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**PUTIN'S RETURN VISIT TO CROATIA IS UNDER NEGOTIATION, PRESIDENT SAYS**

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Russian President Vladimir Putin's return visit to Croatia is being discussed now, Croatian President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic told national television in an interview on Thursday.

"Yes, there is the discussion about the return visit. Certainly, it depends on President Putin and my schedule. It will take place as soon as we agree on the agenda," Grabar-Kitarovic said, noting progress in bilateral ties.

During an informal visit on the sidelines of the FIFA World Cup in Russia, the two countries agreed that they solved several issues at the meeting in Sochi. "From Sberbank's role and checks of Agrokor to air cleaning in Slavonski Brod," she said.

The Croatian leader noted that anti-Russian sanctions have affected bilateral relations. "When Croatia is concerned, for me it is important to make every effort for our economy, which is certainly somehow suffering amid sanctions, but we should find alternative ways, this means those goods which can be exported to the European market without facing sanctions," the president said.

Croatia's Agrokor company, which is most likely to be managed by Russian businesses, should ensure its positions on the Russian market, she said. "From the very beginning representatives of Sberbank assured me about their best intentions and certainly they have to recoup their investment in the company, but they also want Agrokor to become one of the most successful European companies," according to Grabar-Kitarovic.

Agrokor is Croatia's largest private company, with its main operations being food production and retail. The company is facing a debt crisis and it is indebted to Russian banks alone to the tune of roughly 1.3 bln euro or 30% of its total debt. Croatia's government earlier passed the law on putting the company under state management and launching restructuring procedures.

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