
KOSOVO'S PRESIDENT SAYS U.S. HELP NEEDED TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH SERBIA

- 03.05.2019

RFE/RL (2 May 2019)

Kosovo's President Hashim Thaci has said Washington must have a "leading role" in the process of normalizing relations with Serbia because the European Union is too "weak" and "not united."

Thaci made the remarks during an interview with RFE/RL in Pristina on May 2, three days after a summit of Balkan leaders in Berlin hosted by German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron.

The summit failed to restart talks in earnest between Kosovo and Serbia under EU mediation.

"Definitely in Berlin we saw once again how weak Europe is, how the European Union is not united," Thaci told RFE/RL.

He said the role of the United States in the dialogue process between Kosovo and Serbia was "irreplaceable and no agreement will be reached without the dynamic and leading role of the United States of America."

Thaci has previously said that a deal with Serbia could be reached by the end of 2019.

Asked whether that was still feasible, he replied: "I hope yes. If not, we will lose a decade."

EU-mediated negotiations between Pristina and Belgrade broke down in 2018 over reports of a proposed land swap and after Kosovo imposed a 100-percent tax on Serbian imports in November.

Kosovo, a former province of Serbia, declared independence in 2008 in a move rejected by Belgrade.

Both Kosovo and Serbia aspire to join the EU, which has made the normalization of relations a precondition.

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said after the Berlin meeting that revoking the 100-percent tariffs was Belgrade's only request, while Kosovar officials insisted that Serbia should fully recognize Kosovo's independence.

<https://www.rferl.org/a/kosovo-s-president-says-u-s-help-needed-to-normalize-relations-with-serbia/29916803.html>

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