

Austria is fighting the Czech nuclear power plant in Temelín situated some 60 kilometers away from its border, taking a roundabout way via filing a complaint against Britain with the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg, daily Lidové noviny (LN) writes today.

It writes that the Austrians were not successful in their years-long direct attacks on Czech nuclear energy and so they have now opted for a cunning roundabout.

They have filed two complaints that seemingly have nothing in common with Temelín, but in fact they are pointed against its future, LN writes referring to its sources.

The two complaints attack the European Commission for having consented to state support in the form of guaranteed purchasing prices of electricity for the future British Hinkley Point nuke plant amounting to £16 billion, LN writes.

It writes that one complaint was filed by Austria alone, the other by the German producer generating energy from renewable sources, Greenpeace Energy, together with another nine German and Austrian firms.

“Austria is by no means interested in any British project or in looking into the impact of the British state support on economic competition in the EU. It (the complaint) is part of a campaign against nuclear energy as such and specifically against Czech nuclear energy and Temelín,” a Czech government source that requested anonymity told LN.

LN writes that the government decided last week to join the proceedings as an enjoined party to the dispute, that is on the side of the European Commission, and logically of Britain, too.

Hinkley Point is to substitute for the capacity of up to one fifth of old reactors. France may also join the dispute since its national champion, Electricite de France, is to build the British plant, LN writes.

A similar step would be also logical for Slovakia and Poland that are still considering building nuclear power plants, LN writes and adds that the issue is no common dispute about the EC’s decision on state support.

“The verdict in this case is of key importance. It will set the rules for financing nuclear plants in the European Union,” Martin Smolek, from the Czech Foreign Ministry who is in charge of the court proceedings, said.

“We must keep open as many opportunities for support for nuclear energy on which our energy policy is based as possible. That is why we must actively participate in the defense of the European Commission’s stance,” LN quote a source from the Industry Ministry as saying.

LN writes that individual countries almost never sue one another in Luxembourg, though this is possible, and they make use of a “mediated” complaint concerning the European

Commission's decision.

In its history, the European Court of Justice gave verdict on a mere four mutual disputes of member countries. In the latest case, Hungary sued Slovakia for not having allowed Hungarian president László Sólyom to enter its territory in 2009, LN writes.

Sólyom wanted to attend the unveiling of a statue of an 11th century Hungarian King, St Stephen, in Komárno, south Slovakia. The Hungarians complained about a breach of free movement of persons, but Luxembourg judges supported Slovakia, saying the head of state has a special status, LN writes.

The Czech energy blueprint says minimally one reactor will have to be added to Temelín, south Bohemia, and another one to Dukovany, south Moravia, the other Czech nuclear power plant, which indicates that more battles will be waged for Czech nuclear energy.

source: praguepost.com