

Slovenia: Energy future is hydro and nuclear power

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Hydro energy and nuclear power are key for Slovenia's energy future, said Slovenian Minister of Environment Andrej Vizjak. Speaking at the renewable energy summit, Minister Vizjak said that it is impossible to imagine Slovenia's energy futures without the planned construction of several hydropower plants and the second unit at nuclear power plant Krsko.

He said that coronavirus pandemic showed how vulnerable Slovenia is when in isolation, adding that the country relied too much on its geographical position in central Europe. In normal situations, Slovenia can rely on the joint energy market, but in case of some disruptions that reliance could prove fatal. Therefore, Slovenia must do its best to ensure stable and reliant supply of energy in the future.

Slovenia must have realistic plans to make itself self-sustainable energy-wise, therefore its energy strategy will insist on the construction of a series of HPPs on the lower Sava river, as well as the possibility of construction of small hydropower plants on the Sava. Minister Vizjak also said that the decrease in CO2 emissions is impossible to achieve without the construction of second reactor at NPP Krsko, where he sees two options – the construction of conventional, larger reactor or several smaller, modular ones.

Last August, Prime Minister Marjan Sarec said during the visit to NPP Krsko that the country needs to built a second unit at the plant in order to avoid any electricity shortages in the future. He stressed that the future development of energy infrastructure is determined by rising electricity needs, digitalization and infrastructure interconnection in the light of the challenges posed by the fourth industrial revolution and the obligation to reduce carbon emissions under the 2050 Energy Strategy. He noted that in 20 years, the existing unit of NPP Krsko will be decommissioned, as well as Slovenia's largest coal-fired TPP Sostanj, mainly due to environmental reasons. If the country is not going to build new thermal capacities or wind farms then the construction of the new unit at NPP Krsko is the only solution for stable electricity supply in the future. It is estimated that the cost of the expansion of NPP Krsko to total installed capacity of 1,200 MW would range between 3.5 and 5 billion euros. However, Croatia as a co-owner has to approve the project as well. Eight years ago, Croatian Government greenlit the project, but there were no indications whether Croatia plans to enter such venture since.

