

European Commission has approved the construction of new nuclear reactors just 150 kilometres from Osijek.

The agreement with Russia which should build the Paks II nuclear power plant does not violate European laws on public procurement and therefore the European Commission decided to abandon proceedings against Hungary, since it was not obliged to publish a tender for the construction of the power plant.

The new section of the plant will be located 120 kilometres from Osijek, and it is planned that the reactors will use Russian technology. According to media reports, Russia plans to build two new 1,200 MW plants, hopefully with a more advanced technology than the one used at Chernobyl. Since the plant will use Russian fuel, the project will have long term effects on the independence of the European energy markets.

Croatian Commission for Cross-Border Assessment of Environmental Impact at the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Energy is concerned about radioactive waste which is planned to be stored in Russia. "One of the conditions from the Law on Nuclear Energy, regarding permanent storage of nuclear waste generated in Hungary, has not yet been filled. Due to the planned length of life of the power plant, the long-term feasibility is uncertain and there are significant risks", states the study on environmental effects.

Croatia's MEP Biljana Borzan is monitoring the developments. "Since the plant is located very close to Croatia, I am in touch with my colleagues Benedek Javok and Tibor Szanyi. We work together in the Committee on Environment, Health and Food Safety. Given the incident in 2003 and the proximity of Osijek and Slavonia, I have been following what is going on with the project. Among other things, I am worried about the fact that the study did not include preventive protection measures in Osijek-Baranja County", she said, adding that countries must respect certain EU environmental standards and plans to reduce emissions. "It is their decision whether they will build nuclear power plants or, for example, hydroelectric power plants. But, if you ask my colleague Szanyi, he will tell you that he is absolutely against Orbán's plans for Paks II", concluded Borzan.

Paks I Nuclear Power Plant is the first and only operating nuclear power station in Hungary. Its four reactors produce more than 50 percent of electrical power generated in Hungary. In 2009, Hungarian National Assembly gave its consent to the preparation works for the construction of new units. In 2012, the Hungarian government announced that Paks expansion was a high priority project and established a special committee headed by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.

Paks Nuclear Power Plant will be expanded by the Russian state company Rosatom, with eighty percent of the project's cost financed with a 10 billion euro loan from Russia.

Construction of two reactors is planned to start in 2018.

A serious incident happened on 10 April 2003 at one of the reactors. The incident occurred in the fuel rod cleaning system. The discharge of radioactive gases through the stack continued for several days after the incident, although the Hungarian Atomic Energy Agency determined that the radiation levels adjacent to the plant were only about 10 percent above normal. However, the reactor remained out of service for over a year.

Source: total-croatia-news