



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic stated that he agreed with the position of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Macedonia that friendship between Serbia and Macedonia should not be broken.

"Should I remind colleagues in Skopje of how much Serbia has invested (in this friendship) over all these years by recognizing Macedonia under its constitutional name, putting at risk its own relations with the Hellenic Republic, despite the fact that Macedonia is referred to as FYRM both by the UN and the EU. This was, nevertheless, followed by Macedonia's recognition of the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo.

Colleagues in Skopje are well aware of the contribution I made to the development of the friendly relations, both as Minister of Interior and Prime Minister, and currently as Minister of Foreign Affairs. They also know that Serbia is one of the very few countries which recently did not interfere in the internal affairs of Macedonia.

Colleagues in Skopje also know that we had personal talks with Gruevski and Poposki, as well as President Ivanov, regarding the voting on admission of Kosovo to UNESCO, which we consider to be our vital state and national interest. Macedonia, eventually, voted against the Serbian position, that is, in favour of Kosovo's admission, thus enabling those who torched and devastated Serbian Orthodox churches and monasteries in Kosovo, to become their caretakers.

Distinguished Skopje colleagues should have to know that this ruins our friendship. It also sends a clear message that Albanian or whichever other interest, is more important to them than their friendship with Serbia.

Minister Dacic said that his statements could easily be dealt with, but what about specific political decisions to be made in the coming period – that would be an opportunity to demonstrate that politicians think along the same lines as the two friendly peoples.

Belgrade has never done nor will it ever do anything detrimental to Skopje, and would like to see Skopje follow suit.

Ivica Dacic expressed his strong conviction of the need for friendly relations with Macedonia, but could not turn a deaf ear to the fact that Macedonia had recognized Kosovo and voted for

Kosovo's admission to UNESCO, whereas Serbia has recognized Macedonia under its constitutional name, paying heed to the foremost state issue for Macedonia.

Could it be, at the time, that Macedonia did not reflect on the impact this would have on its relations with Serbia, or was it not important to them or was it at least less important than what Albanians or the West were going to say?

Therefore, Dacic called for return to the initial position of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Macedonia that politicians should be responsible for not breaking friendships. However, this should hold for both Belgrade and Skopje", stated the Serbian Foreign Minister.