



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic met today Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Dmitry Rogozin, who is on a visit to Belgrade to attend the Serbia-Russia Intergovernmental Committee on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation.

Following the session of the Intergovernmental Committee, Minister Dacic, Chairman of the Serbian part of the Intergovernmental Committee and Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Rogozin, Chairman of the Russian part of the Intergovernmental Committee, signed the Protocol from the 14th session of the Serbia- Russia Intergovernmental Committee on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation.

Serbian Minister of Agriculture Snezana Bogosavljevic-Boskovic, on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment of the Republic of Serbia, and Head of the Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance Sergey Dankvert, on behalf of the Russian Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance, signed the Protocol on the fulfilment of the phytosanitary requirements concerning mutual delivery of goods with high phytosanitary risk.

At a joint press conference following the meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee, Minister Dacic and Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin agreed that Serbia and Russia had to boost their economic cooperation, specifying that agriculture, civil engineering and energy carried the greatest potential in this respect.

Mr. Rogozin noted that the commercial exchange between the two countries was on the rise, and highlighted that the next meeting of the two countries' Intergovernmental Committee would be held in Russia, in October.

Minister Dacic stated that membership of the European Union was Serbia's main goal, but that Serbia did not ask Russia to defend it in military terms, while the aim of the military and technical cooperation with Russia was to create conditions for self-defence, if need be.

Mr. Rogozin said that Russia opposed the militarization of the Balkans and that it did not wish

the 1990s ever to recur in the Balkan region.

The Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation confirmed that Russia received a list from the Serbian Ministry of Defence containing the needs of the Serbian Armed Forces, stressing that the document would be thoroughly examined by the Russian side. Mr. Rogozin added that the specificities were to be discussed by the top-level Military and Technical Committee to be created by Serbia and Russia by the end of February.

"Russia is not trying to coax Serbia into buying some expensive armament", Mr. Rogozin underlined, assessing that Serbia did not need offensive weapons, and that any procurement of defence arms was fully legitimate, and would be carried out in line with economic possibilities, should Belgrade ask for it.