

07. 11. 2010th 10:51 h | Tanjug

## Cvetkovic in Cairo

**Serbian Prime Minister Mirko Cvetkovic met with Egyptian dignitaries during official visit to the African country, November 7-8, 2010.**

During the two-day visit to Egypt, Serbian Prime Minister will speak at the Business Forum, which will be attended by representatives of major companies from Egypt and Serbia.

It is envisaged also signing bilateral agreements in science and technology cooperation, telecommunications, as well as art and culture.

Cvetkovic will attend the opening of the exhibition "Days of Culture of Serbia in Egypt in the castle of Prince Taza.

The Serbian delegation included the Ministers of Trade and Services Slobodan Milosavljevic, Environment and Spatial Planning Oliver Dulic and Culture Nebojsa Bradic

### **PM talks Kosovo dialogue during Egypt visit**

8 November 2010 | 09:13 -> 13:26 | Source: Tanjug

Cvetković expressed gratitude for Egypt's principled stand not to recognize Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence.

The Serbian prime minister stated that there are possibilities to find a solution for Kosovo through negotiations that would be acceptable to both sides.

"If there is a solution aimed against one of the sides then it will only be sustainable in the short term," said Cvetković.

According to him, a frozen conflict is not in anyone's interest. Cvetković stressed that Serbia will use dialogue to solve the problem, and that this dialogue will be supported and assisted by the EU.

The cooperation between Serbia and Egypt is excellent and there are no open issues between them, which is a good basis for better economic cooperation, Cvetković and his Egyptian host agreed Monday.

Good political cooperation can serve as an incentive to improve economic cooperation, which would be supported by politicians but implemented by companies, Cvetković told a news

conference after the meetings.

The two governments signed three cooperation agreements at the meeting: one regarding science and technology, another referring to telecommunications, postal services and information society, and the last one concerns culture and art. All three agreements are for the period between 2010 and 2013.

Minister of Trade Slobodan Milosavljević and Minister of Culture Nebojša Bradić signed the documents on behalf of Serbia.

According to Cvetković, there is ongoing work on two more agreements, one on free trade and the other on cooperation in the defence industry.

## **Cvetkovic ended an official visit to Egypt**

**Serbian Prime Minister Mirko Cvetkovic today, participating at the round table organized by the most famous and largest publishing house in Egypt, "Al Ahram", ended a two-day official visit to Egypt**

Cvetkovic opened the event organized by "Al Ahram", where they discussed the cooperation between Serbia and Egypt, Serbia after the breakup of Yugoslavia and the current process of reforms in the country towards the EU.

Serbian Prime Minister during his stay in Egypt, met with top officials from African country.

Serbian Prime Minister thanked the Egyptian officials for the principled stance of the country not to recognize the unilateral independence of Kosovo and Metohija.

Cvetkovic and his Egyptian interlocutors agreed that bilateral cooperation between Serbia and Egypt an excellent and there is no outstanding political issues, which is a good basis for expanding bilateral economic cooperation.

Representatives of the two governments, in the presence of Prime Minister of both countries signed three agreements on cooperation between Serbia and Egypt - An agreement on cooperation in science and technology, a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in telecommunications, postal services and information society, and the Cooperation Program in Culture and art from 2010. 2013. year.

Cvetkovic opened a Business Forum of Serbia and Egypt, and on that occasion urged Egyptian businessmen to invest in Serbia, stressing that they should take advantage of excellent political relations between the two countries to promote economic cooperation.

In the presence Cvetkovic, in the historic heart of old Cairo, the castle of the Prince of Taza in the 14th century, the Ministers of Culture of Serbia and Egypt Nebojsa Bradic and Faruk Hosni opened a photo exhibition last night, "Beta: A look at the pupil of history."

That setting, began Days of Culture of Serbia in Egypt, in which the audience will be able to see films, "Tito and Me," "The Trap", "Love and Other Crimes", the ballet "The Who" of the Belgrade National Theatre in Cairo and Alexandria Opera, and at literary meetings, participate Vida Ognjenovic, Mihajlo Pantic, Vladislav Bajac and Laszlo Blašković.



