

IEDC alumni Success Story



A School with a View

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Edmond Haxhinasto, EMBA, 1996, Politician, Albania

“LEADERS IN POLITICS AND BUSINESS HAVE A LOT IN COMMON!”

Mr. Edmond Haxhinasto, born in Tirana, has been involved in the political life since early 90's and his consistent hard work, objective and professional approach supported a steady and gradual growth in his career path as Public Servant. He has held a variety of senior and ministerial posts from foreign policy, economy and infrastructure development. Among other positions, he was Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Economy, Trade and



Energy; Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure and even the Deputy Prime Minister of Albania. No matter how busy his schedule might be, Edmond always finds time for lifelong learning. He has graduated from the University of Tirana, and later upgraded his education with postgraduate studies at IEDC and Princeton University. His schoolmates describe him as “an excellent student, very diligent and hard-working, driven and ambitious, whilst maintaining very good relations through an amiable, cooperative, balanced and very discrete personality.” Even though Edmond is aware of the ambivalent reputation of politics today; he is not losing faith- on the contrary! He strongly believes in the power politics and its essence: serving people and he looks up to those people who do well to others with a humble modesty.

In 2016, IEDC awarded him with Generali AAA award for demonstrating and representing the highest ideals that personify outstanding individual career achievements, leadership, innovation, service to the community, as well as his contribution to the school's development.

By Tonja Blatnik, Head of Corporate Communications, IEDC

You have been involved in the political life since the early 90's; holding a variety of senior positions, among them you also served as a Deputy Prime Minister of Albania. What attracted you to politics?

My involvement with politics has been a course which started, as you said, in the beginning of the 90's, but initially, holding various public service positions and responsibilities, very close to policy-making. It coincided with a period which we refer to as the transition. It was characterized by very heated, polarized and controversial politics. By 2005, I ran for the first time for parliament and have been actively involved in politics ever-since. I recall that the decision to run for MP came naturally. It was a time that a new party had just been created with the main mission to take the country forward, esp. vis-a-vis the European integration process, at a time when traditional parties had failed to do so. So, I found myself among a group of like-minded people who thought that we could do much better, especially in offering the country better governance, and the people a better perspective. I had trust that we were going to make a change.

What defines success in politics? Do successful leaders in politics and in business share the same qualities or not?

Success can sometimes be comprehensive and difficult to grasp in its wholeness. Some relate it with the longevity in politics. My way to define success is rather related to the conception, elaboration and implementation of reforms that can take the country forward, and improve lives of people in a tangible way. I do think that successful leaders

in politics and business do have a lot in common. They have to manage change. They have organizations to lead and people to inspire and manage. They can have much more in common when in both cases the leaders have a cause or a dream to pursue, and inspire others to embrace it. I know many business organizations that manage to be successful because of that.

In the Generali AAA nomination letter, your IEDC Alumni colleagues wrote: "Edmond is a symbol of a new breed of young Albanian politicians, devoted, with a new outlook on country's development path and political dialogue, far from the pathos of the mainstream politics." Why is politics so often connected with immorality, hunger for power and lack of engagement, especially among young people? Less than half of young people eligible to vote did so in 2010. How can we improve the image of politics?

That is really flattering. I think, the reason why we try to define old and new politics is, because we often lose track of the very essence of politics, serving people as their representative. This cannot be old or new. I think what changes is the nature of issues and problems politicians have to face and resolve, the instruments they use, and the means they choose to communicate. Today, there is a growing discontent with the mainstream politics. Recent events in many countries of the world, Europe too, show that there is serious distrust between politicians and voters. There is rather, a gap of representation and a failure to resolve the real issues the people are facing. In other words, there is a lost sense of reality by politicians who have

mistakably positioned themselves in a different trench from people they are supposed to represent. I think the remedy comes from the people themselves, who should make smart choices, through transparent, open and accountable electoral processes. I say "smart" choices, because sometimes one can easily fall in the trap of populist and nationalistic political manipulators who widen the gap and aggravate the relationship between the electors and the elected.

You are a member of steering committee of Albanian SMI political party (SMI stands for Socialist Movement for Integration). Just recently, SMI leader Ilir Meta stated that: "SMI is a political force that does not create problems, but solves them." What is the vision of SMI for the future of Albania?

SMI has established itself as a trustworthy party in Albania, with a constant growing support by the electorate. The substance of its policies and the method of its political activity, make a real difference. As part of the coalitions, SMI has been outspoken and critical of improving governance as policies. First of all, on issues of economic and social development, there is a distinct vision on what should be done to accelerate growth rates and reduce unemployment. We will have the chance to reconfirm the electoral support for what we stand for, in the coming elections on 18 June 2017.

How important is the integration in EU, for example?

EU integration is also a fundamental pillar of SMI's policies. Fortunately, Albanians are very supportive of the integration pro-

cess, but they are also becoming impatient, since the expectations of a prolonged integration process are also high.

After successfully finishing EMBA at IEDC in 1996 (Brdo at that time), you also completed a Master of Public Policy from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University. How important is education for any political carrier and what were the best takeaways for you?

I think I have been really fortunate with my post-university education. But, most importantly, education is a life-long process not confined to the school attendance. In-job learning is a must which no one can afford to ignore. Nevertheless, the post-graduate learning is extremely important as a time to reflect on the past working experiences, recalibrate and readjust to meet the new challenges. In my case, beside the ultimate in-

formation, I think I got an improved capacity to make the right assessments and decisions.

What advice would you give to your younger-self?

Before advising the younger-self, one has to conduct a profound assessment of himself to the date. And that is a pretty serious task. Nevertheless, I sometimes do that

by “advising” or “counselling” my daughter who is a student of Economy and Finance. (She was only two-weeks old when I first came to Brdo). No matter how much we work, strive, fight or sacrifice, at the end of the day, what remains is the question: Are we respected and loved by the people around us? I think this is the best advice I could give to my daughter.



MEET EDMOND PERSONALLY

I am inspired by ...

... people who do well to others with a humble modesty.

My role model is ...

... one who owes success to their own capability and hard work.

When I think of IEDC, ...

... I think of a life-changing opportunity.

I believe in politics ...

... because it has the capacity to transform.

I like ...

... order and balance.

I dislike ...

... anarchy.

My family describes me as ...

... caring (my wife and daughter, just made that confession).