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Bulgaria And Iran 'To Hold Talks' On Reactor Equipment From Abandoned Belene Project

12 Jul (NucNet) : Talks will be held between Bulgaria and Iran to explore the possibility of Iran buying Russian-made reactor equipment produced for the abandoned Belene nuclear project, local media quoted Bulgarian prime minister Boiko Borisov as saying after meeting Iranian president Hassan Rouhani in Tehran yesterday.

In June, the Geneva-based International Court of Arbitration (ICA) of the International Chamber of Commerce ordered Bulgaria's state-owned National Electric Company to pay €620m (\$703m) in compensation to Russia's nuclear equipment manufacturer Atomstroyexport for the termination of the Belene nuclear station construction project in 2012.

Under the ICA's ruling, Bulgaria will acquire the nuclear reactor equipment which had been already manufactured. Mr Borisov said at the time Bulgaria would be looking for a potential third-party buyer.

According to reports in Bulgarian media, the main goal of Mr Borisov's visit to Tehran was to discuss the possibility of selling the equipment to Iran, which could potentially use it for its Bushehr-2 Russian-procured VVER project.

A statement yesterday on the Bulgarian government's website said talks in Iran have focused on nuclear energy and "the potential Bulgaria has, including its reactor [equipment]".

Earlier this week, before the start of his visit to Tehran, Mr Borisov told Bulgarian media that reviving the Belene project may be an option if no funding is set aside in the country's updated budget plans for paying ASE's compensation claim.