

**The Centre for Regionalism
Presented Results of a Research
on the Course of Bilateral
Relations**

**A Roundtable on
the Access to Legal Aid
by National Minorities**

28 Minority News

september 2016

**Omerovic:
A number of
Activities
Pertaining to
Improving the
Conditions of
Human Rights
Should Be Carried
Out**



**The National
Minorities Chronicle
again on RTV Pink**

**The Jewish Chabad
Serbia Centre has
Opened in Belgrade**

HIGHLIGHTS



Are the Signed Bilateral Agreements Implemented?

The Centre for Regionalism has investigated to what extent the agreements our country signed with Croatia, Romania, Hungary and Macedonia are implemented. The Centre presented its findings at a conference called "An analysis of the implementation of bilateral agreements in the area of protection of national minorities - Serbia, Croatia, Hungary, Romania and Macedonia" which the Centre organised this month.



Seminar for Provincial MPs

A seminar for MPs was organised in the Great Hall of the Vojvodina Provincial Assembly the aim of which was to improve their knowledge about the reform processes in Serbia and Serbia's accession to the EU. Tanja Miscevic, the chief negotiator for Serbia's accession negotiations with the EU, spoke about the "EU institutions in Serbia's accession process."



Get a Diploma of a Caregiver in Hungarian

A Department for Education of Caregivers of the Medical Faculty of the University in Pecs has solemnly opened in Sombor, by which this city got an institution of higher learning in Hungarian after ten years. The management of the Pecs University believes that around 100 students will have been enrolled by the year 2020; their diplomas will be valid in all EU countries and they will also have an opportunity to continue their master's studies in Pecs.

EDITORIAL 28

Right to Unhindered Learning of a Mother Tongue

The first thing that crosses our minds when we think of September is certainly the beginning of a new school year. Of course, every student will accept this period in his/her own way. However, the beginning of this school year gave a hard time to many teachers as well, primarily those working in elementary schools and teaching the subject "Mother Tongue with Elements of National Culture."

At the end of the school year, polls were conducted in schools about elective subjects. In addition to an obligatory elective subject – catechesis or civic education, students could have chosen another subject. But, after the first poll, the second one followed in many schools. Why? We don't know. In the second poll, students could have chosen a language of a national minority, but many parents have already opted for some other elective subject, primarily information technology. This whole situation has resulted in a very small number of students who have chosen a mother tongue as an elective subject, which in turn created another problem – it was not possible to form groups of minimum 15 students, as stipulated by law, which for some teachers meant a reduction or loss of a salary. The Ministry of Education offered alternative solutions for learning a mother tongue, but representatives of national minorities are not satisfied with them. The Coordination of National Councils has been trying to improve the status of the subject "Mother Tongue with Elements of National Culture" for quite some time, namely, it wants the subject to become obligatory in schools. Also, they ask, do arts, sculpting or chess have the same value as a mother tongue? The Action Plan for the Realisation of Rights of National Minorities contains regulations which concern education. "Improving the prospects for the learning of a mother tongue – speech and elements of national culture in schools," is one of many items contained in the Action Plan. Do all the decisions benefit the development of prospects for learning a mother tongue?

30 different national minorities live in Serbia



Highlight on Control Functions

Many say that Chapters 23 and 24 are Alpha and Omega in the EU accession process. The Committee on Human and Minority Rights and Gender Equality of the Serbian Parliament will certainly play an important role in implementing reforms our state obliged itself to. Meho Omerovic, whom we interviewed for this issue of the Bulletin, was selected to head the Committee for the second time.

“You have been selected as the Chairman of the Committee on Human and Minority Rights and Gender Equality once again. Is there something from the past term that has not been done?”

Of course there is. Reasons for this, I would say, are very clear and can be explained. Namely, this Committee has existed for somewhat less than four years. For the first time in the history of Serbia, the Committee on Human and Minority Rights was formed in June 2012. It is a relatively small experience of four years, and some things unfortunately remained unfinished from the term which was cut short and which lasted until 2014. During this term we carried out a number of activities pertaining to the protection of national minorities and gender equality. I want to stress at the beginning that we paid great attention to the rights of national minorities. In October, at the beginning of a new term, amendments and supplements to the law on the rights of national minorities were adopted, followed by a number of laws called a set of media laws which impacted on media in national minority languages. In the past two years, our activities have been fo-



cused on gender equality and the prevention of violence against women. This is the answer to your first question as to by which we are not satisfied and what is that that we failed to do – these are the activities of all of us and of all state bodies in preventing the domestic violence. Unfortunately, many fatal outcomes of domestic violence were recorded. This year, we already have 17 women victims of domestic violence. There-

fore, regardless of that which the Committee did, regardless of that which the state body did, I and other Committee members are not satisfied with that which was done regarding this very sensitive issue. In 2013 we adopted the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, the so-called Istanbul Convention. We adopted a number of bylaws, but the practice and steps we are taking in combating violence against women must be better; we must be organised better and we must communicate one with each other, there must exist coordination between services, since the situation in this field is really alarming. Therefore, we must carry out many activities in this field. Unfortunately, Parliament failed to adopt a bill on equality of men and women – it was disapproved by NGOs, organisations dealing with protection of women and improving the position of women, and it was withdrawn from parliamentary procedure for further consultations. I believe that we will manage to arrive at a consensus and draft a good bill on gender equality by the end of 2016, which would go to Parliament and which could contribute to reaching a full consensus and resolution of problems regarding the domestic vi-

olence, equality of women and men, and the whole area of gender equality.

