



On 2 November 2016, a round of regular political consultations between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Serbia and Lithuania was held in Belgrade. Serbia's delegation was headed by Acting Assistant Foreign Minister for the EU Ambassador Marina Jovicevic, while the Lithuanian delegation was led by Vidmantas Purlys, Director of the European Union Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania.

In the talks, a number of issues was considered concerning the dynamics of opening negotiating chapters with Serbia, regional cooperation, EU Eastern Neighbourhood Policy and the relations with the Russian Federation. It was noted that the bilateral relations between Serbia and Lithuania were good, aiming to intensify further the cooperation and mutual contacts. The Lithuanian side reiterated its support to Serbia's European integration and expressed readiness to offer assistance on this path. Views were also exchanged on other issues of mutual interest, noting that the consultations were a good mechanism for promoting the relations between the two countries.

The Serbian delegation conveyed that it was highly important to maintain a positive attitude towards the Western Balkans countries' membership of the EU as well as the dynamics of the accession process, despite all the challenges the region and the EU were facing ("Brexit", migration, terrorism, economic crisis, Euroscepticism, reform of the EU).

In the context of reforms, it was estimated that the reform process in Serbia and the Balkans countries needs to be maintained further, and that the accession process itself represented the key motivation for fundamental reforms at the national level, preparing us for joining the EU, once the institutional requirements within the EU have been met.

Hope was expressed that Lithuania and other EU Member States would assess objectively the progress achieved so far in the accession process and the challenges Serbia was facing, and make decisions that would enable Serbia to continue its negotiation process and, consequently,

achieve substantial progress concerning systemic reforms.

The consultations in the context of European integration have been conducted on a regular basis, according to the previously agreed annual plan on political consultations between the two countries' Foreign Ministries.