

9TH SUMMIT OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION (BSEC)

MINISTERS READY TO STRENGTHEN COOPERATION

ISTANBUL, November 23 (Tanjug) - At the 9th summit of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), which was held in Istanbul, ministers of internal affairs voiced readiness to strengthen cooperation in terms of the fight against cross-border organized crime. The summit was attended by interior ministers of Turkey, Serbia, Russia, Azerbaijan, Albania and Croatia. "Strong interstate cooperation is important, because we are facing both local and international organized crime," Prime Minister and Interior Minister Ivica Dacic told a joint press conference held after the meeting. Dacic said that in the past the Balkans were the scene of various conflicts and that the region is a transit route for those involved in organized crime. This is why cooperation between regional countries is even more important, said Dacic, adding that Serbia will continue to cooperate with everyone in the region in order to resolve these issues. The Serbian interior minister said that Turkey plays an important role in establishing permanent peace and stability in the Balkans, Turkish news agency Anadolu reported. All participants of the summit agreed that it is not possible to fight cross-border organized crime without joint efforts.

DACIC MEETS WITH ERDOGAN

ISTANBUL, November 23 (Tanjug) - Prime Minister Ivica Dacic met with his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan Redzepe in Istanbul. The meeting was held behind closed doors, according to the Anadolu news agency. The Serbian prime minister had a meeting with Turkish President Abdullah Gul on Thursday, and the two officials agreed that the stability of the region was very important to the Serbian-Turkish relations and the development of partnerships between the two countries.

DACIC: BOSNIAKS ARE BRIDGE TO COOPERATION WITH TURKEY

ISTANBUL, November 23 (Tanjug) - The Bosniaks and Muslims living in Serbia are a bridge that helps cooperation with Turkey and in achieving common interest in the region, Serbia's Prime Minister Ivica Dacic said after a meeting with Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. "Turkey sees Serbia as a key player and key country in the region and accordingly believes our cooperation has to be the closest possible, with, of course, mutual respect for each others legitimate interests," Dacic stated. He noted he had discussed with Erdogan and other Turkish officials a series of issues and agreed on regular annual meetings between government officials of the two countries. The USD 400 million trade between the two countries should reach USD 1 billion in the coming years, the two sides agreed, according to Dacic. The Serbian officials said he and Erdogan had discussed Turkey's initiative to take part in constructing roads in Serbia, especially in areas where it would affect political stability, like Raska, in southwestern Serbia, where Bosniaks are the majority population.

DACIC: SERBIA FACES PROBLEM OF ILLEGAL MIGRATION

ISTANBUL, November 23 (Tanjug) - Prime Minister Ivica Dacic said at a meeting of the interior

ministers of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) member states in Istanbul that Serbia was facing a number of pressures, such as the threats of illegal migration, a problem that created a number of others, such as right of asylum abuses. When it comes to the issue of illegal migration, Serbia is primarily a transit country, while the countries of the European Union are the targets, Dacic said during the BSEC 2012 summit, adding that this problem spills over into a series of other problems, such as the abuse of the right of asylum and the use of the human trafficking routes for smuggling weapons and, potentially, terrorists. According to a Serbian Interior Ministry release, Dacic said that contacts established between officials and experts at BSEC conferences and working groups had significantly contributed to promoting the cooperation among the member states, and especially to the promotion of multiculturalism and joint activities that should benefit all equally. It is impossible to achieve results in the fight against cross-border crime without cooperation between states, he said. Dacic said that Serbia had long recognized the need for associating with its neighbors and other countries in the region in combating organized crime, especially the cross-border crime.

DACIC INVITES KOLOKOLTSEV TO SERBIA

ISTANBUL, November 23 (Tanjug) - Prime Minister Ivica Dacic has invited Russia's Interior Minister Vladimir Kolokoltsev to visit Serbia. Dacic met with Kolokoltsev during a meeting of the interior ministers' summit of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation organization. Serbia's Interior Ministry has a cooperation agreement with Russia's Interior Ministry and Ministry for Emergencies, as well as a cooperation agreement on battling narcotics trafficking, he said. Dacic stated he had also met in Istanbul with ministers from other BSEC countries, who had adopted a declaration calling for activities against international crime. Interior ministers from Turkey, Serbia, Russia, Croatia, Albania and Azerbaijan attended the event.

