
BOSNIANS PROTEST AGAINST CROATIA'S NUCLEAR WASTE DISPOSAL PLAN

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Bosnians gathered in front of the Croatian embassy in Sarajevo on Monday, protesting over possible plans being mulled by neighbouring Croatia to build a landfill site for radioactive waste at Trgovska Gora, near the border with Bosnia.

They say over 300,000 citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina may be endangered by the possible construction of the landfill. Trgovska Gora is located just north of the Bosnian border, near the town of Novi Grad.

Croatia adopted strategic documents at the end of last year naming the area as a potential location for dumping nuclear waste from the Krsko nuclear power plant.

No final decision has been made yet. But Croatia needs to take over half of the nuclear waste from the power plant, which lies in Slovenia, by 2023. The plant was a joint venture of the two republics when both were part of former Yugoslavia.

After media reported in 2015 that Trgovska Gora was one of four possible locations for a storage site, nearby municipalities in both Bosnia and Croatia launched campaigns to block the plan.

Maida Sabeta, from Climate Save Bosnia, the organization that organized the protests, told media that not enough work had been done to assess whether the location was safe.

No environmental impact assessment has been carried out in a cross-border context, and no consideration had been given to what kind of danger there may be. Experts from Bosnia, but also from Croatia, have concluded that this site ... poses a great danger to Bosnian citizens, she said.

Bosnian government officials share these concerns. The Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Mirko Sarovic, on Monday said the dangers to the public were unknown.

It is legitimate for Bosnia to raise its voice because the danger is much greater than it might be shown to the public. Bosnia has the right to raise this issue to a higher international level because we could suffer the consequences of nuclear waste only 500 meters from the border, he said.

I do not think it is fair to Bosnia that the neighbouring country, Croatia, which we respect, has not recognized any of our arguments over the past few years on this issue, he added, noting that he expected the Bosnian Presidency to put this issue on its agenda and seek arbitration.

Croatian officials on Monday shrugged off Bosnian concerns, saying its plans were bound to dissatisfy someone, and the high technological standards used with modern landfills posed no

danger to health.

Croatian Minister of Environment and Energy Tomislav Coric on Monday said the final decision on the location would be made in October, and whatever decision was reached, somebody will always be dissatisfied.

With every decision you make, it is impossible to reconcile all possible attitudes and there will always be dissatisfaction, Coric said.

As for the opinions and signals coming from other countries, specifically from Bosnia, it is entirely justified for each country to think about what is in their neighbourhood. However, it should also be noted that such landfills exist throughout Europe and that landfills, which are made to the highest standards and with the best technologies, do not pose a risk, he added.

The location of the possible nuclear waste disposal site is only 800 meters from the River Una, a tourist attraction, but also a border between two states. Bosnias mainly Serbian entity, Republika Srpska, plans to proclaim the river Una a Nature Park, the RS Minister of Urban Planning and Ecology, Srebrenka Golic, announced on Monday.

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