

Hungary Expected to Sign Nuclear Plant Deal in Moscow Tuesday

By [The Moscow Times](#)

January 13, 2014

The  Moscow Times

BUDAPEST — Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban will meet President Vladimir Putin in Moscow on Tuesday, Orban's press chief told Hungary's MTI news agency, and the leaders could sign a nuclear cooperation deal.

The Hungarian daily Nepszabadsag reported Saturday that Hungary could sign a deal soon for Russia's state-owned Rosatom to build new blocks at the 2-gigawatt Paks nuclear power plant south of Budapest.

Orban's press chief Bertalan Havasi gave no details about the two leaders' talks and a Hungarian foreign ministry spokesman also declined comment, but a diplomatic source confirmed that the nuclear issue would be on their agenda.

"I can confirm the prime minister is going to visit Moscow and an agreement on nuclear energy will probably be signed," the source told Reuters, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The source said the contract had been drawn up in Moscow and could be signed "if all goes well," without elaborating further.

An official for Rosatom in Hungary declined to comment.

The Nepszabadsag newspaper report said the agreement could involve an extension of existing nuclear cooperation with Russia and also a doubling of current capacity of the Paks plant, which is run by the state-owned energy group MVM.

An MVM spokesman was not immediately available for comment on Monday on the matter.

The Paks power plant, which runs four Russian-made VVER-type reactors, supplies about 40 percent of Hungary's electricity.

Local media have estimated the costs of the investment at up to 4 trillion forints (\$18.32 billion), making it by far the biggest project in the country since the collapse of communism.

MVM is also involved in the gas business after buying German E.On's natural gas trade and storage units. MVM officials have said Hungary would aim to renegotiate its gas import contract with Russian supplier Gazprom soon.

That contract is due to expire in 2015.

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