



Ivica Dacic, leader of SPS and the newly appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, reveals in his interview to "Kurir" the changes expected in his party, discusses the situation he left in the police, MFA and the challenges facing us as a country.

You said that SPS was to be reformed, both in terms of its manifesto and officials "because of the negative reflections from the past". What specifically do you have in mind?

- One cannot "bathe twice in the same water", as Heraclitus would say.

That's the philosophical approach. Say it so the people can understand.

- Philosophically and practically – SPS must change. We must follow the modern ways of party organization and ways in which parties win the support of citizens. Personnel should ensure that as many people as possible join SPS. I am not thinking only of young people, but all those who have new ideas. And why am I saying this?

Why?

- Because one era in the political life has come to an end. These elections have shown that hardly anyone weathered the storm of a political tsunami.

You are already preparing for the next elections?

- Of course. Everyone in their right mind would think that way. This does not mean that they should be held any time soon. Modern Serbia cannot rest upon old party concepts.

What about old personnel?

- Let me clarify my point – I am not concerned about someone's age, but about their outdated perceptions of the world.

Were you disappointed by the work done by any of your party colleagues?

– There is no use asking me about the new personnel solutions. It is too soon to answer such question. But SPS cannot win votes only on the basis of the name of Ivica Dacic.

Do you think that the 15-percent vote that you won in the previous election was only

thanks to you?

- Unfortunately, that is true for the most part. The situation is similar with SNS and Aleksandar Vucic, as well. No one votes for party manifestoes.

Are you saying that some people in SPS were concerned only about their own interests rather than those of the state or party interests?

- I wouldn't describe it in so graphic terms. Persons holding important positions tend to neglect their party work. That would be normal if everything were not decided at the ballot-box. SPS is living too much in the past.

Who is living in the past? Are you counting on Mrkonjic, Obradovic, Slavica Djukic Dejanovic, Vanja Vukic, Antic, Vukomanovic, Ruzic...?

- I am not naming any names. Even I were, I wouldn't tell you.

Why not?

- Because I am the only one who knows.

What about your party officials?

- They don't know.

Why don't you tell them?

- They abused my good-heart.

They spoke in your name, without letting you know?

- Not only that. They abused my good-heartedness considering it to be my weakness. That's my advantage, but they don't understand. The fact that I am not the type of person who would replace or attack anybody does not mean that SPS may have more than one policy. There is only one policy.

No more about SPS. You said that you were tired of talk about public enterprises. If you were now in a position to chose and become in charge of a public enterprise, would you accept that?

- If you asked the party, their answer would probably be different from mine. I am sick and tired of stories about chief executives who, allegedly, are doing something on behalf of SPS. If I were to make a personal choice, I would not ask for any executive position, based on party quotas.

If you are not the one calling the shots, then who is?

- I will not ask for any one according to party quota. When Vucic said: "what are you asking for", I answered: "we are not asking for anything". He was the one who proposed the offices that were given to us.

Let's get back to public enterprises. Is Bajatovic competent enough to be heading "Srbijagas"?

- That position befits a person having the proper leadership skills required for such a large system.

And did he have them?

- Judging by the results, someone would certainly say no, because "Srbijagas" was a loss-making public enterprise. And there is also a question of state policy. Matters should be looked at realistically.

Failures in the work of the Interior Ministry have received much attention in the media these days, especially those of heads of police departments whom the public considered to be "your people" – General Simic, Tomasevic.....

- My PAs at the Ministry of Interior certainly didn't have official cars. It is true that some of these heads of departments that you have mentioned haven't contacted me since the elections. I am no longer involved in the work of the Interior Ministry, although I will fully support my successor. The new Minister is probably overwhelmed with flattery, just as I was.

How did they flatter you?

- They said that they were SPS members from the very beginning. Unfortunately, their powers are so extensive that the Minister can hardly change anything, even if he intended to.

I hope that your kind-heartedness will not be abused in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as it was in the Interior Ministry.

- I learned my lessons. But I must also admit that Dusan Kovacevic also told me that I am not the type of person to be in charge of the police.

WORK OF ALL AMBASSADORS TO BE PUT TO THE TEST

Have you seen the list of holders of diplomatic passports?

- Not yet, but I asked for it. Everything must be checked.

When can appointment of ambassadors to countries anticipating their arrival be expected?

- Very soon.

Does that mean that former Defence Minister Nebojsa Rodic will be our ambassador to Washington?

- No. We must know something about diplomatic practice and protocol, which is that names of future ambassadors are never revealed before an agrément from the receiving state is received. Failure to observe this practice is an insult to those countries. The Government has not yet passed its decision, and we are already discussing names.