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november 2016



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HIGHLIGHT



A Positive Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan for Minorities

On Monday, November 28, the Office for Human and Minority Rights presented in the Serbia Palace its first report on the implementation of the Action Plan for the Execution of Rights of National Minorities for the first and second quarter of 2016.



"Political Participation of National Minorities, 2016 elections" Research Presented

As it was pointed out during the presentation of the research called "political participation of national minorities, 2016 elections," it is necessary to decrease the number of signatures necessary to found a political party by a national minority, to abolish the need to collect signatures in support of a party which wants to run in the elections, and that the number of parties of national minorities shows the tendency that one national minority is represented by several political parties.



National Holiday of Bunjevci – Day of Great National Assembly – Marked

Day of Great National Assembly, one of four national holidays of the Bunjevci community in Serbia, was marked in the Subotica City Hall where a solemn academy was held which was attended by high-ranking officials of the Republic of Serbia, the Autonomous Province of the Vojvodina, the City of Subotica and the National Council of the Bunjevci National Minority in Serbia.



Flag Day Marked

Flag Day, a national holiday of Albania, this year also was marked in municipalities with majority Albanian population in the south of Serbia. In addition to the Serbian flag, the Albanian flag was raised on municipal buildings in municipalities with Albanian majority.

EDITORIAL 30

A Positive Result of Progress

We could call this month a month of progress reports on our country on its path to the European Union. We first got a European Commission's annual report, and a few weeks later, a report on the implementation of the Action Plan for the Realisation of Rights of National Minorities. Both reports were presented to the public as very positive.

The European Commission assessed that our country progressed relatively well in creating an efficient market economy, in a state administration reform, in the judiciary...However, low grades were given to Chapters 23 and 24. We have talked about these chapters since they have been opened and the public got the impression that we all know what and how we should do, how we should change or enforce laws, but it seems that we again are only talking, repeating what which we learned, but we are not implementing it. Or at least not to an expected extent. The report states that a legal and institutional framework for respect of basic rights has been established, but this requires a consistent implementation, including protection of minorities and groups who have been exposed to discrimination to a large degree – Roma and LGBT population.

When it comes to the report on the implementation of the Action Plan for Minorities, the director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights, Suzana Perovic, has said that almost 80% of the activities planned for the first and second quarter of the year have been realised. The Action Plan includes 115 activities which should be realised in the coming period. Two laws – the law on protection of rights and freedoms and the law on national councils of national minorities – should contribute to improving the status of minorities.

Even though everything is not ideal, it is visible that our country stopped pushing problems under the carpet. Fortunately this is so, otherwise we would stumble on a bunch of problems and the question is if we would have the strength to resume.

30 different national minorities live in Serbia



We Are Dealing Bravely with Problems and Consequences

Not all the citizens of our country know about the Bunjevci national minority. Even though it is small, less visible than other national communities, this national community is working hard to develop, to get equal rights and what is maybe the most important, to preserve its identity, which has been threatened. On November 26 we celebrated one of our four national holidays – Day of the Great National Assembly. In addition to this holiday, the Bunjevci community celebrates Veliko Prelo (February 2), Day of Founding of the Bunjevci National Council (February 23) and Day of Duzijanica (August 17). We interviewed Suzana Kujundzic Ostojic, the president of the National Council of the Bunjevci National Minority, for the latest issue of our Bulletin.



How would you describe the Bunjevci community and what does one first think of when we speak of this community?

For me, as a member of this community, this is certainly the speech, shtocavian ika-vica dialect, and for someone else, who knows less about us, this would certainly be our national costumes which are very rich, colourful. We of course would like that all residents of Serbia and a wider region get to know us better and would like to show them our rich culture.

Minority communities are mostly known by their colourful national costumes and dances. But not everything is so “cheerful” like their costumes. We believe that the situation is similar in your community as well.

The Bunjevci community is special because it is located in two towns. The majority of the Bunjevci population lives in Subotica, and some live in Sombor. Long time ago, there were a lot of us in the territory of southern Hungary, around Baja,

in the area of Bajski triangle. Problems facing the Bunjevci community are similar to problems facing all communities in Serbia, they being high mortality rate, emigration of the population abroad, difficulties in finding a job, etc. It is a historical

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fact that Tito brought a decree in 1945, when the war was not over yet, ordering all Bunjevci to declare themselves as Croats. In 1918, there were 84,000-85,000 Bunjevci in the area I was talking about, and today, there are only 16,000 people declaring themselves as Bunjevci. So, the problems facing our community reach back in history and we still feel some of the consequences. But we deal with all these problems very bravely. This is the third National Council of the Bunjevci National Minority. We work with 3% majority. I think this is good and I think that it is good that we have good and strong opposition in every national council, which we have. We try to work with funds that we get from the Republic of Serbia, the Autonomous Province of the Vojvodina and a little money from the city since there are less than 10% of Bunjevci in Subotica, which is why some rights we used to have we have lost. We are special also by the fact that the Republic of Serbia is our motherland, while the majority of national minorities get aid from their motherlands. So, there is a lot of volunteer work in our council, a lot of love for that what we are and a lot of effort to make visible that which we are doing.

