

Pawlak: Poland may use nuclear energy

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Polish Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Economy, Waldemar Pawlak, has announced the Ministry's view on Poland's future energy security. Poland's energy policy plan till 2030 discussed by Waldemar Pawlak at a conference yesterday includes cooperation with Ukraine on nuclear energy, the construction of power plants, supervision over pipeline operators and facilitations in oil storage systems.

The Polish energy policy plan till 2030 is to be unveiled by the end of the year. According to the Deputy Prime Minister the requirement to reduce carbon dioxide emissions instigates Poland to look for possibilities of using nuclear energy. 'Apart from the planned construction of the Ignalina II nuclear power plant in Lithuania, cooperation with Ukraine is also possible. This undertaking may be completed faster' Pawlak said. The construction of the new nuclear plant in Ignalina is expected to be completed in 2015. The project is being jointly implemented by Poland, Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia.

Joanna Strzelec-Łobodzińska, advisor to the Deputy Prime Minister on energy issues, told the Polish Press Agency that Poland may not only have its share in the projected capacity of Ukrainian plants, but may as well cooperate with Ukraine in the fields of science and technology. 'Scientific and technological cooperation with Czech Republic is also being considered' she said.

Waldemar Pawlak considers Ukraine as a valuable source of know-how in the field of nuclear installations. According to him cooperation with Ukraine may provide an excellent opportunity to train Polish engineers. 'The Polish Energy Group is in talks with prospective business partners in Ukraine' Pawlak said. He also underlined Poland should consider applying the latest technologies i.e. fast neutron reactors. Referring to natural and renewable energy the Ministry of the Economy plans to increase the use of geothermal energy and biofuels in public transport vehicles. Answering a question concerning electric energy in Poland Strzelec-Łobodzińska said that Poland should produce 1,500-2,000 MW of electricity more per year to balance the domestic demand for electric energy and sustain the power reserve. According to experts there is a shortage of 1,000 MW of power in peak time. The problem could be solved by peaking power plants which run only when there is a high demand for electricity. 'It is possible we will call a tender for gas-operated peaking power plants. We have in mind blocks of 400 MW capacities' Strzelec-Ł

obodzińska told journalists.

Waldemar Pawlak highlighted that the government encourages the development of a competitive fuel and energy market which should bring about lower prices for the consumers. 'We are aiming for a situation when it will be so easy to switch to a different gas or electricity supplier as it is today with telecom operators' Deputy Prime Minister explained. He believes Poland should comply with the EU-required ownership separation of production, transport and distribution means. The Ministry of the Economy postulates it should be responsible for carrying out owner's supervision over crude oil pipelines and oil and fuel storage units. Currently PERN Przyjaźń (The "Friendship" Oil Pipeline Operation Company Joint Stock) oil transportation and storage company and OLPP (Logistic operator of Liquid Fuels) are in charge of that. Pawlak expressed the hope that owner's supervision authority over the natural gas supplier – Gaz-System and PSE, Polish Transmission System Operator supplying electricity and energy – will be also transferred to the Ministry of the Economy next year. 'This requires legal amendments' he said. 'Through exercising supervision we wish to guarantee equal access to the transmission network and infrastructure to all market players' Pawlak ensured. The Minister responsible for Poland's energy security also explained what the country's priorities in oil supply are. 'The port in Gdańsk and the line from Gdańsk to Płock are crucial' Pawlak announced. In his opinion it is vital to enable potential oil deliveries from all directions. 'Oil from Azerbaijan could be transported even today via existing pipelines i.e. from (the Ukrainian Black Sea port of) Odessa'. On the other hand Pawlak has underlined the need to increase the oil storage capacity. The Ministry of the Economy is allowing for paid storage of compulsory oil reserves for fuel companies in government agencies. 'Such service could be provided by i.e. the Material Reserves Agency. It would be a great simplification for fuel companies, especially the smaller ones which wouldn't be forced to keep fuels in their storehouses' Rafał Miland, the executive of the Oil and Gas Department at the Ministry of the Economy said.

Waldemar Pawlak pointed out that in view of the rocketing oil and gas prices it is essential to exploit Poland's natural resources, especially coal. 'New coal technologies i.e. coal fuel cells allow for more efficient energy production and reduction of carbon dioxide emissions' he explained. He has also noticed that oil and fuel prices have dropped during the last month thus August inflation can be expected to come in lower than the 5% predicated by the Ministry of Finance. 'Despite the Georgia crisis and the Mexican Gulf oilrigs being threatened by the hurricane, the prices are seen to be dropping. It could have been observed at gas stations in August' Pawlak said.

