

SERBIA

FOREIGN MINISTER MEETS WITH GERMAN COUNTERPART

BERLIN, November 21 (Beta, B92) - German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle has said that Germany's "clear commitment" to supporting the European perspective of Serbia was to continue.

)At a news conference in Berlin after his meeting with Serbian Foreign Minister Ivan Mrkic, Westerwelle said that Serbia on its further path towards the EU "should fulfill all the criteria", and that "for Germany, normalization of relations with neighboring countries, including Kosovo," was "crucial".

Minister Mrkic told reported that the Serbian government "intends to be in as closer cooperation with Germany as possible, and that in the future it will confirm the intention".

In a statement to the Beta news agency Mrkic said that he and Westerwelle discussed the situation in Serbia after the acquittal in the Hague of Croatian generals Ante Gotovina and Mladen Markac.

"We have met with understanding for our strong reaction, because this is about essential injustice dealt by that the so-called verdict," said Mrkic.

"Even so," he continued, "I spoke to Westerwelle about everything that stands in the way of Serbia's path to the EU," and added that Serbia "will have the full support of Germany in that it is one of the key things that absolutely can accelerate this process":

"We repeated it this time as well that we are not in a rush for a specific date (for the start of EU accession talks), but are instead committed to carrying out thorough and serious reforms and harmonize with what is the standard in much of the continent, and we wish to then be invited as a member of that European family."

The Serbian chief of diplomacy said that Westerwelle received information about Kosovo, adding that the Serbian government "has the full support for the policy conducted in order to arrange relations, of course, not giving up our principled positions and respect of our Constitution."

Mrkic recalled that yesterday in Berlin he met with an advisor for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Christoph Heusgen, and described the talks he had in Berlin as "comprehensive and friendly".

Mrkic also spoke for Germany's Tagesspiegel daily, to say that Serbia would give up on its bid to join the EU if its membership in the organization was conditioned with a recognition of Kosovo.

NIKOLIC DISMISSES SERBIAN AMBASSADOR IN MACEDONIA

BELGRADE, November 21 (Tanjug) - Serbian President Tomislav Nikolic revoked the mandate of Serbian Ambassador to Macedonia Tomislav Djurin, the latest edition of the Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia states.

Tomislav Djurin is dismissed from the position of the authorised ambassador in Macedonia, the president's decree states as quoted in the Official Gazette.

NIKOLIC TO RECEIVE CREDENTIALS OF NEW AMBASSADORS

BELGRADE, November 22 (Tanjug) - Serbian President Tomislav Nikolic will receive credentials from new ambassadors of the Russian Federation, Turkey, Switzerland and Thailand on Thursday.

Nikolic will receive credentials of Russian Ambassador Alexander Chepurin, Turkish Ambassador Mehmet Bozay, Swiss Ambassador Jean Daniel Ruch and Ambassador of Thailand Preudtipong Kulthanan, the president's press service released on Wednesday. The Serbian president will meet with the new ambassadors in the Palace of Serbia where he will later confer with Foreign Minister of Costa Rica Jose Enrique Castillo Barrantes, the release states.

NIKOLIC: WE EXPECT RUSSIA'S SUPPORT

BELGRADE, November 22 (B 92)- Serbian President Tomislav Nikolic has accepted credentials from new Russian Ambassador Aleksandr Chepurin and said Serbia expects Russia's support. "Serbia's leaders highly appreciate Russia's support in combat for respect of the international law when it comes to Kosovo and Metohija and protection of territorial integrity and sovereignty," he noted on Thursday.

The Serbian president said that this was a sensitive moment for Serbia, that it was facing important decisions and that it expected Russia's support. He added that traditional friendship and historical and spiritual ties between the Serbian and Russian people should contribute to a more dynamic and stable development of the two countries' relations.

Nikolic said Serbia was determined to implement all agreements reached by Russia and Serbia and that both Russian and Serbian citizens would benefit from them. He encouraged the new Russian ambassador to more actively promote Russian investments in Serbia because strengthening of economic cooperation was key in the time of crisis.