Representatives of the National Council of Bunjevci have recently submitted an initiative to the Provincial Secretary of Culture, Public Information and Relations with Religious Communities, and this initiative concerns the assimilation of the Bunjevci community in 1945. Could you tell us something more about this initiative?

I’ve just touched the topic. It is really hard to describe the Bunjevci community long time ago and today, without speaking of something that is, I would say, a precedent. I don’t know that something like that happened to any other people in these parts. We submitted the same initiative in 2006. The then Parliament and

politicians in the Province did not have understanding for it. I believe they will have now. As far as the Secretariat is concerned, we submitted the initiative, and as far as we know, things are unfolding as they should, and I expect that everything will be fine. What is the initiative about and what is the point of this entire story? Of course, today we can declare ourselves as Bunjevci. This decision was erased by

So many people were rehabilitated, and we feel that we, as a people, also deserve rehabilitation and that it would be nice if someone would say 'sorry' after so many years, this should not have happened, this was an act of assimilation. This is the only thing that we ask for.

time, but since it was brought in the same hall 72 years ago, since this is the body which came into being after that time, there is something that is called moral satisfaction and I think that every honest man strives for it. So many people were rehabilitated, and we feel that we, as a people, also deserve rehabilitation and that it would be nice if someone would say 'sorry' after so many years, this should not have happened, this was an act of assimilation. This is the only thing that we ask for. We cannot ask that this act be withdrawn, I've already said why, but I think that we deserved to get such an answer.



After your answers, a logical question is being posed. Do you think that the Bunjevci have the same rights as other national communities?

I would say that the rights exist, laws exist, but when we start to realise these rights then our path is usually a little longer.

We hope that the situation is somewhat better when it comes to the public media outlets.

We have media in our mother tongue. These are not complete media outlets of course. We have our newspapers that are issued once a month, and a children's magazine. We are still struggling to print a magazine for the youth, which is extremely important. We also have a web site, radio shows that are broadcast on local radio stations. We have a show on RTV Vojvodina once in two weeks that lasts half an hour. I would like that we have much more time, but this is what we have at the moment.

Do you think that there is a chance for

all minorities, or at least the most part, to jointly present themselves on the media in order to be more visible?

Locally, everyone is satisfied to some extent with the presence of their minority in the media. But the local level has been ruined to some extent because of the law on information, and I hope that a link will be found and that things will be resolved. As far as the Province is concerned, and having in mind our numbers and the numbers of all national minorities living in the Province, I think that things are pretty good. But, when it comes to the public broadcasting system, things are completely different and the public can hear about us only when there is something extreme, something sensational, etc. and I think this is not good because there are many people who know nothing about this national community, and they consciously or unconsciously link these bad things with us, which is definitely not right. We are a very peaceful and good people, of a lowland character but originating from highlands, the Dinara Mountain.



The First Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan for Minorities

Source: Office for Human and Minority Rights

On Monday, November 28, the Office for Human and Minority Rights presented in the Serbia Palace the first report on the implementation of the Action Plan for the Execution of Rights of National Minorities for the first and second quarter of 2016.

The presentation was opened by Suzana Paunovic, the director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights, Cedomir Backovic, the Assistant Minister of Justice and president of the negotiation group for Chapter 23, Ivan Bosnjak, the State Secretary in the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Governance, and Andrea Oricio, the Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia.

The director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights has said that the Office prepared the report and that it provides technical and administrative support to the Government's Council for National Minorities which is overseeing the implementation of the Action Plan for the Realisation of Rights of National Minorities. The director has also informed those present of the results of the first cycle of reporting on the implemented activities in the first and the second quarter of 2016, stating that a great number of activities (87%) are being implemented by nearly 80 subjects and partners designated by the Action Plan. She has also said that contact persons, desig-

nated by institutions tasked with implementing activities from the Action Plan, will significantly contribute to the monitoring of and reporting on the implementation of the Action Plan, and that the Office will continue to coordinate, support and improve their work and mutual cooperation.

The director has said that the Office for Human and Minority Rights has translated



the first report into English but that it plans to translate it into minority languages that are in official use in the Republic of Serbia as well. Stressing the importance of operations of the national councils in improving and protecting the rights of national minorities, the director has called on the councils to continue to provide support to the implementation of the Action Plan for the Realisation of Rights of National Minorities.

The Assistant Minister of Justice, Cedomir Backovic, has said that by the mere pas-

sage of the Action Plan for the Realisation of Rights of National Minorities the Government fulfilled one of the objectives from the Action Plan for the Negotiation Chapter 23.

Ivan Bosnjak, the State Secretary in the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Governance, has welcomed those present on behalf of the Chairman of the Government's Council for National Minorities, and informed them that after the elections, the Government formed a new Council for National Minorities which will be chaired by the Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Governance, Ana Brnabic. Also, he has said that the Council will hold a session to review the first report on the implementation of the Action Plan and other issues of importance for the realisation of rights of national minorities

in Serbia. He has said that in the past period the Government did a lot at developing dialogue and securing the development of rights and freedoms of national minorities, working together with the national councils on the Action Plan for the Realisation of Rights of National Minorities, which is clearly seen in the first report on the implementation of the Action Plan.

