
SERBIA AND RUSSIA REMAIN FRIENDS, PLEDGES PRESIDENT

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Serbia maintains good relations with Russia and this policy will be continued, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said at a joint news conference with Slovenian President Borut Pahor in Belgrade on Monday.

"As for Serbia's European path, yes it is on the European path, Serbia maintains good relations with the Russian Federation and will continue doing this," Vucic said when a Slovenian journalist asked him to comment on a recent statement by Slovenian Foreign Minister Miro Cerar, who said relations between Russia and Serbia "make one think whether Belgrade stays on the European path".

"I rubbed my eyes three times when I saw the statement of our friend Miro Cerar, I couldn't believe he could have said that. Who knows what happened to him that morning - maybe waking up on the wrong side of the bed," the Serbian president said.

"As you see, I am telling you, those who have come from the European Union, the same things that I am saying to [President Vladimir] Putin, Americans and all the others. Serbia is not pursuing two policies, but just one - the policy of Serbian interests, while our interests are in being on the European path, developing our economy. But the Serbian policy is not controlled from outside, and it won't be," the president stressed.

Serbia's foreign policy envisages friendly relations with Russia and China, along with the development of ties with the EU and the US. Belgrade intends to remain militarily neutral, refusing to join NATO and other military blocs.

The West objects this policy, and a message has been repeatedly sent to Serbia that European integration is possible only on two conditions - it must recognize Kosovo's independence and end friendly relations with the Russian Federation.

With this in view, mass protest rallies against the policy of Vucic have been organized in Serbia on a weekly basis for the past five weeks.

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