

Goran Svilanović, Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council, speaks to Danas daily about Serbian Prime Minister's visit to Sarajevo

Tailwind for the Entire Region

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Sarajevo, Belgrade – Not only does the fact that Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić chose Sarajevo as his first destination but everything we could hear so far as a reverberation of the visit and talks held represent excellent news for the citizens of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as an important encouragement for everyone in the region, says Goran Svilanović, Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), to *Danas* daily about the visit of Serbian Prime Minister to Sarajevo.

- Serbian Prime Minister has recognized the importance of good relations with virtually the first immediate neighbour, Bosnia and Herzegovina, with which Serbia also has an indissoluble economic link. As well as emotional one, of course. Difficult emotions tie us together and this is the opportunity to start overcoming them. An opportunity well made use of, I would say, emphasized Svilanović on the occasion of Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić visiting Sarajevo as his first official foreign visit.

You say “opportunity well made use of”. In what sense?

- It is also very important for all the neighbouring countries, as only the improvement of economic conditions can help us make a positive change to these relations. The message was clear in this respect, and not only the message delivered by Serbia but also the one by the host, Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers, and other officials. It is the message of full readiness to link Serbian and BiH economy, and have business community jointly enter third markets.

How do you assess the claims that by visiting Sarajevo, Vučić sent a clear message to Banja Luka that Serbia will not be the disrupting element destabilising BiH in future, which would practically meet the EU requirement?

- The common goal of all the countries in the region is the EU accession and the positions are very much clear to that end. Regional cooperation, stability and good neighbourly relations are the essential part of the process, and parameters for all potential member states are the same. I welcome any breakthrough in this sense.

How do you comment the cordiality the hosts in Sarajevo displayed during Aleksandar Vučić's visit, having in mind the problematic past of Serbian Prime Minister in terms of the war in BiH?

- The hosts warmly welcomed the decision that the new Serbian Government is first presented to Bosnia and Herzegovina. I believe some of the issues are common, primarily the dregs of corruption and crime that go beyond the national borders in the region. Hence, all that Serbia embarked on in terms of fight against corruption and readiness to undertake joint action to fight organised crime was met with wide approval and support by the BiH officials.

In your opinion, what is the key part of this event and what would you say is the most important?

- De facto all that we have talked about – the fact that Prime Minister Vučić chose Bosnia and Herzegovina as his first foreign visit and the fact that he was welcomed to Sarajevo in line with his function. This is, I believe, the beginning of a new era of relations between Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and I am very glad to see it. I hope this will be a tailwind for the entire region.

- See more at:

http://www.danas.rs/danasrs/politika/vetar_u_ledja_celom_regionu.56.html?news_id=281440#sthash.ykr59tmy.dpuf