
BULGARIAN PM BORISOV TALKS WITH RUSSIAN PRESIDENT PUTIN

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Bulgarian PM Boyko Borisov has discussed several bi-lateral issues, including those in the energy field, in a telephone conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin requested by the Bulgarian side.

Borisov informed Putin that concrete steps have been taken in order to effect the payment of NEK's debt to Atomstroyexport which currently stands at EUR 628 M, legal expenses and interest included.

In June, the Arbitration Court with the International Chamber of Commerce in Geneva ruled that Bulgaria pay EUR 550 M to Russia for the terminated Belene project.

Last week, the Bulgarian Parliament approved at first reading that the government lend the National Electricity Company (NEK) BGN 1.2 B in order for NEK to pay Russian Atomstroyexport the equipment ordered and manufactured for the Belene project.

The conversation also focused on the project for a gas distribution centre on the territory of Bulgaria. Borisov and Putin discussed the preparation of a tri-lateral meeting of Bulgaria, Russian and the European Commission in order to clarify the technical, economic and legal details regarding the project.

Borisov and Putin agreed for experts from Bulgartransgaz to inform the Russian side about the developed business model of the Balkan gas hub.

The Russian President applauded Bulgarias honest position that the hub should be constructed under mutually beneficial conditions and after receiving written guarantees from the EC.

Borisov and Putin also expressed their satisfaction with the increase of the number of Russian tourists during the 2016 summer season - a 40% growth, compared to 2015.

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