



In his appearance on RTS national television, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic emphasized that there were no more Serbian citizens "stuck" at airports worldwide and that the new priority was the repatriation of Serbian nationals staying abroad who wished to return to Serbia.

The Minister announced that two flights to Malta were supposed to be arranged today as well as that repatriation of our citizens from Abu Dhabi and the United States and a Monday flight to Stockholm were being discussed.

"Foreign Policy these days for the most part implies the fight against the virus, not only that pursued by Serbia but in all corners of the world, and when foreign policy activities are being carried out this is done via video conference or by phone. It is our responsibility to coordinate this integrated activity carried by the Government in concerted efforts with President Aleksandar Vucic to help resolve the issue of Serbian nationals who have found themselves abroad", said Dacic.

The Minister added that huge traffic jams at airports and border crossings were initially an issue.

"There are no more Serbian citizens stranded at airports", Dacic said stressing that these "urgent matters" were resolved as the Serbian Government arranged that Air Serbia aircraft take off twice a day to destinations with largest concentration of our citizens.

As he said, a different priority was now at the top of the agenda. "We are no longer dealing with persons "stuck" at airports, but those staying abroad and willing to return to Serbia", the Serbian Foreign Minister explained.

He stressed that 24 medical workers arrived from Germany risking their job prospects in Germany and throughout the EU, adding that some 200 or 300 medical staff, Serbian nationals, expressed interest to return to Serbia.

The Minister elaborated that remote destinations were an issue, those unreachable by aircraft at our disposal, but that Serbia was taking advantage of an EU mechanism allowing our citizens to be transferred from these remote locations together with those originating from EU Member States.

This was how, as he stated, 12 Serbian citizens were planned to arrive in Vienna from Peru, and that securing their transfer to Belgrade would be explored on their arrival there.

He said that the issue of the United States was also being discussed and that two flights to Malta were supposed to be arranged for today.

"There are no more our people stranded in Malta, but many Serbian nationals remain there who either got fired or are facing some other problems - some are sick, some of them are university students, and so on", Dacic said adding that some of our nationals wanted to return, but gave up as they learned about compulsory quarantine on return to Serbia.

"Today we discussed this matter related to sending one or two flights to Malta. One has already taken off to Malta and another could be added later in the day if need be. I believe that on board this flight from Malta four of five medical doctors are supposed to return, too. We have also been considering Abu Dhabi and a potential special flight to Stockholm on Monday", Dacic said.

The Minister further explained that when it came to road traffic there were no more Serbian citizens waiting at border crossings.

"We resolved the issue we faced at Austria-Hungary border", Dacic said adding that "every case of our nationals managing to reach a city in the neighbouring countries" would be resolved individually.

Commenting on the solidarity and assistance extended by countries in such situations, Minister Dacic said that this was another segment of the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which implied providing assistance to state bodies, the President and the Government of the Republic of Serbia in the realization of "matters related to international contacts".

He emphasized that it was China that helped Serbia the most, not only through donations but also by enabling us to procure goods unavailable elsewhere in the world.

The Minister also pointed out that the EU granted EUR 7.5 million to Serbia for combating Covid-19 as well as that Norway and the United Arab Emirates also provided aid to our country.

He added that a list was put together of what was Serbia supposed to receive from Russia in this context.

The Minister pointed to the problems experienced in procurement of some goods and the lack of guarantees that they would be delivered in the end, stressing that Serbia purchased from India four million face masks and 7.7 million protective gloves.

"However, as you are aware, India has declared a state of emergency banning any export of such goods", Dacic said adding that he discussed resolving this issue with India's Foreign Minister.

He stressed that it was false information that Serbia had confiscated respirators intended for Montenegro.

"Serbia did not take anything from anyone and most certainly not respirators now amid a serious crisis", said Dacic.

He explained that Serbia purchased the respirators from Medical Innovations company in a procedure prescribed by the law.

"At no point has anyone informed our health insurance Fund that these respirators were the subject of a commercial agreement for sale to Montenegro, concluded with a company other than Medical who we have purchased it from, but instead a company that had initially sold them to Medical. These are commercial agreements being concluded between the Government of Montenegro and private companies from Serbia. Neither the Government of Montenegro nor anyone else from Montenegro informed us about this. Taking into account the above, the President said that we were willing to donate the respirators, and you have seen the outcome", Dacic said.

The Minister assessed that it was "unfortunate that in these trying times when mutual solidarity is a must, we are witness to such moves inspired by hatred, completely disregarding any desire for good-neighbourly relations".