



THE OFFICE OF HUMAN AND MINORITY RIGHTS

Summary of Financial Statements of the National Councils published

# 18 Minority News

July 2015

## A small jubilee and thanksgiving for a good harvest



THE GOVERNMENT  
of the Republic of Serbia

**Strengthening  
of bilateral relations  
between Serbia  
and Romania**



INTERVIEW

**ATTILA MÁRTON**  
Minority news-  
rooms are not  
translation services



The Macedonian Community



**Days of Carnation  
in Vranje**

# HIGHLIGHTs



## The fourth session of the National Council

At the fourth session of the National Council of the Macedonian National Community, held on July 18, on the premises of the National Council in Pancevo, the six-monthly report on the work of the Council was presented and adopted.



## The Meeting of Croats from all over the world

"With the recommendations and guidelines for cooperation with the Croats outside Croatia, one of the key issues of the session of the Council is developing new contacts, interconnectedness and meeting people," Slaven Bacic concluded.



## A Round Table on the topic "The role of minorities in fostering multiculturalism" held in Nis

Organized by the Association "Caribrod" from Nis, with the support of the Consulate General of the Republic of Bulgaria in Nis and the OSCE Mission to Serbia, a Round Table was held in Nis.



## Getting to know the secrets of the Macedonian original folk music

Within the festival of folk instruments and songs "Pece Atanasovski", which has traditionally been held for 40 years in the village of Dolneni, near Prilep, a five-day seminar for the study of the Macedonian original folk music, original instruments and songs was organized, which was also attended by the Ensemble of the Macedonian National Council of the Republic of Serbia with the singing group "Tose Proeski".

# EDITORIAL 18

## National minorities are (not) always in fashion

Summer is definitely not the time to start serious and unpleasant topics, as well as public debates, dialogues or opposing views. Summer fashion is certainly all about bikinis that reveal everything but show nothing. It is similar with the issues of importance for national minorities living in Serbia. During the summer, the reports on them are mainly from cultural and artistic events, on their folklore shows or culinary specialties. Concluding on the reports from the National Communities it would seem that the only problem of national minorities in Serbia is how to prepare enough food for so many visitors, and how to practice a new national dance step with children, but unfortunately this is not the case.

As in the story of the grasshopper and the ant, many representatives of national minorities work hard during the summer to prepare themselves for the winter, or in our case the fall, as from the fall the fight for the rights of national minorities in Serbia continues. It is not forgotten that a new law must be drafted, and that broad and extensive consultations and public debates need to be previously done, and different models of integration of national minorities into the political system need to be analysed. It is particularly important for the affirmation of the rights of national minorities and integration into the system of decision-making to be such so that all sides are relatively equally satisfied, which is often neglected as an imperative. The State and State Authorities often find that the job of regulating certain areas is over when a particular law is passed and adopted by the Assembly, but the imperative for every responsible government and state should be that those, to whom such law applies, are satisfied with the solutions and that they apply such law without coercion, but since there is constantly little time for quality solutions, there is always a dilemma as to whether we want any given solution or none at all, and the answer is always the same. And so for years we choose the lesser of two evils and the only possible solution.

## 30 different national communities live in Serbia!





# Summary of Financial Statements of the National Councils published



**T**he Office of Human and Minority Rights of the Republic of Serbia announced that within its ordinary jurisdiction it has published reports on the financing of the National Councils of national minorities for the years 2013 and 2014.

The statement recalls that on the basis of the Law on Budget of the Republic of Serbia, within the funds allocated for the work of the Office of Human and Minority Rights, the means of funding the National Councils of national minorities have been established. For these purposes, in the years 2013 and 2014, the budgetary funds in the amount of 240 million dinars annually have been allocated. In

order to control the expenditure of the funds dedicated, the Office committed the national minority Councils to negotiate contracts with independent audit firms of their choice, to control

**For these purposes, in the years 2013 and 2014, the budgetary funds in the amount of 240 million dinars annually have been allocated.**

the implementation of the Law on National Councils of national minorities. All audit reports for the years 2013 and 2014 stated that the audit was conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISA 800),

stressed out the responsibility of the auditor to give an opinion on these financial statements, for dealing with ethical requirements, and that the audit was conducted in a reasonable manner where the auditor could make sure that the financial statements are free of material misstatement. For the purpose of transparency of the information on the spending of funds of the National Councils of national minorities, the Office of Human and Minority Rights published an overview of all financial statements of the National Councils on its website, with the expressed opinion of the auditor for the years 2013 and 2014.

Reports can be viewed at the following link: <http://bit.ly/1Kw1fRr>

For the work of the Office of Human and Minority Rights in the years 2013 and 2014, budgetary funds in the amount of 240 million dinars annually have been allocated.

# The tenth session of the Political Council of the Government for the realization of NAP held

**O**n Friday, July 24, 2015, in the Government of the Republic of Serbia the tenth session of the Political Council of the Government for the realization of the National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 - Women, Peace and Security in the Republic of Serbia was held.

In order to support the realization of NAP for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, the Office of Human and Minority Rights is continuously preparing reports for the Special Procedures of the UN on the implementation of UN resolutions on the issue of the status of women in the Republic of Serbia, as well as the information relating to the state of gender

equality for the purposes of other relevant UN bodies in the field of gender equality.