"Improving the status of national minorities and their integration are crucial for the functioning of an inclusive and democratic society. As a multicultural and multiethnic society, Serbia has adopted a very progressive legal framework to ensure the protection of national minorities, prevent discrimination on all grounds and provide support to a better integration of minority communities with the political and public life. The adoption and implementation of this Action Plan is a move to that direction," the Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, Andrea Oricio, has said.

Oricio has stressed the importance of the implementation of measures and activities aimed at improving the rights of national minorities and the Mission's commitment to supporting the Serbian Government in this field.



Regulations Pertaining to Registration of Minority Parties Should Be Reconsidered

The number of signatures necessary for a minority to found a political party should be reduced and an obligation to collect signatures in support of an election list or a political party as a precondition for its participation in elections should be abolished. Also, guaranteed seats in Parliament should be introduced for national minorities small in numbers, it was said on November 3 at a presentation of a research on “political participation of national minorities, 2016 elections.”

It was pointed out that the number of parties of national minorities shows a tendency that one national minority is represented by several political parties.

The Bosniak national minority has the greatest number of registered political parties, followed by Roma, Hungarians and Albanians. Ksenija Markovic, an associate to the Institute for Social Research, has said that there are 108 registered political parties, of which number 63 are parties of national minorities, which is 60% of the registered political parties.

She said that, according to the results of the 2011 population census, there are more than 20 ethnic communities in Serbia.

“In addition to Serbs, who are a majority community, only three ethnic communities comprise more than 1% of the population. They are Hungarians, Roma and Bosniaks. The Albanian national community has boycotted the population census,” Markovic said.

According to her, the Bosniak national minority has the most registered parties relative to a number of members

of a national minority, 12, Roma have seven parties, and Hungarians and Albanians six each.

“Political parties of national minorities play an important role in Serbia’s political party life...Political parties in Serbia are mostly mono-ethnic parties and they primarily represent the interests of one community...There is a tendency of growth of majority parties



in the last three election cycles which include members of national minorities, while multiethnic parties are more of an exception than a rule,” she said.

Ksenija Markovic said that an affirmative measure which means that 1,000 signatures is enough to register a political party of a national minority (10,000 signatures is needed for parties which do not fall under this rule) influenced the increase in number of political parties of national minorities. She has said that the number of political parties of national minorities shows a tendency that the interests of one national minority in Serbia are represented by several parties. She added that some of the registered political parties are not active.

The president of the Steering Board of the Forum for Ethnic Relations, Dusan Janjic, said that a series of laws which created the present situation were brought in 2010 and that the legislation should be amended.

“The law on founding political parties of 2010 created a situation of inequality...A quota of 10,000 members was introduced for new parties and when it comes to minority parties, every member should prove that he has a right to vote, and this proof costs 5-10 euros. In order to form a minority party, 1,000 signatures are needed and 1,000 proofs that people are registered in the voters’ list,” he said.

“This does not exist anywhere in the world but in Serbia...If a party was registered, it should have a freedom to take part in the elections and the elections should regulate who will survive and who will not survive. The obligation of collecting signatures, particularly for minorities, should be abolished,” he noted.

Janjic assessed that amendments would significantly reduce the space for corruption or political influence on the elections. He explained that the question is being posed as to who can form a minority party, adding that it is difficult to regulate it since the legislator left a wide space here.

Muamer Zukorlic, a BDZ MP, said that voters’ lists are a very sensitive issue. “Modalities must be found in order to have stable voters’ lists, so that they can be supplemented and that the obligation to regularly register in the voters’ list be abolished. This is something that excludes a large number of people from voting in the elections,” he noted. Zukorlic also said that there were many abuses and that some often come from local factors that are interested in the elections. “Some people have registered in the voters’ lists three times,” Zukorlic explained. The monitoring of election campaigns of political parties of national minorities was conducted from March 25 to April 21. The research was conducted by associates to the Forum for Ethnic Relations as part of a project that was financed by the Open Society Foundation.

Human Rights Committee Conference on Integration of Albanians Ends

Source: Bujanovacke

A two-day conference on “Integration of Albanians in the South of Serbia in the Light of (Non)Implementation of Government’s Agreements Concerning the South of Serbia,” which the Human Rights

tional Council of Albanians, Ragmi Mustafa, addressed the conference. The discussions showed the importance of the continuation of the dialogue between Government representatives and local Albanian representatives on the continuation

use of language, script and national symbols, decentralisation and judiciary, economy and regional development, have been presented at the conference.

On the second day of the conference, participants in seven panel discussions discussed recommendations and problems in the said areas, and documents produced at these panel discussions will be sent to relevant institutions and ministries and international organisations.

The conference was realised as part of the project called “Strengthening the Stability in the South of Serbia through Integration of Albanian National Minority.” Seven public discussions were held as part of the project, a research was done which dealt with the level of implementation of three documents of the Serbian Government for the south of Serbia (the plan and programme for a peaceful resolution of the crisis in the south of Serbia, the so-called Covic plan of 2001, the agreement on reconstruction of the coordination body of the Serbian Government for the south of Serbia of 2009, and the seven items plan of 2013) and an analysis was made which precisely determines the level of integration of the Albanian national minority with the state institutions.

