A New Hearing Held Regarding the Charges Filed by Ilija Dević against the City of Novi Sad

Who Has Suffered the Damage?

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Novi Sad – A new hearing was held yesterday in the Commercial Court in Novi Sad regarding the charges filed by Ilija Dević, majority owner of *ATP Vojvodina*, against the City of Novi Sad for compensation of the personal damage caused due to mismanagement of the contract relating construction of the new bus station. The company signed the contract with that time Major Maja Gojković.

- The authorized representatives of the City of Novi Sad in this court case demanded interrupting of the proceedings because criminal offence had been initiated against Dević. They claimed that, as far as this case was concerned, this represented so-called preliminary issue result of which would directly influence upon foundation of the damage compensation demand, but that is a kind of nonsense. It could have had some sense if the City had suffered the damage, because the possible guilt would have supported the claim. However, Dević is the one suffering the damage in this case and all his problems and the later bankruptcy were created because of lack of fulfillment of the City’s contractual obligations to relocate the traffic to the newly built bus station – Dević’s attorney Nebojša Đokić says today to *Danas*. He also adds that the new judge in this case to whom the demand of the sued City was sent earlier, has not made the decision yet, but she did continue the proceeding at the yesterday hearing by listening to two experts – an agricultural and a construction one.

Đokić explains that the experts did give arguments for their results and that the court accepted the calculated amount of damage. However, expertise done by the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering from Belgrade was not treated in the same way. Namely, he emphasizes, the court gave the order to the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering to define number of the lost standard working hours in newly constructed service centre officially authorized for *Evrobus*, *Setra* and *Mercedes*, as well as the lost profit caused by stopping of selling the machines of seven international brands authorized representative of which *ATP Vojvodina* had been before the bankruptcy. Team of professors from that Faculty have defined the demanded parameters and attached the valid price lists in accordance with which *ATP Vojvodina* had to act as an official representative.

- We expressed our demand that the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering should independently calculate the money portion of the damage in the same way the other two cases of expertise were allowed, but the judge immediately rejected our demand and ordered for this part to be calculated by a special financial expert – Đokić emphasizes and reminds that the calculation already made by the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering has reached the approximate amount of 70 million Euros.

Just to remind you, the case of *ATP Vojvodina* is on European Commission’s list among the first five out of total number of 24 compromised high corruption cases, mostly from the privatization procedures. It is defined as the only case in which an investor, but not the country, has suffered the damage. European Commission headquarters carefully follow the endeavors to solve the cases from the list, and even a special work group has been formed for the case of *ATP Vojvodina*.

Value

Although the investor, majority owner Ilija Dević, is the one suffering the damage in the case of ATP Vojvodina, he was arrested two years ago within the announcement that all the cases from the list of 24 compromised privatizations were solved. Criminal proceedings were later initiated against him accusing him of abuse of official position thus reducing value of the company. However, it is a fact that the company was estimated at the value of three million Euros at the moment of privatization and it is also a fact that that its value reached the amount of about 100 million Euros after completion of the investments. It is also registered in the official stock market documents that, two years after selling, the nominal price of shares has increased for about 40%.