The drafting of the report on the implementation of recommendations 17 (promotion of gender equality through the implementation of adopted strategies and action plans) and 23 (prevention of and fight to eliminate violence against women) of the Concluding Observations of the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in conjunction with the second and third periodic report of the Republic of Serbia on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is underway.

The session also discussed the initiative for the implementation of evaluation and revision of the NAP, as well as the

priorities related to the implementation of planned activities within the competence of the working group of the Political Council.

The Office representative also participated in the work of the Political Council.



## Strengthening of bilateral relations between Serbia and Romania

**P**The Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, Aleksandar Vucic, held talks with the President of Romania Klaus Iohannis, who was on his first official visit to Serbia, on cooperation in the energy sector, as well as the construction of the highway Belgrade-Timisoara.

At the meeting it was noted that this visit would give a powerful impetus to the development of bilateral relations and thus strengthen the economic cooperation between the two countries, whose resources are not used enough. Vucic conveyed his gratitude to Iohannis for Romania's support for Serbia's European integration and pointed out that the Serbian-Romanian relations are important for the entire region. He expressed the hope that the involvement of Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria within the Craiova group would contribute to our rapid rapprochement



with the EU. Vucic and Iohannis reiterated the readiness to address all questions about the position of the Romanian minority in Serbia within the Intergovernmental Mixed Commission for Minorities. Serbian Prime Minister

pointed out that the Romanian national minority in Serbia, as well as the Serbian in Romania, is a bridge of cooperation between the two countries and cultures.



# Macedonian culture and tradition presented at the event “Days of Carnation” in Vranje

Source: National council of macedonian national minority

**A**t the beginning of July, the municipality of Vranjska Banja organized the traditional cultural and tourist event “Days of Carnation”. Within the framework of the event, the Association of Macedonians from Vranje “Goce Delcev” presented typical Macedonian dishes and the most famous Macedonian brands, such as Tikves and Grozd, all under the auspices of the Macedonian National Council.

On the first day of the event a competition in preparing Serbian dishes and game meat delicacies was held, and visitors were able to see the parade and the performance of the cultural-artistic societies from Vranje.

On the second day, in addition to a children’s masked ball and a chess tournament, a promotion of the Macedonian national cuisine was organized, thanks to the diligent hands of the members of the Association, who made an effort to present the Macedonian national dishes in the best light. The

festivity was enriched with Macedonian music and dancing of the Cultural-Artistic Society “Branko Cajka” from Tetovo, who were guests of the event.

Macedonian culture and tradition were also promoted as part of the ethno fair, through the handicraft of the members of the Association, who have once again demonstrated and proven the best-known adage of the man whose name is borne by the Association, that they “understand the world as a field of cultural competition of the people”.



# CULTURAL SUMMER OF CZECHS IN SERBIA - Festival

## “The Beauty of Diversity”

**H**ot July of the year 2015 was full of cultural events which were prepared by the Czech associations from southern Banat for the members of the Czech Community and their many visitors. “CeskabesedaKruscica” from the place that bears the same name in the municipality of Bela Crkva, organized the traditional festival of choirs and music and singing groups called “The Beauty of Diversity”, which brought together close to a hundred participants of all ages.

The greatest attention was attracted by the guests from the Czech Republic, the Ensemble “Pan Optikum” from the town of Usti nad Labem and “Valaskacimbalovka”, an orchestra consisting of musicians from various parts of the country, who gather especially for performances of this kind. The hosts presented themselves with a nice selection of old Czech songs that were performed first by the children’s choir, and then by the adult choir singers of the music section of the Association. The girls, members of the Ensemble “Kruska Ladies” performed the more modern songs and arrangements.

The residents of Kruscica regularly visit and take part in numerous national and international events, and this month their excellent folklore section performed at the famous folklore festival “The Wreath of Vrsac”. The guests from the region are also traditionally present at this musical event which is of entertaining character. The choir “BellaMusica” from Bela Crkva was very successful in Prague, winning the podium among strong competition of choirs from several European countries. Their performance exuded freshness and perfect harmony, giving the impression of professionalism, primarily due to the extraordinary managers and the dedicated work of all its members. Choral Society “Krajani” has also per-



formed at previous festivals and, as always, presented themselves with the selection of old Czech songs that they want to save from oblivion. This is also

the basis of the years of existence and work of this society that belongs to the musical singing section of the “Ceskabeseda Bela Crkva” Association.





The Festival program also included the performance of the Musical Ensemble “Bohemia” from the town of Genjikin the Republic of Romania, which is populated solely by the Czechs. Preserving the tradition of Czech folk music – “dechovke”, the members of this orchestra perform music in a manner that the local members of the Czech Community feel close to, and are therefore always welcomed guests on various occasions. The festival “The Beauty of Diversity”, although of musical character, is never simply that. It is an opportunity to meet fellow countrymen from various regions, to talk and sing in their own language, to make friendships. Therefore, after the festival, the participants and guests gather for dinner. They drink an occasional Czech beer, and when the “Bohemia” plays the sounds of waltz and polka again, they dance and sing well into the morning. That is one of the reasons why Kruscica is a favourite place for the Czech music lovers.





