



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic warned today in Vienna, where he attended the Austria-Western Balkans conference of Interior and Foreign Ministers, “Tackling Jihadism together”, convened on Austria’s initiative, that the fight against terrorism required close networking, and called for early detection of terrorist organizations. The Minister assessed that the Islamic State was allowed to strengthen, and that now a war was being waged against it.

The Minister stated at a press conference that terrorism and extremism were phenomena of a universal nature and that therefore close ties between all the countries that might be of assistance in the struggle against this scourge was indispensable. In this regard, it is important for us to have a common approach and to exchange information, as well as it is important for the politicians to place more trust in the security services than in their own political assessments.

“Apart from security, military and police methods, the certainly basic question is how to create social preconditions for this phenomenon to be uprooted to the largest extent possible, and how to create conditions for bringing the recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters in European countries to a minimum”, Minister Dacic stressed. The Minister added that it was particularly important for the Western Balkan countries, where the recruitment used to be in evidence earlier as well, and that it used to be termed White Al-Qaeda in the first place, but is now replaced with other terms.

“I believe that one phenomenon, the early warning system to be precise, was the one that failed - the possibility of differentiating between extending support to some movements deemed national and liberation movements, and those representing terrorist organizations. It is for this reason that some countries actually used to support such movements, thus doing themselves a disservice by failing to recognize their terrorist nature”, Minister Dacic underscored.

“I held the office of Minister of Interior for six years and I warned even then that Austria, the cities of Vienna and Salzburg, were logistical centers for the Wahhabi Movement in the Western Balkans”.

The lesson learned from all this is that we have been lenient to them all these years, enabling them to gain strength, and now we are at war which has taken a heavy toll.

In order for this never to happen again, transparent cooperation is a must. There are neither differences nor borders in this matter. It does not matter if someone is a Muslim, a Christian, or an atheist, what matters is the principle of living together.

“Serbia will make its maximum contribution to the fight against terrorism”, Minister Dacic concluded.

The Serbian Foreign Minister stated that the OSCE would also devote attention to this topic, that an expert-level conference addressing this issue would be held in Vienna, and that it would feature as one of the major topics in the Belgrade Ministerial Meeting to be held in December.