

DÉJÀ VU

At the presidential elections in Montenegro, according to the forecasts, won the current president, the candidate of the governing Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) Filip Vujanović. What happened contrary to the forecasts was the fact that the candidate of the leading coalition won over the mutual candidate of the opposition for around 2,4 per cent which for a small electorate in Montenegro equals only to around 7 650 votes. The winning in „ photo finish“ is unusual for Montenegro where ,since the establishing of multi-party system in 1990. , left wing Democratic Party of Socialists has been sovereignly governing with its leader the Prime Minister of the country Milo Djukanović.

This electoral result brought to the situation that in the electoral night both President Filip Vujanović and the oppositional candidate for the President Miodrag Lekić announced the electoral winnings . First it did the oppositional candidate whose electoral headquarters claimed that Lekić had got more votes at 97 per cent of electorate. It turned out later that those three per cents of uncounted votes were exactly from those municipalities which are inhabited by the citizens of national minority which quite strongly supports the governing Democratic Party of Socialists. Right after that, the governing party addressed to the public and announced that the winner was its candidate Vujanović. The announcement of the government was confirmed the next day by the State Electoral Commission which revealed the preliminary results confirming that Montenegro got a new- old President Filip Vujanović.

The oppositional front gathered around the candidate of the opposition Lekić is quite different. Some of the oppositional leaders announced boycott of the work of the Parliament and street protests if the winning of their candidate should not be confirmed. The Montenegrin leader Djukanović answered that the announced oppositional boycott of the Parliament is not something which is unknown at the political scene in Montenegro „ and that these movements would always turn up to be wrong and very short-termed“. The leader of the leading coalition repeated that the triumph of Vujanović at the presidential elections is undoubtful, but that Democratic Party of Socialists has no objections about the additional checkings. „ Accounted ballots showed that Vujanović was the winning one, and those who are suspicious about the results can do checking through certain procedures. We are more than willing to enable all the checkings so that everyone can be convinced that the electoral process was regular and that the announced results are correct“, emphasized Djukanović.

No matter how odd it sounds, what the oppositional leaders do in Montenegro is quite logical from their point of view. By admitting the defeat at the presidential elections they would be in about half a year defeated for the second time (during autumn they lost parliamentary elections) so that it is under the question their staying on the leading positions in their parties. That is why the attempt of explaining the close electoral defeat of their presidential candidate to their voters as the „ electoral steeling“ is pointed to the survival of the leaders of their parties.

Still, the greatest problem of the opposition is that for the disapproval of the electoral result they did not get the support of the leading western democracies, but also Serbia as well. However, what is certain, Montenegrin opposition led by Lekić, whom is at least half of the citizens of Montenegro going to consider as moral winner, is going to be encouraged by this electoral result and is going to „breathe to the neck“ to the leading coalition in the future. Behaviour of Serbia after the announcement of the electoral result in Montenegro was quite responsible. Serbian Government have chosen to restrain itself from any kind of comments, not to interfere into the inner affairs of Montenegro and to wait for the official announcement of the results. This behaviour of Belgrade is very important because Serbia and Montenegro are, despite being formally separated states, still very close and connected. In Serbia live more citizens who are by origin Montenegrins than in Montenegro itself, there is almost no family which has not got relatives in Serbia, Serbian media are widely watched in Montenegro, and finally, as we come to that, 29 per cent of the citizens of Montenegro are declaring as Serbs. That is why the consequences of each important political event happening in Serbia can be felt in Montenegro and vice versa. Serbian President Tomislav Nikolić during his visit to Montenegro in February publicly called „pro-Serbian parties“ to include into the government and Serbian Government did not interfere into the electoral process in Montenegro during the last parliamentary and presidential elections. Earlier, it was not the case. During the time of the administration of the former Serbian President Boris Tadić Montenegrin Governments were directly accusing Serbian Government for its support to the opposition and some Serbian companies doing business in Montenegro were financing certain oppositionally oriented non-governmental organisations, oppositional media and political parties. By the change of the Government in Serbia, this behaviour of Belgrade has stopped and it has issued as quite important for the stability of Montenegro and the region in this period. That is why we can only guess what negative consequences on the stability of Montenegro would appear, in this situation of such close winning of President Vujanović when the opposition announces its triumph and upcoming protests, in case that in Belgrade was governing Tadić's administration which used to quite firmly supports the opponents of the Government in Podgorica?