# CULTURAL SUMMER OF CZECHS IN SERBIA – The Month of Czech Culture in Serbia

Jaroslav Bodnar

**C**ultural-Artistic-Educational Association “Ceskabeseda Vrsac” is one of the youngest associations of Czechs in Serbia. It was formed in May 2014, and from that moment, with the effort of its members, it has recorded a range of activities, particularly in the field of culture. This year they have for the first time realized the event “The Month of Czech culture in Serbia”. The project was financially supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Serbia and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

The event began in June, with the performances of folklore ensembles from the Czech Republic and Serbia and ended in July with a visiting folklore performance and an exhibition dedicated to Czech folk treasure.

With its performance at the beginning of the event, the Folklore Ensemble “Safran” from the Czech Republic was certainly the biggest attraction for many citizens of Vrsac and others who had their opportunity to see for the first time, in many ways original, performance of the mixed ensemble from the town of Jablonec nad Nisou. Performances of the local Cultural-Artistic Society “Grozď” from Vrsac, and the always welcomed guests - the Folk Music Ensemble “Ceskabeseda Kruscica” from the village in the municipality of Bela Crkva, also contributed to the rich program. The guests of the event were representatives of the Usti region in Czech Republic, with whom the members of this

young association have already established their first contacts.

On several occasions during the course of the event, the visitors were able to hear the Musical Ensemble “Praskafrajerka” from the town of Litomerice. Seven artists that comprise the ensemble have performed throughout the Czech Republic as well as in Germany, Denmark, Finland, Switzerland and Austria. Their songs recognize the customs and traditions of various regions and areas that were presented once again through their professional performance under the motto: “Who is a Czech - is a musician”.

The hosts presented themselves with the Choral Society, which is a part of the Cultural-Artistic Society “Laza Nancic”, a famous Folk Ensemble from Vrsac. Another outstanding musical ensemble from the Czech Republic has enriched the musical part of the event. It was the Ensemble “Ceski Evergreen” from the



town of Miletov. The Ensemble performs older songs, but it still has its listeners of all generations and is known around the world. It collaborates with famous artists, actors and singers, performs at theatres and cultural centres. Naturally, the whole program was performed in the Czech language, for it is, as they say, rich and melodious. The outstanding singer we had the opportunity to hear, Jitka Dolejšová, is also the leader of this Ensemble.

The program of the event “The Month of Czech Culture in Serbia”, was concluded with the exhibition “Czech Republic - folk treasure in the heart of Europe”, of the author Jarmila Mrnustikova. The setting comprised elements of tradition that have been kept for centuries in the Czech Republic, as well as the traits of different regions of the country through folk costumes and specific traditions that survive in them. Although no previous experience in organizing such event, the Association “Ceskabeseda Vrsac” carried out the program at a high level and gave impetus to other societies to continue this cultural summer of Czechs in Serbia.





# The fourth session of the National Council

Source: National Council of the Macedonian National Community

**A**

t the fourth session of the National Council of the Macedonian National Community, held on July 18, on the premises of the National Council in Pancevo, a six-monthly report on the work of the Council, both narrative and financial, budget rebalance for the year 2015, reports on the work of the Newspaper Publishing Institution "Macedonian Information and Publishing Centre" were presented and adopted, and a decision was made to advertise a vacancy for the director of this institution. The decisions of the Executive Board adopted during the period between the two sessions of the Council were justified and verified, and the decision to hold the central celebration of Ilinden in Jabuka was confirmed.

The session was attended by 19 members of the Council, as well as the Director of the Newspaper Publishing Institution "Macedonian Information and Publishing Centre" (NIU MIIC).

While presenting the six-monthly report on the activities of the Council, President Borce Velickovski particularly stressed out the success achieved in Leskovac, where the Macedonian language with elements of national culture is going to be studied from September, in two grades, nonetheless. In addition to Jabuka and Kacareva, and the activities underway to open new grades in Glogonj and Plandiste, the Macedonian language is going to be studied in central Serbia for the first time, which is a historic achievement in the field of education of the Macedonian National Community in Serbia. As the ones most responsible for this endeavour, which the members of the Council welcomed with an applause, the President named the President of the Board of Education, Mare Karanfilovic, Vice President of the Council, Ivana Cvetkovic, as well as the activists of the Association "Ilinden" from Leskovac.

Financial report on the work of the Council, as well as the budget rebalance for the year 2015, have sparked a debate, after which a number of members of the Council decided to leave the session.

- "It is the duty and obligation of the

President of the Council to allow, within the Work Regulations, the time for discussion to all scheduled discussants, for each item on the agenda, but also to make sure that the time limit is not exceeded. After an open discussion within the first and the second item on the agenda, where the Regulations have been implemented in a completely identical manner, discussants who have exceeded the scheduled time were reprimanded. During the third item on the agenda, due to lack of connection of the discussion to the item itself or the topic under which the discussion was implemented, the last scheduled discussant was reprimanded for exceeding the time limit, which resulted in the situation where a number of members of the Council, without any clear explanation, left the session, after which I announced a break. I want to believe that, because of the weather conditions and high temperatures, certain number of the members was not prepared to continue to participate in the session, which was resumed after the break. I certainly do not want to believe that the Council members who left the session had any intention or desire to try to block the further work of the session of the National Council, out of solidarity with the colleagues who were not prepared to honour the time limits of the discussion", said President Velickovski.