SERBIA

NIKOLIC PROUD OF AGREEMENT WITH HUNGARY, NO BORDER VOJVODINA-SERBIA

NOVI SAD, November 24 (Tanjug) - No one can threaten Vojvodina's constitutional autonomy, just like no one can violate Serbia's Constitution hiding behind the story of simply implementing Vojvodina's autonomy, Serbian President Tomislav Nikolic said on Saturday at the ceremony marking the 94th anniversary of Vojvodina's accession into Serbia. "There is no border between Vojvodina and the rest of Serbia, because that stands in the Constitution and is the will of the people," he stressed. Nikolic called on all those drawing borders between Serbia and the province to lose their pencil so they would stop causing dissent among the people. He stressed that he doubted the good intentions of those who spread dissent in Vojvodina, because they wish to bring back the years before the conflict. The Serb who turns Serbs against each other cannot live well, even as a friend, with other national minorities who are honest citizens of Vojvodina, he stated. "Those who sow dissent do not mean well to the people of Vojvodina and Serbia is not in their interest, but they should not think too much of themselves, because they are not interesting to Serbia either," Nikolic noted. "It is just what we need - dissent in Vojvodina, as though we have no other problems. Those who object to the 1918 decision that incorporated Vojvodina into Serbia probably also object that we have finally, after 70 years, agreed with our friendly neighbour Hungary to put history and World War Two behind us," he said, stressing he

was proud of the agreement. "Let Vojvodina go forward and take all of Serbia with it," he remarked. Nikolic pointed out Vojvodina's history and the Serbs position in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and after its fall, when the centuries-old dream of Serb unification was fulfilled and said that human sacrifices were woven into Vojvodina's history. "Today, we proudly remember Vojvodina's history and celebrate its continuation," Nikolic said. The fact that the ceremony was organized jointly shows that "we can be united in hard times," Nikolic underlined. President of Vojvodina's Executive Council Bojan Pajtic said the idea of Vojvodina in Serbia was not an idea of a country within a country. He addressed the Assembly of Vojvodina for the 94th anniversary of Banat, Backa and Baranja's accession into Serbia and said that Serbia's attitude towards Vojvodina was the same as towards itself. "The decision on the accession was far-reaching and very important, because otherwise we would not be here today," Pajtic stated, stressing there had been no dispute about national unification and the decision was unanimous. He listed some important figures from Vojvodina's history and said they were all able to set apart the important for the unimportant, that Serbia should have learned to recognize the future from them and not to collect political points through divisions. "Vojvodina's autonomy is not based on the 1848 duchy nor on the great national assembly of 1918, but on the future," he noted, underscoring that the integrity of the country should be protected but that also steps should be made to move Serbia closer to the world surrounding it, meaning Europe without borders. President of the Vojvodina Assembly Istvan Pastor said, commenting on the anniversary of Vojvodina's accession into Serbia, that he and the Hungarian national minority he belonged to did not celebrate, but marked that anniversary, stressing that Serbia had fostered its statehood in the past decades, while Vojvodina fostered its autonomy. Opening the session marking the 94th anniversary of the accession, Pastor stressed that Vojvodina's issue was not an issue of national constitutive rights, but of regional constitutive rights, adding that Vojvodina's autonomy had to be precisely defined in Serbia's Constitutions. He welcomed Serbian President Tomislav Nikolic, members of the Vojvodina parliament and guests to the session and said that the day of Vojvodina's accession is marked by some and definitely celebrated by others. "Members of my community and I personally, and perhaps some more of our fellow citizens" whose ancestors were on the losing side at the end of World War One, "we merely mark this date," he said. It is not simply because a half of Vojvodina's population, Hungarians, Germans and others, were excluded from making the decision about the accession, but also because the event was the introduction to the process completed with the Treaty of Trianon, which has been defined as a black day in Hungary's history, he explained. The decision from 94 years ago is accepted as reality, and the reality was that members of the Hungarian and other national communities had not moved from the area and yet still came together in the new country, he stated. "Vojvodina bears a wealth of memory, awareness of its unique centuries-long experience of life together and awareness of the historical political and economic necessity for a joint fate of the members of all the national communities living in Vojvodina, he pointed out. Pastor said he was convinced "the interests we share are stronger than the forces driving us apart."