Will the focus be on the problem of violence against women in the coming period?

The violence against women and domestic violence will be one of the priorities of this Committee which was formed only a month ago. We will deal with this issue in the future as well in cooperation with the Government and relevant Ministries. In September, we will adopt a plan of work of our boards, not only until the end of 2016 but for the year 2017 as well, when our priority will be to implement these laws and agreements which our state adopted in order to suppress and prevent the domestic violence.

When it comes to Chapter 23, which concrete tasks the Committee has to fulfil?

Chapter 23 and the opening of Chapter 23, which we, as a state candidate for membership in the EU have already done, is the greatest and the most difficult task which every state that wanted to join the EU must have fulfilled. We are only at the beginning of this huge, very difficult and demanding task. The Committee reviewed a draft Action Plan and a proposal for a negotiating position for Chapter 23. In the coming period we must see how the activities from the Action Plan are carried out and if the planned dynamics and deadlines are respected. This will be our first task. The next task is to accelerate the passage by Parliament of laws stemming from Chapter 23. I primarily refer here to a bill amending and supplementing the law on the protection of national minorities' rights. The law of 2002 is in force. Therefore, we will have to amend this law in order to reinforce the influence, status and representation of national minorities in public sector. I primarily refer here to the police, education, healthcare and the judiciary – these are the areas where national minorities must be represented more, particularly in regions where they constitute a significant portion of the population. The next thing stemming from the Action Plan is the passage of a law on registries as soon as possible in

order to regulate a way national minorities are entered into registries. Because of the decision of the Constitutional Court, which ruled that certain regulations of the law are not in line with the Constitution, we will have to amend the law on councils of national minorities in order to contribute to a better integration of national minorities in our society, since unfortunately, some of the councils, not all, behaved like extended hands of certain political parties or a pendant in the hands of a man holding office of a president of a national council and who sees this council as his private ownership and

In the coming period we will have a number of activities pertaining to Chapter 23 – how to improve the area of human rights in general, and most importantly, mechanisms that are at our disposal, and this is a control mechanism in the first place.

behaves this way. I would like to stress that the councils of national minorities have their jurisdictions. These jurisdictions have been clearly defined by laws, and pertain to culture, education, information and everything that is stipulated by law. Therefore, politicisation and dealing with politics is something that is contrary to the law when it comes to the jurisdictions of councils of national minorities and, of course, the presidents of all councils of national minorities must know that the money that is allocated from the budget for the functioning of all national councils in Serbia is the money of all Serbian citizens, and a majority of citizens of the Republic of Serbia are not

national minorities. Therefore, in the coming period we will have a number of activities pertaining to Chapter 23 – how to improve the area of human rights in general, and most importantly, mechanisms that are at our disposal, and this is a control mechanism in the first place. We who are members of Parliament of the Republic of Serbia, even MPs who have been in Parliament for a long time, often forget the fact that in addition to a legislative function (we pass laws), representative function (we represent people who voted for us), we have a third function, a control function. The control function is something that is the most important. I, as the Chairman of the Committee, will insist that we reinforce the control function, not only through Chapter 23, so that we do that which is our essential job.

Are Serbian citizens familiar enough with their rights? And are they respected to a sufficient degree?

On the one hand, our state adopted almost all laws and ratified international conventions concerning human rights. We made this legislative framework, we made a foundation on which we can build and improve human rights, and by that, the status of national minorities and all others who in some way are jeopardised. The way laws are enforced, not only laws concerning minorities or human rights, is our essential problem. In principle, we have good laws, but these laws are not enforced. This is where we are in the field of the control function. We must monitor the implementation of all these laws. We also have to raise Serbian citizens' awareness of their rights, what in general are human rights, who violates these rights and which institutions of the Republic of Serbia provide the full protection of citizens' rights. Mechanisms called independent state bodies, such as the Ombudsman, Commissioner for Gender Equality, the Commissioner for Personal Data Protection, are our greatest allies in the realisation of these rights and in reviewing the situation in different fields when it comes to human rights and particularly regarding the violation of these rights. I think that citizens are not familiar enough with their rights. They often do not trust institutions. Citizens are

not aware that certain behaviour is discrimination. Even though state bodies are supposed to protect citizens' rights, we can see in annual reports from the Ombudsman and the Commissioner for Gender Equality that the state bodies are those which most often violate these rights. In the coming period we must work on raising people's awareness, on recognising that which is a human right, and in the end, on punishing those who violate these rights.

Which groups are the most jeopardised in Serbia?

Unfortunately, the situation has not changed for years in this field. The first on the list are Roma, as the most jeopardised category of the population. They are not jeopardised only in Serbia, but in most of the EU countries and some other countries. They are jeopardised primarily because of their [poor] education, housing, social protection, employment, etc. Disabled persons are in the second place. There is a problem here with employment. And we have, of course, LGBT population which is not only one of the most jeopardised but the one that is physically threatened. Mr. Boban Stojanovic, an activist of the gay-straight alliance, has recently been attacked. Therefore, they are still discriminated against, particularly by some hooligan groups and some people who would like to take the law into their own hands. We had a joint session with the Committee on Integration which dealt with the position of LGBT population in order to review the situation in this field. We would like to include into the Committee people who are the most jeopardised and who want to stress problems they are facing. We will invite to a joint session representatives of all institutions which are obliged to protect the rights of this community – police, judiciary, healthcare, education, and I think that slowly, step by step, we will raise awareness and try to improve the position of this community.

