

Serbia: Serbia is importing electric power as biggest coal strip mines are trapped under water

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Serbia is importing electric power because at the moment the national industry is unable to meet the demands of the local market. These days the consumption is around 82 gigawatt/hours per day, although the normal amount for this time of the year is some 6.5% lesser. The citizens are anxious about the forthcoming winter, when the consumption will be considerably bigger, and according to expert estimations the shortage will be approximately 30%. The biggest coal strip mines are working at the diminished capacity, because they have been trapped under the lakes of water. The Electric Power Industry of Serbia will have serious problems in producing enough electricity for the needs of Serbian consumers, it was stated by their deputy CEO Zivotije Jovanovic. He added that a lot would depend on the hydrology situation in the country and reminded that the energy system was the economic branch that suffered the greatest damage in the recent floods, primarily in the production segment. Jovanovic has pointed that the electric Power Industry will first and foremost rely on their own resources, and if necessary, the import will be continued. The thermal power plant "Nikola Tesla" in Obrenovac is not working to its full capacity, due to the "Kolubara" strip mines being flooded, and they are the supplier of coal the biggest power producer in Serbia. Specifically, some 50% of the total electricity in the country is made from this coal.

The mines of the "Kolubara" basin have been seriously affected by the recent disastrous floods. Two biggest strip fields are under water. In one of them the water is being pumped out by seven pumps, and the endeavor will take months to complete. The other one has turned into a big artificial lake, with some 200 million cubic meters of water, so it requires the big-capacity pumps. The assessments of when this field may be put back into function are not optimistic. However, despite the trouble, the daily shipments from the "Kolubara" mines to the "Nikola Tesla" power plant have reached the amount of 45 thousand tons, i.e. around 80% of summertime needs. But, during the winter season it will be but a half of the daily demand.

The high water level, caused by the floods, also had negative effect on the power production in the biggest Serbia hydro power plant – Djerdap 1. In May the production did not meet the planned amount, and since the beginning of the year this plant has delivered 2.3 billion kWh. Due to the shortage, the electricity has to be imported at the price six times higher than what the Serbian citizens are being charged. All those circumstances could lead to the soon increase in the prices of energy. Radio Srbija