
SERBIA TO COMPLAIN TO EC ABOUT CROATIA'S MEASURE

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Croatia's introduction of non-tariff barriers is a drastic violation of the Stabilization and Association Agreement, says Serbia's trade and tourism minister.

For this reason, Rasim Ljajic explained on Tuesday, Serbia will as soon as today address the European Commission, and ask for the decision of Croatia, an EU member, to be reconsidered.

Earlier, Belgrade media reported that the neighboring country had expanded the list of fruit and vegetables coming from third countries - including Serbia - must undergo phytosanitary checks at the border, and at the same time set new taxes, 22 times higher than before.

Ljajic, who also serves as one of deputy PMs, added that, as far as Serbia's reaction to this decision is concerned, some of the measures related to enhanced phytosanitary supervision are already being implemented.

The minister quoted Article 36, paragraph 1, (of the SAA) which states that from the date of entry into force of this Agreement, no new customs duties on imports or exports or charges having equivalent effect shall be introduced," the Serbian government said on its website.

He announced that Belgrade would contact regional countries, primarily Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina - that are also affected by this Croatian measure - in order to jointly appear before the European Commission and protect their economic interests.

"Croatia's decision also represents a drastic violation of the rules and principles of the World Trade Organization, which state that there should be no discrimination between domestic and imported products in terms of taxes," Ljajic said.

"We do not want a trade war with Croatia because it is not in the interest of either country. It would be best to resolve this issue on a bilateral basis, but if that is not possible, then we will internationalize the problem and seek solutions within the framework of the European Commission," the minister concluded.

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