



First Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ivica Dacic is participating at the 127th session of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe hosted by the Cyprus Chairmanship in Nicosia, 18-19 May 2017.

The Serbian Foreign Minister attended today an informal dinner hosted by the Cyprus Chair of the Council of Europe and made the following statement on "Strengthening confidence in the European democracies: facing the challenges of racism, xenophobia, social marginalization, extremism and populism":

"The problems of racism, xenophobia and extremism are, unfortunately, increasing in the whole European region. The Council of Europe can significantly contribute to combating these phenomena. In our region, in recent years and months, we have witnessed the hate speech and hate crimes, xenophobia and dangerous incitement to ethnic hatred and intolerance, with occasional irresponsible and inflammatory statements and aspirations of some leaders for redrawing borders in the region. Secretary General Jagland in his latest report on the human rights situation justifiably indicates a problem of hate speech that is present in many countries. In this regard I wish to point out that the true commitment of Serbia is the further development of regional stability and cooperation through dialogue, peace and reconciliation. But this goal can be achieved only if such willingness exists on all sides, and if the commitment or non-commitment of any government to combat such phenomena is measured by the same yardstick. In this respect, we see the possibility for a key contribution of the Council of Europe which has mechanisms in place to detect these phenomena and problems, condemn them unequivocally and point out the need and directions for taking resolute action to suppress them, which Serbia highly appreciates. We particularly have in mind the necessity of protecting and promoting the rights of national minorities.

We are firmly committed to continue, in cooperation with the CE, to be engaged in this field, in accordance with the recommendations of the CE. At the same time, we expect that all rights of the Serbian minority living in neighboring countries are fully respected in accordance with the standards of the Organization."