



Serbian Foreign Minister Ivan Mrkic assessed at the break from the UN General Assembly debate in New York that Serbia was much sought after as an interlocutor on the world stage nowadays, and that its suggestions were taken seriously, adding that until a few years ago this was not the case.

Mrkic reiterated the position expressed by President of Serbia Tomislav Nikolic who, after a meeting with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, said that "the atmosphere is much friendlier now than last year when I began my office".

"I can even reinforce that position, because in all contacts, and there are really many of them, Serbia is an interlocutor much-sought-after and all our suggestions are taken seriously, but until a few years ago that was not the case", said Mrkic.

Today, he met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, with whom he discussed the upcoming visit of President Vladimir Putin to Serbia.

"We talked about the preparations for the visit of President Putin to Belgrade. We are doing our best to get everything ready so that the visit could be realized as soon as possible, hopefully before the end of this year", added Mrkic.

Another topic discussed at the meeting was Kosovo which the Serbian Foreign Minister talked about yesterday with Omani Foreign Minister Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah, who explained why his country did not recognize the unilaterally declared independence of Kosovo and confirmed that official Oman would maintain that position.

The principled position of Oman was not to side with anyone side as long as the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina was underway, said Mrkic.

During the day, the Serbian Foreign Minister met with British Foreign Secretary William Hague, his Croatian counterpart Vesna Pusic, and said that he "briefly met with Enver Hoxhaj representing the Kosovo authorities", to whom he presented the problems regarding the organization of local elections.

"I explained to him which of their positions prevent us from doing the job as agreed in Brussels", said the Foreign Minister of Serbia, adding that this could be discussed in more detail so that the elections were held completely in line with what had been agreed.

Beside the Foreign Minister of Oman, Mrkic met yesterday with the Foreign Ministers of Turkey, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania, and with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe Thorbjorn Jagland.

Yesterday, Minister Mrkic had a trilateral meeting with his counterparts from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey, Zlatko Lagumdžija and Ahmet Davutoglu, with who he agreed to explore the possibilities for enhancing bilateral economic cooperation and increasing investments in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, at the next meeting in Belgrade, in December.

Mrkic and the Omani Minister discussed bilateral relations and cooperation in the future. "We are in the process of discussing with Oman, which is an important Gulf state, a possibility to complement our presence there with the establishment of our Embassy in Oman, next year", said Mrkic.

He also said that there were plans for a visit by Serbian President Tomislav Nikolic to that region.

### **Minister Mrkic and Sergei Lavrov**

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### **Minister Mrkic and Vesna Pusic**

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