The project lasted for a year and was supported by the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



Committee organised on November 22-23 in the Rozafa Hotel in Bujanovac, ended with submitting recommendations to relevant institutions on seven key problems.

According to organisers, the conference was attended by more than 150 representatives of republic bodies, embassies and diplomatic offices, officials of the district and local institutions in Bujanovac, Presevo and Medvedja Municipalities, as well as by representatives of organisations of civil society and media.

Philippe Guex, the Ambassador of Switzerland to Serbia and Montenegro, Ana Brnabic, the Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Governance, Zoran Stankovic, the president of the Coordinating Body, Saip Kamberi, the Head of the Bujanovac Municipality, Sciprim Arifi, the Head of the Presevo Municipality, MPs Nenad Mitrovic /SNS/ and Fatmir Hasani /PDP/ and the representative of the Na-

tional Council of Albanians, Ragmi Mustafa, addressed the conference. The discussions showed the importance of the continuation of the dialogue between Government representatives and local Albanian representatives on the continuation

Results of the project, recommendations from seven public debates on security, education, culture and information, health and social issues, right to official



The 9th Meeting of the Steering Board of the Project “We are Here Together – European Support to Roma Inclusion” Held

Source: Office for Human and Minority Rights

When opening the 9th meeting of the Project's Steering Board, the director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights, Suzana Paunovic, said that new results on the project have been achieved between the two meetings of the Steering Board.

Paunovic noted that equipment worth 375,000 Euros was presented to 17 companies which employ Roma, noting that the 1st Roma Employment Fair was held. Best practices in employment of Roma were presented at the Fair and for the first time great companies and young people were included.

The process of certification of pedagogical assistants has been completed and 191 assistants received diplomas, by which they became a part of the educational system of the Republic of Serbia, Paunovic has said.

There was also word about challenges of Roma inclusion. Thirty-two local self governments exchanged on the occasion good practices and experiences with other interested municipalities. Also, a declaration on improving the status of Roma at the local level has been signed. A guide to founding mobile teams, which should serve the spreading of this form of local cooperation, was presented to the municipalities. A database for monitoring results of measures for Roma inclusion at the local level is being supplemented, and information from this database will influence the creation of politics of national and local institutions and the bringing of decisions by donors.

Paunovic said that great results were achieved in one of the most complex fields, the housing. In addition to establishing a geographic national system for monitoring the state of affairs in substandard Roma



settlements, a review and analysis of all housing models in Roma settlements have been made. Thirteen urban plans of substandard Roma settlements in 11 municipalities have been drafted. Also, technical documents for some 20 infrastructure projects have been prepared in 14 municipalities. Municipalities applied for funds as part of IPA 2013 programme to implement these projects.

The director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights stressed that components in connection with the approach to basic rights, and training for more than 70 NGOs have been successfully completed.

Paunovic said that the Government of the Republic of Serbia has assumed an obligation to continue the begun activities through the Action Plan for the Implemen-

tation of the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma until 2025.

She pointed out that attention should be directed in the coming period at increasing the capacities of local government units to successfully realise the complex job of Roma inclusion.

Zivojin Mitrovic, a representative of the National Council of the Roma National Minority, said that the full participation of Roma – from the participation in the project's steering board to end users – have been secured for the first time in this project.

Nicolas Bizel, Head of Operations, on behalf of the European Delegation to Serbia assessed IPA 2010 as one of the most important projects in the area of Roma inclusion implemented in Serbia, praised the firm managing structure of the project and efforts the project

team undertook to encourage the achievement of the project objectives.

Jan Lueneburg, the Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia Democratisation Department, expressed satisfaction with the dynamics of implementation of project activities and the commitment of all departments and the project team that are included in the implementation of this project. Lueneburg said that the OSCE Mission will continue to provide support to Roma inclusion programmes and programmes of protection of human rights of all national minorities.

Lloyd Tudyk, the project manager, presented the results achieved in the past period, stressing particularly the issue of housing as an issue in the focus of this meeting of the Steering Board.

National Minority Protection in South East Europe

Taking stock of the results at the grassroots level and finding ways to influence change at the policy level- experience of the joint European Union/Council of Europe regional project “Promoting human rights and minority protection in South East Europe”

“Promoting Human Rights and Minority Protection in South East Europe” is a Joint Project funded by the European Union and implemented by the Council of Europe. It has provided a blend of policy and grassroots support, based on recommendations from the monitoring bodies of the two relevant Council of Europe conventions: the Framework Convention for Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) and European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML). This was the main aim and the biggest success – bringing European standards and recommendations close to real people who live and deal with the issues that national minorities face every day, right where they live. Listening to their voices and combining our efforts, showing how the Council of Europe can add real value and respond to their needs.

Aiming at breaking down barriers for minorities at the local level, over three years 2014 to 2016 the Project worked with seven beneficiaries of the South East Europe region – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” and Kosovo^{*1}.

Following a public call for expression of interest, a small grant scheme (18000

EURO and a 10% municipal contribution) supported 35 municipalities in the region (6 municipalities in Serbia) to address a wide range of minority issues at local level. The Project thus, for example, contributed to the complete elimination of

of national minority protection in Montenegro.

