
TSIPRAS: GREECE UNCHANGED ON KOSOVO INDEPENDENCE

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Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras used a visit to Belgrade on Tuesday to say Athens would not change its stance on recognizing the independence of Kosovo, a former Serbian province.

Tsipras's remarks came during a two-day visit to the Serbian capital.

Addressing reporters after a meeting with Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic, Tsipras said Greece would be stable in its position.

Athens currently does not recognize Kosovo, which Serbia considers part of its territory.

Vucic said Serbia was "grateful" to Greece for not recognizing Kosovo's independence.

The former Serbian province of nearly 1.8 million people is recognized by over 100 countries, including the U.S., Britain, France, Germany and Turkey.

Russia and China are among the other countries which have not yet recognized Kosovos independence.

Tsipras also said Greece backed Serbias steps towards joining the EU: "We have highlighted the strategic importance of the inclusion of Serbia into the European Union.

Greece supports your active and stable path and understands that there are great difficulties and great sacrifices by the Serbian people.

We expressed our willingness to contribute to achieving this goal," Tsipras added.

Vucic described Tuesdays meeting as "long, detailed and serious" on three key themes: economic cooperation; strengthening mutual ties; and regional stability.

Serbia and Greece also agreed to hold a joint meeting of government ministers in the northern Greek city of Thessaloniki later this year.

By Talha Ozturk

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