

Bulgaria: NPP Belene project - no new approvals needed

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Date : July 1, 2020

Bulgaria is not required to notify the European Commission (EC) of changes to the original project for the construction of NPP Belene because it is not a new project, said Bulgarian Minister of Energy Temenuzhka Petkova.

She explained that the EC claims that this is a new project after the old one was abandoned in 2012, which is not true. She added that an important fact that is being ignored is that the Government's decision of 2012 was subsequently cancelled by the Bulgarian Parliament, meaning that the project now has the same status as prior to its abandonment.

According to the legal framework set by the Euratom treaty, if the ongoing procedure for selection of a strategic investor in the Belene NPP project is completed successfully, then the selected investor itself will be obliged to notify the Commission of any changes to the investment project within a three-month period.

Last week, The European Commission spokesperson Tim McPhie confirmed that a new notification on the part of Bulgaria is needed if the country wants to resume the construction of NPP Belene. The motives are the changes to the project, the development of safety standards and the amendment of the legal framework of the Euratom treaty which has changed considerably and has been enhanced since 2007 when the Commission issued a favorable opinion for the construction of the nuclear power plant.