We must not forget gender equality. How do you assess the status of women in our country?

We made progress in certain areas, both in the sense of legislation and institutions. We made amendments

to laws which secure greater participation of women in the political life. 33% of members of Parliament of the Republic of Serbia are women – out of the 250 MPs, 84 are women. In the sector of the defence, and I refer here to both police and army, the number of women taking part in these basic institutions has increased. We also made a legislative framework which enables women to improve their position and this is a good foundation for strengthening the role of a woman in our society. We must work more on the imple-

We must economically reinforce women and this is essential problem in our society.

If you have a financially independent woman, she will not tolerate violence. We have situations now, and this is clearly seen in examples of domestic violence, that a woman is tolerating violence because she is unemployed.

mentation of the Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence as well as on the implementation of the right to healthcare for children, pregnant women and mothers of newborns. We did much in this field by amending the labour law. I stress that we banned the termination of a fixed-term labour contract while the woman is pregnant or at maternity leave. We have the Republic of Serbia Government's Coordinating Body dealing with gender

equality and I think that the good practice will continue. We must economically reinforce women and this is essential problem in our society. If you have a financially independent woman, she will not tolerate violence. We have situations now, and this is clearly seen in examples of domestic violence, that a woman is tolerating violence because she is unemployed. Man is bringing money home, and she must put up with violence. Unfortunately, she is often beaten and is subjected to all sorts of violence, both physical and psychological. We must work on reinforcing women and they must work more in sectors where decisions are made. Decisions are made in jobs that have traditionally been "men's jobs." It is not enough to say we have 33% reservation to women. Let us see where women are directors of important state companies, where women are directors of important institutions, etc. If we do not remedy this, everything else can look like a good marketing for IC representatives, while essentially we did not reinforce a woman, we did not reinforce her positions and her influence in the society so that we could say that they are equal. We still have the same jobs for which men are more paid than women. You can imagine the position of women in rural areas, particularly if a woman is disabled. We are facing this discrimination and this is a great problem. If you see a Roma disabled woman living in poor conditions, then you know to which extent she is jeopardised. This is why I pay particular attention to the position of women and you could see this from my answers to your questions, regardless of whether it is about the gender equality, greater participation of women in political public life, prevention of domestic violence or violence against women.

Mr. Omerovic, thank you for taking your time for our interview.

I would like to thank you for working on improving the status of national minorities and protection of human rights of all citizens. I think this is a good job and we need allies in this significant job, particularly because we will have to work hard on Chapter 23 that we have opened and we need friends and allies in this difficult job

The National Minorities Chronicle again on TV Pink

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fter a summer break, the Centre for Migration Studies has launched the autumn cycle of weekly TV program National Minorities Chronicle.

The show is broadcast on Wednesdays on TV Pink Info and is rerun on Thursdays. Editorial staff will try to raise issues concerning the life and status of national minorities in Serbia in interviews with representatives of state bodies and presidents of national councils of national minorities. They will pay particular attention to Chapter 23 where guests of the Chronicle will try to explain steps in the implementation of provisions from the Chapter, as well as more important reforms which will concern directly national minorities. The most interesting content of these shows will be also available at www.minoritynews.rs and on Youtube.



Roundtable on Access to Legal Aid by National Minorities.

Source: Office for Human and Minority Rights

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s part of activities of the Action Plan for the Realisation of Rights of National Minorities, the High Judicial Council and the State Prosecutorial Council have organised a roundtable at the Serbia Palace about the access to legal aid by national minorities which was attended by representatives of government bodies, national minority councils and civil society organisations.

The director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights, Suzana Paunovic, addressed those gathered and presented information about the process of monitoring the activities from the Action Plan for the Realisation of Rights of National Minorities.

In the past period, the Office organised meetings where it presented a concept of monitoring and reporting which will be developed in the coming period and formed a special team tasked with gathering data and drafting reports on activities from the Action Plan which should have been im-



plemented until the end of the second quarter of 2016, Paunovic has said.

Paunovic particularly stressed that a training is planned for contact persons who will report on the implementation of activities

from the Action Plan so that the reporting would be as efficient as possible and so that it would contribute to a complete picture of the implementation of activities planned by this strategic document.

A joint task force of the High Judicial Council and the State Prosecutorial Council for assessment of the access to the judicial system by national minorities was presented at the roundtable as well as an analysis of representation of national minority in courts and public prosecutor's offices in the Republic of Serbia and an analysis of the use of [minority] languages in the access to the judicial system of the Republic of Serbia by national minorities.



Bilateral Agreements, as Instruments for Improving the Rights of Minorities, Needlessly Neglected

Source: Centre for Regionalism



An Analysis of the implementation of bilateral agreements in the field of national minority protection was presented at a conference which should have answered the question to what extent agreements on protection of national minorities signed by Serbia, Croatia, Macedonia, Hungary and Romania are implemented. The conference was organised by the Centre for Regionalism, and the research was supported by the Open Society Foundation.

