

EU to propose 'isolation or integration' to Serbia

Moscow, March 26 (RIA Novosti) A top European Union official will visit Belgrade Thursday to meet the Serb leadership and propose two scenarios for future EU-Serbia relations, a Polish paper said Wednesday.

Poland's Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, chairman of the EU parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs, would 'ask Serbs which of the two scenarios they will choose - isolation in a region that will in the next few years belong to the European Union or speedy integration', the online edition of Dziennik daily reported.

In the latter case, the newspaper quoted Saryusz-Wolski as saying, Brussels is ready to sign documents with Belgrade giving Serbs visa-free travel within the EU and a possibility to receive financial assistance from EU funds. Also according to the second scenario, Serbia could start talks on EU admission in the next two to three years.

The visit will be the first by a EU representative to Belgrade since Kosovo, with a 90 percent ethnic Albanian majority, unilaterally declared independence from Serbia Feb 17. Its sovereignty has already been recognized by over 30 countries, including the US and most EU member nations.

Early parliamentary elections have been called for May 11 in Serbia following Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica's refusal to govern alongside President Tadic's Democratic Party due to insurmountable differences on the issue of European integration.

Ethnic Serb regions in the 'world's newest state' are currently on a knife-edge after rioters clashed with peacekeepers last week in the city of Mitrovica in northern Kosovo, leaving one Ukrainian police officer dead and dozens of civilians and peacekeepers wounded.

Russia and several other countries, including China and Spain, have refused to recognize Kosovo's sovereignty.

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