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Czech opposition blasts Schwarzenberg for visit to Kosovo

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The Czech opposition on Wednesday criticized Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg for visiting Pristina on Monday, as the first foreign minister of an EU member to talk independence with the new Kosovo prime minister, Hashim Thaqi.

The deputy chairman of the European Parliament's foreign policy committee and European Parliament member representing the Czech Social Democrats, Libor Roucek, accused the Czech government of "going against history and the interests of its own people" by making such moves.

Roucek recalled that the Serbs had always stood by the Czechs in their times of hardship.

To illustrate the statement, Roucek gave the example of 1938, when the major world forces in Munich decided to break up then Czechoslovakia, and hand the Sudet region, populated predominantly by a German minority, over to Hitler's Germany. He also mentioned the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia that began in 1968.

"Now, when the Serbs are going through similar traumatic times, Czech Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg heads to Pristina against Belgrade's will, attends a meeting as the first EU foreign minister and debates the declaration of Kosovo's independence with new Kosovo Prime Minister Hashim Thaqi," Roucek protested.

The Czech opposition also protested the government's plans to recognize the independence of Kosovo, claiming that such a step would bear too much resemblance to the Munich Agreement and the seizing of the Sudet region.