

Bulgarian outgoing Prime Minister Kiril Petkov held a meeting with the management of the country's sole nuclear power plant Kozloduy and the representatives of US company Westinghouse.

The officials discussed the possibilities for completing the process of nuclear fuel diversification. Currently, NPP Kozloduy is completely dependent on Russian imports. The goal of the Bulgarian Government is to have one of the units operate using nuclear fuel supplied by Westinghouse. PM Petkov said that he hopes to clarify the obstacles that prevented the final implementation of the project with Westinghouse, signed at the beginning of 2021 by the previous Government.

During the meeting, the management of NPP Kozloduy confirmed that since 2012 diversification of supplies has been discussed, which is a prerequisite for protecting national security, but by 2018 nothing has been done in this direction. The process actually started only in 2019 with working discussions with an alternative supplier in the case of Westinghouse and safety tests, but due to difficulties in the negotiations, the start of the legal procedures is delayed.

Deputy Prime Minister Asen Vassilev recently announced that during a review it was found that Bulgaria has a stock of fresh nuclear fuel until 2024, and talks are already underway about alternative suppliers.

In July, the Council of Ministers tasked the Ministry of Energy to carry out the necessary actions for the diversification of nuclear fuel supplies. The Strategy for Sustainable Energy Development of Bulgaria until 2030, with a horizon until 2050, envisages a policy of diversification of supplies of nuclear materials and services. It includes diversification in the purchase of natural uranium, its conversion and enrichment, diversification of producers of nuclear fuel, maintaining a sufficient reserve of fuel at NPP Kozloduy and concluding long-term contracts for the supply of nuclear fuel.