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Russia, Serbia Pledge to Strengthen Economic Ties at Moscow Meeting

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Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic

Economic issues topped the agenda at a meeting between Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic on Tuesday, according to a transcript of the politicians' joint press conference published on the Russian government's website.

During the bilateral talks in Moscow, Medvedev and Vucic discussed joint projects in the energy sector and Russian involvement in modernizing Serbian transport infrastructure, the statement said.

Medvedev also said Russia would continue to work toward finding alternative gas supply routes to Serbia.

Russia last year terminated the South Stream project — a pipeline that would have provided southern Europe with gas while bypassing Ukraine and reducing the risk of supply disruptions.

Speaking in Russian to journalists after the meeting, Vucic thanked Russia for its "help in defending Serbia's vital interests at the United Nations," and pledged Serbia would continue to defy EU sanctions on Russia over its annexation of Crimea and role in Ukraine.

Medvedev said agricultural imports from Serbia to Russia had increased by 70 percent last year and another 40 percent in the first six months of the current year.

The two countries also signed a military-technical intellectual property agreement and several memorandums on economic cooperation, the statement said.

Medvedev and Vucic are set to visit the Open Innovations Forum and Technology Show in Moscow on Wednesday.

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