Chepurin said that Serbia and Russia had centurylong friendship and that great relations existed not only between officials but between the two peoples. "This is a cornerstone of our progress. The past greatly determines our future and it is our job to make the future as good as possible for citizens of our countries," the ambassador stressed. He added that there was a political will in Serbia and Russia to establish a new level of the two countries' relations and assessed that Nikolic and Russian President Vladimir Putin's meetings "give a strong impulse". Chepurin reiterated Russia's support to Serbia when it comes to the protection of its territorial integrity and added that the solving of the Kosovo issue in accordance with the international law and UN Security Council Resolution 1244 was the only fair solution. He said that the world faced a great economic crisis and that the best way to overcome problems was to work together on projects that would enable growth and recovery of the economy.

NIKOLIC CALLS FOR UNITY

VRSAK, November 21 (Tanjug) - Serbian President Tomislav Nikolic said Wednesday that Serbia faced great challenges and should remain united.

"I insist and plead with you that we stay united and turn to ourselves and the future of our children," said the president.

At the opening of a Lamp East factory in Vrsac, northeastern Serbia, Nikolic said it was up to Serbia to fulfill the conditions the EU has put before everyone and to say: "Here you go, we are here, if you want us. If you have some new conditions, then you do not want us." According to

Nikolic, Serbia has a lot to learn from the past, and the fact it has not used the past as a teacher "is coming back to haunt it."

The president said the country was burdened by numerous problems and hardships, some of which it created itself while being saddled with others through no fault of its own. "It is up to us to correct this, to fix it and to get to work. It is up to us in power, who have assumed the responsibility and the glory, to create jobs. If we fail to do that, we will lose the positions we hold today," said Nikolic.

Talking about the investment from Italian company Lamp San Prospero, Nikolic said it was just one of many investments from Italy and that many more would come during his term. "This is the only way Serbia can move forward," he said.

Nikolic said Serbian workers were qualified but poorly paid and that he would insist on changing this. "Workers must be paid better so that our living standards can improve," said Nikolic.

According to Nikolic, Vrsac was the right choice for Lamp East, a company which produces packaging for the pharmaceutical industry.

"The pharmaceutical industry is unique and it is good investments are being made. We have done what we could and now people with more capital and knowledge are coming to expand it," said Nikolic.

He invited Italian investors to continue investing in Serbia.

NIKOLIC CALLS ON INVESTORS FOR VRSAC BREWERY

VRSAC, November 21 (Tanjug) Serbian President Tomislav Nikolic on Wednesday invited companies to invest in the country's oldest brewery in Vrsac.

Nikolic visited the bankrupt brewery in northeastern Serbia in the company of German Ambassador Wilhelm Heinz, Italian Ambassador Armando Varricchio and British Ambassador Michael Davenport, where he sent out an invitation to potential strategic partners.

"You will try the beer, and if you see it is good, which I know it is, we will work on this," Nikolic told the ambassadors.

The president said he had visited the brewery during his campaign and believed it needed to survive. "If you too feel now that these people should be helped, that this brewery is worth something and should survive, then know that it needs a strategic partner," said Nikolic.

He told reporters that he and the new German ambassador agreed to visit the brewery together during a reception at the German Embassy. "You talked about the quality of German beer then and I told you we had our own and we agreed to meet here so you could try it for yourself," said Nikolic.

The brewery's director, Ljiljana Dobrosavljevic, said this was the oldest Serbian brewery, founded in 1742. She said the company had filed for bankruptcy and hoped to find good buyers, because it had all the necessary characteristics.

VARRICCHIO: SERBIA HAS ALL REQUIREMENTS FOR EU

VRSAC, November 21 (Tanjug) Italian Ambassador Armando Varricchio said Wednesday that Italy believed in Serbia's European path and that Serbia had all the requirements to become an EU member and build a better future.

At the opening of an Italian Lamp East factory in Vrsac, Varricchio said it was important for Italy and its industry that there is confidence in Serbia.

