
BOSNIA TO PROTEST TO EU OVER CROATIA BRIDGE DEAL

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Bosnian officials reacted angrily to Croatias signing of a contract on Monday to build the Peljesac Bridge on the Adriatic Sea coast in Dubrovnik, arguing that Zagreb must resolve its outstanding sea border issues with Sarajevo first.

Croatia has continued the implementation of the disputed project despite all warnings, and Bosnia will inform the European Commission about that, Bakir Izetbegovic, the Bosniak member of Bosnia's tripartite presidency, told a press conference on Monday evening.

Croatia can start construction of the Peljesac Bridge only after a border agreement with Bosnia is ratified, the deputy speaker of Bosnia's House of Representatives, Sefik Dzaferovic, also told media.

Bosnia sent a letter in September last year to the Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic, European Commissioner President Jean-Claude Juncker and the European Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina Cretu saying it had not given its consent for the construction of the Peljesac Bridge.

Denis Zvizdic, the chair of Bosnias Council of Ministers, announced on Monday that he will send a new letter in order to stop the construction plans.

For years, Bosnian officials have insisted that the bridge cannot be built before the two countries regulate their outstanding border issues.

The 2.4-kilometre-long Peljesac Bridge is intended to connect the Croatian mainland with the Peljesac peninsula, giving Croatia a continuous land link that bypasses Bosnian territory.

The current coastal road passes through a sliver of Bosnian territory around the town of Neum, Bosnias only sea port.

The dispute has been ongoing since 2007 when the construction of the bridge was first announced.

Bosnian officials have constantly objected to the project, claiming that the planned bridge was too low and could obstruct sea access to Bosnia's only coastal town of Neum and so ruin the possible construction of a port there.

But Sarajevo-based political analyst suggested that the dispute was not just the result of technical or legal issues.

We can see that now, for more than a decade, they [politicians] have been using this problem for everyday political tensions and as well ethnic ones, since here we have Bosniaks and Croats involved, Maric told BIRN.

Bosnian Croat politicians support the bridge project.

<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/bosnia-calls-eu-commision-over-peljесac-bridge-04-24-2018>

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