

《习近平访塞波欧将促进合作伙伴关系》

President Xi Jinping's visit to Serbia, Poland and Uzbekistan will lead to more projects involving production capacity cooperation, Foreign Ministry officials said on Wednesday.

During the eight-day trip that will begin on Friday, Xi will attend signing ceremonies for cooperation documents in the three countries, all of which are along the route of the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative, said Liu Haixing and Li Huilai, both assistant foreign ministers.

Liu told a news briefing that Xi will visit Serbia's Smederevo steel mill, which was founded in 1913 and acquired in April by Hesteel Group, China's largest iron and steel business group in terms of production capacity.

The deal is worth 46 million euros (\$51.7 million).

Construction of Serbian power stations and highways in projects involving contracts with Chinese companies is going smoothly, he said.

In Serbia, the Zemun-Borca Bridge, newly renamed Pupin Bridge, was opened in 2014. The bridge over the Danube River is the first built in Europe by a Chinese company.

"The bridge is fondly known by the local people as the Chinese Bridge," Liu said.

The Chinese government is encouraging domestic companies to invest in Poland's nuclear power industry, Liu said.

Poland has been China's largest trade partner in Central and Eastern Europe for 11 consecutive years. It is also the only CEE country that has joined the China-proposed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, Liu said.

Liu Zuokui, an expert at the Institute of European Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said that promoting bilateral cooperation with Serbia and Poland will play a positive role in propelling China-CEE relations.

To show support toward China-Uzbekistan cooperation on the Belt and Road Initiative, Xi will attend a ceremony for the completion of a tunnel made by China, Li said.

While attending the meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Xi will discuss with other leaders the applications by India and Pakistan to join the SCO as members, Li said.

Chen Yurong, a researcher of European and Asian studies at the China Institute of International Studies, said the

SCO summit is expected to have a huge, positive influence on the growth of the organization, which marks its 15th anniversary this year.