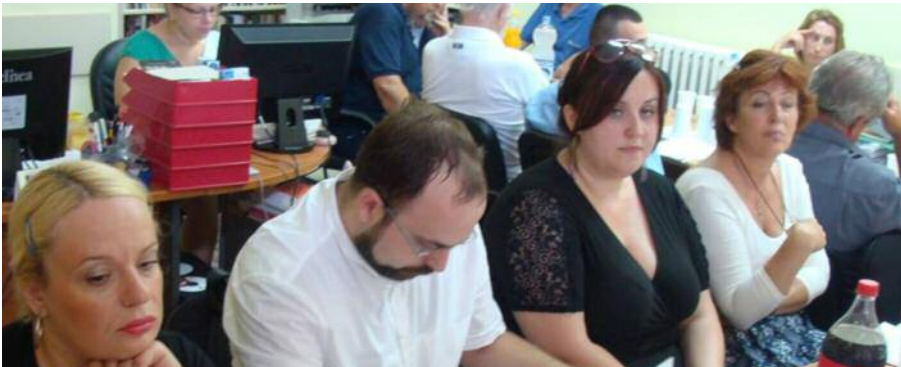
Director of the NIU MIIC, Viktor Secerovski, presented the reports on the work of this institution in the first half of

the year 2015. While highlighting the problems faced by the NIU MIIC, he stressed out that bearing in mind the social and economic circumstances in our country, but also the indolence and indifference of the home country of Macedonia, NIU MIIC still managed to make not a large but a noticeable positive step forward. In addition to the regular issues of the magazine "Makedonskavidelina", children's magazine "Sunica", the magazine for literature, art and culture "Videlo" and the youth trilingual magazine "Alka", which are regularly sent to all associations in Serbia, NIU MIIC managed to form the National Library and classify all books according to library standards.

Upon the ascertainment that the mandate of the former director of NIU MIIC has expired, members of the National Council adopted the decision to advertise a vacancy for the director of this institution. Clarification on the implementation of the procedure of advertisement by the Board of NIU MIIC was given by the President of the Board, Ivan Mitrovski.

The President of the Executive Board, Peco Risteski, reported on the work of the Executive Board between the two sessions of the Council, presented reasoned decisions that this Board has made, and thanked all the members of the Council who participated in the preparation of Regulations, based on which a better and more transparent work of the Council has been ensured.

At the end of the session, the decision that the central celebration of the biggest Macedonian holiday, Ilinden 2015, is going to take place in Jabuka was confirmed, and the President of the Council, as well as the members of the Council from Jabuka, Dobre Trajkovski and Blagoje Sokolovski, briefed the attendees about the activities undertaken and the plans for the program of the event.



# The idea of forming the Network of Women of all National Councils

Source: Bunjevac National Council

OSCE Mission visited the Bunjevac National Council in order to familiarize itself with respect to gender equality. Out of the 21 National Councils of national minorities, women are at the head of two National Councils.

**W**ith regard to the implementation of activities in support of the policies of gender equality within the National Councils and training the empowerment of women that have entered the National Councils to be actively engaged in this policy, on Wednesday, July 1, the representatives of the OSCE Mission visited the National Council of the Bunjevac national minority.

On that occasion, the Advisor on Gender Issues of the OSCE Mission in Serbia, Zorana Antonijevic, pointed out that she was pleasantly surprised by the representation of women in the Bunjevac National Council, and particularly stressed out the importance of a woman being at the head of the Council.

- This is one of the two National Council in which the Presidents are women, which is a positive example. It is a very palpable and certain progress with respect to what the composition of this Council looked like in previous convocations, and how it looks now- said Antonijevic, and added that throughout history it has been evident that where there is a critical mass of women, the change can occur in the direction of greater gender equality.

During the meeting, Vice President of the BNS, Nikola Babic, stressed out that men and women equally participate in the work of the Council, and that they all are here due to their expertise and quality. He pointed out that, in addition to the President of the BNS, Suzana Kujundzic Ostojic, women represent two out of the four Committees in the Council – thus the president of the Committee for Culture is Kata Kuntic, and the President of the Board of Education is Mirjana Savanov.

- There is an equal division between all of us in the Council, but it was created spontaneously, on the basis of assessment of what any of us can offer and how we can contribute to better and more meaningful work of the Council, which would affect the whole Bunjevac Community - he explained.

In late June, NSBNM participated in the education on gender equality organized by the National Democratic Institute. On that occasion, it was proposed to create a network of women from all National Councils in Serbia, with the aim of better cooperation and exchange of experiences on examples of good practice. - During the education we were involved in work with women from other National Councils in order to strengthen our position in them, and in order for gender equality to experience its actions on an institutional level. In this sense, it is very important to cooperate with state institutions and the OSCE Mission in Serbia in this area that concerns not only women, but all of us - said Mirjana Savanov.

