

Serbian Minister without Portfolio in charge of Innovations and Technological Development Nenad Popovic said that the construction of announced Centre for Nuclear Technologies in Serbia, in cooperation with Russian Rosatom, will start by the end of 2022.

Minister Popovic said that the construction will take up to five years. It will contain a research reactor that will be used in medicine and industry. The center will be used for the diagnostics and production of pharmaceuticals and semiconductors.

Asked whether this all means that the ground is being prepared for the potential construction of a nuclear power plant in Serbia, he said that those things are entirely unrelated. However, Minister Popovic believes that Serbia should build a nuclear power plant because it provides cheapest and cleanest energy, but that will not happen in another 15 to 20 years.

In late December, Russian state-owned nuclear company Rosatom said that it has signed an agreement to participate in the construction of a

Centre for Nuclear Technologies in Serbia, as well as an agreement on the establishment of a joint venture with the Serbian Government that will implement the project. Under these agreements, the Center for Nuclear Medicine based on a cyclotron complex and facilities for the production of radiopharmaceuticals will be built in Serbia in the next three years.

Last year, President Vucic reiterated the country's intentions to take part in the construction of nuclear power plants in neighboring countries, adding that the possibility of installation of small modular reactors (SMR) in Serbia is also being considered. He said that he spoke with Hungarian President Viktor Orban about the investment in the project for the expansion of Hungary's sole nuclear power plant Paks. According to him, Serbia is prepared to purchase 15 % stake in the project and will pay good money for it. The negotiations are still at the beginning because the two new reactors at NPP Paks are expected to come online in 2035. He also reminded that there were negotiations with former Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borissov on Serbia's participation in the project for the construction of NPP Belene.