STANKOVIC: SITUATION IN SOUTHERN SERBIA IS STABLE

BELGRADE, November 23 (Tanjug) - President of the Serbian government's Coordination Body for the Municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja Zoran Stankovic said that the situation in southern Serbia is stable. He stressed that Serbia's laws are the same for all and

had to be respected, as that was the only way that confidence in the institutions and respect for the rule of law could be restored. Stankovic spoke about the current events in the southern Serbian municipalities at a meeting he had with the Ambassadors of the United States and the United Kingdom to Serbia, Michael Kirby and Michael Davenport, respectively, Head of the EU Delegation to Serbia Vincent Degert and Acting Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia Paula Thiede. It was concluded at the meeting that the situation was stable but still called for responsible behavior of all, the Coordination Body said in a release Friday. Summing up the results achieved in the country's southern region over the past few years, Stankovic pointed to the Faculty of Economics building built in Bujanovac, a total of 231 scholarships awarded to high-school students, the start of work of a Serbian language school with a total of 305 students and to the RSD 40 million worth of subsidies for small and medium enterprises in Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja. As part of the regular activities of the Coordination Body for southern Serbia, Stankovic met with President of the Bujanovac municipality Nagip Arifi last week, while this week, he met with Ragmi Mustafa, president of the Presevo municipality, where the majority of the population is made up of ethnic Albanians.

FRENCH EMBASSY OFFICE FOR BATTLING CRIME

BELGRADE, November 23 (Tanjug) - The French embassy presented in Belgrade its regional office for battling organized crime in Southeastern Europe. French Ambassador Francois-Xavier Deniau said presenting the office that the battle against organized crime was a priority for the countries striving to join the EU, adding that the office would help cooperation between the region's countries and their EU integration. The office that has recently been moved to Belgrade was located in Zagreb since 2004, he noted. Serbia's Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic could not attend the presentation because of a visit to Norway, but he sent a letter whose excerpt was read by Deniau. Vucic stated he was convinced the strategic and logistical reasons for opening the office in Belgrade were well based and that its presence would help Serbia's and region's efforts in combating organized crime and corruption. Cyril Bomgartner, the diplomat at the head of the office, said certain criminal phenomena in the region affected France and other European countries too. Three quarters of the cases of human trafficking and a third of the cases of arms trafficking in France are related to the Western Balkans, and 90 percent of the heroin consumed in Europe and 90 percent of illegal immigrants in Western Europe go through Turkey and the Balkans, the embassy said. Bomgartner told Tanjug he was pleased with the cooperation with the Serbian police, courts and customs. The cooperation with Serbia is probably the largest and contacts between French and Serbian experts are daily, extremely open and often friendly, which is the best way to have a successful cooperation, he pointed out.

SERBIA – EU

NIKOLIC: SERBIA READY TO BE EU MEMBER

BELGRADE, November 26 (Tanjug) - Serbia is a well-regulated country at least as a half of the new EU member states, and ready to be in the EU, Serbian President Tomislav Nikolic has said. "The fact that we have not started the talks is sign that we are yet to be presented with a new condition. I think that it is high time we entered the talks or be said in how many years we can expect that," Nikolic said in an interview for Monday's edition of the Belgrade-based daily

Kurir. When asked what kind of condition he expects, and whether it would be unacceptable and Kosovo-related, the Serbian president answered positively. When it comes to the talks with Pristina, Nikolic said that "it would be profitable if Kosovo stayed completely within Serbia, and he were the president in Pristina". "Kosovo is what Serbia can agree to, and not what was declared by the U.S. and some other members of the UN. Kosovo can never be seized away from Serbia," Nikolic underlined. When it comes to relations in the region, the president said that he used to have big plans to settle things and establish good relations with Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. "The things with Croatia are not going well. All until this acquittal (of Croat generals Ante Gotovina and Mladen Markac in The Hague), the Croatian president searched for reasons why not to reconcile. All stories about his being angry because I said something about Vukovar are false. He waited for this verdict. He would like to confer with me now - me as the president of the people that committed crimes, and he as the president of the people that has not been convicted of anything," Nikolic said. The president said that it is cynical that General Gotovina has called on Serbs to return. "What does he want - to have them gathered, and then expel them one more time, and kill them to finish the job?," Nikolic posed a question. "When indictment was issued against Ratko Mladic in the Srebrenica case, we did not even wait for the guilty verdict, the parliament immediately passed the Resolution condemning the Srebrenica crime. Our government arrested Mladic and extradited him to the ICTY. I know this was a crime, and I will never say that it has not been. Croats know that the crime committed in Operation Storm was appalling, and that will be on their conscience until they are alive, but now they are celebrating that no one was punished for that. That is a nation on the wrong path, the people that would maybe execute its individuals who say - stop people, that was a crime," the Serbian president said. We have to search for a way to cooperate with Croatia in economic and other areas of joint interest, he said. "However, it is obvious that you cannot cooperate in a sincere, open and hearty way with a country that celebrates its crime," Nikolic said.

