



Following are the remarks made by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic, at a reception held at the Embassy of Serbia in Abu Dhabi:

"Your Excellency,
Distinguished members of the diplomatic corps,
Dear compatriots,

I would like to thank you for being with us here today at the Embassy of the Republic of Serbia in the United Arab Emirates.

The relations between the Republic of Serbia and the United Arab Emirates date back to the times of the Non-Aligned Movement, co-founded by the SFRY. Owing to the efforts made by the Serbian and Emirati leaderships, Serbia and the Emirates today boast of excellent political and economic relations, which have recorded accelerated development in all areas. Previously, a large number of important bilateral agreements pertaining to numerous areas were signed. High-level and top-level visits are taking place on a regular basis, as well as the meetings of entrepreneurs. The number of Emirati tourists visiting Serbia is growing year by year, while in 2017 over 20,000 Serbian visitors travelled to the UAE.

The United Arab Emirates is Serbia's most important partner in the Gulf region, and we are committed to upgrading relations with this country to the level of strategic partnership. The importance that Serbia attaches to the Emirates is also illustrated by the fact that Serbia has been one of the first countries to confirm participation in the World Expo 2020, to take place in Dubai, which will be a good opportunity for our country to introduce its potential.

The first session of the Joint Committee on Serbia-UAE cooperation, to be held in Belgrade in mid-November, will certainly help to further solidify our cooperation.

The United Arab Emirates has also recognized Serbia as an important partner in the Balkans,

as reflected in the number of Emirati companies operating with success in Serbia. Among them there are some of the major companies with operations in Serbia, including Etihad, Eagle Hills, Al Dahra, Al Ravafed, which have an excellent performance record in Serbia.

On the other hand, not a negligible number of reputed Serbian companies are conducting successful business operations in the UAE, promoting Serbia in the best possible manner.

The United Arab Emirates are a home away from home for over 6,000 Serbian nationals, which makes them the most populous Serbian community in the Middle East region. They have recognized the UAE as an ideal place to fulfil their professional goals, and many of them hold senior-level positions in their companies. It is particularly heartening to see that they are thus helping to boost Serbia's reputation in the Emirates.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the United Arab Emirates for the financial and logistical support that this country has given to the Embassy of the Republic of Serbia in Abu Dhabi.

And last but not least, I would like to wish Ambassador Vukicevic every success in the discharge of his responsible duties, confident that he will both energize and encourage further development of the overall bilateral relations between our two countries, in his capacity as the first Ambassador of Serbia to the Emirates and Head of the Mission using new premises.

Thank you for your attention."