

## THE TECTONIC MOVEMENTS IN SERBIA

When the beginning of the criminal proceeding against the most well off Serbian and the owner of the company „Delta M., Miroslav Mišković was approved by the Commissioner of the European Union ( EU ) for the enlargement Stefan Fule, and a few days later the respectable British paper The Economist commended the Government of Serbian Prime Minister Ivica Dačić, then it is obvious that everything what has been happening in Belgrade in the last few months, including the „Mišković case“, is part of the bigger process and not only one isolated case. The case „Mišković“ is the culmination of several months process in which Serbian Government managed to prove to the international community that apart from being reliable and credible partner that fulfills taken international obligations has also got a political will to carry out proclaimed aims during the elections. And among most important were the continue of the process of European integrations and the struggle against corruption and organised criminal.

The bearer of the anti-corruptive activities in the country is the first Deputy Prime Minister of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, the Minister of Defence and the secretary of the Council for the National Security Aleksandar Vučić who is at the same time the leader of the greatest party of the leading coalition, Serbian Progressive Party (SNS). Despite that one part of the public and his political opponents keep trying to discover the reason why Vučić is so interested in the severe struggle against the corruption, the reason is quite simple. As a responsible politician he is aware that Serbia can not survive economically without the European Union despite all the problems that the European Union has got, independently of the cooperation with the Russian Federation and China. One of the rare politicians that understands the connection of the processes of the European integrations and the struggle against the corruption and the building up of the independent law system. If we add to that the fact that poor citizens of Serbia in the period of the transition consider the corruption and criminal the greatest problem in our society, it is obvious why this topic is Vučić's priority. Simply, the struggle against the corruption brings closer the country to the European Union, which will bring indirectly to the increase of the life standard and the investments, it turns the chaotic Serbian society into the arranged, democratic and European system in which are accept European standards in the administration, educational and health care system, but also in the economy, and fulfills what citizens want. Finally, he ties himself personally and the party he leads, for the arrangement of the greatest problem this country has what will certainly have positive effect at the future political rating. Because, different from his predecessors in the Government who only talked about doing something, meaning that they believed that political marketing is everything and that the politics is led by reading the reports about the public opinion – Vučić really does his work. Can one politician imagine greater challenge?

The previous Government was hiding from the citizens that Kosovo is not the only reason for the stagnation of the European integrations of Serbia. The reform of the juridical system, that has turned into the scandal of European measures, and the corruption of the Serbian society were making greater problems to the previous Serbian Government in the process of European integrations than the unsolved Kosovo status! Here we come to the point why the European Union was not even interested who was going to form the Government after the May elections in Serbia, meaning why it did not give the support to the former President of Serbia Boris Tadić and his Democratic Party that they expected from the Brussels and the one they always used to get until these elections. Simply, the situation in Serbian society is quite bad and the Government has so many times said one thing and has done something else no matter whether it was about Kosovo or for example about the Law of Public Tenders or the juridical reform – that there was nothing to support at all. According to the report of the Global index of the perception of corruption (CPI) of the international organization Transparency International for the year 2012 Serbia is positioned in the 80th place out of 176 countries in which this research has been carried out. From our neighbors, Croatia is positioned at the 62nd place, while in the year 2011. It was at the 66th position. Macedonia is positioned at the 69th place, the same as in the year 2011 while Montenegro is positioned at the 75th place which is quite big comedown compared to the year 2011 when it was at 66th place. In the year 2011 Serbia was at the position 86, so there is an increase recorded in this year. Still it can only be an illusion, which best explains the announcement of the organization „Transparency Serbia“ in which it is said that the position Serbia takes now in the year 2012 better „because in the year 2011 our country was at the position 86 out of 182 countries but it is the consequence of the comedown of other countries.“ „ In the last year Bosnia & Herzegovina, Liberia, Sri Lanka, Bulgaria, Trinidad and Tobago either overran or caught up with our country“, it is stated in the report of this organization and is also concluded that „ after a longer period in front of Serbia are all former republics of Yugoslavia and all Balkan countries apart from Greece, Albania and Moldavia.“ In conclusion, Serbian society is quite corrupted one.

