



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic is staying today in Vienna, in the framework of the visit by a delegation of the Government of the Republic of Serbia headed by Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic.

Following the meeting with his Austrian counterpart, Minister Ivica Dacic stated that the Serbian Prime Minister, by coming to Austria only a day after the new Government was installed, demonstrated the importance Serbia attached to Vienna as well as to the role played by Austria and Minister Sebastian Kurz in regional relations.

He recalled that Austria was a major and significant trading partner of Serbia, and that last year's foreign trade amounted to 800 million EUR, with the common goal of reaching 1 billion EUR.

"We expect that Austria will continue to extend its support to Serbia on its path to European integration, as well as for the opening of new chapters in the negotiations with the EU. We also expect and hope that Austria will contribute to lessening tensions in the region. Serbia will play a constructive role and become a stability factor in the region, since this is in our mutual interest", stated the Serbian Foreign Minister.

The issue of migration was one of the key topics in the talks between the two delegations, said Minister Dacic, adding that the Ministry of Interior and Minister Nebojsa Stefanovic had made maximum efforts to curb the migrant flow by engaging the police and the Armed Forces.

The Serbian Foreign Minister maintained that Serbia wished to act in accordance with the European response to this issue, but simultaneously asserted that Serbia could not allow itself to become a kind of a victim of the lack of a unified European policy.

Austrian Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz expressed the gratitude of his country to Serbia for its contribution to curbing the migrant influx by closing the Balkan route. After the talks with the Serbian delegation headed by Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic, Minister Kurz underlined that Serbia had had excellent cooperation with Austria in overcoming the refugee crisis.

"Closing the Balkan route has significantly contributed to reducing the number of refugees coming to Austria along that route", Kurz emphasised, noting that Serbia had accomplished this at the moment when the idea of closing that route had been meeting with a significant

resistance in the European Union.

He particularly thanked Prime Minister Vucic for the fact that Serbia still expressed its readiness to support Austria in maintaining the low influx of refugees.

At the same time, Austria was facing the rise in the number of refugees coming from Italy, which was the reason why it was important to undertake measures to stem the flow coming from the Balkan route, the Austrian Prime Minister stated.