

Greenland and Denmark to agree on uranium in 2014

January 8 2014



Danish Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt arrives for an EU summit in Brussels on December 20, 2013

An agreement between Greenland and Denmark governing uranium extraction in the Arctic territory will be in place by the end of the year, the Danish prime minister said on Wednesday.

"I'm confident that we will get a cooperation [agreement](#) in place in the

second half of 2014," Helle Thorning-Schmidt said at a press conference after meeting with her Greenlandic counterpart Aleqa Hammond.

"We have made strides but we also admit that we don't agree on everything," she added.

The meeting focused on the thorny issue of how much say Copenhagen should have in a future [uranium](#) mining sector in Greenland, which Hammond believes could become one of the world's top exporters of the substance.

Under Greenland's home rule, former colonial power Denmark maintains control over foreign affairs and defence policy.

An agreement between Copenhagen and Nuuk governing [uranium mining](#) was needed because "it's quite clear that Denmark has obligations with regards to security and defence policy," Thorning-Schmidt said.

"A cooperation agreement is essential to actually beginning" [mining](#), she added.

Greenland hopes its vast mineral wealth will wean it off Danish subsidies, which currently account for about half of its economy.

To that end, in October the country's parliament revoked a ban that had existed since 1988 on exploiting uranium.

Hammond said it was still unclear whether the Danish mandate should include "the deals we now have to make with international companies, which companies we cooperate with, or which conventions we should sign."

"My generation will retire in 20 years, and there will be twice as many

pensioners in Greenland compared to today," she said.

"To even have a society based on the same level of welfare that we advocate, decisions have to be made today, also ... on issues that have to do with uranium, that are of great economic importance," she added.

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Citation: Greenland and Denmark to agree on uranium in 2014 (2014, January 8) retrieved 8 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-01-greenland-denmark-uranium.html>

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