

Although Energy Minister Aleksandar Antic says that Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov did not mention the Serbian electricity company (“EPS”) during his visit to Belgrade this week, it is not a secret that Russians are interested in purchasing it. On the eve of Lavrov’s visit Serbian media reported about Russian interest for “EPS”.

“I have not information that any Russian company is interested in purchasing “EPS” and as far as I know, this was not included in the agenda during Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s visit to Belgrade, minister Antic told “Danas” daily.

However, a source from the energy sector confirmed to “Danas” that Russians are attentive with regard to “EPS”. “If the official agreement is reached between Belgrade and Moscow, Russian state-owned electric company “Inter RAO” would become the owner of one among the most successful Serbian firms”, the source claimed.

“It’s known for years that the Russian state giant has been focused on “EPS”. For instance, “Inter RAO” and “EPS” have signed the document on strategic cooperation in 2008. At the time, rumours have been spread that Russians wanted to purchase “EPS”. Given the fact that Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic has recently visited Germany and that the interest of German electric company “RWE” in purchasing “EPS” has been certainly mentioned during his talks with Chancellor Angela Merkel, it is logical that the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov now informed the Serbian leadership that Russia did not give up from its own aspirations”, the source explained.

According to this source, both Russian and German companies are strong enough to take over “EPS”, but “there is not a single economic reason” for this purchase. “If an acquisition is done, the reasons would be completely political”.

The source of “Danas” underlined that both Russians and Germans are interested in “EPS” because it is one among the biggest, the most successful and the most valuable Serbian companies. Nonetheless, interlocutor says that “EPS” is too worthy to be sold to any foreign company.

“EPS” should establish strategic partnerships with the foreign companies and such arrangements should be based exclusively on joint ventures such as constructing new power plants, the source added.

According to “Danas”, there are different opinions inside “EPS” about what should be done with the company. Some believe that “EPS” needs a foreign owner, while others are more inclined towards partnership aimed to constructing new plants.