

Protests over Poland road construction

by UPI

WARSAW, Poland -- Residents of the northeastern Polish town of Augustow are demanding the government restart construction of a highway that the European Union opposes. Protesters blocked Augustow's main road near the town hall Monday, and ecologists said they would erect tents and climb trees in an effort to prevent the construction of a beltway road in the environmentally protected Rospuda Valley close to the Lithuanian border, Polish Radio reported. The European Commission is threatening to seek a court order to stop building the controversial road that could endanger rare plants and animals. The Warsaw government stopped the construction during a bird-nesting period and plans to restart work on the project Wednesday. Greenpeace plans to put up about 1,000 tents to prevent construction while the Augustow residents are patrolling the area to drive the environmental activists away. Polish authorities argue a 25-mile bypass road used by an expected 4,500 vehicles a day would not endanger the wildlife and plants.

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