

OUR HIGHLIGHTS:

- ✓ **Introductory remarks:**
 - No opposition, no problems

- ✓ **Open Parliament Analysis and Points of view**
 - Efficiency without deliberation
 - How can an MP know about the worth of two billion euros anyway?
 - Amending the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia

- ✓ **Selection of law abstracts**

- ✓ **Audio reports of Couplet Chorus Replica**
 - Zagorka forever, the election of the Republic Public Prosecutor
 - #CoupletChorusRebuttal

Table of contents

Introductory remarks	5
No opposition, no problems	5
A month in the Parliament	6
Parliament in numbers	8
Open Parliament's Analysis and Points of view	10
Analysis / Efficiency without deliberation	10
Analysis / Analysis of the attendance of MPs	14
Analysis / Questions on Thursdays – right place, right time	17
Analysis / How can an MP know about the worth of two billion euros anyway?	19
Analysis / Amending the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia	21
Interview / Rodoljub Šabić: If needed, the Parliament can change the meaning of the law	23
Selection of law abstracts	26
Law on amendments to the Law on nature protection	26
Law on amendments to the Law on financial support for a family with children	27
Law on the National Database for Prevention and Fight against Terrorism	28
Audio reports of Couplet Chorus Rebuttal	31
71 episode: What is Mladić to us?	31
72 episode: Missing	31
77 episode: Zagorka forever	31
78 episode: The culture of crime	31

THE OPEN PARLIAMENT INITIATIVE

The Open Parliament Initiative has been monitoring the work of the Serbian Parliament every day since 2012. The Open Parliament collects and publishes data on the Parliament's work and results and deals with the analysis of various processes from the perspective of transparency, accountability and participation.

The main goal of the Open Parliament Initiative is to increase transparency and accountability of the work of the Parliament, to inform the citizens about the work of the Parliament and to establish regular communication between citizens and their elected representatives. Our work is based on the values contained in the international Declaration on Parliamentary Openness, and the Open Parliament took part in the development of this initiative.

Since January 2018, the Open Parliament team has increased the focus of this initiative's activities on democratism and accountability in the conduct of MPs and the work of the institution.

● INTRODUCTORY REMARKS


No opposition, no problems

Mirjana Nikolić

Editor and journalist at Open Parliament

As far as one recalls, the Assembly of Serbia has never worked without a break in June and July, and even at the beginning of August, as it happened this year. The pace of extraordinary sittings reminded us of regular sittings, and at the beginning of August, it was announced that the break would last for two to three weeks. Statistically speaking, the Assembly works great, without any hindrance whatsoever. A shiny example of a parliament that works perfectly because there is no opposition in it. This is why there were so many adopted laws without amendments, without objections, without a single doubt in the correctness of everything that comes as a proposal of the Government of Serbia. The MPs continued to thank the ministers for taking the time to come, repeating the praises for the president of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, but also for the Prime Minister and ministers. The MPs tried hard to remind everyone how bad the previous government was, how absolutely all oppositionists are in fact "traitors and enemies", while the media who do not give unreserved support to the Government are "foreign mercenaries". Although the dialogue on better election conditions between the Government and the opposition is coming to an end, not a single change has been felt in the work of the Parliament or in the narrative of the MPs, that might lead to calming the situation. In our Bulletin, you can read more details about what marked the last quarter in the Assembly of Serbia, the most important adopted and rejected laws, how the Assembly performed its oversight function and which human resources decisions were supported.



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2021**Month in Parliament****JUNE****7.**

At the Fourth Special Sitting of the Assembly, the Proposal for the Amendment of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia was adopted, which marked the first step on the path to amending the Constitution.

9.

The sitting, the agenda of which included the Bill on the National Database for Prevention and Fight against Terrorism, Ratification of International Agreements and Reports of State Institutions, was marked by a debate on Ratko Mladić, General of the Army of Republika Srpska, whom The Hague Tribunal convicted of war crimes.

16.

Representatives of the opposition were still very present in the speeches of the MPs before the Assembly, regardless of the fact that the amendments to the Law on Pension and Disability Insurance were on the agenda.

22.

The sitting dedicated to Kosovo was also attended by the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić. Apart from 23 applause addressed to Vučić, this sitting will also be remembered after Vučić's discussion with opposition MP Shaip Kamberi.

23.

The Minister of Culture used parliamentary questions to inform the public of her dancing skills. "I'm pretty good at dancing kolo. You turned to the right person. From time to time, I like to get up and dance kolo, even though I go to the "Exit"[festival], too", she explained while replying to the MP Dragan Marković.

2021**Month in Parliament****JULY****6.**

The debate on international agreements by which Serbia borrowed several hundred million euros was marked by MPs who glorified economic situation in Serbia.

14.

Amendments to the Law on Waters were adopted while criticism coming from civil society was completely ignored. The President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, refused to sign the Law and returned it for a new decision in the Serbian Parliament.

22.

The only candidate for the position of Republic Public Prosecutor, Zagorka Dolovac, was elected for the third time in a row, with 168 votes in favour and 3 MPs who did not vote.

28.

At the last sitting of the Assembly before the summer break, what was most discussed were the crimes committed during the Second World War, although this topic had nothing to do with the agenda, as usual.

2021**Month in Parliament****AUGUST****2.**

The Speaker of the Assembly greeted the Russian ambassador. The Assembly went on a summer break.

24.

The Speaker of the Assembly greeted the President of the Assembly of Kingdom of Norway

26.

The Speaker of the Assembly greeted the President of the Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia

30.

The Speaker of the Assembly called for local elections in Mionica and Zaječar

PARLIAMENT IN NUMBERS

The statistical review of the work of the 12th convocation by August 31st, 2021.



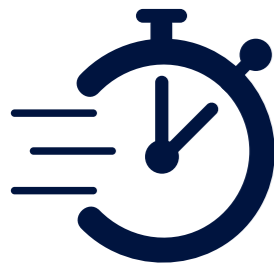
COMPOSITION

- 97%** belong to the ruling majority
- 60%** of MPs are in benches for the first time



LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

- 89** days of sittings
- 155** adopted laws
- 99%** of adopted laws were proposed by the Government



URGENT PROCEDURE

- 7%** of all laws (including new laws, amendments to laws and ratifications of international agreements) were adopted by urgent procedure.
- 3%** of new laws and amendments were adopted by urgent procedure, with the exception of laws ratifying international agreements



OVERSIGHT ROLE

8 sittings were held on the last Thursday of the month, at which **parliamentary questions were asked**

As many as **14 public hearings were organised** – one in November, February and March, three in April, six in May, one in June and one in July. Public hearings were attended mainly by government officials, there were no awkward questions for the organisers, and the civil sector, when present, did not get too involved into discussions. Out of the 14 public hearings, seven were dedicated to amending the Constitution in the area of justice.

Since the beginning of the 12th convocation, 357 committee sittings have been held, out of which 36% lasted less than ten minutes.



KEY NOVELTIES

- The Assembly adopted the Proposal for amending the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, which formally launched the procedure of amending the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia in the field of justice. The Committee on Constitutional and Legislative Issues formed a Working Group to draft an act amending the Constitution, after which new public hearings were announced.
- A rarely seen practice occurred: the President of the Republic did not sign the Amendments to the Law on Waters adopted by the Assembly, after a stormy reaction of the public to the solutions that these changes bring. Although there is no information on the stage of the procedure to which the adopted amendments were returned, the President stated that a new draft would be prepared.
- The Assembly re-elected the former Republic Public Prosecutor. Having remained the only candidate, Zagorka Dolovac was elected to that position for the third time, which means that she will continuously be in that position for 18 years. Five candidates applied for the competition for the election of the Republic Public Prosecutor, one of whom withdrew the application, one application did not arrive on time, and two were rejected as incomplete.