The meeting was on the premises of BNS – and it was also attended by the Advisor at the Democratization Department of the OSCE Mission in Serbia, Jelena Jokanovic, President of the BNS Executive Board, Mirko Bajic and President of the Committee for Culture, Kata Kuntic.



Throughout history it has been evident that where there is a critical mass of women, the change can occur in the direction of greater gender equality



SOMBORSKA BUNJEVACKA DUZIONICA 2015

# A small jubilee and thanksgiving for a good harvest



**S**omborska bunjevac  
Duzionica 2015, traditionally  
held in the last week of July,  
for the 15th time in the or-  
ganization of the Association of Citizens  
“Bunjevacko kolo”.

From the re-establishment of the Association, the hosts and the presidency of the Association of Citizens “Bunjevacko kolo” led by Dejan Parčetić, President, Vice President Aleksandar Bosnjak, Vice President Aleksandra Kalcan-Medurić and Honorary President Djuro Bosnjak, welcomed numerous guests, including the Mayor of Sombor Sasa Todorović, President of the Bunjevac National Council, Suzana Kujundžić Ostojić, M.A., member of IOBNS Tihomir Vrbanić, prim. Dr Vlado Babić, Republican Deputy, prim. Dr Zoran Parčetić, City Council member for the area of health and social protection, Member of the City Council for Culture Nemanja Sarac, Director of the Institute for the Study of Serbian Cultural Development Marina

Lukićević, representatives of the Bunjevac Home-land, representatives of Bunjevac people from Gara and Baja in Hungary, guests from Slovenia, the Netherlands, the United States... who graced the ceremony of the 15th jubilee of Duzionica with their presence.

The start of the event of the final harvesting ceremony was in the borough hotel, where the procession of hosts, harvesters and guests walked the streets of Sombor to the Church of the Holy Trinity.

The ceremonial procession was led by the horseback riders, and then young people, students of the Art Studio “Bunjevacko kolo”. Young artists - Iva Hajnal, Ivana Andreković, Ivana, Katarina and Andreja Bogdan, Nevena Serenćes, Ana Andjelic and Vanesa Marković wearing the Bunjevac national costumes, symbolically carried ears of grain with blue ribbons. Behind them, the column of participants of the ceremony led by the

youth in costumes who carried a symbolic crown, masterpiece of the Straw section of “Kolo”, specially made on the occasion of the 15th jubilee of Duzionica. Behind the pedestrian column, as the sign of recognition of the bunjevac duzionica, dressed up carriages carried the harvesters and the main harvesting couple – Lead Harvester (Bandas) Zarko Goretić and Lead Harvester (Bandasica) Ivana Jaksic.

The thanksgiving Mass was held at The Holy Trinity Church, which, along with the Sombor clergy, was led by Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Orlando Antonini, Ambassador of Vatican in Serbia. After the traditional Bandas round dance at the borough market, the consecrated bread and wreath were taken by the Lead Harvesters Zarko Goretić and Ivana Jaksic and officially handed over to the Mayor of Sombor, Sasa Todorović. - This is a holiday that reflects the true spirit of the Town of Sombor. Not only in these difficult times, but in some, per-

The ceremonial procession was led by the horseback riders, and then young people, students of the Art Studio “Bunjevacko kolo”



On that occasion, the host and the President of the Association Dejan Parcetic expressed his gratitude to the Administration of the Town of Sombor and the Ministry of Culture and the Provincial Secretariat who have supported this year's project of Duzionica

haps, more difficult times, when in spite of everything we managed to live in tolerance, or as I prefer to say we persevered against all odds- the Mayor Todorovic said.

Luncheon and festivity continued in a town hotel "Crystallux". On that occasion, the host and the President of the Association Dejan Parcetic expressed his gratitude to the Administration of the Town of Sombor and the Ministry of Culture and the Provincial Secretariat who have supported this year's project of Duzionica, as well as all sections, members of the Association, and individuals on the exceptional commitment and effort made during the preparation and organization of the final harvesting festivities.

- We must not forget the main heroes of the harvest behind us who have, although with the help of modern machinery, invested long hours, hard work and sweat during the tropical temperatures to harvest and collect bread grain for our daily bread - recalled Duro Bosnjak, the Honorary President of the Association "Bunjevacko kolo".

In congratulating the holiday, the fifteenth ceremony of Duzionica, to everyone, primarily to the Bunjevci of Sombor and the Association of Citizens "Bunjevacko kolo", the President of the BNS,



Suzana Kujundzic Ostojic, M.A., said:

- This is an opportunity to jointly remember those who re-established the Association of Citizens "Bunjevackokolo", those who are here today and those who are not, to thank them immensely for this pioneering work and to remember those who, a hundred years ago, started "Bunjevackokolo", and certainly to wish all those who run and work in it today, and everyone in Sombor, for it to last a long, long time and that Duzionica is always so beautifully celebrated.

Duzionica celebration was an opportunity for the Mayor Sasa Todorovic to address the guests and hosts of the Association of Citizens "Bunjevacko kolo".

- I congratulate you on your holiday once again, for the umpteenth time you have made me very proud to be the Mayor of the Town of Sombor.

On this occasion, President Parcetic handed a membership card - of the honorary member of the Association of Citizens "Bunjevacko kolo" to the Mayor Todorovic.

