2 June 2016 *TABLOID*: Robbery after Timetable

**Following the News**

***Aleksandar Vučić and his mafia are dissembling affairs of their functionaries***

**Robbery after Timetable**

The example of *ATP Vojvodina* in bankruptcy is showing that the amount of money invested in a business activity is not important in Serbia, but what is important is the amount of bribe given to the authorities. Ilija Dević invested millions of Euros from his own money, he took not even a dinar from the state, he decreased the number of the employees and in the end, he lost everything because of the connections between the corrupted politicians and judges and their connections with drug mafia.

***Milan Malenović***

It was in 2012 when European Commission demanded from the Government of the Republic of Serbia to reconsider 24 compromised privatizations and to inform them about the results. In spite of numerous promises, the Government has done nothing relating this issue.

According to the European Commission, there is only one privatization among all the others in which the investor is the one suffering the damage. It is *Auto-Transport Company Vojvodina a.d.* and its owner Ilija Dević.

According to the Central Securities Depository report, on the day when this article was written, the Privatization Agency had in its possession 42, 81 % of the shares of this company, while Ilija Dević possessed 38, 84 % of the shares for which there is the first order pledge. And everything started in the best possible way and it looked for a long time like a kind of the most successful privatization ever taking place in Serbia.

Already during the first year after taking over the company, Dević fulfilled all his investment obligations. He expanded business by buying on lease 30 buses for the new intercity and international routes. He signed the contracts with *Setra* and *Mercedes* on being their official and authorized representative. As a result, 200 more workers were employed and realization of all the launched activities in *ATP Vojvodina* was to open another 1.000 work places.

Dević did not ask for any subsidy money from the state for all these activities. Although he designed everything in an excellent way and in spite of successful accomplishment of the activities in practice, he made a fatal mistake in his calculations for which he paid a very high price: he forgot about the mandatory sentence – *bribery of the rulers* in Serbia.

Although many people could find it unbelievable, the current bus station in Novi Sad is - illegal. The owner of the bus station has not been registered for the intercity and international traffic and if they wanted to perform these activities, they would first have to change the Founding Act and the City of Novi Sad is in charge of that. Even if that happened, although it is highly unlikely that *GSP Novi Sad* would introduce the international routes, the old bus station would have to be reconstructed in order to fulfill the legal standards because that would be even more expensive than building of a new bus station.

In order to solve this problem, the City Administration signed a contract in 2007 with *ATP Vojvodina* by which this company was the one to build a new bus station. That time Mayor of the City of Novi Sad, Maja Gojković, presented this agreement to the public as a big success because neither the state nor the local self-government was obliged to spend even a dinar from the budget on that urgent and inevitable job. All the expenses were born by the private investor, i.e. by Dević.

The financial construction was made very fast, because the banks were willing to give the loans, since the business plan predicted 2.000 departures from the bus station per day. The facilities were completed already in 2008 and the activities could start.

In order to provide conditions for successful work of the new bus station, named MAS (intercity bus traffic), the old bus station had to stop its work. Ilija Dević claims that it was only after several months of negotiations that the Ministry of Infrastructure made the decision on prohibition of payment of the bus services at the old bus station (in practice, it would mean the end of its business activities), but that decision has never been signed or accomplished in practice. According to Dević, a source from the Ministry told him in confidence that Velimir Ilić, who was Minister in that time, did not permit signing the decision.

Weeks were passing as well as months. MAS could not generate revenues and, consequently, *ATP Vojvodina* could not repay the debts. Eventually, the bankruptcy over the company was declared on 15 December 2008.

The demand for introducing bankruptcy was filed by *Čačanska banka*, which was then in the state majority ownership. There was not an actual reason for this act, because the debt was small one in relation to total assets of the company. Besides, the loan was secured by the mortgage and warranty given by *Dunav osiguranje*. However, since the state was majority owner of *Čačanska banka*, those who were familiar with the situation immediately understood that the order for the demand filing had come from a „higher instance".

This became especially clear when, only eight days after beginning of the bankruptcy procedure, the Privatization Agency terminated the contract on privatization, although Dević timely filed the demand for postponing the payment of the received rate. Although the Agency has always been more than generous towards the privatization buyers and in some cases it postponed for several years payment of the second received rate, it was merciless in this case.

It was not difficult to define the actual reason for elimination of *ATP Vojvodina* and *MAS* as well as the persons whose interests were behind this case. Many years before this case, people noticed that auto-transport companies and the accompanying bus station in Vojvodina were in most cases bought by unknown people who had never been in this kind of business and who were not well-known for being rich enough for that sort of job.

When the things relating the activities of Darko Šarić started to be solved, it was found out that the persons being behind majority of privatization of the abovemntioned companies was his companion Anton Stanaj, but also the protected witness against Šarić and the people who were laundering the money - Mile Jerković.

