

Belgrade-Budapest railway-related agreements signed

SOURCE: TANJUG

BELGRADE -- Two agreements on cooperation between the Serbian and Hungarian railways and customs authorities were signed on Wednesday in Belgrade.



The agreements are part of a deal to modernize the Belgrade-Budapest railway and were signed in the presence of prime ministers of China, Serbia, Hungary and Macedonia.

The prime ministers told a joint press conference that they were glad about the high-speed railway project "now being certain," adding that it would benefit the countries of central and eastern Europe, the EU, and overall cooperation between China and this part of the world.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang expects that the railway will be completed in two years and that it will prove to be of benefit to both China and the countries of central and eastern Europe and the EU.

Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic said that it was an important day for Serbia, which would contribute not only to the development of industry and railways, but also enable greater connectivity with Hungary, Macedonia, and far faster transportation of passengers and goods.

The Serbian prime minister said that the travel time would be shortened from eight to 2.4 hours and that the great infrastructure project would bring new jobs.

The Serbian prime minister thanked his counterparts for the understanding and cooperation they were showing, stressing that everything would be done to have the project realized in time and as soon as possible.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said that it was a lucky day for Hungary and that the project would enable the country to use the potentials of its "positive geographical position."

He said that the railway would prove of great importance to the countries of central and eastern Europe, adding that he was confident that cooperation between China and Europe was progressing.

Macedonian Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski agrees that the railway is an important project for the region, Europe and China.

He expressed the hope that the faster transportation of goods and passengers the

project was to bring would help the countries go forward. Official talks on the project to build a double-track railway for rolling stock that can travel at 200 km/h were started during the visit of Prime Minister of Serbia Aleksandar Vucic to the People's Republic of China in September this year.

As previously announced, the railway Corridor X constituent branch Belgrade-Budapest will most likely be built through concession or through public-private partnerships.

The Corridor X branch is 350 km long, with the section through Serbia totaling almost 200 km. According to earlier estimates, the construction of the high-speed railway between Belgrade and Budapest would cost between EUR 1.5 to two billion.

There are also plans to extend the railway from Belgrade via Skopje to Athens.