11 - 17 November 2010  
Issue No. 1023

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### **A new old relationship**

**Yassin Gaber** and **Eric Walberg** report on the recent visit of the new Serbia prime minister

Egypt and Yugoslavia were once the best of friends, but this friendship suffered with the collapse of the Yugoslav federation. Serbia was left as the heir to the federation and suffered civil war and isolation during the past decade. As a sign that a new leaf has been turned, the head of the Serbian government made his first official visit to Egypt last week.

On 8 November, Serbian Prime Minister Mirko Cvetkovic met with various Egyptian dignitaries to discuss bilateral agreements for cooperation in science, technology, telecommunications and cultural spheres and military industry. There are also good prospects for Serbia and Egypt to increase trade and cooperation in agriculture, the food industry, the cable industry and construction.

During the official visit to Egypt, Serbian Minister of Trade and Services Slobodan Milosavljevic and Egyptian Minister of Trade and Industry Rachid Mohamed Rachid signed a memorandum of understanding on establishing the Serbian-Egyptian Business Council. The Serbian Chamber of Commerce signed an agreement on cooperation with the Federation of Egyptian Industries, and JUBMES Banka signed a cooperation agreement with the Egyptian Bank for Export Development.



Serbian Minister of Trade and Services Slobodan Milosavljevic and Egyptian Minister of Trade and Industry Rachid Mohamed Rachid signing a Memorandum

A mining economist by training, and former official at the World Bank, Cvetkovic served as deputy minister of economy and privatisation and minister of finance after the ouster of prime minister Slobodan Milosevic in 2000. In 2008 President Boris Tadic named him prime minister.

At a public forum at Al-Ahram conducted by Chairman of the Board Abdel-Moneim Said and open to staff reporters, Said fondly recalled Egypt's "happy memories" of socialist Yugoslavia under its president Josip Broz Tito in the 1950-70s, marked by close ties to Egypt. The last memory, Said recalled, was of the "horrors of the 1990s" when Yugoslavia disintegrated and "disappeared from the Egyptian screen".

Cvetkovic recounted the turbulent past of Serbia, the "nonviolent democratic changes" in 2000 when prime minister Slobodan Milosevic was ousted and a "new life for Serbia" began. Cvetkovic highlighted the EU accession talks, indicating that Serbia's application has been accepted and that he will submit the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the European Union to the parliament 24 November for ratification, to be executed in 2011.

The biggest issue at present is Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence. The Serbian government's position on Kosovo remains that it will not accept Kosovo's unilaterally declared independence, but the premier made clear to the Al-Ahram audience that he would be against "the notion of a frozen conflict". Tension between the populations is high and "calm talks" are needed. Despite the standoff, Kosovo imports \$1.5 billion of Serbian goods.

Cvetkovic and Said underlined that the visit is to help revive mutual ties and awareness between the countries. Serbia has been called the Balkan tiger in recent years with an

annual growth rate of six per cent.

When asked to comment on Sudan and the relevance of the experience of Serbia with the separation of Kosovo and Montenegro, Cvetkovic looked at this thorny issue from an economic point of view. "If this unity is based on common economic interest, you can become brothers. The former Yugoslavia was not built on such interests and this gave ground to nationalists." He pointed to the EU as a good example of integration and underlined their common economic partnership. He was disparaging of nostalgia for the socialist period as the good old days.

Reforms are producing redundant labour in Serbia and the biggest problem economically is rising unemployment. Cvetkovic nonetheless said that Serbia has a higher productivity than some of its EU neighbours and touted its prospects. A major goal of the government is to strengthen the economy and social responsibility, battle crime and corruption, and comply with international justice.

Serbia maintains good relations with China and Russia. One of the most important policies the prime minister will deal with now is the ratification of the energy arrangement with the Russian Federation.

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The article has been editet for reasons of clarity.