A key to the success of this regional initiative was that it did not try to impose a one-size-fits-all solution based on models developed outside the Region. At no point did the Council of Europe seek to impose top-down solutions, conscious of the importance of relating policy to impact at the individual level – turning “values” into something practical and real for individuals, and knowing that the best policies are developed on the basis of feedback from those individuals, through a genuine form of participation.



school dropout for Egyptian pupils in Tivat; to the modernising the issuance of municipal forms and documents in minority languages in Subotica; to the setting up of a training centre for project drafting for national minorities in Gradiška; to language training for desk officers in Pula; to the adoption of the first-ever municipal strategy for the inclusion of non-majority communities in Vushtrri; as well as to the pre-qualification and employment of women, members of a national minority in Staro Nagoričane.

As well as this sort of support provided at the grassroots level, the Project also assisted at the higher policy level, advising on the preparation of the Action Plan for national minorities under Chapter 23 of EU pre-accession negotiations in Serbia and on revisions of the Law on Minorities in Albania. The Project also contributed to promoting the first-ever report on the state of national minority rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to building capacity of the relevant institutions dealing with reporting and policy-making in the field

Of 35 small grants implemented, the Project Steering Committee selected seven instances of good practice for further development and promotion through organization of Open Day which brought together representatives of participating municipalities from the whole region.

These instances of good practice are bona fide ‘home grown’ projects, designed, developed and tested in the region, by people from the region. They have been implemented by local teams under municipal leadership, supported by local experts and monitored and evaluated by representatives of the authorities concerned. They have the potential to provide sustainable cost-effective solutions throughout the region

You can find more about the Project and its results on the Project website, Facebook page, Instagram and Twitter, together with links to the Publication of Elements of Good Practice and the Final Regional Report prepared by the College of Europe.

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Minority and Local Media as an Investment in the Social Integration

Source: Telegraf

The 5th session of the Regional Conference on Minority and Local Media was held on November 10 in Novi Sad. The conference was organised by Magyar Szó, the Association of Media of Serbia, Heror Media Pint and Giacomelli Media. Next year, the Conference will transform into a European conference as a result of a successful five-year work, it was concluded at the session.

The topic of the session was social integration. Representatives of the state, provincial and local institutions and organisations dealing with European integration, marketing, economy, corporate and media companies, together with minority and local media from Serbia and the region, discussed the issue of understanding the identity, culture and the status of minority and local media as protagonists of new solutions at the time of

and Regional Languages, MIDAS, added a solemn tone to the conference.

The Deputy Prime Minister of the Vojvodina, Djordje Milicevic, has said that multiethnicity and multiculturalism of

cial Government will allocate funds for project financing of these media outlets as well, the importance of which is extremely big in their communities.

During three conference panel discussions, minority and local media were seen as a source of a solution, in the centre of which is the issue of one's own identity.

The Conference answered many questions. It was concluded that digital platforms of minority media do not represent a risk to national

minorities from identity loss and that in addition to informing the public, minority media have the role which "brings" a minority language to the family, and the role to increase visibility of the national community in the society.

A model of possible cooperation between a number of minority and other media outlets during a preparation of major European projects was noted at the conference as one of models of a new positioning of minority media.

Full support was given to the opening of minority media towards the so-called majority communities, and the need to formalise the work of the Coordination of National Councils of National Minorities and draft a minority strategy of Serbia was pointed out.

The 5th session of the Regional Conference dedicated to minority and local media outlets, in which work representatives of our and regional media outlets, MIDAS, a team for candidacy of Novi Sad for the European capital of culture 2021, the Serbian Chamber of Commerce, corporate sector, the Serbian Olympic Committee took part, showed that the direction of development of minority media outlets is well planned.



the Vojvodina are a way of life in all its segments, including information, and that this fact is supported by the existence of a stable system of financial support to the most important media outlets in minority languages in the Province.

Deputy Prime Minister Milicevic has said that somewhat more than 264 million dinars have been allocated this year for the printing of 22 newspapers in eight minority languages, which is more than 90% of a total amount allocated in support of all media outlets in the Province, including media in Serbian. "At least that much will be planned in

the 2017 budget, which will provide for stable and sustainable financing of publishers," said Milicevic, adding that there is awareness of the fact that a significant number of media in minority languages, primarily at the local level, found themselves in the market after the privatisation, and that the Provin-



intensive changes and creation of new parameters which make a contemporary society. The central topic the Conference dealt with was the significance of and belonging to communities. A celebration of the accession of daily Magyar Szó to the European Association of Daily Newspapers in Minority

Less Than One Fifth of Municipalities and Cities Allocated Funds for Media Projects in Minority Languages

Source: The Serbian Journalists' Association

Of 150 cities and municipalities in Serbia which answered the questions posed by the Komsijske Novosti internet site, 31 planned funds for information in minority languages to be granted by way of competitions in 2016.

Funds were allocated to media outlets in 20 municipalities and cities, and even though competitions were called, no one applied for funds for projects in mi-

nority languages in 11 local government units. Five municipalities – Vrbas, Backi Petrovac, Opovo, Irig, Sid, and 13 of the 17 Belgrade municipalities, have not yet answered the questions put by the Komsijske Novosti internet site.

