

Sofia. At the presence of Bulgarian Minister of Energy Temenuzhka Petkova the Bulgarian Energy Holding (BEH) inked a contract on consultant services with the World Bank on Friday.

The consultant services of the international financial institution envisage an overall review of the financial state of the Bulgarian energy sector and outlining steps towards full liberalisation of the electricity market by the end of the year.

The contract is with a six-month term. It was signed by Executive Director of the Bulgarian Energy Holding (BEH) Jacklen Cohen and World Bank standing representative in Bulgaria Blaga Djourdjina.

"With the signing of the contract between the Bulgarian Energy Holding (BEH) and the World Bank we are on our way to the realisation of the most important step in the process of the liberalisation of the Bulgarian energy market and namely - choosing the model we will use for its realisation," Bulgarian Minister of Energy Temenuzhka Petkova said during the signing ceremony.

Minister Petkova said that constructive talks were held within a short time so as this important contract to be a fact. She outlined that the liberalisation of the energy market was one of the top priorities of the Bulgarian government in the energy sector.

"We are a little bit lagged behind compared with the other countries but now we will have the chance to see the best practices and use what is best for us to realise this process," Minister Petkova remarked.

"Accumulation of financial deficit at the National Electricity Company (NEK), which is the major problem in the energy sector, is a result of the activity realised by the national grid operator at the regulated market and the engagements to purchase electricity at preferential prices.

After the liberalisation the regulated market will not be a factor and the electricity price will be as fair as possible, corresponding to the supply and demand," the minister commented further.

"The World Bank report will help not only for the liberalisation of the energy market in Bulgaria but will also provide an objective analysis on the state of the energy sector," BEH Executive Director Jacklen Cohen said.

"We managed to agree the current contract within really short time. It will set the groundwork for the liberalisation of the Bulgarian energy market," Mr Cohen remarked.

"We have the ambition to do it within shortest deadlines. I will not set a concrete date over merely economic reasons," he added.

"We will join the liberalised market a little bit late, as it is already a fact in most countries.

The next stage is the accession to the already existing one. We are looking forward and we are following the right track," Mr Cohen said further.

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