

Regarding the texts published in "Blic" daily in recent days, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia has sent a letter to Veselin Simonovic, editor-in-chief of this daily. The letter states the following:

"Blic" daily is trying to turn the Ministry of Foreign Affairs into a tabloid entertainment on duty, distorting and maliciously interpreting certain facts, and when it is not satisfied with the facts, even daring to state notorious fabrications, deliberately reducing reporting on the work of one of the significant sectors in each country to its private warfare against the current foreign minister, probably seen as an "easy target" to prove its alleged courage and adherence to principles, as he is not a bigwig politician but a career diplomat.

If one scratches, at least, the surface of the latest "scandal" regarding the children of former diplomats working for the Ministry, announced so loudly on the front page, it becomes clear that these are only a few people that were employed in the span of almost ten years, which is almost a negligible number when compared with over a thousand employees of the Ministry and our diplomatic and consular missions. In doing so, the mysterious know-all "Blic sources" misled the journalist about several people, or the journalist made an error in noting down and memorizing the information, so that even the very list of names and relatives is not accurate at all.

Without making comparisons with other diplomacies, where normally the fact that being a child of a diplomat is considered an advantage in employment, and where the percentage is much higher than over here (probably because it is assumed that these are young people who were brought up to become diplomats, who have already developed an attitude towards this sensitive service, and who are usually well educated and speak foreign languages) – a question may be rightfully asked as to why the relationship with former diplomats or public figures should automatically mean disqualification for a job in the diplomatic service.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in order to put in place clear mechanisms for a fully professional diplomatic service that Serbia needs, has prepared a new Law on Foreign Affairs, which should establish, once and for all, clear and firm criteria for recruitment and career development in the diplomatic service.

Regarding the final conclusion (also supported by no evidence) that Minister Mrkic "for no justified reasons, promoted diplomats several positions up in seniority in the diplomatic hierarchy"- it is simply untrue for the period of the last few years. This could only apply to the period when the Ministry was actually managed by Borko Stefanovic and his associates, who himself was promoted overnight from Third Secretary via Adviser to the Minister to the Political Director - but of course "Blic" did not write about it then. Whether this was out of fear or some political or ideological closeness of mind, the Blic staff should explain it to themselves and their readers.

Finally, due to persistently publishing notorious untruths, especially those in the articles last week that "Minister Mrkic provided a diplomatic passport to President Nikolic's mother-in-law", which was officially denied and which "Blic" did not retract, Minister Mrkic will have to resort to an unpopular but forced step and sue "Blic" editorial board that will have the opportunity to prove its claims in court."