



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic held his final press conference in 2016, summarizing the results and activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the past year.

The Minister addressed greatest achievements of Serbian diplomacy in 2016, all the bilateral meetings held in the country and abroad, and also all the international conferences he participated in as a representative of Serbia.

Minister Dacic underlined in particular the successful Chairmanship of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and its Ministerial Council held in Belgrade in December 2016.

On plans for the future and diplomatic endeavours, the Head of Serbian diplomacy said that he expected that Chapter 26 would be opened in either next January or February, noting that in 2017 Serbia would be ready to open more than ten chapters in with accession negotiations with the EU.

The Minister said that Serbia could open Chapters 20 and 29 during Malta's EU Presidency, which are related to entrepreneurship and the customs union. With regard to Chapter 31, which concerned the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Minister Dacic emphasized that it was not discussed and that judging by the experience of other countries that had gone through the accession process, this chapter was opened near the end of the negotiating process, estimating that "that day is not so near for Serbia".

Speaking about relations in the region, Minister Dacic conveyed that they definitely needed to be better, which was not hard to achieve as they were poor at the moment, and added that the door was open to dialogue with Croatia.

At the annual press conference, responding to journalists' questions concerning the relations in the region and tensions with Croatia, the Head of Serbian diplomacy said that Serbia was committed to peace, stability and reconciliation in the region and that he expected regional relations to be promoted in 2017.

Noting that the door to dialogue with Croatia was open, Dacic underlined that it was unacceptable that EU membership should relieve anyone of the responsibility to respect history

and refrain from revisionism.

"I'm absolutely in favour of reconciliation, but it is not possible if you keep going back to conflicts", said Dacic.

The Minister took the opportunity to wish all citizens of the Republic of Serbia a happy New Year, as well as good luck, best of health and every success in the upcoming year 2017.