The director of the Centre for Regionalism, Aleksandar Popov, says that bilateral agreements, as instruments for improving the minority rights, have been needlessly neglected, noting that they can be a means of early warning of problems. A research of the team of the Centre for Regionalism, Popov says, has flaws, since it reviewed the situation with regard to four minorities – the Croatian, Hungarian, Romanian and Macedonian minorities in Serbia, but the team did not have a mandate to investigate the situation with regard to the Serbian minority in these countries and they will try to do this part of the job as well. Regarding problems, Popov says that Serbia has a problem with Croatia which sometimes escalates threatening to block Serbia's path to the EU, and this problem concerns political representation of the Croatian minority at all government levels in Serbia, namely, it concerns an obligation to secure guaranteed seats for the Croatian minority, as is the case with the Serbian minority in Croatia.

"Croatia resolved this issue by a constitutional law and seats are guaranteed there; we have a natural threshold, which is not the same. Croatia often complains that this



the status of Vlachs, while a mixed Serbia-Macedonia commission has not been formed yet.

Popov says that it was concluded at a recent meeting of the mixed Serbia-Hungary commission that there are almost no any problems for the Hungarian minority in

ready to resolve open issues concerning the Hungarian, Croatian, Romanian and Macedonian national minorities in Serbia but also concerning the Serbian national minority in the neighbouring countries. He said that the IC had assessed that Serbia has a good legal framework in the area of national minority protection, but that there are certain obstacles in its implementation. He stressed that national minorities in Serbia are enabled to take part in government bodies primarily by reducing the election threshold for political parties of national minorities and by allowing more favourable conditions for their registration in the Registry of Political Parties.

Recommendations defined during the research should contribute to a quicker resolution of open issues which have been noted during sessions of Government mixed commissions. With the opening of the negotiation chapter 23, this research got an additional value since it is the first of its kind and represents a good starting point for articulation of public minority policies during Serbia's accession negotiations with the EU.



issue has not been resolved and that if it is not resolved, it will be one of the reasons to block Serbia's path to the EU," Popov says.

Romania, he says, threatened that it will make the opening of certain negotiation chapters conditional upon a resolution of

Serbia or for the Serbian minority in Hungary.

Ivan Bosnjak, the state secretary in the Serbian Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government, also addressed the conference. He said that Serbia was always

Chaloka Beyani, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons Visited Serbia

Source: Office for Human and Minority Rights

The director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights, Suzana Paunovic, met on Monday with Chaloka Beyani, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons.

They discussed results and the implementation of recommendations from a report made after his previous visit to Serbia in October 2013. Beyani said that progress was made in comparison to his previous visit and expressed satisfaction with the progress in the issuing of personal documents to internally displaced persons, the most numerous being Roma. Beyani welcomed the founding of the Council for Monitoring the Implementation of Recommendations from the UN Mechanism for Human Rights as an important mechanism for monitoring the state of human rights in Serbia and the activities stipulated by the Action Plan for Implementation of the Strategy

for the Prevention and Protection from Discrimination. Paunovic informed the Special Rapporteur that the Government is monitoring the implementation of all documents in the field of human rights and anti-discrimination. When it comes to the resolution of the issue of personal documents for the Roma community, Paunovic stressed that since the passage of the law on registries, personal documents have been issued to more than 25,000 citizens. By receiving personal documents, these people got access to all rights, and their integration was supported. The Government drafted a database



of all informal settlements. There are 583 such settlements in Serbia and the government will invest in infrastructure in these settlements in the coming period. Asked by Beyani about evictions, Paunovic explained that the resettlement will be conducted in keeping with the highest standards of human rights and that all citizens will be enabled to integrate in new settlements.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, Chaloka Beyani, was on a visit to Serbia from September 11 to September 15, when he met with representatives of state bodies, civil society and international organisations in Serbia.

Post Publication on the Conference on Minority Media Presented

A post publication on the last year's regional conference on minority media, "Minority media as Protagonists of Solutions," organised by Heror Media Pont, was presented in the middle of the month in the Provincial Government. The publication is the result of last year's conference held in the premises of the Association of Serbian Media where representatives of minority media from the wider region spoke about their experiences.

Natasa Heror, the director of the Heror Media Pont, presented the publication, saying that the publication, just like the conference, is aimed at recognising the potentials of minority and local media as the bearers of tradition of national mi-



norities, but also as the bearers of social changes.

Kalman Kuntic, a higher expert associate at the Sector for Information, Media and Analytics of the Provincial Secretariat for Culture, Information and Relations with Religious Communities, who took part in conferences in the past four years, says that the time has come for the minority media to find new solutions for their func-

tioning and survival, in addition to the support from the state which they enjoy and which will continue. He stressed the modernisation of the media as a key factor for their survival.

In addition to presenting a new publication, they announced the next, the 5th conference which this year will be called "Communities of new times." It will be held on November 10 in Novi Sad and will be organised by Heror Media Pont, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and Information and the Provincial Secretariat for Culture, Public Information and Relations with Religious Communities. It will deal with the subject of integration, the phenomena of a community and understanding of culture and the position of minorities and the local media.

