05/06/2020

DPM Pažin: If there is honesty and good will, we are very close to solution in dialogue between Government and Serbian Orthodox Church



Podgorica, Montenegro (2 June 2020) – The dialogue between the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Government of Montenegro will continue once the conditions are met, while the ultimate success of that dialogue depends largely on whether both sides will enter into a renewed dialogue sincerely, in good faith, taking into account arguments of the other point of view and without political ultimatums, said earlier today Deputy Prime Minister Zoran Pažin, responding to parliamentary questions in the Assembly of Montenegro.

In his response to the question from MP Andrija Mandić, Deputy Prime Minister noted that he would not agree to any ultimatums for the Government, in the dialogue with the representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church, but that on the other hand he would not issue any ultimatums to his interlocutors. “It should be taken into account that frequent insults, disrespect and disparaging of institutions is hardly conductive to the success of that dialogue. I believe that it can be done differently, that all issues can be discussed in a manner befitting an interlocutor, on both sides,” the Deputy Prime Minister pointed out. Speaking about processions, he

emphasised that expressing protest on any social issue is completely legitimate in a democratic society. “But you can only get a political answer to that kind of political pressure, and we need a legal dialogue, with mutual respect and respect for the arguments of the other side,” DPM Pažin added. He also noted that the problem of ethnophiletism, which is equally unacceptable in society, as well as in the church itself, represents a significant obstacle to achieving a mutually acceptable solution. “I don’t think anyone goes to church to be counted by nationality. If there is good will, to realise this dimension of the problem, we are very close to a solution,” the Deputy Prime Minister concluded.

Answering the question by MP Predrag Bulatović, DPM Pažin said that the vagueness of personnel decisions in the judiciary, has its reflection on the European integration of Montenegro, adding, however, that the Government is not the address, which should be responsible for that, since the issue is not within the Government’s competence. “The classic substitution of the thesis is to place the responsibility for that to the Government, which neither elects the Supreme State Prosecutor, nor the State Prosecutor’s Office submits a report on its work to the Government, but submits to the Parliament, just as the Parliament elects the Supreme State Prosecutor by qualified majority.”

In a dialogue with MP Slaven Radunović, the Deputy Prime Minister welcomed the actions of the Islamic religious community, as a positive example of social responsibility in respecting health measures during the coronavirus epidemic. “Celebrating its greatest religious holiday, Ramadan Bayram, which passed without a single incident, the Islamic religious community has shown the highest degree of responsibility for respecting the measures of the Ministry of Health.”

Answering the question of MP Nebojša Medojević, DPM Pažin expressed disagreement with the stance on the existence of endemic corruption in Montenegro. “We do not accept that kind of generalization. We are ready to give arguments for that non-acceptance in communication with anyone, respecting our partners as well. “He emphasized that this does not mean denying the problem of corruption, adding that combating corruption must be high on the agenda of every public authority in Montenegro. In this context, the Deputy Prime Minister recalled the results achieved in the fight against corruption, which were recognized by international partners, including the United States and the European Union. “Only during the mandate of this Government, about 260 public officials were either dismissed or resigned. These are the data of the Agency for Prevention of Corruption. Also, tens of millions of euros, through the repression of corruption by the Special State Prosecutor’s Office, have been saved in the budget.”

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