

The construction of hydroelectric power plants of this type is important for energy security, but also for environmental protection.

After more than four decades, investments are being made in the construction of hydro capacity in the upper course of the Drina. Together, “Elektroprivreda Srbije” (EPS) and “Elektroprivreda Republike Srpske” (ERS) will realize the project, and on May 17th, the cornerstone was laid for the hydroelectric power plant “Buk Bijela” near Foca, the first of a total of three HPPs.

HPP “Buk Bijela” is part of the project of building three hydroelectric power plants on the Drina with a total capacity of 211 megawatts, worth about 520 million euros. The project will be implemented by the joint venture HES “Gornja Drina”, in which EPS has 51 percent ownership, and ERS 49 percent

“The construction of HPP ‘Buk Bijela’ on the Drina represents a new beginning in the relations between Serbia and Srpska, but also the entire region, and shows how we are working together in the interest of future generations who will not know the borders for work, capital, projects and survival and it opens many other doors and possibilities,” said Ana Brnabic, the Prime Minister of Serbia.

The project has been thoroughly prepared, in compliance with legal and technical procedures, domestic laws and international standards.

“Together with ERS, after decades of waiting for this project, EPS, as a foreign investor with 51 percent ownership in the company HES ‘Gornja Drina’, is participating in the construction of three new hydropower plants. This investment of 520 million euros will bring green kilowatt-hours and increase the energy security of Serbia and Republika Srpska,” said Vladimir Markovic, assistant director of EPS and director of the Key Investment Projects Department.

According to him, the plan is for the power of HPP “Buk Bijela”, the first to be built, to be between 93.5 megawatts and 114.5 megawatts, with a projected annual production of up to 355 million kilowatt-hours.

The construction of the Gornja Drina hydro system will contribute to sustainable economic growth, social development and environmental protection, and the HPP will provide renewable base electricity and serve as an addition to other variable renewable energy sources.

So far, a Feasibility Study with a Preliminary Design, an economic feasibility study as well as an additional feasibility analysis have been done, and concession agreements have been signed for all three hydropower plants. The construction of the system of power plants “Gornja Drina” creates conditions for optimal management of water resources, both in terms of electricity production and water supply, irrigation, reducing the risk of floods and improving water quality.

The value of works and equipment in HPP “Buk Bijela” is more than 200 million euros, while

the total investment will amount to 250 million euros. The future hydroelectric power plant will have three units, and all units of the Kaplan type turbine with a vertical axis. It is expected that more than 500 workers of various profiles and degrees will be hired during the works. It is estimated that about 100 full-time employees will be needed during this period of operation at this facility.

The entire project "Gornja Drina" envisages the construction of the hydroelectric power plant "Foca" with a possible power of 44.15 to 53.58 megawatts and "Paunci", with a power of 43.21 megawatts.

BiH has no jurisdiction

The Prime Minister of the Republic of Srpska, Radovan Viskovic, said that disputes over projects like this have no basis.

"Bosnia and Herzegovina is not responsible for the construction of the hydroelectric power plant 'Buk Bijela', and no objections from Sarajevo have been substantiated. This location is not the border between the Republic of Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina, but exclusively the territory of Republika Srpska. The Serbian government did not need to talk to anyone other than the Republika Srpska government," Viskovic said, B92 reports.