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## **KOSOVO, ALBANIA BOYCOTT SARAJEVO SUMMIT OVER 'HUMILIATION'**

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Kosovo and Albania refused to attend a two-day summit of Western Balkan and Turkish foreign ministers in Sarajevo because the invitations wording was humiliating to Pristina.

Meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the South-Eastern Europe Cooperation Process in Sarajevo Photo: EPA/Fehim Demir

The South-East European Cooperation Process, SEECP summit began in Bosnias capital Sarajevo on Monday without delegations from Kosovo and Albania, which refused to participate.

Kosovo President Hashim Thaci has said his country didnt attend the meeting because the invitation sent by the Bosnian presidency chairman Milorad Dodik, the longtime political leader of the Bosnian Serbs, did not treat Kosovo the same as the other participating states.

Despite willingness to participate in the SEECP, the humiliating call by the current Bosnian presidency chairman prevented me from representing Kosovo at this meeting, Thaci wrote on Facebook on Saturday.

Thaci said that Kosovo wants equal treatment with other participating countries.

The behaviour of Bosnia and Herzegovina is unacceptable, he added.

Albanian Foreign Minister Ghent Cakaj then announced that his country has cancelled its participation in the summit in Sarajevo in solidarity with Kosovo.

Dodik argued however that Kosovo was invited as a neutral entity, as at previous such meetings.

Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic also argued that the wording had been used before.

It was done in the same way that Albania did it when they called Kosovo to the summit in 2015. It did not bother them then in Albania, Dacic said at the summit.

Like Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina has not recognised the independence of Kosovo, because the Bosnian Serbs oppose it.

The SEECP is intended to help its members get closer European and Euro-Atlantic structures by strengthening good neighbourly relations.

Bosnian Foreign Minister Igor Crnadak told local media that the boycott by Kosovo and Albania was a serious blow to the process of cooperation.

Milos Solaja, director of the Center for International Relations, said meanwhile that the boycott was undermining the credibility of the entire process.

Regional initiatives [like the SEECP] are mostly a result of the EUs desire to accelerate regional cooperation, and hence the EU accession process. But it is obvious that the countries of the region do not have a great desire to cooperate with each other, Solaja told BIRN.

<https://balkaninsight.com/2019/07/08/kosovo-albania-boycott-sarajevo-summit-over-humiliation/>

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