

SERBIA - QATAR**SERBIAN, QATARI FOREIGN MINISTERS: COOPERATION HAS JUST BEGUN**

BELGRADE, 30 January 2017 (Beta) - The Serbian and Qatari foreign ministers, Ivica Dacic and Mohammad bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani, agreed on Jan. 30 that relations between the two states were just beginning to develop, recognizing great potential for cooperation and investments. Following a visit by Serbian President Tomislav Nikolic to Doha, last November, the foreign ministers heralded new high-ranking visits, including a visit to Belgrade by Qatar's emir or prime minister, wch will take place by the end of the year. The Serbian foreign minister said that Qatar's state and private investments in Serbia would be discussed in the coming period, particularly those in agriculture, the IT sector, health care, energy and military industry. Serbia also wants to relax the existing visa regime between the two states, Minister Dacic added, recalling that in 2015 Serbia abolished visas for Qatari ciizens, but that it understood that for internal reasons and the strong inflow of foreigners, the country had maintained a visa system. The two ministers signed a memorandum of understanding on political consultations about matters of mutual interest, which, as Dacic put it, would contribute to political relations and a better coordination between the two states, especially in international organizations. The Qatari foreign minister, the first to visit Serbia, said that the memorandum should serve as a platform for the exchange of opinions on different matters in both regions, support in international organizations and as a mechanism to monitor joint projects.

NIKOLIC ENCOURAGES QATAR'S COMPANIES TO TAKE PART IN PRIVATIZATION OF SERBIAN SPA RESORTS

BELGRADE, 30 January 2017 (Beta) - At a Jan. 30 meeting with Quatar's Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, Serbian President Tomislav Nikolic encouraged Qatari companies to participate in the privatization of Serbia's spa resorts. The Press Office of the Serbian President reported that the Serbian president and the Qatari foreign ministers discussed the development of cooperation, and Qatar's investment in Serbia. The foreign minister said that his country was interested in cooperation in many fields, including the arms industry and high technology, with an emphasis on the production of modern satellites. The minister was quoted as saying that opportunities for Serbian-Qatari cooperation were "very good, because several bilateral agreements provide for a solid foundation," adding that Qatar was offering very good business terms to Serbian companies. Qatar's foreign minister also said that his country "firmly supports Serbia's determination and steps it has taken to preserve stability in the region, and to establish a constructive dialogue" with the authorities in Pristina. President Nikolic said he hoped Serbia would use the visit by the Qatari foreign minister in the best way, to present all the advantages of investing in the national economy. Nikolic added that Qatar's investment in Serbian tourism would be very profitable, and that a decision by Qatari companies to take part in the privatization of Serbian spa resorts would be "an ideal way" to start cooperation, the president was quoted as saying in a press release from his office.

VUCIC: SERBIA HAS A LOT TO OFFER QATAR'S INVESTORS

BELGRADE, 30 January 2017 (Beta) - At a Jan. 30 meeting with Qatar's Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani, Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic said that Serbia had a lot to offer the country's investors. The Serbian PM underlined that Serbia's economy was in much better shape than before, while Serbia was committed to maintaining regional stability, the Serbian government press office released. The two ministers also agreed that there is a mutual interest in establishing partnership, and developing cooperation, expecting economic ties to be strengthened based on foreign trade and Qatar's investment in Serbia. A new visit has been planned by the Qatari Investment Fund, as well as new ties between Serbia and Qatar's chambers of commerce. The Serbian prime minister said he hoped for confidence building based on the exchange of visits by high-ranking state officials, and that more tourists would also contribute to stronger ties between the two nations, the cabinet went on to say in a press release. During his visit to Belgrade, on Jan. 30, the Qatari foreign minister also met with Serbian President Tomislav Nikolic, Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic and the Serbian speaker, Maja Gojkovic.

SERBIA

SERBIAN OFFICIALS SEND CONDOLENCES AFTER TERRORIST ATTACK IN CANADA

BELGRADE, 30 January 2017 (Beta) - In a Jan. 30 letter of condolence to his Canadian counterpart, Justin Trudeau, Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic expressed his deepest sympathy following the terrorist attack on a mosque in Quebec, in which six people were killed. Vucic said that Serbia was shaken by the attack. "This is yet more proof that terrorism knows no boundaries in spreading violence and fear, but it can only bring us closer, determined to defend the human and civilisational values we share. On behalf of the Serbian Government, and my own, I express my deepest condolences to the families and friends of the victims, to you and the Government of Canada, and wish the injured a successful recovery," Vucic wrote to Trudeau. In a letter of condolence to Governor General of Canada David Johnston, Serbian President Tomislav Nikolic said that Serbia had strongly condemned "the horrendous act," and wished the people injured in the attack a speedy recovery, the press office of the Serbian president reported. The Serbian speaker, Maja Gojkovic, sent a letter expressing sympathy to Speaker of the House of Commons Geoff Regan, and Speaker of the Senate of Canada George Furey. The terrorist attack during prayers at the Grand Mosque killed six and injured eight people, the police reported in the night between Jan. 29 and Jan. 30.