Seminar for Provincial MPs

Source: The Assembly of the Autonomous Province of the Vojvodina

Members of the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of the Vojvodina attended the first in a series of seminars aimed at improving their knowledge necessary for the reform processes in Serbia and Serbia's accession to the EU. The seminar was organised in cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.



The seminar was dedicated to the “EU institutions in the process of Serbia’s accession.” The speaker of the Vojvodina Provincial Assembly, Istvan Pastor, who moderated the seminar, said that the chief negotiator for Serbia’s accession negotiations with the EU, Tanja Miscevic, had spoken about the subject.

“We all have certain level of knowledge about the EU, European institutions and a negotiation process, but I am certain that there are holes in that knowledge which can be filled and we can thus improve our knowledge. As holders of public offices we bear a part of the responsibility in this process, which is why it is important that a number of these seminars will be held by the end of the year. It is important that this is a continued and not occasional cooperation,” Pastor has said.

The chief negotiator for Serbia’s accession negotiations with the EU, Tanja Miscevic, has informed provincial MPs of the work and the function-

ing of the most important European institutions, particularly of the European Parliament, the EU Council of Ministers and the European Commission, and stressed their importance, role and jurisdiction in various phases of the accession negotiations. She dealt with the subject from the practical point of view, stressing the importance of informal meetings that are at-

tended by our officials where they are exchanging their experiences.

“Negotiations are not conducted only with the European institutions, but with all EU member states, so that it is not enough to turn all attention to Brussels.

The role of meetings, both formal and informal, is great in this, since we can present the current situation and that which has been done in reforms and harmonisation with the European legislation,” Miscevic has said.

She says that it is necessary that Serbian citizens, who, according to information available to her, are in large numbers for Serbia’s accession to the EU, understand that the reforms Serbia must conduct in the negotiation process are in the interest of Serbian citizens and that they are not needed only for the sake of meeting someone’s conditions.

A discussion began after her speech, and provincial MPs were interested to know which negotiation chapters will represent the greatest challenge, which phase of the negotiations Serbia is currently in, when we can expect to finally join the EU and how this will impact on our daily lives.



An Institution of Higher Learning in Hungarian

Source: www.soinfo.org



Department for Education of Caregivers of the Medical Faculty of Pecs in Hungarian has opened in Sombor. Sombor thus again got an institution of higher learning in Hungarian. Eleven students will enrol in the Department and they will have eight semesters.



Only somewhat more than a year has elapsed since the first talks on this subject, and in the meantime, a century-and-a-half-old building of the Hungarian civil mess should have been reconstructed and widened. Some ten years ago, education of teachers in Hungarian was transferred to Subotica and since then, the city has not had an institution of higher learning in Hungarian.

The Department for Education of Caregivers of the Medical Faculty in Pecs was solemnly opened on Wednesday, September 21. A ceremony began with the university hymn, Gaudeamus, and the national anthems of Serbia and Hungary, sung by Musica Viva.

The management of the Pecs University predicts that by the year 2020, around 100 students will have enrolled in this Department and will have got their diplomas which will be recognised in all EU member states, and

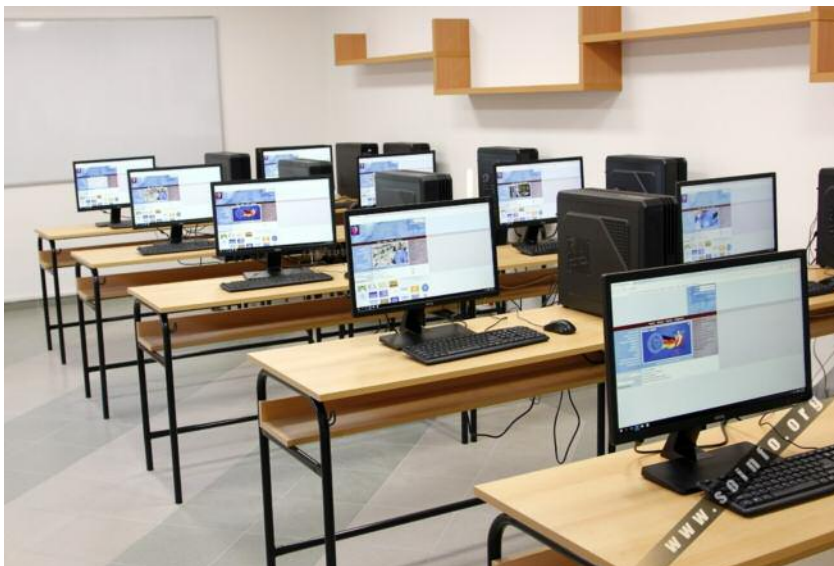
they will have an opportunity to continue their master's studies in Pecs.

- The Department in Sombor is an opportunity for the Medical Faculty of the Pecs University to show that one can get education outside Hungary,

process will be completed by next September - said the dean of the University in Pecs, Prof. Dr. Josef Bethlehem.

- I think this is a historical move – we will launch important studies which will improve the quality of life of citizens in the cross-border area where Hungarians live, said the rector of the University in Pecs, Prof. Dr. Josef Bodish, the president of the Hungarian Rectors' Conference.