The European Commission (EC) also concluded the same thing in its annual report about the progress of Serbia in the process of European integrations, which widely deals with the struggle against the corruption and organized criminal. After the relatively positive report from the year 2011 the current report reveals more medial mark of the efforts of the Republic of Serbia. The conclusion of the European Commission is that „ Serbia has made small progress in the struggle against the corruption“. In the report from the 2011 Serbia was commended for fulfilling all legal and institutional pre-terms for the efficient struggle against the corruption. A special commend was given to the Agency for the struggle against corruption which was found as an independent institution by the National Assembly in 2010. And which raised into the central institution for the struggle against the corruption. The Commission, however, was critical to the overall sense, the legal acts were „hesitatingly aquired“. This year the European Commission criticised because the previous Government failed to adopt the National strategy for the struggle against the corruption. Not only the report from the 2011 but also the report from the 2012 Criticize the affectability of the educational and health care system in Serbia to the corruption.

The European Commission specially insisted on the solving the cases of high corruption and on leading the efficient investigations especially in cases which pointed Serbian Council for for the struggle against the corruption. „This advisory organ of the Government pointed in the raw of cases of privatization to the doubt of the corruption. However, only small number of these cases have been questioned and even in less cases it led to the announcing the verdict“. , it is said in the report of the European Commission for the 2011. In comparison to the year 2011, during this year, according to the opinion of the European Commission, very little have been done. Despite the fact that „ the Council for the struggle against the corruption have continued working on discovering the cases of systematic corruption, it was followed with the legal consequences, even though the Council presented detailed report of the cases of high corruption“, concludes the European Commission and adds that it caused „larger number of investigations with some smaller cases“. According to the opinion of the European Commission even then it led to the too mild punishments“.

The European Union is especially sensitive to the questions of the corruption and the independence of the legal system since it welcomed Bulgaria and Romania in its membership. These two countries have not until today reached high European standards in these fields which represents serious problem in the European Union. It should be added to this the fact that the level of the corruption is always in increase with the new members of the European Union in the first years of the membership because these countries are no longer under the strict monitoring what is the case in the period until they become the members. Then it becomes clear why the European Union decided that during the negotiations about the membership with the new members first opened the chapters 23 and 24 which deal with the law and the basic rights, justice and the internal affairs. This new attitude first experienced Croatia which his going to become the member of the European Union in June 2013 and now through the same process are going other Balkan countries that are negotiating with the European Union. The struggle against the corruption has thus become the important part of the process of joining the European Union, and during the negotiations with the countries of the western Balkans, the European Union is going to pay much more attention to this topic than it did in the previous circle of the enlargement of the European Union. Simply, the European Union recognized that political and economic restructuring that follows the transition opens possibilities for the systematic and high corruption. Out of these reasons, in the European Union consider that the corruption should be considered in an overall way because the focus is not just on the legal regulation, its maintaining and crime investigations but on the prevention as well. Germany especially insists on fulfilling the new terms. The pressure of Germany first felt Croatia when, according to he writing of their media, Berlin ( read German Chancellor Angela Merkel ) took the key part in leaving of the former Prime Minister Ivo Sanader from the position and his being recently convicted of the corruption. Now it is Serbia's turn. It is well known that Germany offers great support to the Serbian Government in its struggle against the corruption and German media give relatively big publicity, when Serbia is concerned, to the anti-corruptive activities from Belgrade. It is very important for Belgrade because Berlin is going to influence crucially on the pace which Serbia is going to advance towards the European Union with.

Besides, Germany has got very close economic but also political connections with Serbian ally, the Russian Federation. Becoming closer to Germany is good news for Serbia because since the assassination of the Prime Minister Zoran Djindjić in March 2003. Serbia has not had any particular close contacts with this country.

