

China Gezhouba Group has signed a construction contract for the Dabar Hydro Power Plant. China Gezhouba Group is going to build 160MW hydropower plant in the south of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This facility is the first large-scale hydro plant in recent years to be built in Republika Srpska (RS)- one of the two entities that make up Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH).

Dabar forms part of the Gornji Horizonti system, and the project is being implemented by Elektroprivreda Republike Srpske and its subsidiary Hidroelektrane na Trebisnjici. Total project cost is estimated at 200 million euros. China Gezhouba is part of China Energy Engineering Corporation, also known as Energy China.

After several years of delays, a contract was signed on May 6 at a ceremony in the city of Trebinje, the Chinese embassy in BiH announced. China's ambassador to BiH Ji Ping and RS Prime Minister Radovan Viskovic attended the signing ceremony via video link, respectively, from Sarajevo, the capital of BiH, and Banja Luka, the capital of RS.

"The Covid-19 outbreak has not stopped China from deepening cooperation with BiH," said Ji Ping at the ceremony.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has long-term ambitions to join the European Union, but is some way down the waiting list. The official candidate countries are Albania, Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey. Listed as potential candidates are Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Kosovo.

Last autumn, the European Union (EU) briefly put the enlargement programme on hold after an argument between member states, but this process is now back on track, and the EU has agreed to open accession negotiations with both Albania and North Macedonia. Brussels is sensitive to growing Chinese influence in the Western Balkans but, given the extremely slow pace of EU enlargement, a number of leaders are strengthening their relationships with Beijing and, in particular, looking for support on major infrastructure projects.

During its six-month EU Presidency Croatia has put economic development in the region high on the agenda, and called for faster progress on EU enlargement.

On May 6 an EU-Western Balkans Summit took place in Zagreb, though various EU leaders had to attend online because of the corona pandemic.

The President of the European Council, Charles Michel, chaired the meeting. The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, Andrej Plenković, Prime Minister of Croatia, which currently holds the presidency of the Council, Josep Borrell, the high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, David Sassoli, the President of the



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European Parliament, representatives of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the World Bank, the European Investment Bank and the Regional Cooperation Council also participated.

At the summit EU leaders reaffirmed their unequivocal support for the “European perspective” of the Western Balkans. The EU said that it is determined to strengthen its support to the region’s political, economic, and social transformation.

Source: theasset.com