For Montenegro is most important to solve all its dilemmas alone, inside its institutions. Post-electoral crises happen in all developed democracies as it was the case with the USA in November 2000. when it was not clear whether for the President of the USA was elected then current Vice President Al Gore or his opponent George Bush. Crises, like the electoral one, can happen anytime. Is the country democratic or not depends on whether its institutions are ready to solve the crises alone and make decisions. And whether political elites are mature and ready for the democracy reveals the fact in which they are ready to accept the decision of the authorised state bodies even if it is harmful for them. As it did the American Vice President Al Gore.

What really happened at the elections in Montenegro? The oppositional candidate Miodrag Lekić won 154 thousand of votes, meaning around 4000 less than the three oppositional candidates (who now supported Lekić) won at the presidential elections in 2008. Then for them voted 158 thousand of voters. At these elections in comparison to 2008. President Vujanović won around 7000 less votes. It should not be forgotten that at the previous elections he was supported by smaller coalitional partner Social Democratic Party which they refused to do this year.

If we compare the presidential results to those of parliamentary elections held in October 2012, it can be concluded that Vujanović got almost 162 thousand of votes which is only about 3000 less votes than the „Coalition of European Montenegro“, together with Social Democratic Party (SDP), won (165 380 votes). At October's elections the minority parties in Montenegro (Bosnians, Albanians and Croats) won around 30 thousand votes and exactly these votes were considered to be „Vujanović's capital“. Parties that belong to the opposition in Montenegro won at the October elections over 161 thousand votes so that the result gained by Lekić now is weaker. At the presidential elections in Montenegro voted for around 35 thousand less voters than in October 2012.

It should not be a surprise because at the parliamentary elections took part 13 electoral lists, what enabled that most of the citizens of Montenegro get the possibility to vote for their own choice. At the presidential elections only two candidates were the contestants so that one part of voters who did not see in them their choice stayed at home. So, at just finished elections did not happen anything spectacular, nor the two greatest political blocks, the government and the opposition, gained or lost many votes. What is new is the fact that the Democratic Party of Socialists, for the first time after more than ten years, came out at the elections alone, with the support of some national minority parties, as well as that it had got against itself the candidate who was backed up by the whole opposition. If we add to that boycott of their traditional coalitional partner – Democratic Party of Socialists confirmed that it is dominant political force in Montenegro. That is why the success of Filip Vujanović is even greater than it would seem at first sight.

The consequences of just finished presidential elections in Montenegro are going to be very far-reaching and are going to lead to the precomposition of Montenegrin political scene in the future. It is also going to be affected by the relations in the leading coalition between Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) and its smaller coalitional partner Social Democratic Party of Montenegro (SDP) which leader is Ranko Krivokapić, the President of the Parliament, as well as the need of the strongest party in Montenegro to gain its part of „Serbian votes“ in the future as well as to, now when the authorities in Serbia do not have any pretensions to arrange the relations in Montenegro, maintain closer connections with Belgrade.

The Problems in the leading coalition between the greater partner Democratic Party of Socialists and smaller Social Democratic Party have been on flame for a long time but they culminated at just finished presidential elections. Social Democratic Party first refused to support the candidate of Democratic Party of Socialists Vujanović explaining that decision by the fact that Vujanović did not have according to the Constitution any right to be the candidate for the President. However, the leader of this party, Krivokapić did not simply stay only on passive boycott. He invited the voters of the Social Democratic Party to boycott by threatening the members of the party not to show up at polls and messaged that the winning of the oppositional candidate Lekić would not mean disstability for Montenegro. This message was experienced in Democratic Party of Socialists as „staggering the knife in the back“. It is clear that the relations of these two traditional political partners will never be the same again, which in the future represents a serious potential problem for the leading coalition.

Being so confirms Krivokapić's statement given the same day when the opposition announced street protests „ that it is still not known the real winner of presidential elections in Montenegro and that the winners are the citizens who supported the politics of (its) party“. The solution of the relations in the governing coalition is also influenced by the number of representatives parties have got in the Parliament. The governing Democratic Party of Socialists is individually the strongest party in the Assembly (consisting of 81 representatives) with 32 representatives and together with 7 representatives of Socialist-Democratic Party and 4 representatives of the national minorities (three Bosnian and one Croatian) create the governing majority. Two Albanian representatives are not the members of the governing majority but are closer to the government than to the opposition. The opposition consists of 20 representatives of the Democratic Front (DF), 9 representatives of Social People's Party (SNP) and 7 representatives of Positive Montenegro (PCG). If the oppositional candidate had been chosen for the president there would certainly have been opened possibilities for new alliances, just like it happened in Serbia after the triumph of Tomislav Nikolić at the presidential elections over then actual president Boris Tadić. Instead, by the choice of Vujanović – Democratic Party of Socialists confirmed not only that it is individually the strongest party but that this party is exactly going to be the one to choose in the future which party is going to form the government with.

