

THE RECONSTRUCTION FOR THE SOCIAL SWERVE

The announced reconstruction of the Government of the Republic of Serbia has become the central topic in these hot summer days in Serbian society and media. And trully, as the end of July is getting closer when it is expected that National Assembly of Republic of Serbia states about the changes in the cabinet of Serbian Prime Minister Ivica Dačić, thus it is more and more auctioned who is going to leave and who is going to stay among the Ministers, are all parties of the governing coalition going to be the part of the Government after the changes, and is the reconstruction better solution than early elections or not. Naturally, as it is usually the case in Serbia, all people have got their own opinion, from market sellers via political parties to the church and media. And all of them have got their favourites and negative characters. And all of them give support.

The announced reconstruction of the Government of Serbia is not the first one in modern Serbian political history but it is unique due to many things. What this reconstruction differs from previous ones is the fact that it is taking place only after a year of governing, at the moment when the parties of the governing coalition together have got the support of more than 50 per cent of the voters, majority in the Parliament which is not endangered and when there is not any pressure from the public nor the opposition for the changes in the Government. Simply, the announced reconstruction of the Government was initiated by the government itself, in other words the strongest party of the leading coalition Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) and its first leader Aleksandar Vučić , first Deputy Prime Minister in the Government and currently the most popular politician in Serbia.

The structure of Serbian government is also one of motives for its reconstruction. It was formed after the elections in 2012. when until then the member of the leading coalition , Socialists Party of Serbia (SPS) decided to, after very good electoral result , break up the coalition with Democratic Party and make new political alliance. For this decision socialists (popular name for Socialists Party of Serbia) were awarded with the position of the Prime Minister despite the fact that they were the third party at the elections concerning the number of votes and while in the Government itself exists political organisation with larger number of votes – Serbian Progressive Party. Another former partner of the democrates also joined the new Government – Mladjan Dinkić (leader of the party United Regions of Serbia – URS) and thus Serbia got new Government. In the previous year was recorded great increase of popularity of Serbian Progressive Party which, according to some researches, has got 40 per cent of the support, while Socialists Party of Serbia which has got the Prime Minister, records the increase of support, but now the relation between these two parties is 1: 3.5. It is exactly the reason why the engine of the Serbian Government is the party which has not got the Prime Minister and why the first deputy of Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić is the person who is real leader of Serbian government.

The popularity of the party and its leader Vučić thus gives strength to Serbian Progressive Party to start , execute the reconstruction of the Government as well as to create the rules under which it is going to be done.

The last reconstruction of the government was done in spring 2011., by then governing and now oppositional Democratic Party (DS) and its then current leader , the former president of Serbia Boris Tadić. It was the forced movement of then actual government at a year before holding of the elections, at the moment when more popular opposition started street protests asking for the early elections. To the government then the reconstruction seemed as good marketing movement which would ensure the citizens that the government is ready to change unpopular ministers and reduce state administration. Thus fulfilled reconstruction came to the ejection of the leader of one smaller party of governing coalition , United Regions of Serbia (URS) Mladjan Dinkić, out of the Government, with the survival of his party and his ministers in it (!?) , to the change of several ministers, to the unnatural fusion of certain ministeries in order to show that there is a reduction of state administration, which actually stayed the same, turned out to be a complete fiasco. Then actual government did not understand that for the citizens the reconstruction of the government is not the question of the name of the minister but the opportunity to make the state more efficient and their lives better. The unsuccessful reconstruction from 2011. was one of the reasons why the former President Boris Tadić and Democratic Party lost the elections a year later.

It is obvious that the leader of Serbian Progressive Party Aleksandar Vučić understands where his opponents made mistakes because when he talks about the reconstruction of the Government, he does not mention personal solutions but new politics and aims. According to his words the Government is intending to , in the following period, after the decision of the European Union to start the negotiations with Serbia about joining and after the normalisation of relations with Priština, pay much more intention to the economy and better living standard of its citizens. When you put things that way, then personal changes of certain ministers or directors are part of the new politics. They are not provided because of inner party reasons but are the part of the policy of the new government where there are periodical checkings of the „ transient time“ of those who were successful and those who were not successful. Being so recently confirmed the leader of the progressives Vučić when he said that the Government „ **must show to the citizens that the principle of responsibility and deposal and respect of the will of people is much more important than the principle of party obeyance and belonging.**“

So, the key question of this reconstruction is not who is going to be the minister and whether some party is after this going to have more or less power, but can the reconstruction become the initial for modernisation of Serbia and changes in society, economy and politics?

