

Wind power plants for the interest of citizens or rich companies?

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Date : August 16, 2019

While Montenegrin ecologists together with the citizens who live near the rivers protest against building of small hydropower plants and ask for moratorium for further building, less attention is attracted to wind power plants whose number will rise according to the announcement from Montenegrin government.

Wind power plant which is for now the only one in Montenegro and produces electricity for the market is VE Krnovo, which has 26 wind generators installed power of 72 MWh and is working since two years ago. The trial period for wind power plant of Mozura near Ulcinj is finished and authorities in thin municipality expect that it will start producing electricity in September.

Ministry of Economy stated for Radio Slobodna Evropa that the tender for new wind power plant is announced at Brajici, municipality of Budva.

For building of that power plant German company WDP was interested for years, but as they underlined in Ministry of Economy investors from other countries are also participating.

"Couple of major energetics companies from North and West Europe showed their interest and participation of Chinese and Middle East companies is also expected, as it happened at almost every tender so far". they announced at Ministry of Economy of Montenegro.

Who are the owners?

The interesting thing is the structure of investors and the owners of companies which already invested their money in wind power plants in Montenegro.

Wind power plant Krnovo is in ownership of company Krnovo Green Energy, which is made out of joint investments of French company Akuo and company Masdar from Abu Dhabi who is owner of 49 percent of stocks.

Krnovo is the third biggest wind power plant of Masdar, after Samoa and Seychelles.

Wind power plants

According to officially unconfirmed information which showed up among others in the daily newspaper Dan, behind the Masdar stands one of the most trusted advisers of UAE royal family and also main figure of English football club "Manchester city" Kaldon al Mubarak.

Wind power plant in Mozura is in the ownership of Maltese company Enemalte.

The gear with 23 wind generators is imported from China and whole system in wind power plant is installed also by the Chinese company "Shanghai Power Electronics".

Although from the state they are claiming all to be transparent, Srdjan Peric from NGO KOD stated that he notices that important data of companies are missing.

"Often are changes in the ownership and that is particularly worrying. According to the data from Central economy register, company that is leading the VE Krnovo had 14 changes of owners so far. When you come to the two main owners (Akuo and Masdar energy) you find two central companies with no existing data in Central economy register of Montenegro.", explains Peric.

One wind power plant is like 13 mini power plants

The Government announced in May this year that there was a record production of electrical energy, about 82 million of KWh and 28 percent of that energy was produced in wind power

plants Krnovo and Mozura.

Also according to reports from Montenegrin operator of electricity market (COTEE) only one wind power plant, the one in Krnovo, produces more electricity than that all 13 mini power plants.

Producers of electricity from wind and mini-hydropower have been paid over 15 million euros from Montenegrin citizens by the incentives for the production of electricity from renewable sources so far, according to the data of the Montenegrin electricity market operator, while they are granted concession fees to the state. By the end of July last year paid only 771,000 euros.

So, the question is, how much do citizens pay for wind power?

Energy expert Strahinja Bulajic told RSE that electricity produced in wind farms is too expensive, and to support this claim, Bulajic performs the following calculation:

"According to official data, Perucica Hydroelectric Power generates 930 million kilowatt hours a year and two Krnovo and Mozur wind farms 314 million KWh, which is three times less than Perucica. If the price of a kilowatt from Perucica is a maximum of 2 cents per kilowatt, this means that citizens pay a total of that electricity annually, just over 18m euros, while wind power plants account for less than two thirds of less electricity produced, but at a cost of 9.6 cents per KWH, we pay over 30m euros.

Multi-million dollar earnings

On the other hand, this business is very profitable for investors.

Srdjan Peric from the KOD organization states that the owners of Krnovo have invested 120 million euros, that their annual profit is around 20 million euros, which, according to Peric, means that they will earn several hundred million euros in 17 years of state concession.

In addition, for a full 12 years the state guarantees them the purchase of electricity at a

subsidized price.

"It is very important to point out that electricity, that is, subsidies that we as citizens pay to owners of wind farms and mini-HPPs is more expensive than it would be if we were buying electricity from exports. "It would be a development measure and these are simply subsidies for wealthy or domestic tycoons hidden behind some foreign companies or for multinational corporations," Peric said.

Source: slobodnaevropa.org