● OPEN PARLIAMENT'S ANALYSIS AND POINTS OF VIEW

Analysis

Efficiency without deliberation

Tamara Branković

Research and policy manager at CRTA

By analysing events in the first year of the current parliamentary convocation through a range of quantitative and qualitative indicators, CRTA and its Open Parliament initiative record that the quality of parliamentary performance is being seriously undermined on a daily basis. First, the least pluralistic Serbian Parliament, where 97 percent of MPs belong to the ruling majority, is marked by high legislative efficiency and absence of deliberation. Second, MPs intentionally avoid pursuing debate in public interest, not even through participatory mechanisms available in Parliament, showing indifference towards the quality of their decisions. Third, such conduct goes hand in hand with daily abuses of the Parliament as a stage for boosting discourse against any entity or individual who dares to contest decisions of Serbia's government and Serbia's president, Aleksandar Vučić.

The work of the least pluralistic Parliament in Serbia's multi-party history marks efficiency without deliberation. The legislative activity is relatively high, in comparison to similar periods in the past. More than 150 acts were passed during 21 regular and 11 extraordinary parliamentary sittings held between October 2020 and July 2021.

Then, parliamentary committees are also more active than usual with more than 370 sittings organised since October 2020. However, with more than one third of meetings being shorter than 10 minutes, and two thirds being shorter than 20, the quality of the work of parliamentary committees should be a matter of serious concern. In addition, even when participative mechanisms, such as public hearings, are used, topics of discussion are imposed by the ruling majority, and they often do not correlate with the burning issues of public interest. There is no evidence that the results of public hearings are further used by MPs.

Finally, almost 70% of all adopted laws, which were exclusively proposed by the Serbian Government, were passed without a single amendment, i.e. MPs felt indifferent to their ability to challenge and improve the government's solutions. As an example, adoption of important laws and documents without a debate, such as the case with the Law on Water or the Code of Conduct for MPs, brought low quality solutions and serious negative consequences for the society.

In such a parliamentary environment, it is important to record and analyse what MPs talk about when they do not argue about different positions and the legislative agenda. This is important for understanding if the Parliament, marked exclusively by the ruling coalition, is only a marginalised, low-profile institution, or if it is given a new purpose in the given political context.

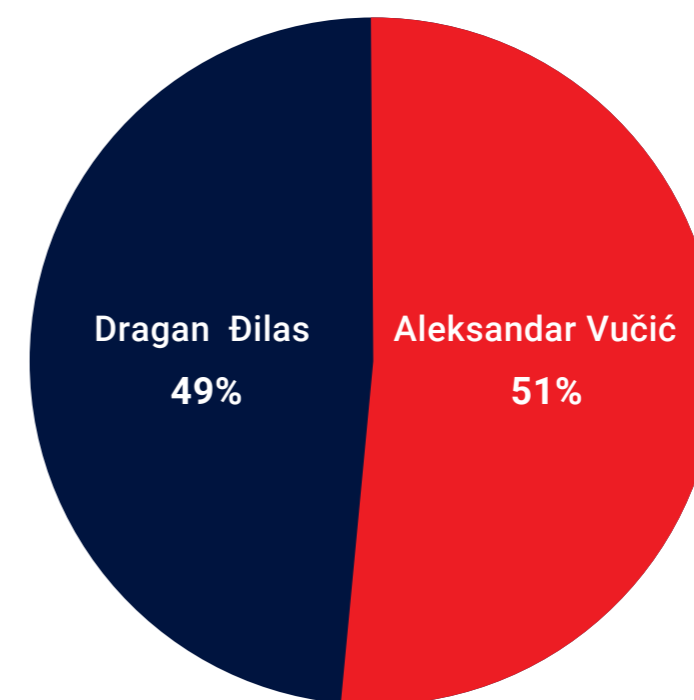
CRTA's parliamentary monitoring and assessment of all MPs' speeches collected between January and May 2021 show that the Serbian Parliament is far from being passive. Its new role is to maintain and boost the regime's appearance. MPs use the Parliament not only to confirm government's, i.e. president's, decisions without a word, but also to amplify narratives which praise the president of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, and fuel negative propaganda, false information and intolerance against opposition and other actors, critical voices, who tend to question official standpoints and actions. Findings of

CRTA's parliamentary monitoring covering narratives on political actors in Serbia's Parliament, show that in recent months the Parliament has mostly served as a training ground for the election campaign.

Narratives on political actors in the Parliament: training ground for election campaign

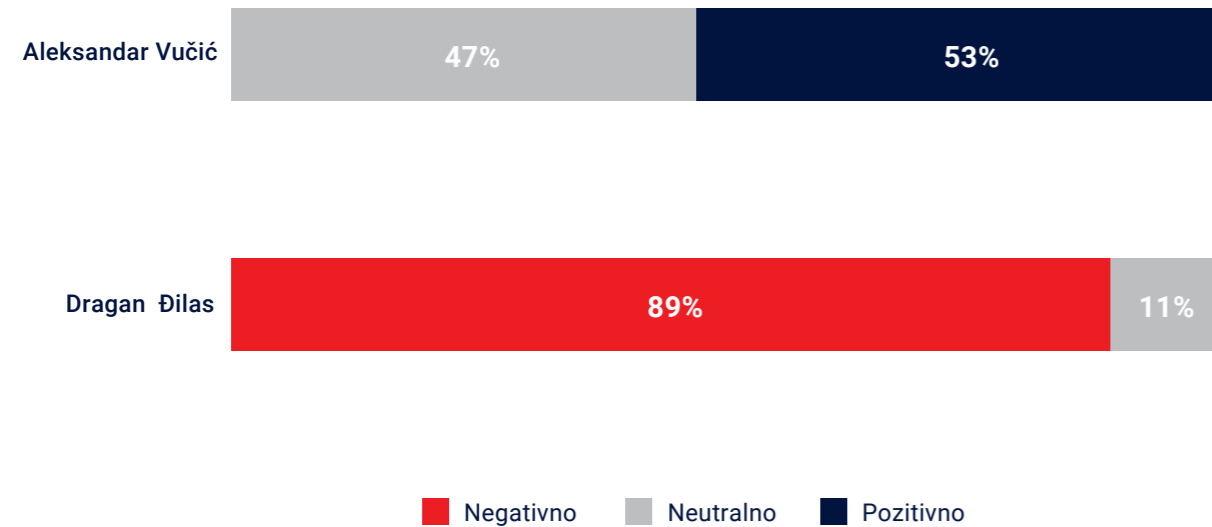
CRTA's researchers analysed all MP speeches that were delivered during the Spring Session of Serbia's Parliament, which lasted 36 days, in the period between March 2 and May 27, 2021. The total of 749 MP speeches were included in the analysis dedicated to exploring narratives on political actors in Serbia's Parliament. The main goal was to understand which political and social actors are receiving the greatest attention of MPs, and then how frequently, in which sentiment (positive, negative or neutral) and for what purpose MPs speak about them in the Parliament.

Analysis showed that the most mentioned person in Serbia's Parliament was president of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić. In 36 days, MPs mentioned Vučić more than 2.500 times. The second most mentioned person in the Parliament was one of the non-parliamentary opposition leaders, Dragan Đilas. MPs spoke about or mentioned Đilas almost equally as they mentioned Vučić (Graph 1).