After quite some time, Aleksandar Vučić is the first Serbian politician and state representative who understood these processes. What is more important, he realised that no one believes in words any more, because the citizens of Serbia as well as the European Union, have already been crossbitten by Serbian politicians so many times so far. Thus, if he wants to succeed, he must show it through his deeds, and to behave in a different way from his predecessors. He has been in politics for twenty years, he has been progressing to the leader of the strongest party in the country through his life by putting the electoral posters as a student, he has become one of the best experts in building up the party structure and organising of the electoral campaigns, and thus politicians praise efficiency, he was losing and again getting and his chance to show what he is capable of was waiting for 13 years. That is why he exactly knows what he must do and he will not miss the chance to do something useful for his country and to take place in the political history of Serbia. It started with the questioning of the suspicious privatizations which the Advisory for the struggle against the corruption marked as examples of the systematic corruption, and on which investigating insists the European Union. Exactly about that wrote the respectable German news „Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung“: „It could be the beginning of the new politics in Serbia being evoked by the European Union“, writes the German news and adds: „When the old nationalists formed the new Government in July in Serbia, the Deputy of Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić said that his most important goal is the struggle against the corruption. However, these promises at Balkans are always heard before the holding of elections, and they are the part of the oppositional campaigns just like the electoral flags, balloons and party's symbols. But after the elections little of these promises actually happen. It still can not be judged whether it is going to be the same in Serbia this time. “However, it is noticeable that Vučić went further in the struggle against the corruption than his predecessor. New development of the events (the hearing of Mišković) is the development that is connected to the influence from abroad. Serbia is under the pressure of the European Union. It is necessary to investigate large number of suspicious privatisations of the companies in which is partly involved „Delta“, as well, is written in these respectable German press.

It seems that the case „Mišković“ is the key act according to which Serbian Government is expecting to get more transparent support of the Brussels meaning to convince its European partners that Government has got the intention of bringing the struggle against the corruption to the very end. „European Commission is encouraged by the movements of the Serbian Government in its struggle against corruption and invites the authorities to determinedly continue in the same direction“, announced Peter Stanos, the speaker of the Commissioner for the enlargement Stefan Fule and added that the attitude of the European Union is „that the struggle against the corruption is one of the most important challenges Serbia is facing today“. He pointed that the European Commission „very carefully“, follows the movements of Belgrade concerning the corruption and that in „preventing the corruption is important to have the coherent, all inclusive and non-selective attitude“.

„We are encouraged by the attitude of Serbian Government and we expect that announced Action Plan and the Strategy become effective as soon as possible“, said the Fule’s speaker Stanos and concluded that „concerning the importance of the solving of this problem for the Serbian European integrations, it is necessary determined commitment to the struggle against the corruption at the highest level“. Being so confirmed the recent statement of the Chief of the Delegation of the European Commission in Serbia, the Ambassador Vincent Degert, at the Anti-corruptive forum in Serbia: „The situation in the field of the streuggle against the corruption in Serbia is not the best and very little has been accomplished so far“, said Degert. „We are the vitnesses that in the last few months there are strong actions that are sending the strong message that the Government can seriously accept its obligation to struggle against organised corruption and criminal“, pointed Degert and stressed that the European Union congratulated the initiative of the Serbian Government to strongly coordinate the struggle against corruption at the highest level but also added that it is necessary for the success of that struggle how its results are going to be accepted in public.“ The check of the condition of this struggle in reality is going to be seen through the reaction of public, It has to see out of that struggle that the tolerance towards the corruption is zero and that nobody is untouchable“, said Degert.

Not entering the details of „Mišković case“ meaning the reasons why the criminal proceeding has been started because it is not the topic of this analysis, the fact is that the government by starting this proceeding sent the message to the international public that in Serbia there are no more untouchables, as well as that its intentions are serious. Because the arrest of the most well off Serb and the owner of the largest domestic company with spreaded business around the country and the region can not but to be the tectonic movement in Serbian society and the economy or „one kind of an earthquake“ as this act was marked by Zoran Stojiljković, a professor at the University in Belgrade. The Government, meaning its Deputy Prime Minister Vučić as the bearer of these activities, by this act is sending the message to the domestic public that, according to most of the relevant researches of the public opinion, the problem of the corruption consider to be the most important in Serbian society.

