



Serbia might become a strategic partner in Bulgaria's 2GW Belene nuclear power plant project, Belgrade said on Wednesday.

Serbia might become involved in Belene's project implementation and construction, because it has scientific and professional knowledge in the nuclear energy sector, according to delegation members from Russian state-owned nuclear energy company Rosatom, who met Serbian energy minister Milutin Mrkonjic on Wednesday.

The Bulgarian energy ministry was unaware of the meeting, but said Serbia could make its own decisions regarding involvement in energy projects.

#### Delays

The Belene nuclear electricity project was postponed to 31 March after a contract annex was signed between Bulgarian power incumbent National Electricity Company (NEK) and the plant's contractor, Rosatom's subsidy Atomstroyexport. The two companies are suing each other over unsettled payments (see EDEM 3 October 2011).

In December, Rosatom offered to finance the project, in return for a 49% stake. However, NEK did not confirm it had received an official offer (see EDEM 7 December 2011).

Bulgarian energy minister Traycho Traykov said in January that Bulgaria might seek to expand the 2GW Kozloduy nuclear electricity plant instead of bringing the Belene nuclear project forward (see EDEM 5 January 2012).

Last month prime minister Boyko Borisov said Bulgaria expected to make a decision in three weeks on whether to build the Belene plant, after project consultant HSBC assessed whether Belene was economically sustainable.

Source pennenergy