

JOINT STATEMENT

Today, on 23 January 2014 in Sofia, Republic of Bulgaria, on the occasion of the 135th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Serbia the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria HE Mr. Kristian Vigenin and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia HE Mr. Ivan Mrkić,

Recognizing the centuries-old ties between the peoples of the two states and the traditional close relations between the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Serbia,

Affirming their common interest of developing friendly and good-neighbourly relations,

Sharing their commitment to democracy, the rule of law and respect of human rights,

Underlying the need for closer cooperation between the two states based on the European democratic values and principles,

Having regard to the role the two states have for the regional security of South Eastern Europe,

Recognizing an increasing number of areas and issues of common interest in which both states can successfully cooperate,

Noting the start of the accession negotiations of Serbia with the EU and its European membership perspective supported by Bulgaria,

Agreed on the following Joint Statement:

By commemorating this 135th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Bulgaria and Serbia, the two Ministers express their commitment, in an exemplary and mutually beneficial manner, to further strengthen and deepen the bilateral relations.

The two Ministers share the view that the frequency of the high level meetings between representatives of the two states should be maintained and intensified.

Both Ministers recognise the two sides' common vision in strengthening peace and stability in South Eastern Europe through the process of European integration and commitment to shared European values and principles. To this end both Ministers express their commitment to promote good neighbourly relations in the region.

The two Ministers reaffirm their commitment to the signing of the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Good Neighbourly Relations.

Both Ministers confirm their readiness to strengthen and deepen the political dialogue through the establishment of a High Level Cooperation Council in joint meetings of the governments of the two states.

In the same spirit, the two Ministers agree to make concerted efforts to further enhance the cooperation in the economic, trade, energy, transport and infrastructure sectors, and pledged to create more favourable and mutually beneficial conditions, in accordance with their national legislation, to the citizens, municipalities and businesses of both sides, especially in the border region area. They agree that the dynamic exchanges in sectoral cooperation should be maintained and intensified, if possible.

Both Ministers stress the need to step up the cross-border cooperation with view to address, in a comprehensive and timely way, all social and economic difficulties of the citizens of both sides in the border region area. To this end, both Ministers agree to pursue joint political, economic and social project-oriented activities.

Both Ministers share the view that the partnership between the two states will become stronger through deepening the cultural exchanges between the peoples and the people-to-people contacts.

The Ministers express their wish to celebrate jointly important historical anniversaries for both states.

As close neighbours, sharing the vision for a prosperous future, the Ministers look forward to working closely together to further consolidate, deepen and diversify the relations between the two states in all areas of mutual interest.