



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic today participated in the Foreign Ministers' Meeting of the Berlin Process participants, held in Poznań , currently chaired by the Republic of Poland.

"I have participated in the meetings of the Berlin Process from the very beginning since the process was launched in 2014 and this is the sixth summit meeting.

As of late, a question lingers as to the purpose of these meetings. I spoke about it today at great length and some of my colleagues share my views. Especially at a time when some leading European leaders say that they have no intention whatsoever of addressing EU enlargement. If that is so, we really do not understand the purpose of these meetings.

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I extended this question to the region, noting that we need to be more responsible as a region. I asked Pacolli about the media reports – whether it was true that Serbian officials will be banned from entering Kosovo and Metohija. He said that his assistant or deputy said so but we do not doubt that such decision had been made.

A decision like this, the tariffs, decision on common Kosovo-Albanian diplomacy – all of it actually brings into question whether these meetings are meaningful since we live a different reality.

Serbia has been very constructive. I repeated our positions today - we are seeking that the entire region identifies and articulates common interests.

We are seeking that Serbia and Montenegro make faster progress along EU path since we are not content with the current pace; that negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia be opened; that Bosna and Herzegovina does what needs to be done to start EU accession negotiations; what is more, we are not at all opposed to visa liberalization for citizens from Kosovo and Metohija, but all of these issues do not depend on us from the Western Balkans. That is why we need encouraging messages from the EU instead of being treated as EU minor league which should replace the EU integration process.

North Macedonia and Bulgaria will assume Chairmanship of the Berlin Process. Do you really

think that North Macedonia will be satisfied just to chair the Berlin Process instead of opening accession negotiations?

Recognizing that we in the Balkans lack solidarity, that there is a lot of outstanding questions and that a lot needs to be done in the field of reforms, such messages are not well received in our region and we have to ask ourselves then about the purpose of all of this.

Nevertheless, we are still glad that this initiative exists but expect that over the next years it will produce some concrete measures.

As for our relations with Pristina, I emphasized that we seek a compromise and agreement but the tariffs have to go. It is impossible to speak of regional cooperation and have 100 % tariffs on goods from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, justifying this measure by the fact that we have not recognized Kosovo. Since there are other countries that did not recognize Kosovo why didn't they impose tariffs on them?

They say that they will lift tariffs once we recognize Kosovo. This is nothing but the obstruction of dialogue. We are ready to resume the dialogue and to resolve the problems as well.

Such situation creates serious problems to Serbs living in Kosovo and Metohija in their every-day life, functioning of institutions – health-care, trade, education, etc. Still, the most serious problem is additional instability threatening to undermine the security situation.

Once again we call upon the international community to bring pressure to bear on Pristina to remove the tariffs.

I am glad that the EU responded to the alleged decision that Serbian officials be banned from entering Kosovo but I do not expect that it will have any effect. This is not an offence to Serbia, but a slap in the face of EU and the international community. We signed the Brussels agreement and part of the agreement provides arrangements for visits of Serbian officials. In a situation when one side fails to deliver on what had been agreed, these deliberations are useless.

More or less, today I could say everything I said back in 2014 since not much has changed in the meantime, even though we are still making some progress towards the EU", Minister Dacic said after the meeting in Poznań.

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