

Serbia withdraws ambassador from Czech Republic

Serbia has withdrawn its ambassador from the Czech Republic after Prague's recognition of independent Kosovo.

Serbian ambassador to Prague Vladimir Veres delivered a protest note to the Czech government ahead of his planned departure Sunday, the Czech foreign ministry said Friday.

'We believe it is a temporary step,' spokeswoman Zuzana Opletalova said in a statement.

Since the breakaway province unilaterally declared independence from Serbia Feb 17, Kosovo was recognised by several dozen countries, including the US and European Union heavy weights Germany and France.

Prague has been lukewarm to Kosovo's independence declaration, avoiding an early recognition in order to preserve traditionally good relations with Serbia.

Russia has supported Serbia in its attempt to hold on to Kosovo, whose population of some 2 million is largely Albanian.

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