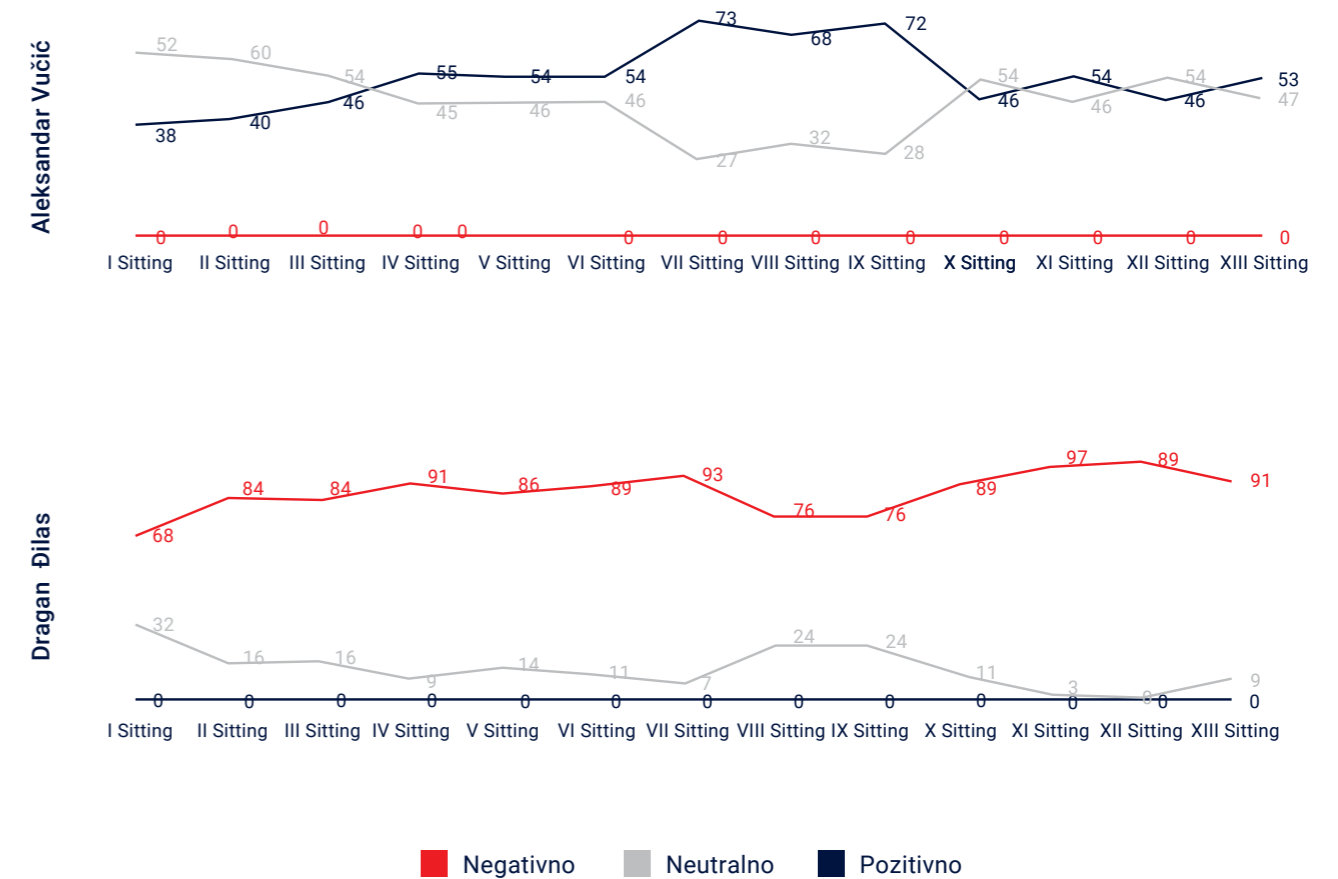


When the sentiment of MP speeches is analysed, results show that the two most mentioned persons are completely opposite portrayed by MPs. Vučić is dominantly portrayed in a positive or a neutral light, never criticised by MPs. On the other hand, Dragan Đilas is portrayed almost exclusively in negative light. (Chart 2)

Graph 2: President Vučić was mentioned mostly in a positive, then neutral tone, while opposition representative, Dragan Đilas in a dominantly negative tone



Graph 3: President Vučić was mentioned in a dominantly positive tone during the Fourth and Fifth sitting while Dragan Đilas was continuously mentioned in a negative tone



Vučić was frequently mentioned together with a syntagm “thanks to Vucic and his wise policy”. MPs dominantly portray Vučić in positive light, creating a discourse where he is portrayed as a saviour whose work and security are endangered by malicious opposition, which destroyed Serbia before SNS came to power. Đilas’s name was most often accompanied with words “tycoon” and in the context of “619 million euros that he stole from citizens”. He is, along with other opposition actors, portrayed as a thief and as a threat to Serbia and to security of president Vučić and his family.

According to this, CRTA researchers were also able to conclude that the frequency of negative messages on opposition leader Đilas did not oscillate throughout the Spring Session. On the other hand, despite the fact that Vučić was constantly present in MPs’ speeches, there were periods in which MPs tended to boost a positive picture of the president. (Graph 3)

Period in which MPs amplified their support to Serbia’s president corresponded to the period when independent media KRIK published an article indicating a connection between the president and his family and criminal groups in Serbia. Thus, it seems that the MPs took part in the regime’s organised efforts to minimise the effects of the affair. Moreover, boosting the president’s positive image was also useful for creating an amplifying effect of another parallel story, launched in this case by the president himself, which involved opposition leader Dragan Djilas and his alleged multiple bank accounts on Mauritius. In succeeding weeks (11.03. – 07.04), MPs mentioned this alleged affair **186 times** during parliamentary sittings, mirroring intensive tabloid reporting on this subject.

Analysis

Analysis of the attendance of MPs

Although there are not any regulations that oblige MPs to attend the sessions of the National Assembly and to actively participate in debates, the responsibility arising from their function as directly elected representatives of citizens certainly requires it. The situation is different when it comes to voting or the beginning of the sitting, when it is necessary to have a quorum of 126 MPs as a precondition for work.

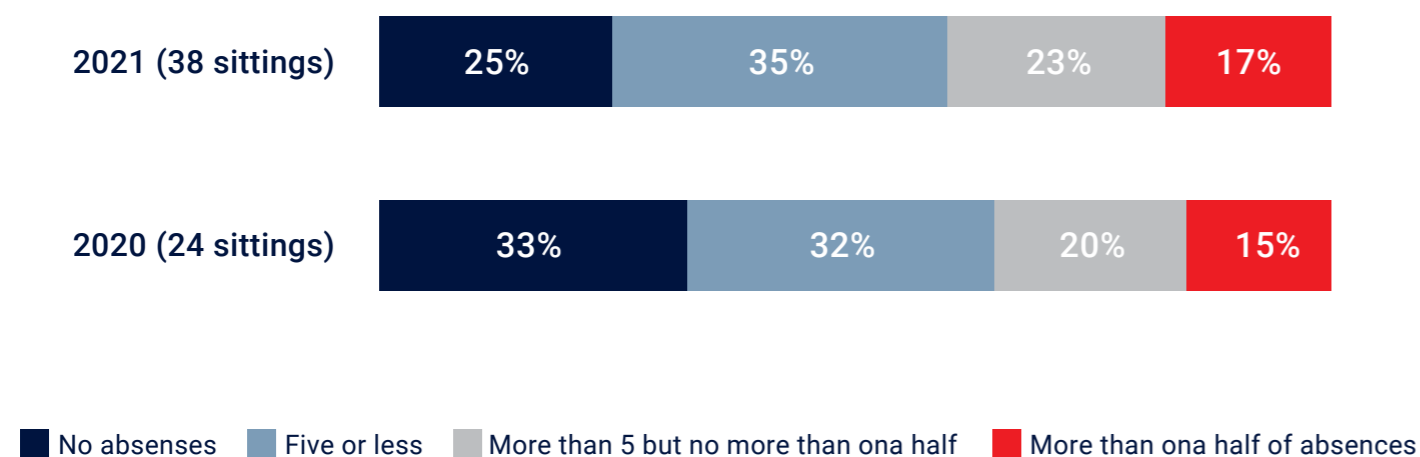
The National Assembly meets annually in two regular sessions. The first regular session is held in the period from the beginning of March to the end of May, and the second regular session starts in October and lasts until December. The sessions between that period are extraordinary. MPs elect the government and judges, oversee the work of ministers and security services, discuss and decide on laws, and are supposed to consider petitions and proposals coming from citizens.