Dimitrovgrad Municipality has allocated the most money to projects in minority languages – 11.2 million dinars. The money was distributed to media outlets in Bulgarian.

Kovacica Municipality has allocated 7,575,000 dinars for two projects by RTV OK which include shows in Slovak, Hungarians and Romanian.

Subotica has allocated 6,350,000 dinars to support eight projects in minority languages while Novi Sad has allocated 6 million dinars to support eight of 13 projects which applied for funds.

Call for Proposals for Media Projects in Minority Languages to Be Opened Next Year in Indjija As Well

Source: Komsijske Novosti

Funds will be planned in the budget of Indjija Municipality for next year intended for co-financing media projects in minority languages,” the chief of staff of the Head of Indjija Municipality, Nemanja Milojevic, told Komsijske Novosti.

“At the beginning of this year, Indjija Municipality called a competition for co-financing of media projects to which local media in minority languages applied, but a competition exclusively for programs in minority languages has not been called,” Milojevic said.

He added that “a budget for next year is being drafted, and special funds will be planned for programs in minority languages and minorities will be able to apply for them with their projects.”

Nedeljne Novine Will Belong to Journalists, Radio Temerin will Be Shut down

Last month, the Ministry of the Economy terminated for the second time the agreement on the privatisation of the Nedeljne Novine Weekly of Backa Palanka, since the owner Miloško Pavlovic did not abide by the purchase agreement.

Pavlovic, who last year made a bid of 34,000 euros for this media outlet, failed to pay the bid price and failed to make the agreed investments.

Zoran Bacina, the state's capital administrator, told the Serbian Journalists' Associ-

ation that wages are two months late, but that the company had done business without any problems before.

“A Commission of the Ministry of the Economy carried out regular controls and noted violations of the agreement. The shares were returned to the state and a shareholders' assembly was scheduled when the shares will be allocated to employees,” Bacina said.

He added that the Nedeljne Novine Weekly is being distributed in Backa Palanka and has good revenues and coop-

eration with the local self-governance.

The “Nedeljne Novine” Weekly, which features articles in both Hungarian and Slovak languages, was sold for the first time eight years ago, but the sales agreement was terminated because the agreement provisions were not respected.

Bilingual Radio Temerin will shut down on December 1, when its broadcast licence will have expired. This media outlet has missed its opportunity to be privatised, so it has been owned by Temerin Municipality since October last year.

Flag Day, a National Holiday of Albanian National Minority, Marked

Source: Danas

Flag Day, a national holiday of Albania, this year was marked in municipalities with majority Albanian population in the south of Serbia without euphoria and political tensions as it had been the case previous years.

The Head of Presevo Municipality, Sciprim Arifi, was in Tirana at the invitation of the Mayor of the Albanian capital, Erjon Velijaj. The office of the Head of Presevo Municipality has confirmed that Arifi signed an agreement on cooperation between Presevo, Tetovo, Pristina, Ulcinj and Tirana, and that he will stay in Tirana for the celebration of the Flag Day. Albanian officials in this municipality were reluctant to comment on the agreement, saying that they did not take part in the drafting of the agreement, and that "this is not a secret document, but a document concerning the improvement of regional cooperation."

- This is a project of mutual coordination and connections in ecology, construction, drawing foreign investments and creating an atmosphere conducive to improving the socio-economic status of Albanians in these

municipalities. The work on this agreement has been done in the past several months, and Flag Day was symbolically chosen for its signing, Albanian sources in Presevo said, where, in addition to the Serbian and EU flags, an Albanian flag flew on the municipal building in front of which a small number of citizens gathered. They said that, upon his return from Tirana, Arifi will "present the content of the agreement in more details."

The Head of Bujanovac Municipality, Saip Kamberi, had a meeting with citizens in his office which lasted for more than two hours. They talked about problems citizens are facing daily.

- Unemployment is the most critical problem in our municipality, as well as lack of economic activities, which is why we need the assistance from the state and foreign investors, Kamberi said.

- In addition to the Serbian and EU flags, the Albanian flag was posted on the Bu-

janovac Municipality building and a building where the offices of the National Council of Albanian National Minority are housed. It was visible that this year there were no slogans in support of independ-



ence of Kosovo or glorification of killed members of the Liberation Army of Bujanovac, Presevo and Medvedja, which, in previous years, had been the major part of a celebration of the Flag Day.

- A Week in November event was held in the Bujanovac Cultural Centre, where a number of theatres and folklore ensembles from Kosovo and Albania performed.

The Bosniak Community

Solemn Session on the Occasion of Day of Sandzak

Source: The Bosniak National Council

The Bosniak National Council on November 21 held a solemn session on the occasion of November 20, Day of Sandzak, a national holiday of Bosniaks in Serbia. The Day of Sandzak is marked on November 20, in memory of the founding of the Anti-Fascist Council of the People's Liberation of the Sandzak (ZAVNOS), in Pljevlja in 1943.

The session started with the reading of the Sandzak's Historical Doubts by Dr. Redzep Skrijelj, and biographies of Sreten Vukosavljevic, the president of ZAVNOS, and Rifat Burdzovic Trs, a people's hero from WWII.