The impressions were also expressed by the Director of the Institute for the Study

of Serbian Cultural Development, Marina Lukic Cvetic, as the honorary member of the "Bunjevacko kolo".

- It is an honour to be a member of the "Bunjevackokolo" and this was an op-

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**mr Suzana Kujundžić Ostojić**

portunity to familiarize myself with Duzionica, of which I've heard so much from Mr. Djuro Bosnjak. While preparing the Straw exhibition "The Gold of Bunjevacko kolo" I became acquainted with



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the customs related to mowing, harvesters, the crown, the consecration of the bread, so I decided to attend it and experience it personally. I am packed with positive impressions, and the Holy Mass left a particular impression on me, solemnly dressed guests, the richness of beautiful folk costumes ... I am glad that I was among the Bunjevci today!

Ivan Goretic was also one of the guests of Duzionica, a Bunjevac who spent most of his life living and working in Slovenia, and he is one of the major donors of "Bunjevacko kolo" for the work of small artists from the Art Studio. As a happy and a proud uncle of his nephew Zarko, who had the role of the Lead Harvester (Bandas), he said with great enthusiasm:

- I was never present at Duzionica, it's very nice, I am full of impressions, and I like the consecration of the bread the most, its handover to the town's Mayor and sharing of bread with all the guests as a sign of prosperity and peace.

A special place at Duzionica was for the crown - the gift of the Straw section "Bunjevackokolo", specially created in honour of the anniversary, marking of the 15 years of the final harvesting festivities. Beautiful work of the diligent straw-girls of the Association was pre-



sented to the guests by the President Parcetic as she took the opportunity to deliver appropriate acknowledgments to the artists.

Festivity and good atmosphere were embellished by the members of the Urban Cultural-Artistic Society "Ravan-grad" and the representatives of the Youth Cultural-Artistic Society "Ivo Lola Ribar" from Sonta, and the ensemble called "Mesecina".

The festivity "Sombor bunjevacica Duzionica 2015" as a project was supported by the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia, Provincial Secretariat for Culture and Public Information, Provincial Secretariat for Education, Administration and National Minorities, National Communities and Administration of the Town of Sombor.





# Meeting of the Croats from all over the world

Tatjana Ljubić

“With the recommendations and guidelines for cooperation with the Croats outside Croatia, one of the key issues of the session of the Council is developing new contacts, interconnectedness and meeting people,” Slaven Bacic concluded.

**T**he different needs and problems of Croats in the world, such as the acquisition of Croatian citizenship, education in the Croatian language, as well as investment opportunities were some of the topics of the Second Session of the Council of the Croatian Government for Croats outside Croatia, held in Zagreb attended by over 60 participants from all over world. The Council represents Croats from all over the world, and serves as an advisory body to the Government of the Republic of Croatia.

»We are here to present our recommendations and conclusions. The position of Croats is quite different for example in Chile and Argentina, North America or Australia and the neighbouring countries. Issues are often different and it is our duty to try to sublimate these issues into some common denominators and as such address them to the Government. What is common for all, starting with the Croats in America to here, is the unacceptably slow process of obtaining the Croatian citizenship. On the other hand, the Croats in the USA are interested in investments and introduction of

direct flights to Zagreb, so those are very different interests«, said Slaven Bacic, President of the Croatian National Council and a member of the Council. “Developing new contacts, networking and meeting people is one of the key issues of the session of the Council”, Bacic concluded.

Beside him, Croats in Serbia are represented in the Council by Petar Kuntic, President of the DSHV and Tomislav Zigmanov, Director of the Institute for Culture of the Croats in Vojvodina, who is also the Vice President of this Council of the Croatian minority in 12 European

countries.

»It was also said that the process of obtaining Croatian citizenship should be sped up and simplified, along with the inclusion of the representatives of the Croatian Community outside Croatia in the process of making decisions that directly affect them, such as the allocation of aids for the Croats outside Croatia, because so far they have been excluded from this process. Also, one of the recommendations was on the need to increase the number of Croats in the voting process when it comes to elections for the Croatian Parliament and the President«, said Zigmanov. The Council's work is divided into four units that make up the Croatian diaspora (overseas countries), immigrants in European countries, the Croats as indigenous minority communities in 12 countries of the Central and South-eastern Europe and Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



What is common for all, starting with the Croats in America to here, is the unacceptably slow process of obtaining the Croatian citizenship



In its further work, the Council is going to explore how to promote Croatia as an attractive destination for retired Croatian emigrants, the introduction of direct flights to overseas countries and the establishment of cultural promotion offices in the cities over the world

### CROATIA AS AN ATTRACTIVE DESTINATION FOR RETIRED EMIGRANTS?

The conclusions adopted by the Council are general and refer to partnerships with the Croats outside Croatia, promotion of the program of learning the Croatian language around the world, preservation of Croatian traditional culture, facilitation of the process of acquiring Croatian citizenship, development of better models of voting abroad, strengthening the communication of entrepreneurs.