Nevertheless, this analysis is not so simple, because in the meantime, 24 MPs resigned and were replaced by others (four before the beginning of recording attendance at the sittings). Besides, the attendance of an MP is recorded as their presence in the building, which may mean that they did not participate in the discussion that day, but in the meeting of the friendship group, for example. Moreover, MPs perform other tasks due to which in some cases they cannot attend the sitting in its entirety.

It is undeniable, though, that in the period from October to December 2020, when 24 regular sittings were held, out of 264 MPs one third attended all sittings, and one third had a maximum of five absences.

During the period from March to May 2021, 38 regular sittings of the National Assembly were held. One quarter of MPs were never absent, while slightly more than one third (35%) had between one and five absences.

MPs' attendance at the regular sittings of the National Assembly-
autmn 2020 and spring 2021



Attendance of MPs by parliamentary groups

The parliamentary group of the Social Democratic Party of Serbia (SDPS) was most present at the sittings of the National Assembly in the period between October and December 2020. Out of 24 working days, SDPS MPs were present for an average of 22 days and on average on a daily basis they sat in benches for about seven and a half hours. The United Serbia (JS) MPs, who have only one MP more than SDPS, spent on average three days, or 30 hours less (on average) in the parliamentary benches. The largest parliamentary group in the National Assembly "Aleksandar Vučić – For Our Children" attended the sittings for 20 days out of 24, while an MP of this parliamentary group would stay in the bench for less than 7 hours a day on average.

The parliamentary group United Valley – Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak spent the least time at the sittings at the end of 2020. Its MPs sat in the benches for 14 days out of 24 and stayed for an average of 3 hours a day. In addition, the independent MP Vladan Glišić was present at the sittings for 13 days, but he spent an average of 3.5 hours every day in the bench of the National Assembly. The SPS parliamentary group came to the sessions of the National Assembly the least times in this period. They were present only during 11 of the 24 days of the sittings.

Table 1: Attendance of MPs by parliamentary groups in the period from October to December 2020.
(24 working days)

Parliamentary group	Average attendance ¹	Number of days ²	Number of hours ³	Number of MPs
SDPS	7.6	22	163	8
JS	7.0	19	133	9
AV - "For Our Children"	6.7	20	133	175
PUPS - "Three P"	6.0	17	101	10
SPS	4.9	17	83	25
SVM	4.6	14	65	11
SPAS	4.6	11	48	14
SPP-USS	4.5	16	71	5
Vladan Glišić	3.5	13	45	1
United Valley - Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak	3.1	14	45	6

- 1 Average attendance in hours during one day per MP
- 2 Average attendance in days
- 3 Average attendance in hours on a daily basis

As at the end of 2020, the SDPS parliamentary group most attended the sessions of the National Assembly in the period from March to May 2021, when 38 sittings were held. They sat in the parliamentary benches for 250 hours for 35 days, i.e., they spent 7 hours on a daily basis at the sittings. The largest parliamentary group “Aleksandar Vučić – For Our Children” attended the sittings for three days less with a total of about six and a half hours a day.

The independent MP Vladan Glišić “stopped by” 27 times, but spent little time at the sittings, less than one hour a day. MPs of the United Valley – Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak did not do much better. They spent a little more than an hour a day in the parliamentary benches during the 10 days when they attended the sittings.

Table 2: Attendance of MPs by parliamentary groups in the period from March to May 2021.
(38 working days)

Parliamentary group	Average attendance ¹	Number of days ²	Number of hours ³	Number of MPs
SDPS	7.1	35	250	8
AV - “For Our Children”	6.6	32	208	172
JS	6.2	30	186	8
PUPS - “Three P”	4.6	24	108	9
SPS	4.3	26	110	27
SVM	4.3	32	136	9
SPP-USS	3.6	28	102	5
SPAS	2.9	18	52	10
United Valley - Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak	1.3	10	13	6
Vladan Glišić	0.8	27	22	1

- 1 Average attendance in hours during one day per MP
- 2 Average attendance in days
- 3 Average attendance in hours on a daily basis

You can access the table with the total number of hours of attendance during the entire 12th convocation for all 264 MPs [here](#).

Data on the MPs’ attendance at the sittings during the 12th convocation were obtained through the Request for Access to Information from the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia. You can access the original data submitted by the Assembly [here](#).

Analysis

Questions on Thursdays – right place, right time

Mirjana Nikolić

Journalist at Open Parliament

Exactly how much did the vaccines cost? Or respirators? How did we decide on a contractor for the construction of the long-awaited Belgrade tube? Is the top of the government really connected with criminal fan groups? Who eavesdropped on the President of the state, and if no one, why have you been claiming for months that someone did? What will back-to-school be like in autumn? Where is the main bus station in Belgrade? Do we plan to negotiate with Kosovo for another 20 years without progress? Can we find money for the treatment of children so that citizens do not send SMS? The MPs could have asked all these answers from the representatives of the executive every last Thursday of the month. But they did not.

At the three-hour sitting, MPs can get an answer from the Prime Minister or ministers, live and immediately. And not only that. Afterwards, they have extra time to ask additional questions and in the end, give a final comment. In that way, as required by law, the National Assembly would exercise its oversight role of the executive, and MPs could “examine” those elected.

Instead, in the latest parliamentary convocation, parliamentary questions are not really questions, but rather a cue for ministers to brag without hesitation about their wise moves. Topics relating to successful economics, construction of infrastructure, international successes of the President, successful vaccination are brought up. Even if something specific from the local environment were mentioned, one would conclude that major issues are illegal landfills, construction of roads or modernisation of the railway. However, when the answers are heard, one gets the impression that it has all been agreed, as it happens that the ministry has just started some work in connection with the topic that the MP is asking about. In the rare cases when one of the seven opposition MPs asked for an explanation – they received an answer filled with attacks, insults and even humiliation.

It is good that they keep coming

It is commendable that the sittings at which the MPs’ questions are answered are organised every month, while earlier (when there was opposition) it was often avoided. For example, while the current President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić was the Prime Minister, MPs asked questions in May and July 2014, in July 2015 and October 2016, and the next time only in October 2017, when Ana Brnabić was already the head of the Government. It usually happened that the session ended on Wednesday or Thursday morning, and when there is no session – there are no parliamentary questions. Now, on the contrary, the Speaker of the Assembly announces in advance that the vote would take place on Thursday night, in order to enable MPs to ask questions. And members of the government are happy to come. Maybe because they have unlimited time to answer questions posed only by their party or coalition comrades. It is also good that statistically the illusion is created that the Assembly controls the Government, so this is something that cannot be skipped in various reports.

Who would not want questions like these?

Just as politicians regularly and often appear on television, where journalists ask them pre-agreed questions and do not interrupt them while answering, so they like to come to the almost one-party Assembly. The Prime Minister Brnabić and Ministers Aleksandar Vulin and Zlatibor Lončar have a unique opportunity to go on about what they planned, regardless of the topic.

