



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ivica Dacic has received today the NATO Chief of Staff of the Allied Joint Force Command Naples and Head of European Union Command Element, Lieutenant General Luciano Portolano.

The two collocutors expressed satisfaction at the intensified top level political dialogue between Serbia and NATO as well as at the successful military and civil cooperation on the ground, in many areas, which is being translated into action within the PfP programme, with full respect for the policy of military neutrality of Serbia by the Alliance and NATO member states. The two sides discussed opportunities for further promotion and deepening of all forms of partner cooperation, as Serbia and NATO were firmly linked by the common interest of preserving peace and stability in the region.

Minister Dacic underlined the participation of Serbia in numerous international missions and operations under the EU and UN mandate, as well as the readiness for cooperation and coordination with the Alliance in combating terrorism, emergency response in case of natural disasters, and in facing current security challenges.

The two sides assessed as positive the cooperation between the Serbian Armed Forces and KFOR on the ground, aimed at full implementation of UNSC Resolution 1244 and the Military-Technical Agreement.

Minister Dacic emphasized that un-reduced presence of KFOR was very important for the security and preservation of cultural and religious heritage of Serbs in the Province. He highlighted, in particular, importance of NATO guaranteeing that "Kosovo Security Forces" and other Albanian heavily armed formations could not be active in northern Kosovo and Metohija without the approval of NATO, i.e. KFOR Commander and Serb representatives in the north of Kosovo and Metohija.

Minister Dacic pointed out that starting from the fact that past could not be changed, including the 1999 events, but that the future could be influenced, it was important that, in view of the common interest to preserve peace and stability in the region, Serbia and NATO deepened cooperation so that the positive agenda be further developed in the mutual interest.

Lt Gen Portolano underlined that Serbia was one of the best partners to the Alliance, the key factor of regional stability and that NATO invested special efforts to further improve the quality

and quantity of common activities realized with a view to strengthening security and stability in the region.

He highlighted that KFOR clearly opted for the continuation of the mandate it was entrusted with by the UNSC.