



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic is paying a visit to the Russian Federation.

The Serbian Foreign Minister met today the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov with whom he discussed bilateral cooperation, while exchanging views about the most important subjects relevant to the two countries and international cooperation.

"It is a great pleasure to be in Russia once again. Minister Lavrov and I have the tradition of meeting at least twice a year, alternately in Serbia and Russia. Therefore, I expect my fellow Minister Lavrov to visit Serbia by the end of the year

{youtube}BYxmR95DdQw{/youtube}

The immediate reason for the visit is the celebration of the 140th anniversary since the Legation of the Principality of Serbia was established in imperial Russia. On the occasion, Co-Chairman of the Serbia-Russia Intergovernmental Committee on Trade, Economic and Scientific-Technological Cooperation Yury Borisov and myself will inaugurate the exhibition.

This testifies to the continuity and the long tradition of our political relations, which have been very good to this day. Our relations are at a strategic level and we can only be pleased by the top-level meetings. President Putin's visit was of critical importance. The two Presidents are about to meet next time on 26 April 2019, during the Summit in China.

This meeting will precede the Berlin meeting scheduled for 29 April, to which both representatives of Belgrade and Pristina have been invited.

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It is important to be aware of the fact that Serbia and Russia will always work towards finding the best possible political solutions to the problems existing in our region.

I would like to thank the Russian Federation, President Putin and my colleague Lavrov for the great support offered in the defence of our territorial integrity and sovereignty.

It is impossible for Serbia to protect its national interest without the help of the Russian Federation. This has to do with the developments at the international stage. Serbia cannot protect its national interests without the help of its friends.

{youtube}0tbNrtI2APo{/youtube}

The fact that Russia is a permanent member of the UNSC is also very important. For us, this a stability factor and therefore a positive decision on Kosovo's UN membership cannot be passed, because it has to go through the Security Council.

What also matters is the help of the Russian Federation and other friends regarding membership of Kosovo in international organizations. When it comes to IOs, we strive to help each other and our relations in this regard are at a very high level.

As far as Interpol is concerned, we were very successful and we will maintain this cooperation having in mind that Kosovo has applied for membership of Interpol again.

This year's Interpol conference will take place in Chile and they will exert pressure and be angry with us once again for lobbying against further recognition of Kosovo, or for working on certain countries backtracking on their previous decision. Now their problem with us is that Serbia allegedly has such a major impact that it can prevent someone from becoming a member of a big international organization.

Thirteen countries have revoked the recognition of Kosovo and I hope that the process will continue.

{youtube}3ZkfJ3PQH5I{/youtube}

What matters is that we consult the Russian Federation in the protection of our interests and this is why the meeting between President Vucic and President Putin, to be held ahead of the meeting called by Chancellor Merkel, is very important.

We will not take any steps without consulting Russia. It is heartening that the Russian position is that they will support all that is in the interest of Serbia.

The volume of our foreign trade with Russia has increased. Last year it amounted to more than \$3 billion, and we want this upward trend to continue. The construction of the Turk Stream gas pipeline through Serbia has started – with the aim of having all works completed as soon as possible. The South Stream project has been prevented and the Nord Stream 2 has been given

all the permits needed by the EU. We faced pressures from the West and the question is why the gas coming from Russia to our region is any different from the gas that Russia sends to Germany.

To conclude, I am very pleased by such visits and they are just a factor encouraging further cooperation", Minister Dacic said at a press conference in Moscow.