For example, at the last sitting, the independent MP Vladan Glišić asked about the closure of the Geox factory and in general about (in his opinion) the excessive reliance of the economy on the European Union. The Prime Minister replied that everything was “wrong” and gave him a long lecture on the successes of the Serbian economy and foreign investors who are simply racing to come to Serbia first. Only at the end of her speech did she say that “we will not leave the Geox workers in the lurch. We will be there and we will find them better jobs.” (Source: Shorthand notes). No reason was given for the withdrawal of the investor, no explanation how much it all cost, who will find a better job for the workers and whether jobs will be found for all 1200 workers. The MP did not even insist on that, but continued to fulfil his agenda with a story about Kosovo and attitudes against the EU.

Next, the MP from the Justice and Reconciliation Party, Samir Tandir, spent most of his time thanking the Prime Minister for visiting his city, and enumerating everything that was marvellously done and promised there. And then came the question addressed to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Police: “Are you satisfied with the results of the fight against organised crime and corruption?”

So if they were not feeling comfortable enough, the MP additionally praised them for starting the “mafia strike”. It was an opportunity for Minister Vulin to attack opposition politicians with all his might, to quote certain media, to accuse them all of working to incriminate Aleksandar Vučić’s family and to present his theories proving that there is no connection between the Government and criminal clans. Of course, the Prime Minister used the opportunity to talk about the arrest of Veljko Belivuk’s clan, about the details of their crimes, repeated everything that Vulin had said and added: “Personally, I really want to give all the support and courage to Aleksandar Vučić and Aleksandar Vulin, who was brutally attacked just because he does his job responsibly, and properly. Together with Aleksandar Vučić, he was the first to put his and his family’s life on the line.”

This is how almost half of the time provided for the sitting was spent. Among other issues, we single out the request to increase the number of police officers in Novi Pazar, and the allegations that opposition leader Dragan Đilas was reported for domestic violence a few years ago. The MPs asked the Minister for European Integration about the funds from which Serbia should receive grants, and the MP (from the party headed by the Minister) asked the Minister of Village Care to hear very detailed plans for investments in rural households. The Minister of Culture was asked for information on celebrating important dates, and the Minister of Education for information on plans for investment in education.

By the book

And just like that, at every sitting, the history is repeating – the Minister of Defence is asked about weapons that will be procured and the Minister of Health about the fight against Covid-19. Ministers are satisfied with questions, MPs with answers. In this convocation, there is even an agreement that MPs should keep their questions short so that all the parliamentary groups can take their turn.

Since the questions are always asked in the same order, from the smallest to the largest parliamentary group, and since there are several small parliamentary groups from the ruling

coalition in the Assembly, surprises are impossible. If, after the next elections, an opposition party enters the parliamentary benches, the custom of spending all the time on answers to regime MPs can easily be restored, so that opposition MPs never take their turn to ask. According to the Rules of Procedure, members of the Government have unlimited time to respond, so no rules have been violated.

This text was created in cooperation with Istinomer

Analysis

How can an MP know about the worth of two billion euros anyway?

Mirjana Nikolić

Journalist at Open Parliament

In the course of one year’s work, the current parliamentary convocation has confirmed 26 agreements on loans debiting the state for over two billion and 200 million euros. This piece of information is not in itself relevant, especially knowing that loans are always voted for along with some other, seemingly more important laws and that there are no long discussions related to them. If there is a discussion regarding loans, there seems to be a rule that everyone follows – if you want to hide data, present long series of numbers and no one will understand anything.

How can an average citizen, or even an MP, understand whether the current parliamentary convocation has debited us for a lot or little? How much do the public know about such loans anyway?

Here is an illustration of the worth of two billion euros: Aleksandar Vučić, the President of Serbia, has recently announced that the new Covid hospital in Novi Sad, along with the surrounding infrastructural works, will cost a little less than 28 million euros. The vaccine factory will cost less than the hospital. The projected investment in the children’s hospital ‘Tiršova 2’ is worth 110 million euros. Speaking of large numbers, the construction of two Belgrade underground lines (that has been anticipated for decades and cannot seem to start) requires the investment of six billion euros. We take a loan of two billion euros every year, but the money is used for something else.

Why does an economic tiger need such big loans?

Yes, we know that all states take loans, we know that citizens also live on loans, but we also know that if you take loans for the house and the car at the same time, this means that you must have a very high salary. Since we hear daily from the state authorities that Serbia is ‘an economic tiger’ and that ‘things have never been better’, we are starting to wonder what are the projects that the state has funds for and what are the projects that the state is taking loans for. In order to make things somewhat clearer, we have tried to classify all state loans into four groups: ecology, Covid-19, infrastructure

and public company debts. We have also analysed how much and in what way these loans have been discussed in the Parliament and whether MPs have made any effort to understand what they were voting for.

A bit less for Covid than for the entire infrastructure

The state has taken loans of over 520 million euros for remote heating systems, the projects of energetic efficiency, the so-called 'green recovery' and the cleansing of wastewater. Loans of 867 million euros have been granted for the road construction, railway reconstruction, the renovation of river corridors and the gasification of some cities.

However, four loans intended for the urgent response to the Covid epidemic are worth about 600 million euros and they should be used to facilitate the public sector, the small and medium enterprises. It is not a lot when we know that 237 million euros were allocated for the debts of only three (privileged) public companies – 28 million euros for the ski resorts, 40 million euros for 'Elektromreža Srbije' and everything else for Srbijagas.

Lest we forget what we are building

As a reminder, in November 2020, the Parliament allowed in one day loans for the rehabilitation of the remote heating system in Serbia, for the project of energetic efficiency in public facilities (phase II), for the same project in the facilities of the central authorities and for the water supply and the wastewater cleansing facilities.

We cannot analyse everything so we shall take two random samples. In December, the Parliament adopted the Law on Debiting of the Republic of Serbia in order to enable financing of the project Ruma-Šabac-Loznica. This is not a mistake; this is the actual title of the law. What project? In the parliamentary discussion, Marija Obradović, the Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, explained that the project was related to the construction of an important road which will connect 600.000 people (the source: shorthand notes, 22nd December 2020). During the discussion, the MPs of the ruling coalition (at least seven of them who discussed this topic) kept repeating her explanation about connecting people, following the pattern: 'By investing in capital projects, we wish to achieve faster growth and development of our economy'.

Besides the importance of the project, they also discussed interest rates which 'have never been more favourable' and which are, by all means, lower than during the times when 'tycoons and thieves' were in power, and which are, naturally, low not because of the global situation, but because Aleksandar Vučić has carried out the reform of the Serbian economy successfully. They added that, by taking favourable loans, the state was actually decreasing the debt. As a second example, we will take the parliamentary discussion where guarantees were given to the company Srbijagas (the source: shorthand notes, 9th June 2021).

Maja Popović, the Minister of Justice, started by explaining the loans. She read that the loan of 66 million euros would be used for the gasification of the districts of Bor and Zaječar, the loan of 28 million euros was intended for the construction of the distribution gas-pipeline Leskovac-Vranje, whereas the loan of 75 million euros was intended for the gasification of the district of Kolubara. And she did not ask to speak again. During the discussion, someone said that Serbia needed 'Srbijagas to be strong' because this company has taken over some other companies which were 'heading for a fall and the state will take care of its employees'. The importance of gasification was mentioned dozens of times, and everyone unconditionally supported the company whose debt of 1.2 billion euros from 2019 was written off by the state.

We take loans because we are doing great, and we will continue to do so

During this parliamentary convocation, not a single criticism was heard regarding the loans. There were no formal questions about the prices of projects, the deadlines for finalisation and previous unfinished businesses. Nobody asked for the explanation on what grounds it was concluded that the loans were favourable. Nobody expressed any concern, only beliefs that Serbia was economically growing stronger.

