

The Cernavoda project consists of five 685-megawatt CANDU power reactors which, when finished, will supply more than one-third of Romania's electricity. "The country now has one of the lowest per capita electrical consumption rates in Europe," Jake Epp, Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, said in making the announcement with Mr. Wilson. "To compare it with Canada, electricity available to Romanian households is just 4 per cent of the average used by Canadians in their homes every day. Just this past winter, a serious lack of electricity, coupled with extreme weather, forced a number of Romanian companies to close, throwing more than a quarter of a million people out of work. Romania desperately needs an additional electricity supply."

Mr. Epp also said he was satisfied with the safety aspect of the project. "The fact that Canadians will help Romanians commission and operate the reactor for the first 18 months is very important to me."

The CANDU nuclear power project, which is owned by Romania, began in 1979 and suffered a series of delays during the Ceausescu regime. Romania, which has managed the project to date, has asked AECL for greater involvement in the completion of Unit 1. AECL and its private-sector partner, Nuclear Construction Managers, have formed a consortium with the Italian firm Ansaldo, which is responsible for the turbine-generator portion of the plant, to complete the unit.

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For further information, media representatives may contact:

Media Relations Office  
External Affairs and International Trade Canada  
(613) 995-1874

or

Eric Alexander  
Energy, Mines and Resources Canada  
(613) 996-2007