The president of the Bosniak National Council, Sulejman Ugljanin, congratulated the

November 20 holiday to all citizens of the Sandzak and stressed that the Sandzak is a historical region where Albanians, Bosniaks, Montenegrins and Serbs have lived for centuries in harmony.

In addition to Council members, the session of the Bosniak National Council was attended by members of the Council's Board, Bosniak MPs, mayors and heads of Sandzak municipalities, representatives of NGOs, directors of schools in the Sandzak, and other figures from the public and cultural life.

The Bosniak National Council has established an annual literary event called "Sandzak's Literary Meets," when a literary award called "Camil Sijeric's Pen" is

awarded, and this year, it went to writer Faiz Softic, of Bijelo Polje.

As part of marking this year's Day of Sandzak, a delegation of the Bosniak National Council paid a visit to Pljevlja and laid flowers at a memorial to the founding of ZAVNOS. Children's play "Halima's Homeland" directed by children writer Suada Bozic was performed.

At the beginning of November, the Bosniak National Council called a literary competition "Sandzak is Pronounced by Heart" and a photo competition "This is Sandzak," both intended for the youth. Awards for winners of these competitions will be presented on December 2.

Day of Great National Assembly

Source: Bunjevci

Day of Great National Assembly, one of four national holidays of the Bunjevci community in Serbia, was marked by a solemn academy in the Subotica City Hall, in the presence of high-ranking representatives of the Republic of Serbia, the Autonomous Province of the Vojvodina, the city of Subotica and the National Council of the Bunjevci National Minority.

Subotica Mayor Bogdan Laban congratulated the holiday to the Bunjevci community and reminded of historical facts pertaining to November 25, 1918:

“The marking of a national holiday of the Bunjevci is an opportunity to remind of events from the fall of 1918 and from the time when patriotic aspirations of the Yugoslav peoples began to realise. The Bunjevci have lived in these parts for 330 years, and they are an example that, despite serious challenges and difficult problems, people can preserve its customs and culture, if it is united and if it nurtures the awareness of its existence. The Bunjevci managed to preserve their national identity under not so simple historical and social circumstances. Convinced that the work on standardisation of the Bunjevci language will be accelerated and that the decision which bans Bunjevci and Sokci to declare themselves as Bunjevci and Sokci will be formally abolished, I wish your respected community to live long in these parts.”

“In the history of the present Vojvodina, there is no an event which is more important than the Great National Assembly of Serbs, Bunjevci, and all others who decided to merge the Banat, Backa and the Srem with the Kingdom of Serbia. On this great day, the history of these parts took a new course: it was a far-reaching historical decision thanks to which we are all here today, united the way our forefathers imagined 98 years ago. Two proud peoples, Serbs and Bunjevci, two great personalities, Jasa Tomic and Blasko Rajic, two cities, Subotica and Novi Sad, marked this historical turning point. The freedom-loving spirit of Serbs and Bunjevci played a crucial role in the last year of WWI”, Igor Mirovic, the Vojvodina Prime Minister, said.

The envoy of the Serbian President, Stanislava Pak Stankovic, spoke about the efforts of the current government

to nurture the richness of differences:

“We are proud of what our forefathers, Serbs and Bunjevci together, did. They



enabled us to live in peace and freedom, to be proud. I am certain that we are worthy of our ancestors and that we will manage to maintain the inheri-

“There are no centuries, there is no language or culture, there are no bones scattered on fronts, everything has gone. This lasted for so long that we asked ourselves if we existed at all. We did, the Great National Assembly of Serbs, Bunjevci and other Slavs says. Yes, we were there, we spoke our beautiful ‘ikavian’ we left a mark and gave ourselves, the only thing that we had. And like it always happens with the just and persistent, our wheel of fortune moved, we stand side by side with other national minorities and fight for our rights, fight to compensate for that which we have missed.”

The ceremony was also attended by Gojko Radic, an adviser to the Serbian Prime Minister, Mihalj Njilas, the Vojvodina Deputy Prime Minister and the Provincial Secretary for Education, Ad-



tance they left to us. The president of the National Council of the Bunjevci National Minority, Suzana Kujundzic Ostojic, said in her remarks that November 25, 1918 was the “date which radiated the light even at the time it seemed that there was not a ray of sunlight for the Bunjevci.”

ministration, Regulations and National Minorities, and Nebojsa Kuzmanovic and Djordje Vukmirovic, assistant Provincial Secretaries for Culture. Tamara Babic, Stela Bukvic and the “Aleksandrovo” Cultural and Artistic Society performed in the cultural part of the program.

Daring and Structurally Complex Projects

Source: Hrvatska rijec



The Strategy is a document which charts a way to a long-term development of education of the Croatian national community in the Republic of Serbia and it is susceptible to constant reconsideration of objectives and their revisions," says the Draft Strategy of Education in Croatian for the period 2017-2021, which was prepared by the Committee on Education of the Croatian National Council. The Strategy was brought in keeping with the Strategy of Education in Serbia until 2020, and in keeping with the Strategy Europe 2020. The predecessor of the Strategy is "a Platform of Education of Croatian National Minority in Their Mother Tongue in the Republic of Serbia," drafted by pedagogue Dujo Runje and his associates.

