



Following today's meeting of the Government MFA I. Mrkic summoned Turkish Ambassador Mehmet Kemal Bozay and lodged a strong protest over the statement made by Turkish Prime Minister R. T. Erdogan during his stay at Prizren in Kosovo and Metohija. He said that Erdogan's statement "Kosovo is Turkey and Turkey is Kosovo" deeply upset our public opinion and that many rightly saw it as being hostile, and numerous other individuals as being openly intolerant. We are deeply offended by this statement which is contrary to everything that the Turkish leaders say in meetings with the Serbian officials. Serbia has no prejudice against any nation and its officials would have never said a thing like that. It would be enough to imagine the reactions of the Turkish public in Ankara caused by a similar statement made by a Serbian leader in the opposite sense. Thus, the beliefs of many people that we are witnessing the revival of neo-Osmanli claims against the Balkans are proved right. This is about Kosovo and Metohija, the southern Serbian province, which everyone is aware of, even those who have, for their own reasons, recognized Pristina's unilateral declaration of independence. This Erdogan demonstration will affect the relations between Serbia and Turkey, and has already harmed them. Mrkic requested urgent clarification from official Ankara and expressed the hope that Ankara would offer an apology.

The Turkish Ambassador underlined that he would immediately pass the message onto his Government. He pointed out that Prime Minister Erdogan was misquoted in the media, that he praised Serbia in his speech in Prizren and, therefore, had absolutely no intention of offending it.