

## TENT Block B1 renovation begins

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The thermoelectric power plant Nikola Tesla (TENT) B launched Friday a six-month major renovation of Block B1 amounting to EUR 80 million.

The project of renovation and modernization of Block B1 is financed by the Elektroprivreda Srbije (EPS), a state-owned energy provider of Serbia, with around EUR 59 million, while the European Union granted EUR 12 million for the reconstruction of electro filters, and the Swiss government allocated EUR 8.7 million for the replacement of control and regulation systems.

Serbian Prime Minister Mirko Cvetkovic, who attended the launch of the renovation works, underlined that the EPS is the largest investor in the state, and that in the last few years it has invested between EUR 400 and 500 million annually in maintenance and repair of systems to secure continuous electricity supply.

According to him, these investments create a need for engagement of foreign and domestic companies, and lately the participation of domestic companies has become even bigger.

Cvetkovic expressed expectation that the renovation will be over in the planned period of six months, adding that the EPS is a reliable pillar of Serbia's infrastructure. He also thanked the Swiss government and EU for the donation. The cooperation regarding the project's funding symbolically shows that Serbia is a part of Europe and confirms the government's pro-European orientation is the best choice, the prime minister stressed.

Cvetkovic expects the cooperation to expand now that Serbia has become a candidate for EU membership. The renovation of Block B1 is part of the second stage of TENT's rehabilitation, which should be done by 2017 and help extend the blocks' service length, raise their power output, increase energy efficiency and improve work safety and environment protection.

EPS Director General Dragomir Markovic underlined that the modernization and revitalization of EPS facilities in the past 10 years had given excellent results, which was proven during the

February cold wave. "Last year was a record year for the EPS, producing 26.4 billion kWh, and the production reliability of the facilities has exceeded 95 percent," Markovic stated.

The EPS faces large projects and significant investments in the coming years, along with the construction of new facilities through loans, company funds and cooperation with strategic partners, he noted.

The EPS is not giving up on the construction of a third block in TENT B and is negotiating on it with many foreign companies, Markovic stated, adding that the EPS would also soon do a feasibility study with its strategic partners.

TENT Director Petar Knezevic underscored that the plant produces half of Serbia's electricity and had 3,300 MW.

Deputy Head of the EU Delegation to Serbia Adriano Martins said the EUR 12 million EU donation to reduce harmful gas emission in Block B1 was part of EUR 520 million of assistance the EU had provided for the energy sector since 2000. He pointed out that EUR 120 million out of that figure had been invested in thermal power plant renovation.

Martins said the EU would continue to support the Serbian energy sector. The 2012 funds include EUR 16 million to invest in TENT Block A3 and thermal power station Morava, he stated.

Source Emg