



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic had talks today with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of Ghana, Shirley Botchwey, who is on an official visit to Belgrade.

"Former Yugoslavia and Ghana were among the founding members of the Non-Aligned Movement. Ghana was the first African country that gained its independence 60 years ago. Next year, we will be marking the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between then Yugoslavia, now Serbia, and Ghana. Representatives of the two countries, Tito and Nkrumah, were great friends, and we are proud of our history and cooperation dating back to that period", Minister Dacic underlined.

The Serbian Foreign Minister further stated that the two countries wished to revitalize their relations, undermined six years ago by Ghana's decision to recognize Kosovo.

"We decided to revitalize our relations, to restore them to the level existing at the time of Tito and Nkrumah, and endeavour to promote them even further", emphasized Dacic.

Minister Dacic said that what he had in mind were not solely political relations, but economic relations too, recalling that annual trade between the two countries, at the time of Yugoslavia, amounted to 80 million US dollars, while totalling only 10 million US dollars last year.

Dacic conveyed that President Aleksandar Vucic invited to Serbia his colleague from Ghana, and that an effort would be made to arrange their meeting during the 2018 session of the UN General Assembly.

The Serbian Minister further said that the decision had been made to reactivate Joint Committees for mutual cooperation, as their last meeting was held in 1998.

"Friendship needs to be cherished. We wish to assure our friends that we are a reliable partner, always guided by common interests", Dacic stated.

"It is not our intention to pressurize, and the main theme of our discussion is not Kosovo. The decision is theirs, although we would like them to re-examine the situation again, as it is far

different now, since a solution is being sought and dialogue is underway. We would appreciate it if the decision adopted by the previous administration were reconsidered", Dacic underscored.

Minister Botchway thanked the host for the warm welcome, underlining that Ghana wished to restore former relations with its friends. Botchway further stated that Ghana was interested in having good relations with Serbia, as it considered Serbia an ally, and that there were many areas for further cooperation, to the benefit of the people of the two countries.

"Ghana will definitely re-examine the previously adopted decision concerning the recognition of the unilateral declaration of Kosovo's independence", stated Minister Shirley Botchway.

"I know that the adopted decision was an obstacle to the development of our relations. But we are here", underlined the Foreign Minister of Ghana, recalling that the decision on the recognition of Kosovo's UDI was made by the former Government.

Ministers Dacic and Botchway signed today the Memorandum of Understanding concerning political consultations.