LJAJIC: SAUDI ARABIA VERY LIKELY TO FUND SERBIAN-BOSNIAN JOINT PROJECT

RIYADH, 30 January 2017 (Beta) - Chances are that Saudi Arabia will finance an infrastructure project to be run jointly by Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbian Minister of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications Rasim Ljajic said in Riyadh, on Jan. 30, after a meeting with Saudi Arabia King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. "The meeting with King Salman of Saudi Arabia was the pinnacle of the visit. We discussed opportunities for Saudi Arabia to finance a joint Serbian-Bosnian project. It is up to us to select the right project, and apply to the Saudi Development Fund, with very good chances of winning funding for the project," Ljajic said. Together with Ljajic, Bosnian Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations Mirko Sarovic attended the meeting with the king. Ljajic added that Serbia's goal was to increase the number

of Saudi investors in Serbia, and that a business forum was held on Jan. 30 for that purpose, bringing together more than 30 companies from the three states. "We also want to attract more tourists from Saudi Arabia, and in Riyadh we shall quickly organize a large meeting with major tourist agencies and operators," said Minister Ljajic, who, together with Sarovic, headed a Bosnian-Serbian state and business delegation, visiting Saudi Arabia on Jan. 29 and Jan. 30.

SERBIA, TURKEY OUTLINE COUNTER - TERRORISM COOPERATION PLAN

BELGRADE, 30 January 2017 (Beta) - Serbia's interior minister Nebojsa Stefanovic and Undersecretary of the Turkish Ministry of the Interior Muhterem Ince agreed in Belgrade, on Jan. 30, to draft a plan for cooperation in combating terrorism and organized crime, having decided there is room for improvement in those areas. The two interior ministers discussed the migrant crisis, too, suggesting that it was necessary to identify a comprehensive solution for illegal migration, the Serbian Ministry of the Interior reported. Stefanovic and Ince also discussed opportunities for cooperation between the two national police academies, and in organizing police training programs.

SERBIAN, BOSNIAN JUSTICE MINISTERS DISCUSS JOINT PROJECTS

BELGRADE, 30 January 2017 (Beta) - Serbian Minister of Justice Nela Kuburovic met in Belgrade, on Jan. 30, with her Bosnian counterpart, Josip Grubes, to discuss cooperation and projects to be run jointly by the two ministries. Kuburovic and Grubesa agreed that judicial cooperation between Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina had been good, referring more specifically to intense international legal aid contacts, the Serbian ministry said in a press release. Minister Grubesa said that Bosnia and Herzegovina was running judicial and public administration reforms, and that it had started pre-accession talks with the European Union (EU). The Bosnian justice minister underlined that Serbia's support in the EU integration process would be very important for Bosnia, "bearing in mind that Serbia has already opened Chapter 23 on the judiciary, and is a couple of steps ahead of Bosnia in the process." Minister Grubesa was interested in the operation of a training center for the employees of the Administration for the Execution of Criminal Sanctions, wishing to exchange experience in that domain, said the Serbian justice ministry.

CADEZ: SAUDI INVESTORS TO VISIT SERBIA IN APRIL OR MAY

RIYADH, 30 January 2017 (Beta) - A delegation of investors from Saudi Arabia will visit Serbia in April or May, to learn about the possibilities to do business deals, Serbian Chamber of Commerce President Marko Cadez said on Jan. 10. At a business forum of Saudi Arabia, Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina (B-H) i Riyadh, Cadez presented the potential for cooperation between Serbian and Saudi companies in several sectors, according to a news release from the Serbian Chamber. "We presented the possibilities for Saudi companies to invest in Serbia and also to find a good partner and receive quality products and services in various fields, from the construction industry, agriculture to the IT sector and tourism," Cadez said. He also said that an agreement on cooperation between Serbian and Saudi IT firms was confirmed in Riyadh and that the Serbian Chamber of Commerce and the Council of Saudi Chambers of Commerce and Industry had signed a memorandum of understanding to improve and expand economic

cooperation. The forum participants were also informed about the specifics of the Saudi market and the government's development plan titled "Vision 2030." It was also agreed to organize a new trilateral forum as the most frequent format of Saudi cooperation with other markets.