
PRESIDENT VUCIC SAYS SERBIA WILL NOT INTRODUCE SANCTIONS AGAINST RUSSIA

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Serbia will not introduce sanctions against Russia, President Aleksandar Vucic said on Wednesday as he addressed a joint news conference with the visiting Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov after talks on a governmental villa.

"Serbia won't change its policy towards Russia," he said. "It will never introduce sanctions against Russia. Serbia has never spoken against Russia and will never do it in the future. We hope others in Europe will realize it."

Vucic said accession to the EU envisioned coordination of foreign policy with Brussels but he said along with it that Serbia would take account of the centuries-old ties with Russia.

"We have been developing and will keep developing and strengthening our ties with Russia," he added. "On this occasion, I would like to wish Russia success in its presidential election. I hope our effective cooperation will be continued after the election".

Russian gas

Serbia hopes to continue buying Russian gas, including through the Turkish Stream pipeline, Vucic said. "We are constantly increasing gas consumption, so such supplies are very important for us," he noted.

The Turkish Stream project envisages the construction of a gas pipeline across the Black Sea to Turkey's European part and further on to the border with Greece. The seabed section is to be 910 kilometers long and the land section will run 180 km into Turkey.

The first thread is meant for gas supplies to the Turkish market. The second one will be used to supply gas to Southern and Southeastern Europe. Each thread will have a capacity of 15.75 bln cubic meters of gas a year. The overall cost of the project was estimated as 11.4 bln euro (\$12.98 bln).

Progress in Russian-Serbian economic relations

Vucic has pointed to progress achieved in the Russian-Serbian economic relations, specifically in the energy sphere.

"Economic relations between our two states demonstrate considerable growth. This year's trade turnover gained up 25.2%. I'd like to single out progress in the energy sphere, which is of huge importance for our country," Vucic said after his talks with the Russian Foreign Minister.

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