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## **AUSTRIA'S STRABAG FILES COMPLAINT WITH CROATIA OVER BRIDGE TENDER**

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Reuters (23 January 2018)

Earlier this month, Croatia chose a Chinese consortium to build a 2,400-metre bridge to connect the mainland with its most southern region for 2.08 billion kuna (\$344.10 million).

The consortium, which includes China Road & Bridge Corp., CCC Highways Consultants Co Ltd and CCC Second Harbour Engineering Co Ltd, submitted the lowest bid and said it would complete the project in 36 months.

Strabag said on Tuesday it had filed its complaint with Croatias state commission for public procurement.

We claim that certain items in the (Chinese) bid are unusually cheap. We emphasise the authoritys obligation to question unusually low prices according to the European Union law on public procurement, Strabag told Reuters.

A third bidder for the project was a consortium comprising Italys Astaldi and Turkeys IC İctas, which offered to carry out the works for 2.5 billion kuna. Strabags offer was the highest and amounted to 2.6 billion kuna.

Croatias daily Novi List reported on Tuesday that the Astaldi consortium had also filed a complaint. Astaldi was not immediately available for comment.

The European Commission agreed last June to fund 85 percent of the project, with Croatia providing the rest.

Croatia, an EU member since 2013, sees the project and the resulting territorial continuity as necessary to enter the EUs Schengen zone, where passport checks are not required.

At the moment, the only road connection between mainland Croatia and its far south - including the popular tourist destination of Dubrovnik - passes through neighbouring Bosnia.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/croatia-construction/austrias-strabag-files-complaint-with-croatia-over-bridge-tender-idUSL8N1PI5CB>