

EU to give Kosovo over \$385 mn to prepare for integration

Belgrade, March 12 (RIA Novosti) The European Union (EU) is to give the government of Kosovo over \$385 million to prepare for admission into the EU, the head of the European Commission Liaison Office in Kosovo has said.

Renzo Davidi told reporters in Kosovo capital Pristina Tuesday that 124.7 million euros (\$192 million) would be allocated in 2008, 66.1 million euros (\$102 million) in 2009, and 67.3 million euros (\$104 million) in 2010.

He said the money would first of all be invested in building the breakaway republic's infrastructure.

Kosovo unilaterally declared independence from Serbia Feb 17. Since then, the US and 18 of the 27 EU states have recognised the Republic of Kosovo.

However, Russia, China, Spain, Cyprus and several other countries have refused to recognise its independence.

Belgrade has recalled its ambassadors from a number of countries recognising Kosovo's independence. Russia has also pledged to block any move by Kosovo to join the UN.

Prior to the declaration of independence by the Serbian province, the EU approved the sending of a 2,000-strong police and justice mission to Kosovo to replace the UN mission.

The mission was deployed there since the NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999 ended a conflict between Albanian and Serb forces. Kosovo has been a UN protectorate since the end of this conflict.

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