In its further work, the Council is going to explore how to promote Croatia as an attractive destination for retired Croatian emigrants, the introduction of direct flights to overseas countries and the establishment of cultural promotion offices in the cities over the world. "In addition to proposing concrete measures, the role of the Council and all of us above all is to strengthen the communion between the Republic of Croatia and the Croats who live outside its borders, and also between the members of the Croatian minority, the Croatian diaspora and the Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina", said Daria Krstićević, Head of the National Office for Croats outside the Republic of Croatia.

### SPECIFIC ASSISTANCE THROUGH THE STATE OFFICE FOR CROATS OUTSIDE CROATIA

However, although the Council has only an advisory role, good communication with the State Office for Croats outside Croatia is important because, for example, there is no »structuring of minority rights by the authorities with regard to education, and thanks to the State Office, and through them to the Ministry of Education, it was helped in the printing of textbooks without which we could not work, as the Ministry of Education of Serbia does not fund it«, said Bačić. Help from the Central Office is also evident on the political level when it comes to issues that representatives of certain bodies within the Croatian Community cannot resolve on their own.

»Then you need some sort of work in the political field, of course, in the domain of the legitimate powers of diplomatic and consular representatives (DCR) or on the level of bilateral meet-

### Conclusions from the session: Special engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina and strong support from the Croatian minority in Europe

The Council adopted 12 conclusions that focus on various issues and initiatives that emphasize how important it is to improve good partnership of Croatia with the Croats who live outside the country, to implement and improve programs of learning the Croatian language on all levels in Croatian Communities around the world, devise new projects and continue the existing ones in order to contribute to the preservation of the Croatian traditional culture, encourage and propose legislative solutions that will allow the members of the Croatian nation a facilitated acquisition of Croatian citizenship, allow unhindered voting and representation in the Parliament, to implement affirmative tax policy for the returnees and encourage the entrepreneurial cooperation with the diaspora, to promote Croatia as a destination for tourism. The necessity of supporting the Croatian special engagement in relation to the Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as strong support for the Croatian minority in European countries was emphasized.

**"In addition to proposing concrete measures, the role of the Council and all of us above all is to strengthen the communion between the Republic of Croatia and the Croats who live outside its borders, and also between the members of the Croatian minority, the Croatian diaspora and the Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina"**

**Daria Krstićević**

ings. Here is where the issue of textbooks proved to be the best in the sense that there have been continuous efforts of the representatives of the DCR to resolve this issue, although not in the way we, the representatives of the Croatian Community have hoped for, which is for Serbia to finance the printing of textbooks and not for them to be printed by the Croatian means«, said Zigmanov. The Council was established in 2013, when it held a constitutive session. Last year, the Council session was cancelled because it was decided that the money that would be spent on the maintenance of the session is to be sent as a donation for flood relief in Posavina.



Slaven Bačić, president of National council of Croatian national minority

Help from the Central Office is also evident on the political level when it comes to issues that representatives of certain bodies within the Croatian Community cannot resolve on their own

ATTILA MÁRTON, EDITOR IN CHIEF OF RTV VOJVODINA, SECOND TV CHANNEL

# Minority newsrooms are not translation services

We need to find a good path where we have a specific mission as part of the public service in the languages of National Communities and where we avoid the other extreme, which is some sort of self-isolation

**R**adio Television of Vojvodina is unique in that program is prepared and broadcast in ten languages of National Communities living in Vojvodina. Among these ten languages is also the Croatian language, as the television program in Croatian language is broadcast since 2010, and the radio program since 2012. They recently appointed the head people of RTV Vojvodina, including the Editor in Chief of the Television of Vojvodina, which broadcasts in minority languages. It is Attila Márton, who until now worked as an Assistant Editor in Chief of the Second Channel of TV Vojvodina.

**HR: Recently, you were appointed editor in chief of the Television of Vojvodina. What programs of the Vojvodina public service have been entrusted to you?**

Compared to my previous television assignments there haven't been any major changes, because so far I was in some way responsible for the Second Channel. That channel is in the languages of National Communities, but as with the existing manpower we cannot produce 24 hours of programming in the languages of National Communities, that channel is not entirely a minority one. As in the past two and a half years, I will continue to strive to strengthen the staff and the quality of minority newsrooms and to ensure the Second Channel has more minority programs. With the sup-

port of the management of RTV Vojvodina in the past two and a half years we have managed to strengthen the staff capacity of the Second Channel, which of course is not enough. We also managed to ensure the shows prepared by minority newsrooms are more visible and have more quality. When talking about the newsroom in the Croatian language, it is staff improved. The show *Izravno* got its framework and I think that's a good concept. In order to improve the show *Svjetonik* we are going to need additional people. Since the arrival of the Chief Editor Jelena Tumbas the progress has been evident in the *Dnevnik* that is broadcast in Croatian language, which is now more coherent and more appropriate to the needs of the citizens of Vojvodina. There is progress, but it does not mean that the

job is over. Indeed, I will strive to improve the program through the staff and the quality alike.