- The Department for Education of Caregivers in Sombor was opened thanks to the commitment of the Hungarian Ministry of Human Resources and State Secretary Zoltan Maruza.



primarily people who want to study in Hungarian and stay in their homeland, but also those who want to get their diplomas at international studies in English. Documents for accreditation of a study programme in English are ready and we hope that the

First students say they would like to stay in the homeland after the studies, and they consider Serbian with professional terminology, which they will study, an important subject, which will make their work in health institutions in Serbia much easier.

The Jewish Centre Chabad Serbia Opened in Belgrade

Source: RTS

U The Jewish Centre Chabad Serbia has opened in Belgrade. It is the first centre of the Chabad Lubavitch Organisation in Serbia whose purpose is primarily to preserve the Jewish tradition and culture.

Addressing the guests at a reception, the Ambassador of Israel to Serbia, Alona Fisher-Kamm, said that Serbia and Israel are linked by the same values, interests, but also by worries and hopes, and that both are seeking ways to secure a better life, conditions and education for their citizens.

The Chabad Centre, she says, is a great thing for Jews who travel and want to rest in their own way wherever they are and to feel an Israeli atmosphere and the way of life. She believes that she, as the Ambassador of Israel, has a task to encourage and reinforce a Jewish life in Serbia, since, she says, Israel, Jews and Serbia, deserve it.



Reminding of the Holocaust, she said that the Serbian restitution law was very much appreciated in Israel. The host of the reception, Rabbi Joshua Kaminecki, welcomed the guests and reminded of a belief from Torah that a person works the land for six years while on the seventh year, both the man and the land get rest.

"The same is with us, just like in Torah. After six years of hard work in Serbia, at the beginning of the 7th year, God gave us this huge gift, this beautiful

and huge building and I hope that this building will be full of people and activities in the years to come," Kami-necki has said.

He also wished a happy Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah, to all, wishing them a good and happy year.

The Chabad Serbia is an education centre both for the youngest and those somewhat older. The Centre has a ritual mikvah bathroom, and a kosher kitchen.

The opening ceremony was attended by representatives of the Serbian government, the diplomatic corps, the Belgrade Jewish Municipality and other guests.

Renowned Israeli singer Yishai Lapidot performed. The Jewish Centre Chabad Serbia is in 61 Knez Milos Street.

German Community

Good Cooperation with German Minority

Source: www.soinfo.org

S ombor mayor Dusanka Golubovic met with Hans Supric, the president of the Alliance of Danube Swabians of Germany and the vice-president of the World Alliance of Danube Swabians, Josef Jerger.

She pointed out a very good cooperation with the Gerhard Humanitarian Association of Germans and the National Council of German National Minority, which is based in Sombor, and demonstrated a good will to widen the cooperation in mutual interest. The mayor says that the Gerhard Humanitarian Association of Germans is a very good collaborator of the local self government in the realisation of activities which bring benefit to all citizens of Sombor, it was said on the official internet site of the city of Sombor. The president of the Association of the

Danube Swabians of Germany, Hans Supric, said that a visit to Sombor is not an accident, but that it is a result of previous cooperation and that he is extremely glad that "the co-operation has continued regardless of which party is in power in Sombor." The meeting was attended by Silard Jankovic, a member of the City Council in charge of the protection of national minority rights and religious communities, Nemanja Sarac, the assistant mayor in charge of culture and information,



and Anton Bek, the president of the Humanitarian Association of Germans, Gerhard, and the president of the Executive Board of the German National Council.

Support to Improving the Status of Roma

Source: Provincial Government

The Provincial Government will in the future focus on issues that contribute to a better position of the Roma minority in the Vojvodina – says one of the conclusions from a meeting between the Provincial Prime Minister, Igor Mirovic, and a delegation of the National Council of the Roma National Minority in Serbia, which was composed of the president of the Council, Vitomir Mihajlovic, and provincial MP Jelena Jovanovic.

Prime Minister Mirovic said at the meeting that the Provincial Government would be particularly dedicated to issues that contribute to a better position of the Roma national minority and all other national minorities living in the Vojvodina which, he says, are one of the basic pillars of stability of our society.

Vitomir Mihajlovic said that the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma in Serbia, 2016-2025, that had been brought by the Serbian Government, offered the best solutions in four key areas – education, housing, employment and health and social protection, and particularly thanked the Vojvodina Autonomous Province which is ahead of others when it comes to the resolution of issues concerning the position of national minorities.



The European Progress: Donation to Bujanovac Roma Women

Source: Bujanovacke

The Association of Roma Women in Bujanovac, the Swiss Government and the EU supported a project titled “Reinforcing Roma Women in Bujanovac for greater employment” with 8,150 euros.

By way of the European PROGRESS development programme, the EU and the Swiss Government will support 16 projects of organisations of civil society which will contribute to improving the status of the Roma community in 34 municipalities in the SE and SW of the country.

The projects, which will be supported with 150,000 euros, are directed at implementing measures from the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma for the period 2016-2025 concerning education, employment, housing, social and health protection and security.

The EU and the Swiss Government supported the Roma community to get actively

engaged in initiating and implementing measures from the Strategy because we believe that the consistent implementation of this important document is the best way to achieve visible progress and improve the socio-economic status of the Roma in local communities, said Graham Tindall, the manager of the European PROGRESS.

