

Slovenia remains a nuclear country

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While the Government recently placed a new NPP Krsko unit the list of strategic projects for post-corona recovery, State Secretary at the Slovenian Ministry of Infrastructure Blaz Kosorok said this did not mean a final decision on the project had been made. Now Kosorok says that Slovenia is and will remain a nuclear country, adding that it needs to build the second reactor at nuclear power plant Krsko.

He stressed that the 20-year extension of the life-span of Slovenia's sole nuclear reactor needs to be secured again first after a recent Administrative Court decision that entails a reinstalling of the original 40-year span ending in 2023. Kosorok is confident that the Environment Agency, which needs to approve the extension through an environmental impact assessment, has enough awareness about the importance of nuclear energy for Slovenia.

He stressed that securing the needed facilities for the storage of nuclear waste was a pre-condition for any decision. The investor, state-owned Gen Energija, which manages Slovenia's half of NPP Krsko, will have to be convincing with a serious investment plan and zoning procedures need to start. The investor will have to convince the asset manager, meaning the Slovenia Sovereign Holding, and key stakeholders, with the plan being that a decision on a second reactor be adopted until 2027 approximately.

Broad social consensus will be needed for a new reactor, especially in light of social and economic development, he added. Some opposition is expected and normal while urging against politicking and for expertise-based debates. Kosorok said it was too soon to speak about any technical details of a new reactor. There are a few interested parties, among them Westinghouse, which also built the existing reactor.

Interest in participation in the project was recently also expressed by Croatia, which co-owns NPP Krsko and has been cooperating with Slovenia in its management.

The project has also drawn attention in other neighboring countries, including Austria as a country traditionally opposed to nuclear energy. Talks were conducted as the life-span of the current reactor was being extended and Kosorok said there had been no major opposition to the project.