



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dačić had talks today with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada, Honourable John Baird, who is on an official visit of several days to Serbia, at the invitation of Minister Dačić.

Today's meeting was an opportunity to revitalize the bilateral dialogue at a high level, since the last time Belgrade played host to a Canadian diplomacy chief was back in 2001.

During the talks, Minister Dačić underlined that Serbia was interested in intensifying dialogue with Canada, in view of that country's influence in relevant international organizations, the massive Serbian expatriate community there and the need to adjust the level of political contacts to the intensive development of economic cooperation.

The Canadian Minister commended the progress made in the normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina, and extended Canada's support for Serbia's European integration process. Minister Baird assessed that the commencement of the negotiations on Serbia's EU membership was a guarantee for and an impetus to the promotion of relations between the two countries, bearing in mind the likelihood of Serbia's European perspective and the fact that the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the EU would be signed in the near future.

The interlocutors underlined their mutual interest in further intensifying economic cooperation between their countries, given particularly continued Canadian investments in the areas of mining, energy and agriculture.

Views were also exchanged on current international issues, particularly in the context of the forthcoming OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office by the Republic of Serbia. The Ministers agreed that it was necessary to immediately proceed with the diplomatic resolution of the Ukrainian crisis issue.