Finally, regardless of 'steel friendships' with China and Russia which are daily promoted by authorities, Serbia has taken most of the loans from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the German Development Bank and the Council of Europe Development Bank. Recently, new loans have been proposed – 32 million euros for the project of student housing and 78.200.000 euros for the development of the Sava and the Drina corridors, so we should expect new loans this autumn. Thus, Serbia will carry on with the trend from the previous two years when it took loans of two billion euros a year through interstate agreements.

This text was created in cooperation with Istinomer

Analysis

Amending the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia

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Since the adoption of the Constitution in 2006, the need for constitutional revision was discussed. There was even a popular initiative on the subject. Given that the country is on the European integration path, the harmonization of national law with the *acquis communautaire* requires, among other things, a reform in the field of justice. Hence, on December 4th 2020 the Serbian Government submitted a Constitutional Amendment Proposal, which refers to the regulation of the judiciary and the constitutional provisions in that regard.

On May 6th 2021, the Committee on Constitutional Issues and Legislation determined that the proposal was submitted by an authorized proposer. Except by the Government, this proposal can be submitted by 150,000 citizens, one third of MPs and the President of the Republic. The constitutional amendment proposal was presented to the National Assembly on June 7th, which decided with a two-thirds majority to proceed with the change of the Constitution. This is the first phase in the constitutional revision procedure, because the Constitutional Amendment Act is yet to be considered, adopted and drafted. The Government's proposal should be distinguished from the Constitutional Amendment Act because the latter is based on that proposal and precisely formulates the amendment subject. This act is drafted by the Committee on Constitutional Issues and Legislation. However, on this occasion, the Committee formed a Work Group to draft it. At its first meeting, the Work Group stated that they will go beyond the Government's proposal and consider the conclusions made at the public hearings held by the Committee after the constitutional revision procedure began. The expert public took a critical stance on judicial reform solutions even during the preparation of the Government's proposal, so it is to be expected that the Work Group will take these opinions into account as well.

The question may arise here as to whether the public hearings, organized after the initiation of the procedure, are sufficient to meet the objectives of the public debate on the constitutional revision. Although the importance of public hearings should not be diminished, a public hearing will fulfill its purpose only if citizens and the expert public are given the opportunity to express their views on the act they're supposed to decide on. Hence, the public debate should be organized after the Assembly Committee drafts the Constitutional Amendment Act. During the same phase, this act should be sent to the Venice Commission, for expert evaluation. Although there was talk that the Venice Commission was aware of the content during the preparation of the Government's proposal to change the Constitution (that is, that it noted the proposal), the fact is that the Constitutional Amendment Act that citizens will decide on was not officially considered by this advisory body. Moreover, the Government's proposal and the Constitutional Amendment Act do not necessarily have to coincide. The National Assembly does decide on the change of those constitutional provisions initiated by the proposer, but as the Assembly is the holder of the constitutional power, it can draft the act independently.

After the completion of all the aforementioned actions, the National Assembly will discuss in the plenum and make a decision on the Constitutional Amendment Act by a two-thirds majority of all MPs. However, the constitutional revision procedure does not end here. The provisions in question regulate government organization and therefore must be put to a constitutional referendum.

The constitutional referendum is regulated in a relaxed manner. The reason for that can be found in the revision procedure of the previous Constitution (1990), which could be changed in a referendum only by a majority of half of all citizens registered to vote. This rigid condition led to the referendum for the adoption of the Constitution in 2006 lasting two days in order to secure the necessary referendum majority. From the very beginning, cracks were starting to show in the legitimacy foundation of the highest general legal act of the first independent Republic. It is not common for a referendum to last more than one day - especially in a country with a relatively small number of voters and a territory that does not require special technical conditions for voting stages.

In order to prevent the difficulties caused by the rigid procedure of the previous Constitution, the new Constitution (2006) not only reduced the referendum majority, but also omitted the so-called referendum quorum. The decision on the constitutional amendment is made by the majority of citizens who vote for the amending act, regardless of the number of voters that went to the referendum. Therefore, in the national law of Serbia, the constitutional referendum will be legally valid even if the majority of registered voters do not participate, which raises the question of the legitimacy of the highest general legal act in case of low turnout. In the formal sense, for a positive referendum decision, it is enough to get a larger number of votes that support the Amendment Act compared to those who voted against. The decision will be made regardless of the size of the majority in relation to the total number of citizens with the right to vote (for example, one half or one quarter of the registered voters is not required).

Given this constitutional rule, citizens should be active in the referendum process. For those who do not agree with the amendments, it is not enough to abstain and not respond to the referendum call. When there is no mandatory turnout threshold for a referendum to be successful, it is pivotal for citizens to express their views with an explicit answer if they oppose a constitutional revision.

It remains to be seen how big the turnout will be and how will that affect the legitimacy of the Constitutional Amendment Act. The short Serbian constitutional history since introducing the multi-party system in the nineties is filled with constitutional acts that were disputed because of lack of legitimacy. Such was the case of the 1990 Constitution of Serbia adopted by the socialist Assembly just before the first multi-party elections were held, then the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1992, adopted by the Federal Assembly of the socialist Federation without quorum because the delegations of self-proclaimed republics have previously withdrawn from it, all to the current Constitution adopted in 2006 without a public hearing on a referendum that lasted for two days.

Interview

Rodoljub Šabić (Lawyer):

If needed, the Parliament can change the meaning of the law

Interview conducted by:

Miša Bojović

Senior Researcher at Open Parliament

In this parliamentary convocation, the sitting of the Committee on Constitutional and Legislative Issues with a proposal for authentic interpretation of the provisions of the Law on Consumer Protection, the Law on the Protection of Financial Service Consumers and the Law on Contracts and Torts was scheduled for July, and cancelled at the initiative of Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić. Although the proposal that the interpretation of the laws is necessary was signed by three MPs of the Serbian Progressive Party, only when the President reacted did the Minister of Justice respond and say that the problem of disputes between banks and clients would be resolved by amending the Law on Civil Procedure. Earlier, in February, the Assembly adopted an authentic interpretation of the Law on Prevention of Corruption, as it was necessary to clarify to the public who is a public official and who is not. Why such frequent attempts at authentic interpretation of the laws, how does it differ from amendments to the laws and does it mean that the laws adopted by the Assembly are bad? The lawyer and former Commissioner for Information of Public importance, Rodoljub Šabić spoke for the Open Parliament.

What is an authentic interpretation and how common is this instrument in comparative law?

An authentic interpretation is a constitutional legal instrument, a mechanism by which the Parliament, i.e. the authority that passed the law, clarifies the meaning of a certain norm of the law. As a rule, this happens in situations when a new law appears which, for example, radically changes a relationship, or in practice we have a previously unknown institute, or a relationship. It causes certain dilemmas in the subjects to which this law refers or who should apply it, regarding its true meaning, possible consequences and the like. Consequently, those who apply it, most often courts, for example, in case of conflict of views of several courts of the same rank, could turn to the Parliament and ask for a definite explanation of the true meaning of that norm. It is a rarely used instrument. It means per se that the law is not exactly perfect since there is a need for a subsequent interpretation. If subjects, otherwise qualified to apply it, such as courts or administrative bodies, have dilemmas – it means that the law has not been articulated in an ideal way. As a rule, an authentic interpretation should appear soon after the law enters into force, as dilemmas and possible ambiguities arise at that time. Naturally, an authentic interpretation can also be subject to serious abuse. As it happens, we have faced one such case recently in Serbia, where an authentic interpretation of three laws was required, resulting from allegedly spontaneous reactions of three MPs of the same party. An interpretation of the norms was sought, all of which referred to one specific relationship, namely the relationship between the lender and the borrower in the banking sphere, where a dispute arose regarding the collection of secondary, ancillary services provided by the bank. Since citizens began to protest because of bank fees that were actually much higher than the value of the service provided, the courts began to rule in favour of citizens. Obviously, it was not suitable for banks and, in all appearances, the demand for an authentic interpretation can be explained by an unprincipled lobby or in some other way. So, MPs allegedly came up with the idea on their own to provide a binding order for the courts

in the form of an authentic interpretation.

