

The Slovenian Ministry of the Environment has announced that it has issued a permit to extend the life of the **Krsko nuclear power plant (NEK)** until 2043.

The procedure included an **environmental impact assessment** to examine potential improvements that would reduce the likelihood of environmental accidents, resistance to climate change and external factors, as well as the impact on water, regarding the trend of warming watercourses in **Slovenia**, said Environment Minister Uros Brezan in a statement issued on Monday.

Representatives of Slovenia's neighbors - Croatia, Austria, Italy and Hungary, as well as Germany - took part in consultations related to the project, while delegations from Italy and Austria additionally visited the power plant, the government announced. In July 2021, the Ministry of Infrastructure issued an energy permit for the construction of a second reactor at the Krsko NPP, and that decision drew criticism from Austria, whose constitution prohibits the use of nuclear fission in energy supply.

As many as 50 experts participated in the environmental impact assessment, and the action plan should be completed by the middle of 2023, said the president of the Management Board of the Krško Nuclear Power Plant operator. He added that physical technological upgrading of the power plant will not be required.

NEK expects to complete the installation of the facility for dry storage of spent nuclear fuel by the middle of this year, which will fulfill all the conditions and implement the decisions of the competent authorities for the extension of the operation of the power plant.

In November, NEK completed the planned overhaul of the power plant, which included the replacement of a total of 56 out of 121 fuel elements and a standard program of maintenance and inspection of mechanical, electrical and instrumentation equipment. The nuclear power plant was originally designed to operate until 2023. However, in 2016, **GEN** energy and **HEP** decided to extend its life by 20 years, until 2043, on the condition that the plant passes a safety inspection every 10 years.