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## Tusk thanks Vucic for turning down "very attractive political offer" and hosting him

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Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said Thursday that his country supports Serbia's European path, and that the European Union (EU) will not be complete without Serbia.

Addressing a joint press conference with Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic in Belgrade, Tusk said in Serbian that he welcomes Serbia's economic success, which is beneficial to the EU.

We support regional cooperation, especially the Open Balkan initiative and the Berlin Process, said Tusk, adding that he is aware of the ambitious plans Serbia has regarding the Growth Plan in order to accelerate its European path.

He noted that bilateral relations with Serbia, especially economic cooperation, are important to Poland.

"My friend Aleksandar Vucic told me he would like to see this region in the European Union soon and that he has supported the opening of negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia because, as he said, when you have successful neighbors, the whole region is successful," added Tusk.

He emphasized that enlargement and the closest possible cooperation with Serbia will be his priority during Poland's EU Council presidency next year.

Tusk pointed out that Serbia and Poland have differences on certain issues, but that there is mutual respect and understanding between the two countries.

He added that, at the dinner on Wednesday evening, which was also attended by Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, they discussed cooperation on various levels and issues related to irregular migration.

He said he thanked Vucic for the humanitarian aid to Ukraine.

We have different views on relations with Russia, but that is precisely why I value even more the mutual understanding and support for Ukraine, and the fact that we can have a conversation, even when we don't always agree, Tusk said, adding that he now has a clearer understanding of Serbia's position.

He also said he thanked Vucic for turning down a "very attractive political offer" at this time and choosing to host him in Belgrade, noting that many had noticed this and were not entirely pleased with it.

The Polish prime minister said that Vucic had informed him in detail about the situation in Kosovo and the efforts being made to calm tensions, expressing confidence that Serbia's goodwill and active work will contribute to the region's stabilization.

"Dear Aleksandar, see you in Warsaw," Tusk concluded.

### **Vucic: Poland an exceptionally important partner to Serbia**

Following his meeting with Tusk, Vucic said that Poland is an exceptionally important partner to Serbia, and that he heard from Tusk "important messages" regarding Serbia's advancement on the EU path.

"Last night and this morning, I had the honor of having a serious and responsible conversation with the Polish Prime Minister, one of Europe's most important leaders. I am especially grateful to Donald Tusk because, even during his time as President of the European Council, he visited Belgrade and, back in 2018, brought extremely encouraging messages at a time when there were doubts in our country about the European path and whether Europe wanted Serbia," said Vucic, adding that, back then also, Tusk was willing to hear Serbia's positions, "unlike many in Brussels."

The Serbian president mentioned that the topic of Serbia's European future was also discussed during the dinner he hosted for Tusk and Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis.

"Tusk and Mitsotakis, the most influential prime ministers from the European People's Party (EPP), conveyed very important messages regarding Serbia's progress towards the EU and membership in the Union. They opened new perspectives and new hope for what we can expect in the future, not an acceleration, but a different kind of relationship, along with all the things we need to do," said Vucic.

He said he had tried to clarify to Tusk Serbia's stance on refusing to impose sanctions on Russia over its invasion of Ukraine.

"Mr. Tusk would like to see our full alignment with the EU on sanctions against Russia, and I did my best to explain Serbia's position and the significant humanitarian and financial aid we have already provided to Ukraine," Vucic said.

Vucic said he also discussed with Tusk the Kosovo issue, and the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East.

"I asked Prime Minister Tusk to hear me out on the issue of Kosovo and Metohija. I presented the facts and asked him to check them, I did not give political evaluations. I am grateful to him for listening and for wanting to hear our side," said the Serbian President.

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