For what reason did they resort exactly to an authentic interpretation in relation to the Law that was in force in previous years when there were the most verdicts in favour of citizens in disputes against banks?

When a law needs to be changed, it implies a certain procedure that does not differ significantly from the procedure of authentic interpretation, but which, by the logic of things, has a different weft. Why would you change now the Law on Contracts and Torts, that has already been affirmed as a fundamental Law that has existed for forty or fifty years? Why would you change the provision of that Law if the practice has not shown any weakness so far? You have a provision the interpretation of which we are seeking. It goes something like this: paragraph 1 – The loan agreement must be made in written form, paragraph 2 – The loan agreement regulates the conditions for granting, using and repaying the loan. What's there to interpret? What judge does not understand what that means? And why did it suddenly become unclear to someone after 45 years. In fact, they wanted the Assembly to say in the form of an authentic interpretation: Yes, but if the Agreement does not say that, precisely this and that, binding instructions will be imposed on the court. Courts will be told how to rule, which is inadmissible. The court is independent in the system of division of power, no one can tell the court how it will judge. So this was simply not the norm that required an interpretation. It is a norm that is legally, logically and grammatically completely clear, there's nothing to interpret. An attitude was sought in order to enable court decisions that will be different from those made by the court now.

What is the relationship between the law and the authentic interpretation, in relation to the legal force and the enactment procedure?

The procedures are more or less similar according to the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly. However, as a rule, you are passing a law for the future, and the Constitution allows that only certain provisions of the law can have retroactive effect. An authentic interpretation is by definition retroactive. So the moment you say this norm does not mean what you meant, but something else – it supposes that since the beginning of the entry into force of the law “it has meant something else.” Do you understand what a source of legal uncertainty this is? In this situation, if it had been realised, if the President Vučić had not prevented it at the last minute, we would have had a situation where banks would not only not lose disputes anymore, but would be in a situation to demand fees from citizens who won disputes earlier. Again, although Vučić has now prevented this, it is quite certain that he initially stood behind the proposal of an authentic interpretation because it is simply unbelievable that his party's MPs would try such an operation without the consent of the party leadership. The banks were so sure of the outcome, that they publicly spoke even before the interpretation was made, promising that they would keep their hands off of citizens. The Serbian Chamber of Commerce also reacted as if it had guarantees of what the authentic interpretation would look like. Manifestly, the President estimated at the last minute that it would pay off more politically to withdraw the proposal and to say “that everything is done in the best interest of citizens”.

How often is an authentic interpretation passed in Serbia and for what purposes?

We have been recently seeing this tendency in our country. Everywhere in the world it is a very rare institute that is used only when necessary, as it is a confirmation that some law is not good. We had an almost scandalous situation, the actor was also one of these three MPs who asked for the previously mentioned authentic interpretation. It was an authentic interpretation of the Law on Prevention of Corruption. At first, there was an interpretation that literally whittled away the Law, exempting officials, those who were obviously officials. It was so unbelievable that the public was confused, the media asked questions, and then the next day the MP (chairwoman of the Committee on Constitutional and Legislative Issues), who had asked for an authentic interpretation, appeared and silently corrected the interpretation. This is how the number of those officials who were exempted – decreased. In the afternoon of the same day, yet another correction appeared, and we had such a conundrum that even the proponents of the authentic interpretation did not understand who had been excluded... and serious damage has been done. By the way, the authentic interpretation must adhere to a strictly formal procedure, similar to the law-making procedure. Therefore, when a committee formulates the proposal for authentic interpretation, the Assembly makes a declaration. No president can change the meaning of what the committee has determined on its own initiative. What's more, there was only one sitting of the committee. So the whole procedure was not followed. Even then, they disgraced that institute. Fortunately, this time, it did not happen again.

● SELECTION OF LAW ABSTRACTS

LAW ON AMENDMENTS TO THE LAW ON NATURE PROTECTION

As stated in the explanation of the Draft, the reasons for amendments to the existing Law on Nature Protection are the regulation of small hydropower plant construction in protected areas and harmonization with the Law on Planning System of the Republic of Serbia and the Law on Inspection Supervision, as well as with regulations of the EU. The main amendments to this Law are harmonized with the Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Animal and Plant Species and the Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds.

Work on amendments to the Law on Nature Protection began in 2018, when a work group was formed. Members of that group included representatives of the Ministry of Environmental Protection, an institution responsible for environmental protection and representatives of civil society organizations. From the initial proposed amendments to the latest version of the draft Law, the original work group was last included in the drafting process in February 2019. Even though the idea was to include the comments of interested parties in order to improve the Law, the public debate held on March 19, 2021 included the Ministry of Environmental Protection, representatives of certain institutions and only four civil society organizations. Such an omission occurred as a result of a non-transparent call for a public hearing, and a subsequent call for an online public hearing was also unsuccessful due to late notification of the platform necessary to engage in an online public hearing.

The local self-government unit, which will conduct supervision in this way, shall be obliged to ensure the implementation of the plan of joint supervision of the communal inspection and communal police, as well as to submit to the Ministry of Health weekly reports on the conducted supervision and measures taken.

PRINCIPLE OF PRECAUTION AND ASSESSMENT OF ACCEPTABILITY

The legislator has foreseen the introduction of a new principle in order to better preserve protected natural assets - if there is a threat of significant or irreversible damage to the protected natural good, despite the lack of scientific data, decisions and implementation of measures to prevent deterioration and degradation of nature will not be delayed. In addition to this principle, an acceptability assessment procedure is introduced. This means that an approval of the competent ministry will be necessary, for all basic plans and programs that cover the protected area or whose implementation may have a significant negative impact on the ecological conservation of the area. What is stated as a shortcoming of the acceptability assessment procedure is that the procedure itself is unclear, meaning most of the solutions are taken over from EU directives without clearer formulations.

DURING THE CONSTRUCTION OF HYDROPOWER PLANTS, IT IS NECESSARY TO OBTAIN AN ACT ON THE CONDITIONS OF NATURE PROTECTION

The Act on Nature Protection Conditions will prescribe the conditions under which any type of hydropower plant can be built, or not, in national parks and protected areas belonging to I and II categories. By including this Act in the construction process, the legislator seeks to prevent con-

sequences to the environment that are unwanted. Amendments to the Law also specify the content of this Act.

CONSTRUCTION OF SMALL HYDROPOWER PLANTS IN PROTECTED AREAS

Regarding the controversial issue of construction of small hydropower plants, new legal solutions seek to accelerate this process and but also to limit the construction of hydropower plants in protected areas. As stated, it will be possible to build small hydro power plants in cases when the construction is of general interest and national importance. What the legislator failed to define is what exactly is considered to be of general interest and national importance.

AN ECOLOGICAL NETWORK IS ESTABLISHED TO PRESERVE THE HABITATS OF WILD SPECIES OF FLORA AND FAUNA

An ecological network is being established, consisting of ecologically important areas and ecological corridors, which will protect types of habitat that are of special importance for the preservation of wild species of flora and fauna living there. These changes are made in order to harmonize with the ecological network NATURA 2000, which is a network of protected areas within the European Union.