PRESIDENT'S ADVISER: EU SEEMS TO NOT WANT SERBIA

BELGRADE, November 25 (Tanjug) - Serbian president's adviser Oliver Antic has said that the EU's actions so far lead to the conclusion that it does not want Serbia as a part of it. "In essence a powerful EU member, and it is known which one, has exerted a strong influence and embraced its loyal allies from World War Two, while others are rejected. The trouble is that our allies do not have the strength and awareness to see what is being done," Antic told the Vecernje Novosti daily. "Unlike the previous government, the current one is not fanatical about Europe," he stated. "This government knows there is more than one solution and one path, because if there were no alternatives, there would be no politics. The road and path can be changed in different circumstances. There are always a number of solutions and the one best for the people and the country should always be picked," Antic remarked. He thinks the ICTY acquittal of Croatian generals makes it clear there is no reconciliation in the region, and that Ramus Haradinaj's release could threaten the talks with Pristina. "Now even those who bowed down to the ICTY the most have realized it is merely a political instrument and not a court. It is time we showed unity within and strengthened as a country on the basis of all the mistakes and defeats," he said.

FIRST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER IN OSLO

BELGRADE, November 23 (Tanjug) - First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Aleksandar Vucic met with members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense of the Parliament of Norway and Norwegian Minister of Defense Anne Grete Strom Erichsen in Oslo. Chair of the Norwegian parliamentary committee Ine Marie Eriksen Soreide said that Norway and Serbia have traditionally good mutual relations and voiced belief that political and economic ties between the two countries will be raised to a higher level. Vucic called on the Norwegian government and private companies to invest in Serbia, adding that Norway is currently the biggest foreign investor in the Serbian economy, and that Serbia will improve its investment environment thanks to the new set of laws on public procurements, public enterprises and fierce fight against corruption. Vucic and Strom Erichsen discussed fostering military cooperation, the Serbian Ministry of Defense released in a statement. "Respecting its Constitution and parliamentary declaration, Serbia will not join NATO or any other military alliance, but it will continue with further modernization and professionalization of its armed forces and development of operational and functional capabilities of the Serbian Armed Forces through the Partnership for Peace program," Vucic said. The officials agreed to continue cooperation in the field of financing and human resources and to establish cooperation in terms of increasing energy efficiency in Serbia's defense system. Vucic also said that an emphasis was placed on bilateral relations and Serbia's progress in the process of EU integration. The deputy prime minister laid a wreath at the memorial to fallen Yugoslavs in the cemetery Vestre Gravlund. On Friday evening, Vucic will meet with Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide.

WESTERWELLE: NORMAL RELATIONS WITH PRISTINA KEY FOR EU ACCESSION

BERLIN, November 23 (Tanjug) - Germany's Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle said that a normalization of the relations between Belgrade and Pristina was necessary for their ultimate accession into the EU as a partner, with all the rights and obligations. Berlin supports in full the fast and ambitious efforts by EU High Representative for Foreign Policy Catherine Ashton towards normalizing those relations, he noted. Speaking at a conference of foreign ministers from Southeastern Europe, Westerwelle asked Belgrade and Pristina to continue their strong and constructive efforts in the negotiations. A political understanding between Belgrade and Pristina about key issues is necessary, including the unsolved situation in northern Kosovo and honest and direct implementation of past and future agreements, he stated. The German official said the EU remained committed to integrating the countries of the region, adding that enlargement was still the EU's strategic interest. Divisions in Europe will not be truly overcome until all the countries of the Western Balkans complete their path into the EU, he said, stressing the importance of upholding human rights and the rule of law and battling corruption and organized crime for the EU. It is up to each country to show resolve, courage and competence, he noted. There are no shortcuts to membership in the EU. The negotiations last until all the criteria for membership are met, he added.