The opposition welcomed the action of the Government which could be expected concerning the non popularity that Mišković as the billionaire has in Serbian society. However, the representatives of the opposition did not miss the opportunity to demand that the struggle against the corruption „should not be selective“ meaning that it should be systematic and not to depend on one man. That is, for example, the biggest oppositional Democratic Party (DS) in the special statement signed by the deputy president Miodrag Rakić (the predecessor of Aleksandar Vučić at the position of the Secretary of the Advisory for the National Security) „supported the action of the state organs“.

Rakić added that the Democratic Party expected from the state organs and the Government of Serbia that in „the future actions show that the struggle against the corruption is not selective“. It is exactly the greatest remark of the opposition for the politics of the struggle against the corruption being organized by the Government of Serbia and its Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić.

Still, the Democratic Party is not the party that can with complete right give such remarks. Namely, in the last four years along which the Democratic Party and former President of Serbia and this party Boris Tadić had the complete government, the main objection was that the complete government was in the hands of Boris Tadić instead of being in the institutions. Tadić himself contributed to these objections because he least dealt with the work he was chosen for and from the position of the President he influenced the work of other state organs commenting even the law processes. Besides, the government of the Democratic Party was as well accused of non selective aquirement of the justice. The cases of processes against Goran Knežević, once the Mayor of the Municipality of Zrenjanin and today the Minister of Agriculture and the businessman Dušan Stupar (who rented the assets for then oppositional Serbian Progressive Party) arrested at the electoral campaign and then set free without even started the quilt proceeding against him – speak in terms of that fact. Besides, the former Prime Minister of Serbia Mirko Cvetković in times when the Democratic Party has all the government in the country has recently written in his book that one of the biggest problems of the previous government was that the struggle against the corruption was not „put on sistematically“. That is why the remarks of the Democratic Party are not convincing because the governing Serbian Progressive Party can still answer them that all they are criticising the government about could have done only a few months ago while they were running Serbia meaning that for four years they did not create sistematic pre-terms for the struggle against the corruption.

So, there is no doubt that the Government has got wide support for the anti-corruptive actions it is undertaking. Still, in the following period it will have to give the answer to the question whether it itself wants to be systematic. According to the statements of the Deputy Prime Minister Vučić who insists on „the arranging the system in the country for the struggle against the corruption“, there is an impression that they are based on his firm political belief. The fact is that on the agenda of the National Assembly there is right now a new Law about Public Tenders speaks in terms of the determination of the Government to arrange the system because the public tenders are the greatest source of the corruption in the country. Besides, the current Government of Serbia has before the announcement of the Law about the Public Tenders maintained the wide public discussion in which took part all the interested for public tenders, and the Law itself got the support of the European Union as well as the non-governmental organistions dealing with the struggle against the corruption. Opposed to the current government, the previous government tried a year ago to bring the new Law about the Public Tenders quickly, without any public discussion, with the severe opposition of the European Commission and the European Parliament and without the support of the experts and non-governmental organisations. The core of the wish of the previous Government was the centralisation and the control of public tenders in the Ministry of Finance, with the abolition of the independence of the Administration for Public Tenders. The Law suggested by the current Government is the opposite – it is strengthened the role and the independence of the institutions and it is increased the transparency of the tenders. This Law is maybe the most important step in the building up of the system.

The Governmental activities will be welcome by the foreign investors working in Serbia. In Serbia in the year 2012 noticed the outflow of the foreign investments but it is the consequence of the electoral year, the long process of constituting the Government and great economic crisis. Despite those who would be hit by the Governmental measures that are going to comment that it despels the investors, the things does not stay that way. Serbia has not lost even one foreign investment because of the bad roads or the fact that one party is in the Government, but because of the corruption that foreigners are complaining about, the monopoly in the economy, or the uncertainty about the tax or other obligations, because every investor wants the possibility to plan. The research made by the Trade in the sistem of the Austrian Embassy in Belgrade speaks in terms of that fact.

