



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ivica Dacic will take part at the Western Balkan Summit to be held in Paris today.

Minister Dacic said that the most important thing was to keep the flame lit in Berlin burning by holding the previous meeting in Vienna and now in Paris, and that the next summit was expected to take place in Italy next year. He underlined that it was of the utmost importance that the Western Balkan agenda be on the table of the major EU member states in Brussels.

"We are grateful to Germany for launching the process but also to France, Austria and Italy that are making efforts to have the Summit held every year.

It is important to deliver concrete results. The Prime Minister also talked about it. There is a whole range of projects including the transport infrastructure, energy or the Regional Youth Cooperation Office that was essentially the idea of Prime Minister Vucic that was accepted by Albanian Prime Minister Rama. I am happy that the Agreement on the Establishment of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office will be signed today.

One of the topics for discussion is the migration issue. We hope and ask for a unified approach. We have proved to be a reliable partner in that regard.

The most important topics also include regional stability and the European integration of the entire region. Serbia will demonstrate readiness for peaceful settlement of all outstanding issues in the Balkans.

We therefore hold the view that the EU decision not to open chapters 23 and 24 and to continue negotiations with Montenegro and Turkey, had very negative repercussions as Serbia wants basic respect. If we do everything we are asked to do, we do not expect to be punished for it.

The way Croatia acted has nothing to do with negotiations. That was not part of something Serbia was supposed to comply with. Croatia's request is based on bilateral relations and that is no practice in European negotiations.

We stand ready to resolve outstanding issues between our two countries but Croatia expressed no such readiness as it did not delegate people to various commissions set up to address outstanding issues such as the border issue and others.

We expect the EU to resolve this issue. We did our best and now it is EU's turn to act concerning the chapters.

The meetings like this one are useful. Both the Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers will advocate clear policy of continuation on our EU course but we do demand respect for our country and for what we have accomplished so far", Minister Dacic said.