

Bruxelles, 29 August 2013

Dear Commissioner Hahn,

I would like to thank you for your willingness to meet with me and my colleagues on September 10th in Strasbourg regarding this topic.

In complete support of the measures being taken by the Commission, I would like to take this opportunity to bring to your attention the issue concerning Pelješac Bridge from an additional viewpoint.

I am aware that the best possible resolution needs to be formed in order to find the most efficient way to ensure free movement and border crossing in the Republic of Croatia, and as of July 1st, in the European Union. I am also grateful and aware that all necessary matters are being taken by the Commission to resolve the border issue in Dubrovnik - Neretva County and would like to present to you a few reasons that support the need for promptness on the matter.

On Wednesday, August 28th, a second meeting was held in Dubrovnik in order to present once again the position of Dubrovnik - Neretva County on the issue concerning the Pelješac Bridge. As was stated at this meeting and in the meeting held in July 2012, Dubrovnik Neretva County is without the Pelješac Bridge in an economically, geographically, and demographically unequal position in comparison to the rest of the Republic of Croatia and to the European Union. This local political consensus expresses the opinion of the County and as the new members of the European Parliament my colleagues and I strongly support the unanimous standpoint that was presented in this meeting.

Dubrovnik - Neretva County is currently one who's economic and social development can be boosted through connected maritime territory, yet hindered through land detachment. The region is disproportionate in its value relative to its size and should not be seen through the number of its citizens but through the value it brings to the Republic of Croatia, the European Union and to the World Heritage.

This brings about numerous topics, one of them being the grave impact this situation has on the City of Dubrovnik- a city with high economic, cultural and geographic importance for the Republic of Croatia. In this region, Dubrovnik is the main tourist destination and as Croatia's budget highly relies on tourism, Dubrovnik is highly important for the economic development of Croatia. But not only is it of economic importance, it also has a high cultural significance as its status as a world cultural heritage city that is protected by UNESCO contributes greatly to the diverse cultural environment in the EU. In terms of geographic location, Dubrovnik is situated at the very bottom of Croatia and can be, with the development of proper infrastructure and the Jadransko-Jonska/Adriatic-Ionian initiative, the EU's corridor to South Eastern Europe.

With the motto of the European Union being 'United in Diversity', which puts emphasis on working together towards prosperity with respect towards different cultures, for Dubrovnik - Neretva County, such current and future possibilities for progress are limited by the current detachment of the County from the rest of Europe. Having this in mind, I would like to highlight that when considering the construction of the Pelješac Bridge we remember that it is a project that needs to be continued, not started and that though important, quantitative standing alone cannot lead the discussion of this topic, for if importance is put only on financial matters, a decision made from a quantitative standpoint alone can have a negative impact on economic, cultural and geographic development for Europe in this region.

As a border on the sea would slow the free movement along the coast, the soundest solution for avoiding obstacles to free movement on land, specifically in this region, is the construction of the Pelješac Bridge. Therefore, we not only support your initiative to find the best solution, we strongly suggest that the optimal solution for this situation is the Pelješac Bridge, and that further discussion be oriented towards finding an efficient way to implement this optimal solution.

Kind regards,



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