Italy looks at Serbia with great friendship and admiration, especially its state leaders, represented in Vrsac today by President Tomislav Nikolic. We believe Serbia has a great future in the EU, said Varricchio.

According to Varricchio, Nikolic's presence at the opening of the Vrsac plant shows that Italy and Serbia have a future together.

DACIC ORDERS FULFILLMENT OF EC RECOMMENDATIONS

BELGRADE, November 21 (Tanjug) Serbian Prime Minister Ivica Dacic ordered Wednesday all ministries and competent institutions at the first meeting of the Coordination Body for EU Accession Process to fulfill this year's recommendations of the European Commission regarding the EU integration process within the planned deadline.

The first meeting of the Coordination Body for EU Accession Process stated that faster progress in the EU integration process and start of the EU membership talks is one of the priorities of the Serbian government, reads a release by the Serbian government.

The Coordination Body has accepted the Action Plan for fulfillment of recommendations from the annual report on Serbia's progress in the EU integration process in 2012. The task of the Coordination Body is to coordinate the work of state administration bodies in relation to Serbia's EU accession.

The Coordination Body also discusses the political and strategic issues relating to Serbia's EU accession, determines the government's key political positions, and helps in possible distribution of jurisdictions among the ministries in the EU integration process.

It was planned for the Serbian government to adopt the Action Plan before the meeting of the European Council in December so as to show the readiness for fulfillment of all conditions for getting a date for the start of the membership talks, the statement reads.

The Serbian government will discuss the fulfillment of this plan on three occasions April, July, and September, 2013.

GOVT. ADOPTS ENERGY AGREEMENT WITH ITALY

BELGRADE, November 21 (Tanjug) The Serbian government passed an energy agreement between Serbia and Italy unchanged and returned it to the parliament for an urgent adoption, Energy Minister Zorana Mihajlovic said Wednesday.

Practically, nothing has been changed in the energy agreement that was signed in 2009, Mihajlovic said, adding that she expected the document to be discussed in parliament in 10 to 15 days and that it would be adopted.

After opening the 4th Energy Community Oil Forum, held in Belgrade on November 2122, the minister told reporters that Annex 1 of the agreement, which listed projects and hydroelectric plants to be built on the Drina River in cooperation with Italian and Republika Srpska partners, had remained. "We had the obligation to check with the Italian partners whether they accepted Annex 1 as several other projects appeared in the meantime, but there was also a proposal by Republika Srpska to change certain plans," explained Mihajlovic.

She pointed out that changes were withheld and that the energy agreement with Italy had been passed unchanged.

BRAMMERTZ DISSAPOINTED, SUFFERING NOT ACKNOWLEDGED

THE HAGUE, November 21 (Tanjug)- Serge Brammertz, the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), stated Wednesday that his office is disappointed by the outcome of the appeal judgment, which reversed the convictions against Croatian Generals Ante Gotovina and Mladen, and stressed that those affected by crime committed in connection with Operation Storm felt their suffering has not been acknowledged.

Brammertz pointed out that as a party to the proceedings, his office has to respect the result of the Appeal Judgment and that it will, as in all cases, "consider review proceedings if the necessary conditions are met." "My Office has carefully studied the Judgment rendered by the ICTY Appeals Chamber in the case of Gotovina and Markac on Friday 16 November 2012. My Office is disappointed by the outcome of the Judgment, which reverses the convictions against Mr. Gotovina and Mr. Markac entered unanimously by the three judges of the Trial Chamber," Brammertz said in a statement for the media.

He added that his office is aware that "those affected by crimes committed in connection with Operation Storm are not satisfied by the outcome and feel their suffering has not been acknowledged." "Throughout the appeal proceedings, my Office explained to the Appeals Chamber why we believe the evidence was sufficient to support the Trial Chamber's convictions," which sentenced Gotovina to 24 and Markac to 18 years in prison.

"In the end, three out of the five Appeals Chamber judges saw it differently, resulting in the acquittal of Gotovina and Markac on all counts of the Indictment."