These people were those who intervened with that time state leadership asking them to prevent the person who did not belong to them to take the most valuable piece of cake - *ATP Vojvodina* and *MAS*. As far as Stanaj is concerned, it has been found out that he was one of the most significant financiers of the Serbian Radical Party (SRP) in Vojvodina, the party from which Maja Gojković came (her brother was Stanaj’s lawyer during the criminal proceedings). Perennial president of the City Board of SRP and current high positioned official of the Serbian Progress Party, Igor Mirović, used to be the Director of the Institution for City Development from 2004 to 2008.

According to Ilija Dević’s assertions, which he also stated in his criminal charges filed in December 2014, the two of them „in 2005 and 2006 first made the decision and concluded the contract with him on building of a new intercity bus station in Novi Sad, and then they began to obstruct practical realization of the contract, deliberately obstructing beginning of the work of the new intercity bus station".

When these facts are compared to the ones from the proceedings against Darko Šarić and his criminal group, it becomes clear that Maja Gojković and her collaborators were financially stimulated for preventing Dević’ MAS from beginning to live.

The abovementioned criminal charges filed by Dević also included the ex director of the public company *Urbanizam* from Novi Sad - Aleksandar Jeftić, current Mayor deputy -Miroje Jovanović and ex President of the City of Novi Sad Assembly - Zoran Vučević, while he filed criminal charges to the Basic Public Prosecutor’s Office in Novi Sad against his son and current Mayor - Miloš Vučević. The very reason for filing of the charges was the final court decision made by the Commercial Court of Appeal according to which the City of Novi Sad had to pay 14 million Euros as the damage compensation due to its violating of the contractual obligations. The Supreme Court of Cassation reduced the amount to 4 million Euros. That money was paid to *Vojvodina* which was already managed by the Bankruptcy Trustee, but nobody knows where the money has gone.

Instead of recourse collecting the money from the assets of the official who were guilty for the damage, the City Government of Novi Sad pays the money from the budget which is severally provided by all the citizens of this city.

Although it is obvious that an organized criminal group is doing all these things, the Higher Prosecution neither forwarded the case to the Special Prosecution for Organized Crime nor did they themselves start the investigation. Instead, they sent the charges to the Basic Prosecution as if it were a low value criminal charge. Using drug-Euros given by Stanaj, Gojković can obviously achieve whatever she wants in this country.

However, the Prosecutor’s Office for Organized Crime was not hesitant when the very Ilija Dević was arrested, in accordance with the staged indictment which could have been made in a better way by an average primary school pupil. Namely, it was the end of December 2013 when the Serbian Government had to inform the European Commission on progress of the investigation of the 24 compromised privatizations. Since the only investor suffering damage in these cases was Dević, a person without appropriate political connections, the police sent to the Prosecution some materials which were allegedly found among the documents of *ATP Vojvodina*, so that the Government could declare this case solved and brag to the European Commission.

In February 2014 the Prosecutor for organized crime Miljko Radisavljević emphasized Ilija Devića’s arrest as a special example of „fight against crime". After satisfying curiosity of media, and after the Government had sufficiently exploited this case for its own promotion, Dević was released from custody and the whole case was forgotten. It was found out that the abovementioned documents were, as already defined in the previous procedure, in their essence fragments which had been tendentiously taken out of context and due to that fact, inappropriate for and indictment founding.

In his letter sent to the editorial staff of *Tabloid* Ilija Dević has stated that, besides the already mentioned politicians and state officials, he thinks that principal persecutors are: Deputy Head of UKP and Chief of the disbanded Work group for investigation of the compromised privatizations - Bogdan Pušić, The Republic Public Prosecutor’s Deputies - Đorđe Ostojić and Snežana Marković, as well as the judges Stojan Jokić and Neven Vukašinović. The list could be expanded for about ten new names because many people were in a hurry to destroy one of the most successful privatizations in Serbia using the money given by drug cartel. In the end, the Supreme Court of Cassation intervened in the story with an intention to declare an injustice as a justice, deciding that the City of Novi Sad acted in a proper way by not fulfilling contractual obligations because, allegedly, if they had fulfilled the obligations, monopoly would have been established in favour of a private company. The judges probably have not heard that there is not even one town in Serbia in which there are two bus stations for intercity and international traffic and that most of them are owned by private natural or legal persons. Besides, in order to prevent abuse of monopoly position, the Law defines that the Chamber of Commerce of Serbia but not the owners is the one to determine the prices of use of these stations.

Irrespectively of outcome of this affair, the former employees will be the biggest losers. 500 employees were fired on the same day when the bankruptcy procedure was started. There are no more workers in ATP *Vojvodina,* butthere are employees – there are even three directors: Bojan Škrbić, Ljubinka Živković and Milan Plećaš. In order to provide money for their salaries, they are unscrupulously selling real and movable property of the company.

The European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg as well as the European Commission which has still been conducting the investigation are the ones which will say their final world about this case, in spite of the fact that the current Government claims that the case has been solved.