

Serbian President Turns Down Putin's BRICS Summit Invite

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Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic. vucic.rs

Serbian leader Aleksandar Vucic said he would not be able to accept Russian President Vladimir Putin's invitation to attend the BRICS summit in Russia next month, media [reported](#) Thursday.

"We have important guests [coming] from abroad at that time," Vucic was quoted as saying by the Balkan service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.

The Tatarstan capital of Kazan will host a high-level BRICS meeting on Oct. 22-24.

BRICS, originally formed in 2009 by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, aims to bring together the world's most important emerging economies, as well as act as a political and economic counterbalance to wealthier nations in the West. The group of countries expanded earlier this year to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates.

Putin [said](#) Wednesday that he was hoping Vucic would accept his invitation, which Vucic

confirmed receiving “10–12 days ago.” The Serbian leader had [said](#) he would consider the possibility of attending the BRICS summit.

Earlier Thursday, the European Union warned Serbia that keeping strong ties with Russia was “incompatible” with its aspiration to join the EU after Serbia’s Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandar Vulin described Belgrade as an “ally of Russia” when he met with Putin at the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok.

Serbia has historically close ties with Moscow and depends heavily on Russian gas. While it condemned Russia’s invasion of Ukraine at the United Nations, Belgrade has refused to impose sanctions on the Kremlin.

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