

SERBIA

DACIC: BELGRADE-PODGORICA RELATIONSHIP WOULD BENEFIT FROM SERBS JOINING GOVERNMENT

BELGRADE, 8 January 2019 (Beta) - Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic said on Jan. 8 that it would be good for relations between Podgorica and Belgrade if Serbs joined the ruling coalition in Montenegro. Minister Dacic said in an interview for Podgorica's Vijesti paper that Serbia "wishes to have a good relationship with Montenegro, the many differences aside." "I still believe that for bilateral relations, as well as the internal stability of Montenegro, it would be good if the Serbs were part of the ruling coalition. It would help overcome many problems," Dacic said. Describing Montenegrin-Serbian relations as "stable," Dacic said it was important to have a dialogue. "We share the same goals - the European Union and regional stability. Economic cooperation, growth, the development of infrastructure projects and cooperation in the energy sector have been satisfactory. It goes without saying that we are equally cooperative in the EU integration processes and cross-border operations," Dacic said. Dacic pointed to differences in the views of Podgorica and Belgrade, explaining that they largely referred to the position of Serbs in Montenegro, and the status of the Serbian Orthodox Church. "We differ insofar as we believe that Serbs are a constituent people in Montenegro, not a minority. Serbia also believes that the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro is an important part of its history and culture, and should be treated as such. I personally believe that most people in Montenegro feel the same way. As you know, a decision on which language the citizens of Montenegro will use is their own, but I can see we needed no translation for this interview," Dacic said.

MIHAJLOVIC SIGNS AGREEMENT WITH DEPARTMENT FOR PREVENTING MONEY LAUNDERING

BELGRADE, 8 January 2019 (Beta) - Serbian Minister of Construction, Transportation and Infrastructure Zorana Mihajlovic signed on Jan. 8 an agreement on cooperation with the acting director of the Department for Preventing Money Laundering, Zeljko Radovanovic. Mihajlovic said that the agreement had been signed based on a Serbian government document titled Assessing the Risk of Money Laundering and Assessing the Risk of Financing Terrorism, in which the sector of construction is identified as a potentially risky area in terms of money laundering. The Ministry of Construction, Transportation and Infrastructure said that by signing the agreement Serbia had become the only country in the region to institutionally regulate the area of construction, which would systematically solve the question of "dirty money" in the sector. The Ministry, Zoran Mihajlovic said, had in past cases of illegal construction notified the authorities and forwarded information and charges to both the Department for Preventing Money Laundering and the prosecutor's office. "We have seen that this kind of agreement is essential as a mechanism through which the Ministry of Construction will regularly notify the Department on possible suspicions in performing jobs in its purview, such as issuing construction permits, legalizing facilities or supervision by inspectors, while we will additionally train employees to recognize these cases," she said.

FIAT, SMEDEREVO STEELWORKS SERBIA'S LARGEST EXPORTERS

BELGRADE, 8 January 2019 (Beta) - Serbia's 15 largest exporters reported exports worth a total of EUR4.1 billion in the first 11 months of 2018, with the Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) Serbia, having reported EUR699.7 million in exports, and the HBIS Group, the owner of the Zelezara Smederevo steel mill, whose exports reached EUR695.3 million last year, topping the list, the Serbian Ministry of Finance reported. The Petroleum Industry of Serbia (NIS) came in third, having exported EUR436.5 worth of oil products, and was followed by Pirot-based Tigar Tyres, whose exports were valued at EUR365.8 million. Also on the list of top 15 are Robert Bosch (EUR227 million), Petrohemija (EUR199.8 million), Belgrade's TetraPak (EUR191.1 million), Grundfos of Indjija (EUR187.5 million), Yura Corporation based in Raca (EUR167 million), and RTB Bor copper mines (EUR165.7 million). The last group on the list includes Hemofarm of Vrsac (EUR161.5 million), Leoni, Prokuplje (EUR155.2 million), Henkel (EUR152.3 million), Gorenje (139.7 million) and Victoria Group (EUR119.8 million).