

# Story of an artist

**Marko Kumer - Murč is a Slovenian video artist from Sostanj, who is angry and worried about his town's and his country's future. He is a part of DRUŠTVO.**

**In the last three years Slovenian media has been full of reports about the importance of building a new 600 MW lignite block at the Sostanj power plant to help meet growing electricity needs. They say it will be a "clean" coal plant.**

## **But can lignite really be "clean"?**

**No! No matter how efficient the new block is claimed to be, once installed, it will puff carbon into the atmosphere for another four decades. In this time it would emit twice the amount of carbon that the already existing units would produce until the end of their lifetimes.**

**This cannot be clean. And this is what made Marko angry.**

**Back in the spring of 2011, he created a very simple installation in Sostanj, hanging gas masks like this one from electricity lines throughout town. Marko's art was meant to remind people from his town that, no matter how much we improve production means, coal is still the dirtiest source of energy.**

**Since then, Marko has also found out that this project would not be possible without substantial financial assistance from European public banks and loans from commercial banks in Italy, Germany, France and Austria.**

**Interestingly, the core of this financial support, 550 million euros, is given by the EIB, a bank created by the EU to support its goals.**

**But wasn't environmental protection one of the main priorities of the EU? Hasn't the EU made the ambitious claim that emissions in this region would be reduced by more than 80 percent by 2050? This new block alone would take up almost all of Slovenia's CO2 emissions quota if it were to implement the 80 percent EU emissions reduction target.**

## **Why does the EU say one thing and finance another?**

**This dilemma brought Marko and Slovene environmentalists to Brussels.**





**THE SOSTANJ POWER PLANT IS NOT AN EXCEPTION. NEW COAL PLANTS ARE AT THIS VERY MINUTE BEING CONSTRUCTED IN MANY PLACES AROUND EUROPE AND OFTENTIMES WITH EUROPEAN TAXPAYERS' MONEY.**

### **The Sostanj Story**

**Slovenia plans to build a new 600 MW unit (TES6) in the Sostanj lignite power plant which would replace the power plant's four existing units (two of them are already closed).**

**TES6's promoters argue that the power plant's new unit will increase efficiency and reduce CO2 emissions, but forget to mention that operating TES6 will result in so many CO2 emissions over the next four decades that Slovenia will not be able to meet its climate obligations as an EU member (reduce emissions by at least 80 percent by 2050).**

**In spite of this, the new plant will be built with European taxpayers' money. The project would not be possible without a 550 million euros loan from the European Investment Bank (EIB), a bank created by the EU to further its goals. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), another public bank sustained with European taxpayers' money, is also financing this plant.**

**Green NGOs argue that the money would be better invested in renewable energy sources whose potential is hardly exploited in the country.**

**Also the overall energy demand could be easily reduced by energy efficiency measures.**

### **POLISH COAL (EIB, EBRD)**

**As stated in the national energy strategy until 2030, Poland – where almost 85 percent of electricity is currently produced from coal -- plans to construct 11, 300 megawatt of new coal power by 2020. Out of the planned new capacities, the European Investment Bank (EIB) has already approved a loan to a plant in Bielsko Biala and is currently participating in informal talks about another coal-fired power plant in the North of Poland. This latter power plant would have a capacity of 2 megawatt, nearly as much as the entire renewable energy sources currently installed in Poland.**

### **KOLUBARA COAL FIELD, SERBIA (EBRD)**

**The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the German development Bank KfW are providing loans worth 140 million euros (80 and 60 million respectively) for the development of a new field in the lignite open cast mine in the Kolubara mining complex. The banks' investment in effect supports the construction of lignite power generation to the tune of 700MW at Kolubara. Kolubara will deepen the country's dependency on lignite – the dirtiest of all fossil fuels.**