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R E M A R K S

by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton together with the new prime Minister of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić during her visit to Serbia

"First of all, Prime Minister, can I congratulate you and your government on the elections. The people have spoken and they have decided that the path that you and the Deputy Prime Minister Dačić, the team of Ministers and the coalition they have chosen, is the right one.

I am absolutely delighted that I was able to make a special visit to Serbia today, to have the opportunity to congratulate you in person and to talk about the work that lies ahead.

It is wonderful to see Serbia on its journey to joining the European Union. And the strength of commitment of every one that I have met – not just in government but outside – to that journey is what is going to guarantee success, I hope, in good time.

Both in my discussion with President Nikolić this morning and with you, Prime Minister, we touched on a number of important issues.

First of all, the importance of the work to be done on the economy of Serbia to ensure that the difficult reforms will bring benefits for the people to get investment; to ensure the economic future of Serbia is as strong as possible.

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I hope that one of the benefits of your relationship with the European Union is to send as strong as possible a message to investors, to markets, to institutions, that coming to Serbia, investing here is a good thing, is good for business, is good for the people. And the European Union is determined to help and support Serbia in its efforts to ensure a strong economic path for its people.

Prime Minister you have talked already about your desire to look at areas of law and order and I commend you for making them a priority. But I also know that you are passionate about education and I share that with you, having once been an education minister. I know you share with me that nothing is more important than investing in young people and ensuring they have the best possible start, so that they have good lives and contribute to the future of the country

I am delighted that Serbia is making the first steps on the journey to becoming a member of the European Union. It's not an easy process as any country who has already made the journey will tell you. But it is a journey that none of them ever will regret.

We are part of a family and by being part of the family we guarantee peace and security for our people. Peace and security and economic stability are the watch words that enable people to feel that they can look to the future.

And I am very much looking forward to continuing to work with you, Prime Minister, and your team for the rest of my mandate. But I am sure my relationship with Serbia will carry on long after I have finished this role and I very much look forward in seeing your progress in the years to come.

Thank you!"

Video and photos:

<http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?ref=1088838>

<http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/photo/photoByReportage.cfm?ref=025545&sitelang=en>