SELAKOVIC: EC SATISFIED WITH REFORMS

BRUSSELS, November 23 (Tanjug) - Justice Minister Nikola Selakovic stated in Brussels on Friday after meeting with Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Fuele and Commissioner for Inter-Institutional Relations and Administration Maros Sefcovic that the European Commission

(EC) is satisfied with the results the Ministry achieved in the reform of the judiciary and customs administration. EC assessed that all the activities the Ministry of Justice and Public Administration carried out in the short period are exceptionally favourable, Selakovic said and added that he can proudly say EC is satisfied with the presented results. He underscored that the Ministry has a strategic access to the search for a solution to the problems which EC listed in the October annual report so that Serbia could win the date of the initiation of accession talks as soon as possible. At this point, the judiciary is in the focus of attention of both the EC and the local public, but the importance of public administration should not be forgotten, which was also the aim of the talks with Sefcovic, the minister said. He noted that he would travel to Strasbourg next year and Venice to present the results of reforms to the Council of Europe and Venice Commission. Selakovic said that the Commission fully backed the government's new approach in the fight against corruption which he qualified as one of the biggest plagues of the contemporary society. "This is why we need a better Criminal Procedure Code but it calls for an alliance between the government and citizens," he said and added that it is important to restore trust in government institutions. Selakovic announced that the draft law on protection of whistleblowers will be presented soon since it constitutes an important element in the fight against corruption. In a release, Commissioner Fuele underscored the importance of continuation of judiciary reform for the process of Serbia's European integration. Fuele said that he is encouraged by the results which the Ministry of Justice and Public Administration achieved since the previous meeting in October, and added that Serbia can count on the EC support. He noted that Serbia can count on EC support in fulfilment of imposed tasks in the time to come.

REYNDERS: NEW REQUIREMENTS SET FOR SERBIA

BELGRADE, November 23 (Tanjug) - Belgium's Foreign Minister Didier Reynders has told Vecernje Novosti he has the impression, ahead of the European Council meeting in December, that Serbia is being given new requirements, making everything uncertain. Commenting on whether Serbia could at least get in December a conditional start date for the accession talks, he said that since his arrival in the European Council in December last year, he got the impression that new requirements were set for Serbia compared to what had earlier been required. It surprised him a little, giving him the impression that things only possible once the process had started were asked for. That is why everything is uncertain now, he noted. Reynders stressed the importance of results in the talks between Belgrade and Pristina, which could lead Serbia to the next stage of EU integration. Some EU countries have asked that Serbia be given a positive opinion at the next European Council meeting in December, and Belgium has always had that view, wishing that Serbia and the entire Western Balkans could move closer to the EU, he said. The Balkans should be part of the EU, Reynders stated as his personal opinion. It is pretty incredible that 100 years after the start of World War One, Balkans is still not a part of the European process, he added.

DZURINDA: WITH GOOD WILL AND REFORMS TOWARD EU

BELGRADE, November 23 (Tanjug) - Adviser to the Serbian deputy prime minister for European integration Mikulas Dzurinda stated that with reforms and good will, Serbia can make some progress on its EU path. On Thursday, Dzurinda told Radio and Television of Serbia that he was overjoyed to hear that Serbian Prime Minister Ivica Dacic would meet with the prime

minister of the Kosovo administration, and added that this point is very important. When asked whether he believes that both Serbia and Kosovo could be members of the EU without Serbia recognising Kosovo, Dzurinda underscored that this can happen. He expressed the belief that no reasonable or responsible politician in the world would ask Serbia to recognise Kosovo and added that he does not think this is necessary. The only thing that needs to be done is to set up normal relations, Dzurinda noted. He said that helping Serbia make a better image in Europe is not difficult for him and that he sees this as a challenge. Dzurinda, who previously held office as Slovenian prime minister, said that it is his job to communicate his experience to Serbia and added that the business climate needs to be enhanced so as to be more receptive and attractive and thus create conditions for attracting foreigners and making business easier for Serbian entrepreneurs. "You need a better law on labour, tax system, better judiciary which would also be more transparent, better laws and less corruption," Dzurinda said and added that Slovakia got the title of a black hole in Europe in 1997 but it managed to become a member of the EU through enormous efforts and reforms in May 2004. He underscored that he believed in the potentials of the people of Slovakia, and added that he believes in the abilities of Serbs as well.

