

Speaking at the energy conference in Belgrade, Serbian Minister of Energy and Mining Aleksandar Antic said that Serbia will soon be able to meet its obligation of having 27 % of its electricity production coming from renewable energy sources (RES) by 2020, considering that the current percentage is between 23 and 24.

Minister Antic said out that special focus in the coming period will be placed on using biomass as Serbia's greatest potential, adding that projects which were supposed to secure additional 500 MW from wind power are also in progress.

According to him, Serbia's total RES potential is around 5.6 million tons of oil equivalent, of which 3.3 million comes from biomass. He pointed out that Serbia finds wind and solar parks more attractive, but is neglecting its potential in biomass. There needs to be a much greater focus on biomass, and the Ministry has worked on promoting it and will continue to do so by raising small facilities and making investments in biomass and biogas, but primarily through constant pressure on remote heating systems, Minister Antic concluded.

Several biomass project have been already announced since the beginning of the year. The municipality of Knjazevac in eastern Serbia is planning to replace boilers in a local heating plant that use solid fuel and fuel oil with the ones that use biomass and thus build new cogeneration power plant that will have power output up to 2 MW. In addition to electricity, this cogeneration facility will also produce heat sufficient for the operation of the town's district heating system, so the entire town would be heated on forest biomass.

The district heating system in Sabac in western Serbia will be supplied from a new 20 MW biomass power plant, that should be built in 2018, thus replacing natural gas as the energy source, which is three to four times more expensive than biomass. The plant should be built as a private-public partnership and the city officials estimate that the project would cost about 5 million euros.

In late 2016, local company Vinex Etil is planning to build a biogas plant in Lukicevo near the city of Zrenjanin. The plant will have a power output of 2 MW and the value of the investment is about 5.8 million euros. This will be the second biogas power plant in the vicinity of Zrenjanin. In October, local company Bioelektra announced that it has put into operation new biogas combined heat and power plant in village Botos near Zrenjanin. Currently, plant has power output of 0.6 MW, but it will reach 1.8 MW at the end of the third phase of the project. The project was worth about 2.5 million euros, while the majority of the funds was obtained through 1.2 million euros loan by Erste Bank, along with the 668,000 grant from the Government of Netherlands. The project was also financed with 275,000 dollars through a joint project of United Nations Development Program and Serbian Ministry of Mining and Energy. Estimated annual generation is about 15 GWh of electricity, while the plant will be fueled by beet pulp and sugar beet waste, along with corn waste. At the same time, Swiss Government has agreed to invest additional 1.2 million euros and 500,000 Swiss francs in a project for the construction of biomass cogeneration power plant

in Padinska Skela, a suburb of the Serbian capital Belgrade. The investment in the plant will thus be increased to a total of 7.6 million euros and 973,000 Swiss francs.