

Interview with Ante Jelavic, the Croat member of the BiH Presidency and the President of the HDZ

We would like to ask Mr. Ante Jelavic what he means by the ‘shock therapy’.

As far as I am informed the central government, which has had a purely technical mandate in the past several months, achieved a significant progress especially in the functioning of the joint institutions, and especially when we speak about the strengthening of the regional cooperation with Zagreb and Belgrade. In fact, the signing of the trade agreement with Zagreb and the establishment of diplomatic relations with Belgrade sent perhaps the best message to BiH public.

In that context, I want to say clearly that I am sorry that this process, the entire elections process, and in particular the process of the formation of authority which has been dragging for past three months has been truly abused for the single-handed revision of the Dayton Peace Agreement at the expense of the Croat people in BiH, especially in terms of the changes of the constitutional position of the House of Peoples. I think this is a sort of the abolishment of the BiH and the Federation House of Peoples.

What is presently happening in the process of formation of authority at the state and the Federation levels, in particular the issue of the formation of the Council of Ministers and the election of the Chair of the CoM, are the best examples of the neglect of the political will of one constituent people in BiH. I am really sorry about this, since the BiH Presidency endorsed the name of the nominee for the Chair, Mr. Raguz by consensus and respecting the constitution of BiH (i.e., that BiH has three constituent peoples) but also respecting the political will of citizens of BiH and its constitutive peoples whose political will was reflected in the elections results.

It is certain that the confirmation of the Chair of the CoM should have been a mere formality, if this were a democratic procedure. However, what transpired during the recent session of the House of Representatives was something else. I want to say openly that what was discussed there was not the issue of conformation of Mr. Raguz's candidacy or the quality of his program. This was a conflict of different political concepts in BiH. I personally cannot accept someone, under the term change, trying to sell a new political model and create a civic state with two entities in BiH, all at the expense of Croat people in BiH.

Mr. Jelavic, you once said that the Constitutional Court's decision about the constituent status of peoples in BiH should be used to abolish a whole layer of authority in BiH. Which layer?

I think that the Dayton-structure of BiH, and BiH as such is too expensive, too irrational, and an inefficient state, the state with four layers of authority. I think that only a consistent and transparent implementation of the CC decision can lead us towards the standardization of civic and political rights and the equality of all peoples in BiH. With that on mind, I see as the most optimal model the internal structure based on the cantonal level.

Yes, at today's session your party, the HDZ, mentioned the possibility of secession from the Federation. It was also said that the HDZ will suggest to the Croat National Council to make the actual decision.

I want to say openly that after everything that happened in the past period, here, I primarily think about the election law, the PEC rules and regulations for the election of deputies to the House of Peoples, the formation of authority and the neglect of the political will of Croats, we are in a sort of a dire straits.

Political leadership of Croats in BiH cannot go below certain base standards and principles, despite the fact that it (political leadership) is in favor of the consistent implementation of the Constitutional Courts decision and the standardization of political rights of all peoples. It is the time for Croat people to make a complete turn. That is why it was said today that we are ready for a sort of a shock therapy, as a prerequisite for the struggle for the constitutional rights of Croats within BiH.

Will the ‘shock therapy’ also mean the new elections in BiH? You have also accused the International Community for legalizing a semi-protectorate in BiH, but you said that a new and fairer elections

would be acceptable for you.

You see, a new and fair elections are acceptable for us since certain representatives of the International Community think that we abused the electoral process by organizing the referendum and believe that, without the referendum, some political parties would have achieved different political results. In that sense, we are ready to consider a new and fair local and general elections, but I do not think that they can bring about anything better unless we insist on the consistent implementation of the CC decision, the standardization of political rights and the change of electoral law for the new elections.