Out of one hundred and eight foreign even 81 per cent told that they expect of the new Government the improvement of the legal certainty and the struggle against the corruption. The question is whether the other Serbian businessmen, meaning tycoons as they are called in Serbia, (the term taken from Croatia) are going to understand the change of game rules in Serbia? Most of them are badly hit by the economic crisis because they are over indebted and at the edge of the bankruptcy. Out of the new Government they expected help which they, from time to time, used to get earlier. They learned to do business by using political connections which they created earlier, and it is the question if they can manage to do business successfully in any other system? Their logic is that the Government should cooperate with their richest businessmen because they employ hundreds of thousands of people. What they will have to understand is that the status of the strongest businessmen will have to earn working without the monopoly and on the open market. At that market can happen to them exactly the same what they did for years to smaller serbian companies – to come the bigger than they are take over their place. Who lack to understand that is going to disappear. What the Government is still going to have to be careful about is that these companies – whatever they are, employ hundreds of thousands of employees and that those people can not be left without working places. It is certain that Serbian business elite is going to look completely different in a few years that it looks like today. Who is going to be present at that gathering picture is still unknown, but it is certain that their organising in the powerful, elite economic club Privrednik, that least dealt with the economy and which the ministers and the Prime Ministers were coming to their feet – is the past.

Which topics are going to be opened during the investiation against the most well off Serb nobody can tell at all. Mišković's influence on the politics and the economy of Serbia is still great today, and in the past it was enormous. It can not be different when in the small country exists the businessman whose wealth in the 2007. Magazine Forbs estimated at one billion euros. In the same year, the Advisory for the Struggle against the Corruption claimed that Mišković controlled „at least six per cent,“ of the gross domestic product (GDP) of Serbia. Then neither the Advisory nor anyone else knew that for the network of offshore companies led from the Mišković's headquarters in Belgrade. In the meantime that influence reduced after the selling of the greatest Serbian retail chain Maxi in the ownership of the Mišković to the Belgium company Delhaize Group but still it is large. It is more than obvious that sooner or later the question is going to emerge how Mišković had the priviledged status in Serbian society.

It has already done the non-governmental organisation „Transparency Serbia“ by the demand of,, the questioning of the spreaded doubts about the priviledged position and status of Mišković but any other owner of great capital as well with the organs of the Government, the hidden financingof the political parties, and especially publicly stated claims of the first Deputy Prime Minister of the Government about the people from the Government that were given from 30 to 50 thousand euros a month by Mišković“.

So, after the economic earthquake, the arresting of the most well off Serb could cause the social and political earthquake. And that could lead to the change of the political map, the disappearing of some political parties and the politicians as it used to happen in Italy in the last twenty years. Namely, just because of the corruption, the connection of the parties and the politicians with the mafia, and the rottness of the political system today at the political scene of Italy there are not any of the traditional political parties, which were running the country for the decades. Exactly that could happen in Serbia because our political mentality is much closer to the Italian than to the British or the German where the same, traditional political parties exist for the century or longer. Who does not believe let look at the how in Croatia because of the corruptional affairs fails the party that created the independent Croatia and which had the tough electoral body – Croatian Democratic Society (HDZ).

In front of the Government of Serbia and its Deputy Prime Minister Vučić is the big task to use the situation in which their efforts are supported by everyone- from the European Union to the citizens of Serbia as the country could get the stable domestic institutions for the struggle against the corruption that run the business in the field of their regular authorities, clearly defined with the Constitution and the Laws. The consistence at that road will bring to the situation that Serbia already in June next year can expect to start the negotiations about the joining the European Union. And the negotiations with the European Union are going to enable Serbia to arrange other fields such are health care system. Education, state authorities and protection of the rights of the consumers and finally become normal and arranged European country. All chances are that it is going to be so because Serbia for the first time since the assassination of the Prime Minister Djindjić has got the Government that leads real politics based on the possibilities and the restrictions and does not slave to the myths and the past no matter if we talk about the relations with the European Union, the question of Kosovo, the relations with the USA or the Russian Federation. Or to say more clearly, after many years, the president Tomislav Nikolić the Prime Minister Ivica Dačić and the first Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić speak the truth to the citizens whether if they talk about Kosovo, the struggle against the corruption or any other problem. That is why this Government has the chance to succeed.