The approved projects will contribute to the economic reinforcement and employment of Roma, improving their health and security, particularly to the protection from fires which are often in Roma communities.

We are thus helping Roma organisations, particularly those in the local communities, to realise ideas which will contribute to reducing inequality and poverty of the Roma community which is one of the most jeopardised in Serbia, said Ana Nedeljko, the manager of the Sector for Good Management and Social Inclusion, which is a part of the European PROGRESS programme.

A project titled “Reinforcing unemployed Roma through fire-fighting training” in Vranje was approved and supported with 10,000 euros, a project titled “Support to Roma children to maintain the continuity of education” of the Bakija Bakic Association in Vranje was supported with 9,850 euros. “The Caravan of Health” of the Association of Health Care Providers of Roma Nationality in Vranje, Vladicin Han, Surdulica, Prokuplje and Leskovac, was supported with 9,800 euros.

The “Together to a Better Life” project of the Association Optimist in Bosilegrad (improving living conditions through legalisation of houses) was supported with 9,800 euros, and the Roma Education Incubator (educational content for children in schools) of the Association of Roma Intellectuals in Vladicin Han was supported with 9,200 euros.

The projects should be implemented in September and October 2016.

Successful Performance of a Ruthenian Theatre in Slovakia

Source: Ruske Slovo



From September 22 to September 24, the Ruthenian National Theatre “Petro Riznich Djadja” performed the play “She is Innocent” directed by Mihajlo Zazuljak during its tour of Slovakia. The play was performed in Kladzani on Thursday, in Presovo on Friday, and in Zamplinska Teplica, former Krstur, on Saturday.

The Ruthenian National Theatre was warmly welcomed everywhere and even though this is a drama with elements of tragedy which tells the story of the former life of Ruthenians in these parts, the audience received the play emotionally, stressing its actuality and messages even for the present time, and the fact that there was no language barrier contributed to all this.



and a Roman Catholic Church in Krstur.

The Ruthenian National Theatre was in Slovakia six years ago with the play called “Canary soup” directed by M. Zazuljak, and this visit was made possible thanks to the funds from the Ruthenian National Council intended for the Ruthenian National Theatre and an agreement on regional cooperation between the Autonomous Province of the Vo-

Theatre ensemble members met their friends in all three places, agreed future

cooperation and paid a visit to the elementary school, a Greek-Catholic Church

jvodina and the Presovo self-government.

The Slovak Community

Culture of the Republic of Slovakia in Vozdovac

Source: Vozdovac Municipality/Hlas Ljudu



Vozdovac Municipality has traditionally organised events intended to present culture of ethnic communities. A new cycle of these events began with the presentation of the culture of Slovakia.

The event was held on September 16 and on that occasion, the president of the Vozdovac Municipal Assembly, Aleksandar Mirkovic, and Her Excellency Dagmar Repchekova, the Ambassador of Slovakia to Serbia, opened an exhibition of photographs titled “Magnificent Slovakia” at the Solemn Hall of the Vozdovac Municipality.

The president of the Municipal Assembly, Aleksandar Mirkovic, said that the Municipality had traditionally organised such events. “I am glad that we launched a new cycle with Slovakia which is a proven friend of Serbia and which

is providing us with the support on the path to the EU, particularly now when the Republic of Slovakia is chairing the EU,” Mirkovic has said.



“Slovaks came to Serbia 270 years ago, but they maintain their tradition and pass it on to the younger generations, which is a rarity even in Slovakia,” said Ambassador Dagmar Repchekova.

The folklore ensemble Klas from Stara Pazova, singers Darko Uhelji, Andrea Ruman, Ema Kocis and Maria Bzovski and instrumentalist Branislav Kovac performed traditional songs and dances of Slovaks. The movie titled “The Boxer and Death” directed by Slovak film director Peter Solana was screened at the event. Visitors could see handicrafts of the Association of Women from Stara Pazova and taste traditional Slovak dishes.

The event was organised by the Municipality, the Embassy of the Republic of Slovakia and the Slovak Cultural-Artistic Society “Hero Janko Cmelik” of Stara Pazova.

News and Shows Six Days a Week

Source: Croatian Word

A year or so ago, or more precisely, on July 6, 2015, the first show created by the TV production of the Cro-Info Association of Journalists of Subotica was aired. This is a five-minute daily news bulletin, Cro-Info News. The Croatian Panorama TV show, created by this Association, has been broadcast since then on the Subotica YU Eco TV which can be watched on cable in Sombor, Backa Topola and Kikinda. In addition to the Cro-Info News, which is broadcast on working days at 15:30, the Association is producing another two shows. The show Motriste (on Thursdays at 22:30) which is dealing with social and political subjects, and Zlatna Skatulja (on Sundays at 10:00), which is keeping the cultural heritage of Croats in the Vojvodina from oblivion – customs, old crafts, people's creativity, are half-an-hour weekly shows.