For the sake of greater inclusion of people who want to give a constructive contribution, the Croatian Na-

sented data, results of public opinion polls and a strategic plan. The last public debate was organised for representatives of public institutions in the Subotica City Hall.

The Strategy was financially supported by the Foundation for Open

implemented depends on the bearers of the cultural autonomy, but also on other factors, general social atmosphere in which it will be implemented, the authorities...

"The document shows who the allies are and on which aid we can count



Society in Serbia, and Foundation director Jadranka Jelincic has said that this is a daring and structurally complex project and the first strategic project which a national minority in

its implementation. During the implementation, this document will have to be harmonised with general politics and this is why we expect Serbia to make certain novelties in its strategy for development of education," Jelincic said, adding that she is glad that the Foundation is dedicated to supporting the enhancement of rights of national minorities in Serbia.

The president of the Croatian National Council /HNV/, Slaven Bacic, said that this is one of the most important and best documents produced by the HNV since 2002. "The basic sense of the Strategy is the future. It is understandable that maybe not everything will be realised in the coming period, but we must strive to realise the majority of these objectives," Bacic said, adding that the main objective is to increase the number of children attending classes in Croatian, and that everyone in the community can help to achieve this goal.

"I am grateful to all participants, the head of the project, Jasna Vojnic, and the Foundation for Open Society which recognised the values of the project even before the work on it started. It is important that the Strategy speaks of a future. We should strive to that which was planned. Crucial objective that remains to be achieved is to increase the number of children who attend classes in Croatian. One of the objectives also is to create a single school centre," said the president of the Croatian National Council, Slaven Bacic.

tional Council organised public debates in the past two weeks, in Subotica, Sonta, Monostor and Tavankut. At public debates, the team which drafted the Strategy, headed by coordinator Jasna Vojnic, pre-

Serbia proposed to the Serbian public, and that this Strategy can be a guide to others as to how activities should be planned. Jelincic has said that this is a well thought-out activity, and whether the Strategy will be

Hungary Building a University Campus in Subotica

Source: vajma.info

It is extremely important for our children to learn Serbian and, with this goal in mind, we reached an agreement this week for Serbian to be taught as a foreign language," said Istvan Pastor, the president of the Alliance of the Vojvodina Hungarians in Subotica at a press conference which he held together with Zoltan Balog, the Hungarian Minister of Human Resources.

Previously, Balog toured student dormitories Apacai and Evropa in Novi Sad and prior to a press conference he and Pastor had talks behind closed doors.

Pastor thanked the Hungarian Government on its aid, adding that the student dormitory Evropa would not have been completed without it, that it would not even function without the aid from Hungary and that there would not be a scholarship program either. Pastor said that he and Balog had discussed new programs: the purchase and reconstruction of the university centre based in Subotica, the fifth phase of reconstruction of the building of the Faculty of Pedagogy in Hungarian in Subotica, resolution of financial problems of this Faculty and preservation of the building of the High Technical School in Subotica. Pastor said that he asked Balog for aid in the completion of a building of the Salasarski Theatre in Kaval, the development of the Sencani Chamber Theatre, the financing of the Madjar Szo and Het Napa (newspapers of the Hungarian National Council), and the development of the Holy Well in Doroslov. Balog said that the widening of higher education in Subotica is in the first place, and that there is an intention to build a serious campus. Money for the purchase of a building has been secured; the Sekeres Laszlo Foundation will head the project. He confirmed that the Hungarian University campus will be a branch of the

Segedin University, where the classes of economy and pedagogy for persons with special needs will be held in the first cycle, and in the second cycle, an IT engineering department will be opened. He added that the status of the Hungarian national minority will have a special place at a joint session of the Serbian and Hungarian Governments. Participants of the Vojvodina scientific roundtable took a stance that with the aim of decreasing the high unemployment rate and putting a halt to emigration, only classes ac-

of economic development help this objective. Balog noted that his Government is helping only these branches of Hungarian universities for which there is a need in the Vojvodina, and that this is why it is open for a dialogue with those who disagree with the announced plans. "We do not intend to send to Vojvodina professors who are not needed. If the offer is better here and if institutions are stronger, then of course, they won't be coming," Balog said. Pastor noted that effort should be made to



credited exclusively in Serbia and taught by domestic professors are acceptable, while they support the hiring of visiting professors from Hungary only if it is temporary, and in agreement with the local institutions. Balog said that as long as domestic professors are not able to give lectures, there cannot be obstacles to "sharing the resources." "This does not mean a competition, since students will get their diplomas here. It would be a competition in case young people leave to study in Segedin, Budapest or Western Europe," the Hungarian minister said, adding that young people must not be deprived of a freedom of movement. It is important that they have the desire to return, and projects

implement the ambitious conclusions from the roundtable. The reality is that the Alliance of the Vojvodina Hungarians and the Hungarian Government have completely harmonised positions, Pastor said. The essence of this position is that the Novi Sad University and all of its faculties have the priority, but that there are needs which can be met only by relocation of Hungarian universities since those courses cannot be taught at the Novi Sad University. He added that this party does not think that establishing a Hungarian university in Subotica is realistic, but thinks that the Novi Sad University, the Pedagogical Faculty in Hungarian in Subotica and the Hungarian campus are important.



Centar za istraživanja migracija
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