

V.I.P. Daily News Report

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Issue No. 4777

Tuesday, January 17, 2012

ANALYSIS

Serbia Needs Technocratic Government, Like the One in Italy, Greece

If Serbia does not get the EU member-country candidate status in March, then her European future will be threatened because the EU, which is already under pressure of her own problems, will not consider the enlargement in the West Balkans for a long time, according to many analysts from Serbia and the EU member-countries.

This thesis, however, does not have to be correct. Serbia's chances to get closer to the EU will not be any slimmer if the country seriously reforms her state's apparatus, economy, media and judicature. One should have in mind that the talks for the EU membership of various countries were of various duration as well. For example, Spain had the longest talks (86 months); the country is followed by Croatia (84 months) and Portugal. Sweden and Finland had the shortest talks (around a year and a half each).

It means that it is possible to speed up the EU integration process of a country by consistent reforms. If a country wants to become an EU member, but does not meet all criteria for that, pinning her hopes on the political decisions of the EU instead - as the case is with Serbia - then it means that the country is not ready for the EU accession.

If the authorities, on the other hand, for example, in Serbia, are not ready for the reforms, or cannot implement these - then the key problem lies with the authorities. Serbia's authorities persistently advocate the idea that there are various political powers in the country that oppose country's accession to the EU. That's not true. Public opinion is mostly for Serbia's accession to the EU; they expect that the EU will bring order in the country that will prevent corruption, enable better and more righteous life in the country, life that will be in line with certain rules.

Against such order is only a portion of the Serbia's elite, which will lose its power and at least a portion of their wealth gained during the transition in an illegal way - if the country is reformed in the way the EU demands it. Political and economic elite wants to join the EU above all to keep its positions and get the money from the EU funds. It is most difficult to the ones who will lose their current monopoly positions, if the country and society are reformed to give up the current situation.

Therefore the public opinion in Serbia is in constant misunderstanding with the EU. The biggest problem to Serbia's getting closer to the EU is her own elite, which mediates between the EU and the citizens of Serbia. If the EU and the Serbia's elite wanted the same, then the Serbia's pathway to the EU would be short and the reforms could be implemented fast. Thus, each side in this process protects its own interests; small and often apparent moves in reforms, including the resolving of the Kosovo issue, occur only when the EU sets strict conditions Serbia's authorities must meet.

With the present state of things, Serbia's getting closer to the EU will be a toilsome process of struggling, in which the EU puts Serbia's political and business elite in order by force. During that process there is nobody to represent interests of the citizens who live a hard life and who are burdened with the lack of prospects.

If these premises are correct, that means that the citizens should dismiss the current elite at the elections, and the President Boris Tadic and his Democratic Party (DS) to be removed from office and power. Their biggest opponent is the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) led by Tomislav Nikolic, who is very popular almost by default, mostly because the electorate is deeply unhappy with the current authorities. However, there are fears of many voters that both Nikolic and his party are not capable of conducting necessary reforms in order the country to get closer to the EU. The current authorities have been making use of these doubts in its propaganda to a great extent.

Sure enough, Serbia - after the elections, which are planned to take place in May - will find herself in a hopeless situation: the SNS, which probably will win at the elections, will have to form a coalition in order to somehow form a government. On the other hand, Tadic-led DS will do everything in its power to form any coalition that will keep it in power. Even a grand coalition of the DS and the SNS is possible, but it will mean numerous give-and-takes and trade-offs.

Anyways, Serbia will not be able to leave the closed circle of her inner crisis even after the elections. There will be no a clear winner, who will have a clear plan for the development of the country. The only winner will be again the caste of top people of the political parties and large business, who will keep leading the country on the former, unsuccessful path. It is certain that the crisis will continue and it is highly likely that it is going to deepen.

It is obvious that this particular model of parliamentary democracy - in a form it is in Serbia - has failed. It has created political and business elite over the past decade and so, which, independently from party belonging, actually is an entity mostly opposed to the citizens.

So, it might not be bad if the so-called Italian, or Greek model is applied in Serbia as well - regardless of the outcome of the elections a technocratic government to be formed in agreement with the EU, which will have precise and clear objectives, funds and full support of the so-called international community (whatever is meant by this term) as well as of large majority at the parliament (it is certainly possible to do it bearing in mind how much Serbia is subservient to foreign influence).

Such a government will have to be made of undiscredited experts headed by a prime minister who will have strength, will and moral authority to quickly and efficiently implement reforms and bring the country in front of the EU doors. That process could be relatively fast and with less mistakes than the so-far process of the EU enlargement process.

That government should also have additional competences, in terms that it should not have rendering of accounts to the parliament for some of its moves. It seems as an infringement of basic democratic principle of checks and balances, but someone could hardly claim that the current way the government's drafts are passed at the Serbian parliament is the height of democracy.

After all, it is better the country to be led by a team of enlightened technocrats, than to run a risk of street riots of the unhappy people.

Such a solution probably has its own faults, but when a country finds herself in a closed circle, then even such solutions can get support of the people. It will depend mostly on the selection of people who will take over the process of reforms and their quick results. Such the solution looks like an emergency administration imposed to companies that do business in bad way, but Serbia is also a country in which business is done in bad way.