
BOSNIANS FRET OVER EX-YUGOSLAV PROPERTY IN CROATIA

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Bosnias Council of Ministers said on Tuesday that it will wait for an opinion from its Committee for Succession before making any official move in response to the new Croatian law that allows Zagreb to rent out properties in Croatia that were inherited from the former Yugoslavia.

Concerns have been raised in Bosnia that the country could lose access to or even ownership of its ex-Yugoslav properties in Croatia, which are worth an estimated 10 billion euros, because of the new Croatian law on state property management, which was passed on Friday.

The Council of Ministers and the presidency of Bosnia must raise the issue of drafting an agreement between Croatia and Bosnia at the highest level. If in time, Croatia refuses what Bosnia has to offer, then there are international institutions, arbitrators and courts, Edin Forto, an MP in the countrys Bosniak- and Croat-dominated Federation entity, told BIRN.

A succession law agreeing the distribution of Yugoslav properties between the former republics came into force in 2004, but very few property cases between Bosnia and Croatia have been resolved in the past 14 years.

Republika Srpska, Bosnias Serb-dominated entity, has registered 64 pieces of real estate in Croatia.

According to the Federation entitys Privatisation Agency, the Federation also has 78 pieces of real estate in Croatia, including petrol stations, hotels, and assets at the ports of Sibenik and Ploce.

However, Bosnia has no state-level registry of the property.

Bosnias Justice Minister Boris Grubesa said that because there was no agreement in Bosnia about who actually owns or is in charge of managing the properties, Croatia was acting correctly.

By adopting this law, Croatia showed it cares about those facilities, it wants to find concessionaries who will preserve that property, Grubesa told regional TV station N1 on Tuesday.

Croatias Property Minister Goran Maric told media after the law was adopted that it does not affect the ownership of the facilities in any way

Ownership is sacred and it must be sacred. This law simply activates the abandoned properties, Maric insisted.

The Croatian property management law allows unused ex-Yugoslav properties to be rented out as concessions for up to 30 years.

An agreement on succession issues between the former Yugoslav republics was concluded in Vienna in 2001 but so far, no contract to resolve the issue has been signed between Bosnia and Croatia despite several attempts.

Negotiations were conducted until 2012, when the issue came close to being resolved, but Republika Srpska asked for the contract to include the right to perpetual ownership of the properties, which Croatia refused.

Croatia signed contracts with Slovenia and Macedonia before the Vienna agreement and returned their properties.

<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/bosnia-worried-about-former-yugoslavia-properties-05-30-2018>

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