A team That Is Progressing

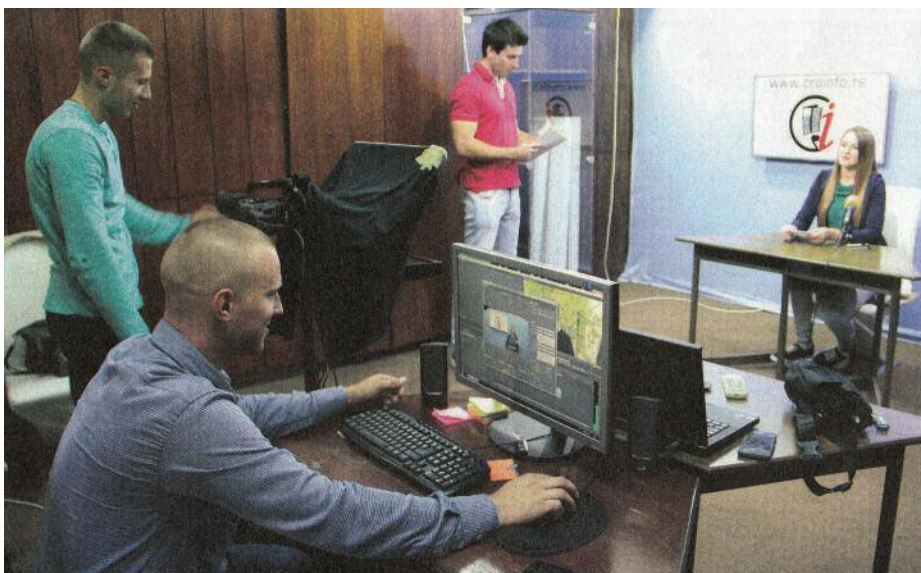
"We feel that we managed to establish in a very short time a system that is functioning well," the manager of the Cro-Info Association, Branimir Kuntic, has said. "This is a system in which everyone knows his role, but when needed, covers for colleagues from the team. This is something that enables us to progress and achieve goals for which the Association was founded, and this is to improve the electronic media in Croatian and education of young journalists."

Kuntic adds that Cro-Info is a very dynamic structure and is in the constant process of development. "Around 20 persons cooperate with the Association – journalists and anchors, and persons in charge of technical part of the job – recording, editing, converting media contents with the aim of publishing them on our internet page www.croinfo.rs and on Youtube and Facebook."

Project Financing

The Croatian Panorama project is financed mostly from grants. A small portion of funds come from advertising and journalist services to other persons and associations.

"Funds which the Association gets from providing services are used for mere survival until we get funds from competitions which last from April to June. During that period, almost half of a monthly budget of TV production is spent on the rent for media premises," Kuntic has said.



The dynamics of opening calls for proposals, decision-making and the disbursement of funds is a great problem for this TV production.

"Calls for proposals are opened in April, commissions are in session and make decisions within three months since the deadline for filing applications for funds, and funds are paid starting from the second half of August, and sometimes they are paid in the last week of the year. Funds for projects in 2015 which we got under a call for proposals were paid only in April 2016. Also, a problem is the fact that we cannot apply for technical improvement of the media, so that our budget in this segment is limited, re-

sulting in a modest technical equipment of the production," Kuntic says.

The Cro-Info Studio is located in a rented office of 24 sq m in the Open University, owned by the City of Subotica, for which the Association pays a monthly rent and utilities.

Space for the Youth

Bernardica Vojnic Mijatov is now a recognisable anchor of the Cro-Info news: "At the beginning of my engagement, Ivan Usumovic of the Cro-Info Association informed me about everything that I will do at work. I have

never been before camera until a year ago, so there was much stage fright at the beginning. A TV job was something that I have always secretly wanted and it is my pleasure to work in the Cro-Info family."

Marin Piukovic Works as a Video Editor

"I work as a video editor in the Cro-Info, and sometimes when it is necessary, I take the camera and film something in the field. I am very satisfied with the job, I love it, particularly because we are all young and make a good team; we understand well each others and produce daily news in Croatian with great enthusiasm".

The Sopsko Oro Association Opened its Office in Pancevo

Source: www.pancevo.mojkraj.rs

Uhe Association of Bulgarians, Sopsko Oro, officially presented and opened its office in Pancevo. Zoran Rajko, the president of the Association, opened the premises which are in 1C Cara Lazara Street.



A ceremony was organised on September 22 on the occasion of the opening of the Association office and it was attended by the first secretary of the Bulgarian Embassy, Todor Todorov, the vice-president of the National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority, Stefan Stojkov, the acting director of the Novo Bratstvo magazine in Bulgarian, Mila Vasov, and Association members.

Zoran Rajkov says that the Association was formed on March 24, 2015, but that members have gathered since February

2010 and that the idea has existed since then on preserving and nurturing the ethnic identity.

Todor Todorov, the first secretary of the Bulgarian Embassy in Serbia, who also addressed the guests, and on behalf of the newly-appointed Ambassador, Radko Vlajkov, and on his personal behalf, congratulated the opening of the premises of the Sopsko Oro and stressed that this Association will have a future with the assistance from the Bulgarian Embassy in Serbia and the Na-

tional Council of the Bulgarian National Minority.

The Association of Members of Bulgarian National Minority, Sopsko Oro Pancevo, is a non-governmental, non-profit association, which is joined by citizens of Serbia of Bulgarian origin in order to nurture the tradition and customs of their country of origin, the language, folklore and culture and to carry out other activities needed to preserve the national identity in keeping with the law. The seat of the Association is in Pancevo.





Centar za istraživanja migracija
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