

Serbia still needs one more power plant

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Ten-year development plan of "Elektromreze Srbije" (Serbia's power grid operator) is scheduled for public consultation by the end of the month. There may be a shortage of electricity, as we will constantly increase consumption.

Over the next decade Serbia will be consuming seven terawatt-hours more electricity than today, which means that every year we will have a higher consumption of kilowatts for about one percent. At the same time, there are forecasts that we will produce nearly the same amount of electricity as we produce now.

This is shown in the Transmission System Development Plan of the Republic of Serbia for period 2017-2026, which was prepared by the public company "Elektromreze Srbije" (EMS), which has projections up to 2031. The study is currently reviewed by the Energy Agency of the Republic of Serbia which has announced a public consultation. The document is made available for comments and suggestions within the next month.

- At the end of the public consultation the Agency should give its approval - explains Ljubo Macic, President of the Energy Agency. - I am not allowed to comment the plan during the process, but we expect to receive specific proposals from the public in the next 20 days. In this case the consultation is announced so that we potentially might have an interested participant who would like to connect larger facility on a power grid and that is not EPS. I mean the major participants in the electricity market.

The plan deals with the entire energy system of Serbia, but the most interesting part is related to forecast of kilowatts consumption that could be problematic.

- Expected consumption in 2031 ranges from 44.3 to 472 terawatt hours, depending on the scenario, and shows an increasing trend - according to EMS plan. - Looking at the medium GDP growth scenario the average annual growth rate of electricity consumption is 0.9 percent. The results of conservative production development scenario show that in the winter peak mode there is a problem with negative values of the remaining capacity.

The study further suggests that after 2023, it is not expected that new power plants will be built.

- This scenario shows how critical is further postponement of investments in new capacities, bearing in mind that in accordance with European directives some capacities will be shut down in the coming years - it is further stated in the study.

According to Slobodan Ruzic, Director of "Energy Saving group" and a former advisor in the Ministry of Mining and Energy, these indicators clearly suggest that we need to build at least one more power plant:

- The consumption will start to increase as the economy recovers, and we all hope for that, although there are currently savings of electricity and energy efficiency. It is inevitable that units in TPP "Kolubara" and TENT will be closed because they are outdated. Even if we open a new power plant in "Kostolac", B3 with a 350 MW capacity, we will still have a minus in production. We will need another power plant, which will have a minimum of 620 MW, ideally 900 megawatts. It is about two or three times greater facility than the one that is being built.

Construction in TENT? It would be ideal if the power plant that would be built is TENT B3, because of the proximity to the coal mine, says Slobodan Ruzic.

- Stavalj was discussed as an option, Kovin and other sites, but these are unlikely to be built - adds the Director of "Energy Saving Group."

- The construction should begin early in 2020 because we will have a problem three years later, when the old units will start to shut down.