

Following the review of the design documentation, the Hungarian Atomic Energy Authority (OAH) issued the licence for the construction of two power units with Generation III+VVER-1200 reactors at the Paks II nuclear power plant site.

This is the first time that a power unit with this type of reactor has been issued a construction licence in the European Union and, under the current circumstance, it is also the only major industrial project involving Russian-supplied VVER-1200 reactors in the EU. The Paks II project will be implemented with cutting-edge automated active and passive safety systems, including a reinforced concrete containment with a double wall structure and a core catcher to prevent the release of radioactive substances from the active zone in the extremely unlikely event of a beyond-design accident.

“Today, the Paks II NPP project is taking another leap forward,” said Péter Szijjártó, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade. “The construction license confirms that the project complies with the international and Hungarian safety requirements. It is entirely feasible that Hungary will have two new power units by 2030, thus ensuring the stability of energy supply.”

Paks currently has four small VVER 440 reactors with a combined capacity of about 2,000 megawatts (MW) that started operating between 1982 and 1987. The nuclear power plant accounts for half of Hungary’s electricity production and the government relies on nuclear as a cheap and safe option which can also contribute to achieving the country’s climate targets. In 2014, Hungary signed a deal with Russia, awarding Rosatom the project to build two additional Russian VVER 1200 reactors at Paks.

“An enormous amount of work has been accomplished together with our Hungarian partners to prepare the documentation”, added said Alexey Likhachev, ROSATOM Director General. “The construction license for the new power units of the Hungarian NPP demonstrates firm belief in the Russian VVER-1200 technology, which has successfully passed the test of time and proved its safety and reliability. We are confident that the Paks II NPP will guarantee Hungary’s energy sovereignty for almost a century and bring European countries closer to achieving climate goals.”

“A number of key licences issued by the Hungarian authority, the OAH, for the nuclear power plant construction project is an important step towards the transition of the project to the construction stage of two state-of-the-art, safest possible nuclear power units with Generation III+ reactors, which will ensure Hungary’s stable and financially affordable electricity supply until the end of the century,” commented Alexander Merten, Vice President of the main project’s contractor ASE JSC (ROSATOM subsidiary), Director of the Paks II NPP project.

By the end of October 2023, the Hungarian government wants to see construction works beginning on the ground, which requires the legal and physical launch of the second phase. “All of this is necessary for the two new units to be operational by 2030, increasing the capacity of the Paks nuclear power plant from 2,000 MW to 4,400 MW”, underlined Minister Szijjártó.