
SERBIA ACCUSES WORLD OF DOUBLE STANDARDS OVER CATALONIA AND KOSOVO

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04.10.2017

Reuters (3 October 2017)

Serbia foreign minister accused world powers on Tuesday of using double standards by refusing to accept the Catalan independence referendum while largely welcoming a separate Kosovo.

Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008 - an announcement accepted by Washington and most EU states but rejected by Belgrade and its allies.

Almost a decade later on Sunday, voters in Catalonia backed independence from Spain in a referendum declared unconstitutional by the Madrid government. A day later Germany called the vote worrying, as other states fretted about their own separatist-minded communities.

I am bothered by the double standards of the international community, foreign minister Ivica Dacic told the RTS public broadcaster.

The EU will never say it made an error with the recognition of Kosovo, but that decision will backfire. The Pandoras box was opened, Dacic said.

Serbias position on Kosovo has been one of the main stumbling blocks in its own bid to join the European Union. Brussels has said it needs to improve relations with the authorities in Pristina and stop trying to block their efforts to join international bodies.

On Monday, Serbias President Aleksandar Vucic called senior ministers and security chiefs for talks after European Commission spokesman Margaritis Schinas said comparisons between Spain and Serbia could not be made as Kosovo had happened in a very specific context.

How it can be that the referendum is invalid in Catalonia and in Kosovo it (independence) could be done without one, Vucic said on Monday after meeting Greek President Prokopis Pavlopoulos in Belgrade.

Kosovo seceded almost a decade after NATO intervened with air strikes to drive out Serbian forces and halt the killing and expulsion of ethnic Albanian civilians during a two-year counter-insurgency war.

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<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-politics-catalonia-serbia/serbia-accuses-world-of-double-standards-over-catalonia-and-kosovo-idUSKCN1C818G?il=0>

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