

The recent statement by the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, that our country will need from 16-17 billion to 32 or 33 billion euros in the next 15 to 20 years for investments in the energy sector, according to the forecasts of the Serbian government consultant of the Norwegian energy company Rustad Energy, attracted the attention of the public.

Namely, at the regional conference “Possibilities of investing in renewable energy sources in the Western Balkans” organized by the Norwegian embassies in Belgrade and Sarajevo, he said that Serbia has run into structural problems.

- It is not just about diversifying the supply of gas and oil, but about the fact that there is an old-fashioned approach, old technologies in thermal power plants, and there is nothing new in hydropower either. We are still not in a position to increase the percentage of renewable energy sources in total consumption - said Vučić.

What attracted the most public attention in the assessment of the company Rustad Energy is the large difference in the figures when it comes to the financial resources that need to be invested in the construction of new production facilities in the mentioned period. That range is from 16 to 33 billion euros.

Dilojt’s energy expert Željko Marković tells Danas that when it comes to such plans, the “broader picture” is looked at and care is taken of the integration of the energy sector both in Europe and in the region where Serbia is located.

- The energy system of Europe is integrated, and the objective situation is such that the integration of the energy system will have to happen in our region as well. In the specific case, this means that when deciding what should be built in the following period, it is necessary to analyze not only what could be built in our country, but also what energy facilities will emerge in the region. For example, if others plan to build to the same extent as us, there will be an excess of production facilities, that is, there will be too many of them in relation to the demand for energy. Therefore, you should make plans accordingly.

Therefore, if others do not build to the extent that we in Serbia are planning, then we can go to raise more capacity in our territory, which requires more money. If everyone in the surrounding area wants to build new capacities, then we do not need a large number of new plants in our territory.

According to him, priorities in the construction of new energy production facilities in Serbia should be carefully determined.

- In this sense, I think that the most profitable thing for Serbia, in addition to the completion of the construction of Block B3 in the “Kostolac” Thermal Power Plant, would be to work on the development of the “Bistrica” Hydroelectric Power Plant project as well as the multifunctional Lim - Zapadna Morava hydrosystem with five hydropower plants - says Marković.

The General Secretary of the Serbian Gas Association, Vojislav Vuletić, tells Danas that new energy capacities in Serbia should be built by state-owned companies and not by foreign

capital, as this would be in the interest of consumers as well as the state itself.

- The Government of Serbia is the owner of Elektroprivreda Srbije and Srbijagas, and the state should be responsible for the construction of new production facilities. Namely, the state should finance the construction of new capacities through taking loans or in other ways, and by no means leave it to private capital. In this sense, the previously adopted plan on the construction of gas power plants in several cities of Serbia, which would produce electricity as well as thermal energy, should be implemented. By increasing the capacity of the “Turski Tok” gas pipeline, Serbia would receive enough gas for the operation of those power plants that would produce electricity and heating. Personally, I am not a supporter of the use of nuclear energy and I think that because they are risky for the environment and people’s health, nuclear plants should not be built. If there is no other solution, then the state should participate in their construction in neighboring countries and not build them in Serbia. It is necessary to build new hydropower plants such as Hydroelectric Power Plant “Đerdap 3” and Hydroelectric Power Plant “Buk Bjela” in cooperation with the Republic of Srpska - says Vuletić.

Economic analyst Branko Pavlović also believes that the main role when it comes to the construction of new energy production facilities should be played by the state.

- Energy is a sector in which the main role should be played by the state and not by private capital. Such a situation is not only in Russia and the Czech Republic, which are most often cited as examples, but there is also a tendency for nationalization in that sector in Western countries such as France. Consequently, there is no reason why it should not be the same in Serbia. The state is able to find funds for the construction of new energy plants. Even at this selling price of electricity, EPS, provided it is managed professionally, could make a profit of 700 million euros per year. So, with minimal credit debt, the state could build new production capacities without any problems. Emphasis should be placed on the modernization of thermal power plants that Serbia owns, as well as the construction of biomass plants - concludes Pavlović, Danas writes.