

Floating nuclear power plants to resolve regional energy problems

MOSCOW, June 30 (RIA Novosti) - Floating nuclear power plants could resolve some regions' energy problems, academician Yevgeny Velikhov said.

"Installing a floating nuclear power plant may resolve regional energy problems," the head of the Kurchatov Institute, formerly the Nuclear Energy Institute, said at a round table in the State Duma, parliament's lower house.

Velikhov said regions were supplied with energy differently.

"The European North, Eastern Siberia, and the Far East demand special attention," he said.

Russia has opportunities to start building floating nuclear power stations, Velikhov said.

He said the first such facility could be constructed with a 70-megawatt capacity on the basis of icebreaker reactors.

The development of the nuclear power industry is important for replacement of organic fuel, especially natural gas, he said.

Oleg Samoilov, chief designer at the Afrikantov R&D machine-building bureau, said a draft of a station with a 600-megawatt capacity had already been developed in Russia.

Samoilov said the floating station would be built at a shipyard and then transported to a fixed site.

Floating nuclear power plants can be used to produce electricity and heat and to desalinate seawater. Such power stations can be installed in any littoral region. A floating nuclear power plant can be utilized for 12-15 years without refueling, the designer said.

Samoilov said such a station had an increased level of radiation safety. The environment is not affected when the station is in normal mode. The worst disaster would not affect those beyond a 1-kilometer radius, he said.