**HR: How many hours of program per day is prepared by minority newsrooms and in what languages?**

On average, on our Second Channel, half of the program comprises the program in the languages of National Communities. Our assignment is to increase that time slot. Increase of the scope of the program is possible, but not with the current number of people. If we fail to significantly increase the time slot of minority programs, we will work on having more visible shows. Some improvements have already been made. We managed to broadcast only minority programs on Sundays, from morning until evening. My goal, starting from the fall, is to have more minority programs every day, even in reruns, in the visible part of the program. RTV Vojvodina broadcasts in ten languages. These are Hungarian, Croatian, Slovak, Ruthenian, Ukrainian, Roma, Bunjevac, Romanian, Macedonian and Serbian language, naturally. The introduction of new languages requires permission of the regulatory body for electronic media and the Executive Board of RTV Vojvodina. I think that, for now, we should primarily deal with the existing programs.

**HR: How satisfied are you with the programs that are prepared by the minority newsrooms and what burdens the work of these newsrooms the most?**

The biggest obstacle is the paucity of these newsrooms. In some newsrooms additional problem is the age structure. People will soon retire and therefore are not as motivated as the young, nor willing to accept change and technical and software innovations. A solution



We also managed to ensure the shows prepared by minority newsrooms are more visible and have more quality



would be to employ new people.

**HR: Are minority newsrooms under the influence of the leading minority political parties, is there too much folklore and other content related to traditional culture in them?**

Radio Television of Vojvodina is defined by the Law as a public service, which means that it must not be subject to economic or political influence. The public service must be independent and must have an independent editorial policy. We are here for the public and the people have to trust us. We are required by the Law to promote pluralism. I think that the Serbian Law on Public Broadcasting Service is good and it is our task to answer to that Law. How much folklore content will be in the program, depends on the very people who work in minority newsrooms, but also on the life within the communities beyond folklore events. We cannot report on what is not there, we cannot invent events. I oppose the National Communities being described as folk exclusivities. This is primarily a shame for the members of National Communities. We are not some exotic creatures living in the ghettos. We are not that, we are citizens of this country who have the same problems as the others (and then some), and these issues ought to be addressed. In the Croatian language program, there is no silence on the events in recent history, we do not prevent anyone from appearing in our program, and moreover, we invite people of opposing views. We cannot be perfect, but we should not forget that the program on Croatian language is prepared by six journalists, including correspondents from Subotica and Sombor. Hungarian newsroom has 26 employees and is preparing twenty different shows, so how can it be said that this newsroom is folk-oriented? Or let's say the Ruthenian newsroom, which, like the newsroom in the Hungarian language, participated in the preparation of the series on corruption in agriculture.

**HR: The newsroom in the Croatian language has existed since 2010. 10-minute Dnevnik is broadcast six times a week, and once a week there are two half hour shows—Izravno and Svjetionik. Do you plan to expand the program in the Croatian language?**

I'm all for the program in the Croatian language to be expanded, but with the existing manpower that's impossible. This is my opinion that coincides with the opinion of the newsroom in Croatian language. Probably your readers know, but it would not hurt to say it again, that there is no separate radio newsroom in the Croatian language and the Chief Editor of the television also prepares the radio program in Croatian language.

**HR: It is often talked about the self-isolation of national minorities, but it is in any case a two-way relationship and the question is how the majority is interested in the minority. When we talk**

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**about the public service, how often can reports from minority newsrooms be seen in the program in Serbian language, because there are probably some events or topics that are of interest to other viewers?**

The exchange program exists in both directions. The most famous show of that type is Paleta. Its slogan, which I personally defined, is - Get to know each other better in order to understand each other better. Paleta's broadcast every week day and it presents the best contents of minority programs. The newsroom in the Croatian language has a 10 minute time slot, and the more numbered newsrooms board have longer time slots. The show is premiered on the First Channel and subtitled in the Serbian language. It's not the only such program, because there are documentaries in several languages which are subtitled in Serbian. There is an ex-

change of information between the newsrooms, in particular of the Information program. The exchange within the television is present and that's a good thing, because in the end, RTV Vojvodina must have a unique editorial policy. It should be noted that our minority newsrooms are not translation services and each newsroom only makes programs suited to its viewers. The news on the Second Channel is not the copy of the news from the First Channel. But we, here on the Second Channel, must not omit issues essential for the whole society, because the Croats in Tavankut and Subotica are also interested in whether the price of milk is going up and what the international position of the state in which they live is. We need to find a good path where we have a specific mission as part of the public service in the languages of National Communities and where we avoid the other extreme, which is some sort of self-isolation. As a public service, we have a mission to inform, educate, entertain, but we also have, as a minority newsroom, the role to work on the preservation of the national identity.

**HR: The media privatization in Serbia should finally end. Given that part of the electronic media that awaits privatization also broadcasts programs in languages of minority communities, to what extent is the upcoming privatization going to threaten the right of National Communities to information in their own language? How is RTV Vojvodina even more significant in such situation, with its program in minority languages?**

Personally, as a private person, I feel sorry for any media to be shut down. If that be the case, and I rather hope not, then RTV Vojvodina as a public service of Vojvodina is going to have an increasingly important role, because for some minority languages it will remain the only medium. In that sense, RTV has taken some measures, so it has technically strengthened the correspondent office in Subotica, while a year ago, the correspondent office in Sombor started to operate, which has correspondents preparing reports in the Hungarian and Croatian language and also for the program that is prepared for the Bunjevac-National Community.

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