



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic had talks in Belgrade today with the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, Miro Cerar.

After the meeting with his Slovenian counterpart, Minister Dacic noted that bilateral contacts between Serbia and Slovenia had intensified in recent years and that relations between the two countries were very good.

Head of Serbian Diplomacy said that Serbia remained on the European path, despite the fact that there were various obstacles when it comes to the EU's views on the speed and manner of negotiations, as well as the pace of the enlargement process.

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"On the other hand, Serbia must protect its national and state interests, which are primarily related to the protection of our territorial integrity and sovereignty concerning the issue of Kosovo. It must have a very balanced approach when it comes to key political players on the international political stage," Dacic said.

He said that common interests were being sought with Slovenia regarding those issues that were not agreed on, such as the Kosovo issue.

"We always put forward an argument that essentially requires an understanding of our position and of the need, our desire to reach a compromise," Dacic said.

He stressed that Serbia wanted to be a constructive factor in the region, a factor of stability, reconciliation and peace in the region.

Minister Dacic emphasized that it was very important that we had good economic cooperation with Slovenia, as well as that last year's foreign trade amounted to EUR 1.1 billion and that there was interest in further development of economic relations.

All issues such as cultural heritage, succession and the position of Serbs in Slovenia, Dacic added, were discussed in a friendly tone and with the desire to resolve problems that belonged to the legacy of our past.

Minister Cerar, who has been in Serbia for the first time since he took office, said that preparations were underway for a joint session of the two governments and that he believed that it would be held in a constructive spirit, primarily when it comes to economic cooperation which he stressed was excellent. He also announced that he would meet with Slovenian entrepreneurs in Serbia tonight.

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He underscored that Slovenia was more in favour of EU accession of the Western Balkans region than any other EU country.

"Here we see Serbia as a significant actor. We support any integration, cooperation, and we want this integration to be as wide and as inclusive as possible and to involve as many actors as possible", Cerar said, stressing that Slovenia would continue to support Serbia's EU accession.

"We have already included the issue of European integration of the Western Balkans among the key priorities of our EU Presidency," Cerar said.

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