ACQUITTAL OF THE CROATIAN GENERALS

DACIC: VERDICT STRIKES BLOW TO RECONCILIATION

BELGRADE, November 25 (Tanjug) - Prime Minister Ivica Dacic said on Sunday the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia's (ICTY) acquittal of Croatian generals Ante Gotovina and Mladen Markac was a blow to reconciliation and "a great slap in the face and suicide by the ICTY." Dacic told reporters at the commemoration for the Serb victims of the wars in the 1990s that Operation Storm was one of the greatest crimes in Europe since World War Two. According to the prime minister, regardless of the way each nation from the former Yugoslavia views the events of the 1990s, the fact is there were 200,000 refugees, thousands killed and disputes regarding their property. "Former ICTY prosecutor Carla Del Ponte and ICTY Chief Prosecutor Serge Brammertz speak with a degree of non-acceptance for the verdict. What then is left for us to do," Dacic stated. "Regardless of that, Serbia should preserve the historical memory about what happened... the memory of all the victims that were forgotten for years, beginning with the World War Two genocide and onward," he noted. "That is why we from the government were at the commemoration," he remarked, thanking the Serbian Orthodox Church and all refugee associations. Dacic said he would support all activities that could help find a legal way to get a sentence, if it couldn't be done through the ICTY. "It does not matter how long the sentence should have been. If they had been sentenced to one day in prison, it would have been better than the release, because it is a disgrace," Dacic pointed out.

SPEAKER: RECONCILIATION WITH RESPECT FOR SERBS' RIGHTS

BELGRADE, November 25 (Tanjug) - Parliament Speaker Nebojsa Stefanovic said on Sunday Serbia wanted reconciliation, but that it would insist on respect for the rights of the Serb refugees from the former Yugoslavia. "We are here to seek justice for the people of Serbia and all those exiled. We want reconciliation and normal relations in the region, but how is it possible that no one has answered for crimes and that it causes no stir in the international community,"

Stefanovic stated after the Coalition of Refugee Associations presented him with the request to call a special meeting of the parliament to discuss the rights of refugees and internally displaced persons. Everything boils down to no one being guilty of burned houses, refugees, murdered women and children and no one answering for crimes against the Serbs, he stressed. Serb commanders have been sentenced to more than 1,200 years in prison for the wars in the former Yugoslavia, he underscored, asking how it was possible that no one had answered for crimes against the Serbs according to the same principle. Head of the coalition Miodrag Linta handed Stefanovic the request and a draft resolution on respect for the rights of the refugees, IDPs and others seeking compensation from the former Yugoslav republics. A protest walk was held in the centre of Belgrade earlier regarding the acquittal of Croatian generals Ante Gotovina and Mladen Markac. Stefanovic was at the front of the crowd. The protest with the slogan "We seek justice for the Serb victims as well" followed a commemoration for the Serb victims of the wars in the 1990s held by Serbian Orthodox Church Patriarch Irinej. Prime Minister Ivica Dacic, Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic, Stefanovic, ministers, parliament members and officials of government institutions attended the commemoration. Protesters carried banners that said "We ask for justice for all victims," and "God is with us, EU and NATO is with you."

JEREMIC: DEBATE ON ICTY UNDER UN AUSPICES

BELGRADE, November 24 (Tanjug) - President of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) Vuk Jeremic stated that the call for a 'themed debate' on the international criminal tribunals followed the 'shocking decision of the Appellate Chamber of the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY) which was adopted by a slim vote difference.' "One man's vote turned the injustice done to a quarter of a million people in the war upheaval into a legitimate act. I believe it would be wrong to allow a historical judgement on such tragic events to be made without previously performing a systemic debate in the spotlight of the global public," Jeremic said in an interview for the Belgrade-based daily Politika. He underscored that he believes it is in the interest of the entire international community to conduct open talks on the degree of efficiency of criminal tribunals as UN bodies in terms of their original purpose. "Having in mind the fact that these are wider public meetings, they tend to attract considerable attention during the annual UNGA session," he noted. Jeremic said that many people around the world were shocked by the ruling of the ICTY Appellate Chamber to acquit two Croatian generals (Ante Gotovina and Mladen Markac) who received long prison sentences in the first-degree trial on charges of banishment of 250,000 Serbs from Krajina and several hundred murders. "I spent the following weekend in the consultation with associates as to what my cabinet could do on this occasion. We studied the rules and procedures of the UN and reached a conclusion that the UNGA president can call a 'themed debate' concerning a problem of international importance," Jeremic said. He noted that the role of international ad hoc criminal tribunals in the reconciliation process certainly falls in this category and added that he decided to call the debate on the issue for April 2013. When asked why such an important meeting would be held as late as April when the event would most likely be overshadowed by other events on the international stage, Jeremic said that he wants the themed debate to be well-prepared.

