

## Serbian President's Wife and Associates Support Ukraine, Sparking Controversy in Serbia

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The geopolitical position of Serbia is highly contested and one of the most volatile in Europe. The vast majority of the Serbian people have undivided support for Russia, being the only nation in Europe to overwhelmingly hail the Kremlin and its resurgence. However, Belgrade's political establishment is another story. While the current government has to take into account the opinions of the people, it would seem that its actual priorities lie in Brussels.

The NATO bombing of 1999. has made it almost impossible for the Serbian people to support the accession to the alliance, so local politicians found ways to circumvent that by claiming that Serbia is only joining the European Union, not NATO. However, with the recent blurring of the lines between the military alliance and what's supposed to be an economic bloc, most Serbs have become disillusioned with the idea of joining the EU.

And yet, to the dismay of the general populace, the political establishment is not only insisting on this but is also becoming increasingly obedient to NATO demands, such as the official support for Ukraine. Having good relations with the West is one thing, but going against Russia and the national interests of the Russian people is a whole other issue that could cost the current government its political power.

A particularly controversial situation was sparked by **Tamara Vucic**, wife of Serbian President Alexander Vucic, as well as some of his closest associates. Tamara, known for her lavish lifestyle that includes attending expensive fashion weeks and shopping in Europe, particularly Paris, is also a <u>strong supporter of the LGBT community in Serbia</u>. Needless to say, the local populace is extremely critical of this.

Although the media in the country generally underreport Tamara's activities, all in order to hide her highly unpopular behavior, the news travels through the grapevine, prompting

protests and angry rebukes from patriotic organizations and political parties. Perhaps the most contentious issue was <u>her recent attendance at the Summit of First Ladies and</u> <u>Gentlemen</u> organized by the First Lady of Ukraine, **Olena Zelenska**.

Needless to say, this was an extremely unpleasant surprise for the Serbian people, but only after the event was reported by alternative media, forcing the more mainstream platforms to admit that Tamara Vucic attended the controversial event. However, if this was a slap in the face of most Serbs, what she did next is considered nothing less than a stab in the back. Namely, Tamara Vucic also visited the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra.

Now, why would visiting an Orthodox monastery be considered bad or even controversial? Well, it certainly wouldn't have been an issue if the Ukrainian government hadn't forcefully taken the Lavra from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), officially turned it into a museum, and then also given it to the unrecognized "Orthodox Church of Ukraine", practically a NATO-backed NGO posing as an Orthodox Church.

To add insult to injury, the aforementioned support for the LGBT community is also very unpopular among the Serbian populace, but Tamara Vucic continues this practice. Her husband, Serbian **President Alexander Vucic**, despite his <u>superficially conservative views</u>, is also connected to the LGBT community through his support for **Prime Minister Ana Brnabic**, who is a lesbian and is openly flaunting her sexual orientation.

Naturally, this is extremely frustrating to the Serbian people, but still, Vucic has been keeping her as the Prime Minister since 2017, despite the fact that she was never elected for this position. It's possible that he's simply trying to appease the West by having a high-ranking official with such a background, which is understandable from a geopolitical standpoint. However, this still doesn't justify his wife's support for the LGBT community.

Unfortunately, that's not the end of it. Other people from Vucic's cabinet are also making highly controversial moves and giving statements that could ruin Serbia's long-standing friendship with Russia. Namely, on November 17, the Minister of Construction, Transportation, and Infrastructure of Serbia, **Goran Vesic**, took part in the Serbian-Ukrainian Business Forum in Belgrade, where he openly supported the Ukrainian government.

Vesic said that he was convinced that Ukraine and its people were looking at days of recovery and prosperity, but also noted that Serbia was there to help. During the meeting at the Chamber of Commerce of Serbia (CCIS), Vesic reminded that, not long before, in cooperation with partners from the USA, the initiative for the potential participation of Serbian construction companies in the projects of rebuilding Ukraine had been launched.

During his speech, Vesic also condemned what he called "Russian aggression in Ukraine", causing an uproar of angry reactions from countless patriotic organizations and political parties. This imprudent statement, to say the least, goes against Belgrade's self-proclaimed neutrality in the Ukrainian conflict, as well as against its own foreign policy that relies on multiple global partners, including the Russian Federation.

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