The negotiations about the membership in the European Union are going to change Serbia for ever, no matter if it is going to become the member of that organisation or not. During the negotiations, Serbian society is going to modernize, new standards are going to be applied in state administration, education, health care and economy and state is going to respect rights of its citizens more.

Small and poor societies, such as these created after falling apart of former Yugoslavia, would never be able to achieve these standards alone and that is why for them the membership in the European Union, with all the flaws and problems this organisation might have, is great advantage.

Is Serbian society ready for the changes it is going to face with? Serbia is still being governed by the provincial spirit which is against any modernisation and change. „ **In the world of province, it is more important to stick to the usual custom than to be a person**“, wrote about this phenomenon Serbian philosopher **Radomir Konstantinović** in his most important work „ The philosophy of the province“ in the middle of the last century. So, great obstacle for the new beginning of Serbia is the fact that political project of modernisation does not have any emotional attractiveness as classical ideologies and provincial spirit which it is about to exchange. Speaking about them back in 1998. in Aspen institute **Zoran Djindjić** noticed that „ **these ideologies have got demagogic arsenal being made perfect for a few centuries**“. „ It is not an easy work to grab real national and social problems out of the magnetic field of their demagogy and to put them to treatment of rational politics“, said former Prime Minister of Serbia and its first democratic Prime Minister after October changes in the year 2000. , being assassinated in 2003.

Thus, in order that Serbia could change and modernize it is necessary strong government that is going to lead it, and to whom citizens can trust. Thus it is important that reconstruction of the Government is done thoroughly, and that it does not become simple change of the ministers and several state officials, but the reconstruction of its goals and the way of its functioning. After the reconstruction the Government must be well trained team which is capable of leading the country towards the European Union and to use all the chances it is going to be offered. It does not only imply a successful ending of negotiations about the membership in the European Union but the administration which is ready to use the money being given to Serbia in the funds of the European Union for the states in the process of negotiation about the membership , as well as to attract as much foreign investments as possible.

These are great and historic changes for Serbia and there are no great changes without great efforts, strong government and politicians with vision determined to make historical steps. Great changes do not happen evolutively. They emerge in discontinuity and creation of new relations and rules. Reforms can only be successful if the feeling of hope and will in Serbia wins over provincial spirit. Hating, sceptical, suspicious societies do not achieve great aims and extraordinary results. Serbia must change its mentality, that people start looking thing from the bright side, that do not blame the whole world for bad things happening to them, to be determined to start changing and engaged in solving the most important social problems.

In order that Serbian people succeed in that, despite the Government being determined to the same aims, it is necessary to exist a great idea. Because, there are no great changes without people being included in them and their trust in government , strong political leadership and great ideas. Serbia finally can say that the idea of European integrations has won in politics as well as in society. It is exactly that great idea which can make Belgrade move forwards. Because „ **there is no anything more powerful than the idea which time has come**“, wrote French writer Victor Hugo back in nineteenth century.

Maybe there lies the answer why the strongest political party of the leading coalition , Serbian Progressive Party, only after a year in the government and in the situation of enjoying the support of 40 per cent of the citizens without any political competition, decided to start question of changes in the Government and not the early elections. If you only want to rule and your only aim is to get few more ministries , then in such a situation you do not change anything. If you recognise a historical moment and a chance for your country to, after hundreds of years of wandering and at a hundred years of the beginning of the First World War where it lost more than a half of its male population, finally change the way of thinking and instead of myths choose progress and development , then the reconstruction of the Government is logical solution. There lies the answer to the question why Vučić keeps talking about the reconstruction of aims and not ministers.

That is why for Serbia is important the the reconstruction of the Government is successful , that administration shows that it is ready to learn out of others but also their own mistakes, as well as that it is focused on solving problems and achievement of aims. That is why the reconstruction is only going to be successful only if it becomes the reconstruction not only of aims but the mentality, habits and priorities our society has got. It is up to smaller parties of the leading coalition to realize why such reconstruction is necessary and to show that in next three years they are ready to be dedicated to that aim, and be less interested in how many ministers they have. On whether they are going to accept this way of thinking or not depends if the changes that are inevitable in Serbia are going to happen by the reconstruction of the Government or by early elections.