



Statement by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic at the commemorative session of the Negotin municipal assembly on the occasion of Negotin Municipality Day:

"Ladies and gentlemen,
Representatives of the local government,
Dear people of Negotin,

It is my great honour and pleasure to be here with you today in Negotin at the kind invitation of your representatives, the more so as your municipality celebrates its Day today. I would, therefore, like to thank you most sincerely for the warm welcome and invitation you extended to me.

I am visiting today for another very special reason, too. As you know, I had the great honour today, as part of the Regional Housing Programme, and in cooperation with the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration and the local government, to deliver 20 sets of keys for flats to 20 families who had fled Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia during the conflicts of the 1990s, leaving their ancestral homes. In this connection, I want to thank once again the European Union as the biggest donor to this programme, Council of Europe Bank, the OSCE and UNHCR as active participants under this housing solutions programme. To the families who will as of today be able to live in new flats, I wish to move in and feel at home soon, and for their lives there to be peaceful and safe, as they look forward to a better future.

{youtube}akGfHZYptd8{/youtube}

Dear people of Negotin, I want you to know that I am always glad to revisit your region. The Negotin area as well as the city itself have - from the Stone Age to the times of the arrival of Illyrians, Thracians and Celts, the Roman reign over the Danube basin, and the vying for power over these fertile lands between the two empires - played the role of a bridge between East and West, so the abundant historical heritage you have accumulated in your area should come as a

surprise to no-one. It is likely that a person called Negota was aware of it too, who according to the legend, had settled with his wife and a flock of sheep in this area of forests and pastures, which ended up being named after him.

We should avail ourselves of this opportunity to, in addition to some general historical facts, recall some of the renowned personages who came from Negotin, such as Hajduk Veljko Petrovic, Stevan Stojanovic Mokranjac and Djordje Stanojevic. Each of them and their life and work have made this area famous throughout Serbia and the Balkans.

As a municipality at a tri-border point between Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria, situated in the lowlands bordered by Danube and Timok rivers, Negotin has had a special role both through history and today, as a home to various minority communities and ethnic groups and a place where most beautiful and diverse traditions and customs are fostered. I kindly appeal to you to protect and nurture this treasure trove of yours for the generations to come.

I wish your municipality all the success, well-being and prosperity. May you celebrate your day in happiness!

Thank you!"

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