Seven years after the announcement of the independence, Montenegro is still divided into two blocks. The Come back of the most important politician in recent Montenegrin history, Milo Djukanović, at the position of the Prime Minister which happened by the end of the last year and the individual triumph of the Democratic Party of Socialists at the presidential elections enable the Government to make further steps in the following period in order to attract those citizens who declare to be Serbs. Out of the success of this process depend the future and the stability of Montenegro. One more reason for this venture is the fact that in Serbia, for the first time after 2003. the Government is the administration which does not want to interfere into the inner affairs of its brotherhood neighbour. It can be seen in the statement of the President Nikolić who in February during his visit to Podgorica invited proserbian parties in Montenegro to join the government but also in the recent statement of the leader of the strongest party in Serbia , Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) Aleksandar Vučić that Serbia and Montenegro are going to take part in front of the international investors with mutual projects.

That is why in the following period can be expected closer cooperation of Serbia and Montenegro which was burdened with lots of problems in the past. This cooperation which can be not only economic but also sports, cultural and political can influence the processes on the political scene of Montenegro. There are several unsolved questions in front of these two countries such are the question of the status of Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro, dual nationality etc. However, after almost ten years, there exists a political will for solving problems and cooperating in both countries. Being so, all the problems become solvable.

BACKGROUND

Montenegro is one of the six former republics of Social Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ) which existed from 1945. to 1991. when it fell apart in a bloody civil war. Montenegro faced the crush of Yugoslavia with quite young communist authority which had been chosen a few years earlier after the protests and demonstrations in the capital of this country Podgorica, then called Titograd named after the marshal Josip Broz Tito who founded and ruled for 35 years over communist Yugoslavia. Young Montenegrin authority did not, as other republics of former Yugoslavia, immediately proclaim the independence, but already in April 1992. founded a new state together with Serbia named – Federal Republic of Serbia. This new country, constituted as the federation of two equal countries out of which one was ten times bigger than the other simply could not survive even if there were not a civil war, United Nations sanctions, and political difficulties. Not long after the ending of the civil war in former Yugoslavia, there emerged political differences between the Montenegrin leader then Prime Minister Milo Djukanović and then current President of Serbia Slobodan Milošević which brought to the basic falling apart of federation which then only formally was not announced. One part of Montenegrin authority, led by then current President Momir Bulatović supported Serbian President Slobodan Milošević and founded his own party – Social People's Party (SNP). Djukanović won over Bulatović at dramatic presidential elections in 1996. and kept the government while his political opponent continued to act as an opposition with quite strong support of Serbian President Milošević. Bulatović's Social People's Party won over those voters in Montenegro who declare as Serbs, and there live 30 per cent of them, and live near a border with Serbia, while most of the other citizens supported Djukanović. Exactly that separation is specific for Montenegro and influences political affairs of this country and connects it with Serbia a lot more than other former Yugoslav republics have been ever tied. During the next couple of years, all to the democratic changes in Serbia which happened in 2000. , and specially during NATO intervention, Montenegro was at the edge of civil war. Montenegrin leader Djukanović supported the democratic opposition in Serbia and played an important part in democratic changes happened in Belgrade. In these times was formed a friendship between him and the Serbian oppositional leader Zoran Djindjić who in the year 2000. became the Prime Minister of Serbia.

With the intermediation of the European Union in the year 2003. was formed confederation of Serbia and Montenegro which was named The State Union of Serbia and Montenegro. By forming this union Montenegro got the possibility to hold a referendum about the independence, which it did in May 2006. when majority of citizens voted for the independence. The separation of Serbia and Montenegro happened peacefully and agreedable, and two countries established diplomatic relations. The hardest incident in the relations of these two countries happened when Montenegro, after hard pressure of the USA , in 2008. admitted the self-proclaimed independence of former south Serbian province of Kosovo. Then Serbia relegated the Montenegrin ambassador from Belgrade. The relations of these two countries have also been burdened by the question of Serbian Orthodox Church which has been the only „ religiously admitted“ church in Montenegro while Montenegrin nationalists founded Montenegrin Orthodox Church which is not admitted by any other orthodox church in the world. The relations of these two countries have been improved after the change of the authorities in Serbia in May 2012.



Montenegro, according to the latest index in 2011. has got 620 000 citizens, and not any nation has got the overhalf majority. There are most Montenegrins – 45 per cent while there are 29 per cents of Serbs. Montenegro is the candidate for the member of the European Union which have started negotiations about the joining to this organisation and is the candidate for the membership in NATO.