CVIJAN: SERBIA NEEDS BETTER LOBBYISTS

BELGRADE, November 26 (Tanjug) - Vladimir Cvijan, chairman of the Serbian parliament's

committee on constitutional and legislative issues, said that the Hague Tribunal would not have delivered the verdict of acquittal for Croatian generals, had Serbia had better lobbyists abroad."I am sure that had we had better lobbyists, such a verdict would not have been passed in the Hague," Cvijan told reporters ahead of the opening of the Fifth European Legal and Policy Forum dedicated to lobbying as a measure of the fight against corruption. Cvijan said that the goal of the forum is to bring the term of lobbying closer to Serbia's citizens, and to see how much Serbia could gain in the future if it had better lobbyists abroad. He noted that the forum would also deal with how to make the lobbying process in Serbia as transparent as possible, and the final aim would be the adoption of a law on lobbying. "If we regulate lobbying in a better way, that would reduce corruption in Serbia, and that is totally in line with the policy of zero tolerance towards corruption that the Serbian government is pursuing," Cvijan noted. The forum is bringing together representatives of ministries, international organizations and associations of lobbyists from the country and region.

DORIS PACK: STORM WAS LEGITIMATE, ICTY WORKS WELL

NOVI SAD, November 25 (Tanjug) - German member of the European Parliament (EP) and rapporteur for Bosnia-Herzegovina Doris Pack said it would be good for the Serbian public to realize as soon as possible that Storm was a legitimate operation by the Croatian military, regardless of crimes having been committed during it. Croatia fought a just war to take back its territory seized by the Serbs, who occupied a third of the country and exiled all Croats from the area, Pack said, adding that Ante Gotovina's release meant he was not guilty of war crimes. The culprits of the crimes unfortunately committed during the war by the Croatian side are being tried and verdicts are made, she told the Dnevnik daily, adding that there were crimes against the Serbs during that war, but that the culprits were later convicted. The acquittal of the Croatian generals is a signal to all that the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) is working well and does not favour any sides, she noted, adding that Gotovina's release had helped Croatia close an unfortunate chapter in its history. Pack stated she saw no consequences of the verdict to Serbia's EU integration, because one had nothing to do with the other and Serbia had to clear the obstacles in its path by itself. A court verdict concerning a citizen of another country should not influence its EU integration policy, Pack stressed, adding that all nations were treated the same way by the ICTY. There are those the ICTY convicted and acquitted among all the nations of the former Yugoslavia, she remarked.

KOSOVO

DACIC: SERBIA WAS ROBBED OF KOSOVO

BELGRADE, November 25 (Tanjug) - Prime Minister Ivica Dacic said on Sunday that no one would return Kosovo to Serbia if it abandoned EU integration, adding that the current government had managed to get the country back to the negotiating table. According to Dacic, it would be wrong for Serbia to quit those talks. "It is certain that none of us are going to sell Kosovo and betray Serbia," he noted, adding that Serbia was not in a situation where it could hold on to Kosovo and refuse to give it up. "They robbed us of it. The issue here is how to save some of it," he stated. "We can say that we do not want to join the EU, but will someone then return Kosovo to us," he wondered. Dacic commented on Serbian Orthodox Patriarch Irinej's

statement that Serbia should not join the EU at any cost by saying that one should not presume the EU was going to demand that Serbia recognize Kosovo."So, I do not want anyone telling me what the national interest is," he pointed out. Dacic stated that he knew from experience how the people reacted, "how they reacted at the start of the bombing and how two months after that" and how everyone celebrated defeat with Slobodan Milosevic at the head as a supposed victory. He recalled 2000 as well, when everyone spoke about the national interest, but the fact the people did not want to wait in line any longer to get visas, cooking oil and petrol won out in the end. The relations with Russia are a priority and Russia is Serbia's biggest friend, but those relations have yet to be built and strengthened and Serbia still has to take advantage of the power the Russian president and prime minister have, said Dacic. However, when Serbia was going through its toughest moments, the Russian government at the time had no understanding for Serbia's troubles, he added.