Brammertz also pointed out his office will also make sure that evidence it collected will remain available to judicial authorities in the former Yugoslavia to facilitate national prosecutions for the crimes committed in connection with Operation Storm. "We trust that the judicial authorities in Croatia will live up to their obligations," he added.

The ICTY chief prosecutor stressed that the dissenting opinions from two of the Appeals Chamber judges Judge Agius and Judge Pocar have identified important issues arising out of the Majority's Judgment for the ICTY to reflect on. "These issues have also been the focus of attention by commentators external to the ICTY in the days following the Judgment. The issues include ensuring coherent standards of appellate review, assessing the evidence on the record in its totality and giving appropriate deference to a trial chamber's factual findings," he said.

"Reflection on these matters is important and hopefully, in the end, will be a catalyst for further strengthening the international justice system," Brammertz concluded.

SERBIA - K&M

ZARIF: MEDIATION FROM UN, OTHERS NECESSARY IN KOSOVO

BELGRADE, November 21 (Beta, B92)- UNMIK chief Farid Zarif has said that the UN mission in Kosovo was making significant efforts "in order for Priština to change its attitude towards the north".

Zarif was in Belgrade when he said that the situation in Kosovo "changed drastically since the beginning of the implementation of Resolution 1244 of the UN Security Council", the Serbian parliament said in a statement on Wednesday.

Zarif met with Parliament Speaker Nebojša Stefanovic and said that Kosovo needed mediation from other international institutions as well, given the narrow maneuvering space of UNMIK, "as Priština institutions no longer accept the mandate of the (UN) mission".

The statement added that he also noted that "effort should be made so that the Priština leadership would become an acceptable interlocutor for Belgrade". Zarif said that it would be "a favorable perception of the population of northern Kosovo that their interests are directly included in the Belgrade platform would be of great importance for the development of the situation".

Stefanovic said that the UN mission was an important factor of stability in Kosovo and Metohija, while Zarif noted that the administration in Priština should intensify its communication with UNMIK.

Stefanovic informed Zarif about the facts testifying to the jeopardized security of the Serb community in Kosovo and Metohija, which prevents the return of displaced persons, his office said.

Zarif said that, due to the fact that the Priština institutions no longer accept UNMIK's mandate, "the mission of providing stability on the ground, protecting the Serb minority and fighting fight against discrimination was being conducted in cooperation with EULEX and KFOR".

UNMIK chief said that Serbia has "objective reasons for concern about the situation in Kosovo", pointing out that, thanks to reports of international organizations, "relevant international actors are also informed about that situation".

UNMIK will in the coming period assess the situation in Kosovo and Metohija primarily based on the results in the domain of respect and promotion of human rights.

They agreed that it was necessary to continue cooperation and intensify regular communication, the statement added.

KOCIJANCIC: PROGRESS MADE IN DIALOGUE

BELGRADE, November 22 (Tanjug) - Although progress was made during a twoday dialogue of the working groups of Belgrade and Pristina, which ended in Brussels on Wednesday evening, there was no full agreement, the European Commission released.

Progress was made, but there is still much work to be done, Maja Kocijancic, spokesperson of EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton, told reporters on Wednesday.

The main topic of the talks, which took place on Tuesday and Wednesday, was the implementation of the agreement on integrated control of crossing points, and in line with the practice so far, the participants of the dialogue did not address the media.

Kocijancic said that the EU expects a new meeting soon, following the necessary consultations of the working groups. The technical dialogue is part of the preparations for a meeting between Serbia's Prime Minister Ivica Dacic and his Kosovo colleague Hasim Taci, expected in early December.

As agreed earlier, the implementation of the agreement on integrated management of crossing points should start on December 10, in the beginning at 2 out of the 6 crossings along the administrative line separating Serbia from Kosovo.

Head of the Belgrade team Dejan Pavicevic said earlier he would request that Kosovo customs officials be present at the crossing solely as observers, with EULEX officials conducting all the work.

The implementation of the agreement is one of the requirements the European Council set for Serbia in March this year in order to give the country the start date for the accession talks.