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## ELECTRICITY

### **Serbia gives green light to memorandum on energy cooperation with EDF**



Photo: Emilija Jovanovic

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**The Government of Serbia has adopted a Memorandum of Understanding with French state-owned energy company Electricite de France (EDF) on establishing a framework for long-term dialogue and cooperation in the energy transition and low-carbon technologies. Possible areas of cooperation include nuclear energy and hydropower.**

The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding is expected during an upcoming visit of Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić to France, according to the Ministry of Mining and Energy.

Yesterday, Vučić asked the government to start amending the regulations to enable the construction of nuclear power plants, and announced that nuclear energy will be one of the topics he will discuss with French President Emmanuel Macron.

Of note, just a week ago EDF established a strategic partnership with the Government of Montenegro, which may involve joint projects to build hydropower plants.

According to Serbian Minister of Mining and Energy Dubravka Đedović Handanović, the memorandum paves the way for a strategic partnership with EDF in assessing the potential for the development of a civil nuclear program in Serbia, including support for professional staff development and the exchange of knowledge.

*The development of energy storage solutions is also one of the possible areas of cooperation*

EDF is interested in cooperation with Serbia's power utility Elektroprivreda Srbije (EPS) in the development of new, and revitalization of existing, hydropower plants of regional interest, to ensure Serbia's energy security by applying the best international standards in environmental protection, technology and practice, she stressed.

The memorandum, in her words, also envisages the possibility of cooperation in the development of solutions for energy storage, including batteries and green hydrogen.

Earlier today the minister met with French Ambassador to Serbia Pierre Koshar. The two discussed the preparation of the upcoming visit of the President of Serbia to France, and cooperation in the energy sector.



***Đedović Handanović: An opportunity to bring back educated young people to Serbia***

She noted that there are discussions with France about strategic cooperation in many areas, among which energy is one of the most important.

Đedović Handanović said that due to its moratorium on nuclear energy, Serbia lacks experts in this field, which will be intensively discussed in the coming period.

She believes this is also an opportunity for Serbia to bring back a large number of educated young people to the country.

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Tags: Aleksandar Vučić , batteries , Dubravka Đedović Handanović , EDF , Elektroprivreda Srbije , energy security , energy storage , EPS , hydrogen , hydropower , hydropower plants , investments , nuclear energy , nuclear power plant

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Reuters

## Serbia to boost defence industry cooperation with France, President Vucic says

Apr 4, 2024 at 2:07 pm GMT

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Adds details about Croatia's purchase of Rafale jets in paragraphs 14 and 15

BELGRADE, April 4 (Reuters) -Serbia wants to boost defence industry cooperation with France, and is still seeking to buy Rafale fighter jets, President Aleksandar Vucic said on Thursday, in a further sign of Belgrade's shift away from Russia as an arms supplier.

Vucic said he will discuss the cooperation with French President Emmanuel Macron during a visit to France scheduled for April 8.

"One of the topics will be the special purpose industry and the cooperation of our special purpose industries," Vucic said, referring to defence industries during a televised government session.

Serbia, a candidate to join the European Union that has one of the largest militaries in the Balkans, still relies on Soviet-designed aircraft, such as MiG-29 jets and Mi-35 helicopter gunships, alongside Russian missiles and tanks.

It also bought Chinese anti-aircraft missiles and combat drones.

The country remains militarily neutral, but it joined NATO's Partnership for Peace programme, tailored for countries which do not aspire to join the Alliance.

Serbia has already purchased Airbus AIR.PA H125M helicopters and transport planes, Mistral surface-to-air missiles and Thales TCFPPA radars.

Belgrade is also seeking to bolster cooperation with Airbus via maintenance and the development of the H125M helicopters in Serbia and potential a joint production of a combat drone.

"We will speed up cooperation over Airbus helicopters," Vucic said.


In January, Vucic said that Serbia will spend around 740 million euros (\$803.20 million) on new military equipment in 2024.

Belgrade is continuing talks on the procurement of 12 Rafale fighter jets from France's Dassault AM.PA, Vucic said.

"We are determined to buy new aircraft ... that would significantly improve our combat capabilities."

Last year Vucic said that the price for the jets was estimated at around 3 billion euros.

Neighbouring Croatia, a EU and a NATO member and Serbia's wartime foe in the 1990s, purchased 12 used Rafale jets from France for 999 million euro in 2021.

Speaking later on Thursday in Zagreb, Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic said his country was expecting the delivery of the first batch of jets by end-April. 

Belgrade curtailed military co-operation with Moscow after Russia invaded Ukraine and has condemned the invasion. But unlike the EU and other Western countries, it has not imposed sanctions on Moscow.

Serbia's military budget amounts to around 2% of gross domestic product (GDP).

(\$1 = 0.9213 euros)



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Reporting by Aleksandar Vasovic; Editing by Jane Merriman and Christina Fincher

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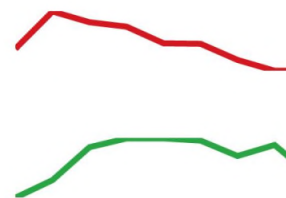
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