PREFABRICATED BUILDINGS SET UP AT CROSSINGS

BELGRADE, November 23 (Tanjug) - Head of the Belgrade team for the talks with Pristina Dejan Pavicevic said preparations were under way to set up prefabricated buildings at administrative crossings between Kosovo and central Serbia. He told Tanjug the technical details of the implementation of the Integrated Border Management agreement were discussed in Brussels on Nov 21. According to Pavicevic, they discussed how many facilities would be needed, how to provide power, water and telecommunications. Procedure was also discussed, that is how to facilitate the flow of people, goods and vehicles, he noted, adding that 4 to 8 facilities would be placed on either side depending on the outcome. There are ongoing preparations to set up the buildings and everything will be done by December 10, when the implementation of the agreement should start, he said. He called on disgruntled Serbs from northern Kosovo who had threatened to set up roadblocks again because of the agreement's implementation to wait and see how the implementation would work. "Serbia is doing everything to facilitate their life in Kosovo, including crossing those checkpoints," he noted. When asked if Serbs from northern Kosovo would be included in the subsequent stages of the technical negotiations, Pavicevic responded that they had refused to take part because they felt the accepted solutions were not to their benefit. However they said they wanted their own representative in the political dialogue, he added.

UNSC TO HOLD SESSION ON SITUATION IN KOSOVO

NEW YORK, November 26 (Tanjug) - The UN Security Council will hold a session on November 27 at which it will discuss the regular quarterly report of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon on the situation in Kosovo-Metohija. As Tanjug learnt at the Serbian Foreign Ministry, Serbia's Foreign Minister Ivan Mrkic will hold a speech at the session. In the report presented to UNSC member countries and Serbian mission to the UN several days ago, Ban commended "constructive steps" in the continuation of the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue, and expressed the hope that it would gradually lead to a normalization in relations and setting up lasting peace in the region. In the report encompassing the period between July 16 and October 15, Ban noted that constructive steps implemented in terms of joint border management at administrative crossings and regional cooperation give ground for optimism, and added that these steps, these and other agreements reached during the previous meetings in the dialogue should be fully

implemented. The UN secretary general invited Belgrade and Pristina leaders and local governments to show restraint, patience and good will necessary for achieving a sustainable solution.

SERBIA – ECONOMY

DACIC WITH EIB VICE-PRESIDENT ON NEW PROJECTS

BELGRADE, November 26 (Tanjug) - The European Investment Bank (EIB) is interested in projects in the field of infrastructure, agriculture and energy in Serbia, it was said during a Monday meeting between the bank's delegation and Serbian Prime Minister Ivica Dacic. Dacic talked with EIB Vice-President Dario Scannapieco about the bank's engagement in Serbia, underscoring that realization of the projects should be sped up, so that the money could reach the real economic sector more quickly. Dacic informed the EIB vice-president about the Serbian government's efforts aimed at financial consolidation and economic revival, the Serbian government's media office announced.

TALKS ON SMEDEREVO STEEL MILL ONGOING

BELGRADE, November 23 (Tanjug) - State Secretary at the Finance Ministry Vljako Senic said that the negotiations on Smederevo steel mill with a Russian company are underway and that a Russian delegation is expected to arrive in the coming days in order to wrap up the process.

RUSSIA APPROVES USD 800 MILLION LOAN TO SERBIA

MOSCOW, November 23 (Tanjug) - Russia's government has agreed to grant Serbia a USD 800 million five-year credit line for infrastructure projects at an annual interest of 4.1 percent, Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov said. The government considered the question of granting the loan to Serbia today, Siluanov said. This loan, a sum of USD 800 million open for a period of five years, is intended for infrastructure projects - the construction of new railway lines, repairs, buying locomotives and more, he added at a press conference at the Russian parliament after the approval of the country's 2013 budget. Siluanov said that the credit line would be opened starting with the current year and the annual interest rate was 4.1 percent, the RIA Novosti news agency reported.

INTEREST ON RUSSIAN LOAN LESS THAN 6 PERCENT

BELGRADE, November 24 (Tanjug) - Minister of Natural Resources Milan Bacevic said in Belgrade the preliminary decision to take out another USD 1 billion loan from Russia had been made and that a formal confirmation from Moscow was expected. The loan should have an interest of less than 6 percent and a 7-year deadline for payment. The first tranche, USD 300 million, will be available by the end of the year, Bacevic told RTS commenting on the loan meant for Serbia's budget. Minister of Finance Mladjan Dinkic said in the parliament on Friday the sale of eurobonds secured USD 750 million and enough money in the budget until May 2013, adding that the Russian USD 1 billion loan would cover the entire 2013.