



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic had talks today in Belgrade with Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

Ministers Dacic and Lavrov made statements for the media after the meeting, highlighting on the occasion that the relations between Serbia and Russia were stable, friendly and fraternal, that they were not subject to any trading with third countries and that such cooperation would be maintained in the future.

“Our relations go far beyond the daily political affairs. There are no contentious issues between our countries. We are thankful to Russia for its support vis-à-vis Kosovo.

We cannot conceal our policy. We have made our decisions public. Serbia’s political aim is to become an EU Member State, but this does not signify that it should break off its relations with countries that are friendly to us, where I primarily refer to Russia”, Minister Dacic said.

The Serbian Foreign Minister said that Serbia, as the country holding the OSCE Chairmanship, advocated peaceful solution to the situation in Ukraine, and that the role of the OSCE was to make sure that the agreements be adequately implemented in practice.

It is extremely important that the ceasefire agreement be observed, for “the restoration of the national dialogue in Ukraine” awaits us.

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Lavrov said that Russia highly appreciated the level of relations it had with Serbia, and that Serbia’s wish to join the European Union had not affected the relations existing between Belgrade and Moscow.

“Serbia has a pan-European position related to cooperation with all fundamental partners and it is no coincidence that Serbia chairs the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), which plays a very important role in the resolution of the Ukrainian crisis”, the Russian Foreign Minister said. He also said that the role of the OSCE was growing, and that the OSCE mission was established so as to assist and contribute to the political reform and the defence of human rights in Ukraine. Mr. Lavrov emphasized that the direct dialogue was the only way to resolve open issues.

## **Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov visits Belgrade**

Friday, 15 May 2015.

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The Serbian Foreign Minister stated that Serbia wished to develop relations and cooperation with Russia in as many areas as possible. The Minister positively assessed the trading and economic relations between Serbia and Russia, and stressed that there was still plenty of room for their advancement. In 2014, the trade in goods amounted to EUR 2.5 billion, but both sides assessed it might be even higher.

Ministers Dacic and Lavrov discussed energy cooperation in particular.

In this regard, the Russian Foreign Minister said that the Russian party confirmed its readiness for cooperation in this area, and for gas supplies to Serbia, while Minister Dacic underlined that the Nord Stream was insufficient for Europe, so much so that another South Stream Project was necessary, “no matter what we call it”.