



Foreign Ministers of Serbia, BiH and Turkey, Messrs. Mrkic, Lagumdzija and Davutoglu met today in Sarajevo in the framework of the preparations for a Summit Meeting of their Heads of State in Ankara, to be held on 14-15 May, and they announced the signing of an economic cooperation agreement between the three countries.

The three Foreign Ministers agreed that deepening of economic cooperation and joint appearance on "fourth markets" was a priority for the three countries concerned and that their shared goal was a prosperous common future for the region.

The Serbian Foreign Minister assessed that meetings like this one contributed to the further stabilization of the region and to the strengthening of friendship, thus creating a development perspective for the region, as a safe bet.

"Our political relations are so good that they make possible economic interdependence and joint presence on fourth markets. All we did today was serving the purpose of the Summit or future trilateral meetings ", said Minister Mrkic at a news conference.

Asked about the message he would pass onto Serbian President Tomislav Nikolic, Minister Mrkic replied: "I'll pass onto him that preparations are well underway and that they will have a successful meeting in Ankara."

Minister Mrkic added that ahead of the Summit Meeting, an economic cooperation agreement would be signed by the three countries, voicing the hope that other similar agreements would follow. The cooperation agreement would be signed by the Minister of Foreign and Internal Trade, Mr. Rasim Ljajic on behalf of Serbia, the Foreign Trade Minister, Mr. Mirko Sarovic on behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina and by the Minister of Economy, Mr. Zafer Caglayan, on behalf of Turkey.

"Our three countries are doing whatever it takes to shape a common future and have the whole region become prosperous. History has made us intertwined; we are bound by the present; and we definitely have a future together ", concluded Minister Mrkic. He wished the Ministers a

warm welcome to their next trilateral meeting in Belgrade in October.

In Minister Lagumdzija's words, all that they discussed today was in preparation of and an introduction to the Ankara Summit and the Meeting of Economy Ministers on the eve of the Summit.

Attention would be focused on four areas – economy, education, cultural cooperation and tourism, said Minister Lagumdzija. "The aim is to create through these areas a platform for a more intensive cooperation ", he added.

He pointed out that it was agreed that trilateral meetings at the Ministerial level would be held twice a year, in the autumn and the spring, whereas the meeting at the level of Heads of State would take place once a year.

Referring to the economic cooperation, Minister Lagumdzija said that there were companies in all the three countries that were interested in trying to work together, primarily in the fields of construction trade, energy, infrastructure and food processing.

As to the markets for joint presence, they are primarily the Middle East, Iraq and Africa where Turkey is most present in comparison with the rest of the world countries. "Countries should above all create prerequisites for cooperation and be at the service of the economies of the three countries ", added Minister Lagumdzija.

He recalled that the trilateral meetings began eight years ago, that Minister Davutoglu took part in all of them and that today's meeting was the first one after three years. He singled out a wonderful atmosphere at the Meeting and the importance of the fact that after a series of meetings where Ministers only recognized the difficulties, we came to the point of defining a common future.

"Starting the Trilateral at the Ministerial level is an excellent encouragement for a positive atmosphere and development of relations bilaterally ", he said, assessing that there was a great improvement in relations between Serbia and Turkey, and that relations between BiH and Turkey and BiH and Serbia were good.

Davutoglu said that the success of the Trilateral was reflected in passing this atmosphere to the people and reviving among them the will to live together and to strengthen their friendship and cooperation. "We'll be together in troubled times ", said Davutoglu.

He expressed his hope that the Heads of State of the three countries would use the occasion of meeting in Ankara to breaking to the public some important decisions.

He also added that he expected that the Ankara Summit would be attended by all BiH Presidency members, saying that diplomacy should help overcome all difficulties through dialogue.

Regarding economic cooperation and prospective Turkish investments he said that he always passed to Turkish companies that their investments in Serbia and BiH were as safe as if they

were made in Turkey itself, but that they needed to see it for themselves. "I always encourage Turkish companies to invest directly in BiH and Serbia ", said Davutoglu.

In addition to trilateral meetings, the Minister will also have separate bilateral meetings today.