
SERBIAN MINISTER: EU WON'T BE FORCING US TO RECOGNIZE KOSOVO

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Reacting to President Aleksandar Vucic's statement that the EU will ask Serbia to sign a legally binding document on normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina, Joksimovic said that this does not mean recognizing Kosovo.

The signing of a legally binding document is envisaged by the Brussels agreement, she told RTS, Beta reported on Friday.

Perhaps some EU members would want Serbia to recognize Kosovo, but the EU is status neutral because there are member states that have not recognized it, she added.

"Of course we can become a member of the EU if we do not recognize Kosovo. Precisely the essence of a normalization agreement is to define the normalization framework that will not force us to recognize an independent Kosovo, but which will surely mean a whole series of concessions - but under the condition that Pristina fulfills its basic obligation (from the Brussels agreement), which is the Community of Serb Municipalities," the minister said.

She stressed that the content of a legally binding agreement would be defined by the results of the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina.

"There will be no 'Kosovo or EU' dilemma because if there were, it would be an indicator that the standards that we are talking about daily with Brussels do not exist, and those are reforms, the rule of law, administrative capacities...", Joksimovic said.

She also said that she disagreed with Prime Minister Anom Brnabic that it did not matter how many chapters in Serbia's EU accession negotiations would be opened by the end of the year, adding that the opening of the chapters represented proof of successful work.

"The opening the chapters is proof that you have been working on reforms, and I expect at least three to be opened by the end of the year, anything else we would consider a slowing down of the European integration progress," Joksimovic stressed.

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