A COUNCIL OF USERS OF THE PROTECTED AREA IS FORMED

A Council of Users of Protected Areas is being formed, the goal of which will be the protection and sustainable use of natural values and resources, as well as preserving the interests of the local population and other users of protected areas. The Council consists of representatives of local governments, organizations and associations whose activities take place in the protected area: one member of the municipality where the protected area is located; one member of forest users; one hunter representative; one fishermen representative; a farmer representative and representatives of tourist organizations and local civil society organizations from the protected area.

LAW ON AMENDMENTS TO THE LAW ON FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR A FAMILY WITH CHILDREN

The Law on Financial Support to Families with Children has been in force since July 2018. These are the first amendments to the Law. The reasons for the adoption of this Law stem from the analysis of the effects of previous solutions found in the Law as well as the need to improve its application in practice. In addition, the association "Moms are the Law" submitted a proposal to assess the constitutionality of provisions relating to mothers of children with disabilities as well as the rights of new mothers. On that occasion, the Constitutional Court adopted three Decisions in 2021, which improve the rights of parents as well as children who are in need of special care. During the process of improving the Law, the comments and suggestions of citizens that work with families and children were considered in order to comprehensively approach the material improvement of families with children. The most significant amendments to this Law relate to the improvement of the position of mothers and their benefit rights during maternity leave; the improvement of the position of mothers who are insured as agricultural workers; and families with children with disabilities.

THE MONTHLY AMOUNT OF COMPENSATION FOR NEW MOTHERS CANNOT BE LESS THAN THE MINIMUM WAGE

Amendments to the existing legal solution enable mothers to earn the full monthly amount of their earnings, i.e. salary, during maternity leave. This decision stipulates that the amount of compensation may not be less than the minimum wage determined on the day they became entitled to this right.

OTHER COMPENSATION BASED ON BIRTH AND CARE AND SPECIAL CARE OF THE CHILD

The previous provision which did not make it possible for a mother who was insured as an agricultural worker to get child benefits based on birth and care and special care of a child is being changed. Mothers who were insured as agricultural workers in the period of 18 months before the birth of a child are now allowed to exercise this right.

THE POSITION OF PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IS IMPROVED

The provision that caused the most public controversy and the provision whose constitutionality was being assessed, refers to the special care of children with disabilities and is now changing. The old provision is removed, because it did not allow parents to simultaneously exercise the right to salary indemnity during a leave of absence for the purpose of special child care and the child disability assistance payment.

LAW ON THE NATIONAL DATABASE FOR PREVENTION AND FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM

The need for the adoption of the Law on the National Database for Prevention and Fight against Terrorism appeared in 2017, when the Government of the Republic of Serbia, at the proposal of the Ministry of Justice, formed a work group for the establishment of a database against terrorism. In that sense, one of the tasks of this work group was to draft a law that would be the basis and normative framework for the establishment of the National Database for the Fight against Terrorism. The need to create the aforementioned database stems from the Action Plan for Negotiation Chapter 24 as well as the National Strategy for Prevention and Fight against Terrorism for the period 2017-2021. The adoption of this Law will establish a single legal framework that will offer two solutions in the fight against terrorism. The first solution will regulate data storage procedures, content, access to data, their use and protection, while the second will aim to ensure the exchange of data between state bodies responsible for the prevention and fight against terrorism.

SUBJECT OF THE LAW

This Law defines its subject, which is the establishment and content of a single national database for the prevention and fight against terrorism, access to and use and protection of data, supervision and control over enforcement of this Law and other issues necessary for its functioning.

TERMS IN THE LAW

All terms in the Law are defined. The basic terms mentioned in the Law are: National Database for the Prevention and Fight against Terrorism, data, competent authority and indexed person (a person marked and placed on the international or national list of terrorists, terrorist organizations, i.e. which are in the records of the competent authorities due to links to terrorist activities).

AIM AND PURPOSE OF THE NATIONAL BASE

It is foreseen that a national database will be established in order to efficiently exchange data and information between the competent authorities. As the National Database contains personal data, there is a purpose for which this data can be used and there is a restriction on how this data can be used and processed.

ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL DATABASE

A National Database is established, consisting of a basic platform located at the Security Information Agency (hereinafter: The Agency) and individual services for access to the basic platform. This prescribes the obligation of the competent authorities to establish and manage the database. Already collected and processed data are entered into the database; it is based on the principle of indexing persons based on already collected, processed and stored data that exist in the databases.

CONTENTS OF THE NATIONAL BASE

This Law prescribes the following content of the National Database: indexed persons from the list of persons marked by the UN and other international organizations; lists established by the law governing the restriction of property disposition in purpose of preventing terrorism; consolidated lists established under the law governing international restrictive measures and lists of existing databases of competent authorities that include persons suspected, accused or convicted of terrorism and related offenses.

INDEX OF PERSONS, ACCESS TO DATA AND USE OF DATA FROM THE NATIONAL DATABASE

It prescribes the manner in which basic data on natural persons, legal entities, as well as groups or organizations are indexed and stored, the manner in which covert indexing is performed, the exchange of extended data, who are the persons that have authorized access to the database and a certificate for access to classified information.

PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION

As for personal data, it is necessary that it be stored in electronic form and protected in accordance with the provisions of the law governing the protection of classified information, the law governing the protection of personal data and the law governing information security. Competent administrators implement general and special protection measures.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The accountability of the competent authorities that enter data into the database is stipulated, as well as the accountability of the database administrator. They are obligated to undertake appropriate measures to protect the data contained in the National Database and thus protect its confidentiality, integrity, availability, authenticity and credibility. The Agency, as the administrator of the National Database, is obligated to establish records in which data will be entered: records on the time of access, the subject of access and the authorized person of the competent authority that performed the access.

SUPERVISION AND CONTROL

Supervision over the implementation of the Law is performed by the ministry in charge of justice, supervision over the processing of personal data is performed by the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection, while control over the application of information security measures is performed by competent authorities in accordance with the Law on Information Security.

TRANSITIONAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS

The deadline for the establishment of the National Database is one year from the day the Law enters into force, while the data will be indexed within one year from the establishment of the database. The Agency is obligated to adopt an act on data protection measures within three months from the day this Law enters into force.

Audio reports of Couplet Chorus Replica

71 episode: What is Mladić to us?

If you did not give a second thought when Ratko Mladić was sentenced to life prison for war crimes, you are either not Serb enough or you do not support Aleksandar Vučić and the Serbian Progressive Party. Or at least that was a message sent by the Serbian Parliament last week.

Episode no. 71 #CoupletChorusRebuttal

72 episode: Missing

The amendments to the Law on Pension and Disability Insurance were adopted by the Assembly in order to help the retired to live even better, although according to the MPs they are already doing quite fine. The largest part of the debate was devoted to Aleksandar Vučić whose name was mentioned more than one hundred times during the day. Each MP did their best to repeat, in case it was not yet clear to everyone, that all credit was due to the President. It all sounded like

this. **Episode no. 72** #CoupletChorusRebuttal

77 episode: Zagorka forever

The election of the Republic Public Prosecutor in the Assembly was merged with three other items on the agenda, hence the twelve-year mandate of Zagorka Dolovac was discussed with the election of court presidents and the amendment to two more laws. Those who spoke about her had only words of praise, without any specific case to point to as an example. In addition, MPs seem to see a remarkable proof of their democratic orientation as they re-elected a person who “was also good to those before”. **Episode no. 77** #CoupletChorusRebuttal

78 episode: The culture of crime

At the last session before the summer break, the amendments to two laws in the field of culture and one international agreement were on the agenda of the Assembly. Judging by the reactions of the chairpersons, all the discussions were on the agenda. In reality only some of them were.

Episode no. 78 #CoupletChorusRebuttal
