

The new contract between the Government of Montenegro and the Italian company A2A on management over the Electric Power Company, EPCG, and the interstate agreement with the Czech Republic, which provides that Skoda Praha will build the second block of the Thermal Power Plant in Pljevlja, were given the green light at yesterday's meeting of the Government Commission on political and economic issues.

The contracts are now to be approved by the Government, while the bilateral agreement with the Czech Republic shall be considered by representatives of the executive authorities of the country as well. It is expected that the agreement will be signed in the next two days, which will mark the beginning of realization of the largest development project in the energy sector in Montenegro.

During the marathon session that lasted over ten hours, the main issue was further cooperation with the Italians, with which the Government spent the last two years trying to decide whether and how to proceed to manage EPCG together. Opposition representatives have insisted that the new contract was in fact a cover for the Government's intention to terminate cooperation with A2A and introduce another company.

They also claimed, during several hours of discussion, that the project of construction of the second block of the thermal power plant is not economically viable, and that there is no social justification for it. They also demanded that before the contract is signed with the Czechs, details of their offer are defined in detail.

Škoda Praha, whose bid for the construction of the second block was last year selected as the most favorable offer, did not yet define the final price for their work. Their original offer of 338.5 million euros was through negotiations corrected to 325 million. The Government considers that the final offer should amount to 321.68 million euros.

Details finally agreed upon

The construction of the second block of the TPP, on which the Government insisted, was a major stumbling block in negotiations with A2A. All details of the new contract were agreed late last month, and they provided that Italians continue to manage EPCG in the next five years, with the possibility of leave, or terminate cooperation. In this case, the government will in seven annual installments pay 250 million euros for a 41.7 percent stake currently owned by Italians.

Eventual withdrawal of A2A, as previously announced by the government, would not jeopardize the construction of the second block, and both sides renounced international arbitration.

No rebalancing, no wage increases for doctors

Government Commission for Economic Affairs, KEP, has rejected the proposed amendments

to the Law on salaries of employees in the public sector because, as explained, it is deemed unsustainable and discriminatory.

Returned is also the supplementary budget, on which the Finance Minister, Rasko Konjevic, shall so inform the Government today, orally.

Dnevne Novine daily learns the proposal “did not fulfill the basic preconditions to be seriously taken into consideration”, since the Statistical office, Monstat, has not reported the data for the first half of the year. This would make the discussion about expenses, moot. The increase of salaries to doctors, as assessed by individual members of KEP, is also at this point without a foundation. As DN learns, Minister Konjevic objected to the fact that this proposition includes only doctors and no other healthcare professionals, or other sectors financed from the budget.

Dnevne Novine also received information that opposition ministers sought to return the fees for participation in working bodies and commissions, which were abolished by the Law on Salaries in the public sector, which was rejected.

source: m.cdm.me