

**First National  
Minorities  
Fair Held**

**A Roundtable on the Implementation  
of the Action Plan Was  
an Opportunity to Exchange Opinions**

# **31 Minority News**

december 2016



**Jozo Sapun:  
We Are  
Fighting  
against the  
Disappearance  
of Identity**

**The National Council  
of the Russian  
National Minority  
Founded**

**Slovak Households  
Are Reviving the  
Christmas Tradition  
of Their Forefathers**

# HIGHLIGHTS



## About the Implementation of the Action Plan

The Centre for Migration Studies, supported by the Open Society Foundation, organised a roundtable on "the implementation of the Action Plan for the Realisation of Rights of National Minorities in 2016." Representatives of national minorities and a representative of the Office for Human and Minority Rights spoke at the conference about the implementation of the planned activities and their participation in the implementation of the Action Plan.



## Serbia's Mosaic

On the occasion of International Human Rights Day, the Fair of National Minorities under the motto "Serbia's Mosaic" was held for the first time in Belgrade. A total of 15 national minorities presented their cultural heritage.



## The National Council of the Russian National Minority Founded

The National Council of the Russian National Minority in Serbia was founded in the Russian Home in Belgrade on December 24, 2016. Professor Irina Miljkovic, of Krusevac, was selected as the president of the Council.



## Contribution of the Ruthenians to the Development of Novi Sad

A project called "Contribution of the Vojvodina Ruthenians to the Development of Novi Sad" produced by the Ruthenian Journalists Association /NAR/ was presented at the Vojvodina Ruthenians' Cultural Institute. The project is comprised of ten radio shows that presented ten persons, who in the past 50 years contributed to the development of Novi Sad in the area of culture, arts, infrastructure and media.

# EDITORIAL 31

## Life-saving Changes

The end of the year is an ideal period to summarize our work, to see which goals we did not achieve, which problems we managed to resolve, and which problems we will have to solve next year. While the whole of Europe, including our country, was engulfed by the migrant crisis and other political turbulences, Serbia opened the negotiation chapters 23 and 24 in Brussels at the beginning of July, chapters of crucial importance for Serbia's accession negotiations with the EU.

Both chapters are accompanied by action plans which include a number of activities. A part of the Action Plan for Chapter 23 is dedicated to the realization of rights of national minorities. At the end of November, we received the first report on the implementation of activities from the Action Plan for the Realisation of Rights of National Minorities which divided the public.

A part of the public was positive about it and activities that were implemented successfully, while the other part of the public, including representatives of some national minorities, was negative about it and claimed to the contrary. Having in mind that this Chapter was the first to have been opened and will be the last to be closed, it is very likely that we will face similar situation next year as well.

Of course, we have to emphasize positive things, at least those that happened for the first time. For the first time this year, a budget fund for national minorities was established as an additional source of financing. Also, for the first time, representatives of numerous national minorities met on the International Human Rights Day to present their cultural heritage. They are different, but so similar in their determination to persevere in preserving their language, culture and tradition, but also in efforts to contribute to the development of not only their communities but of the society as a whole.

**30 different national minorities live in Serbia**



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# Fighting Against the Loss of Identity

**T**he Ukrainian national minority is one of the smallest national minorities in Serbia. This however does not mean that this national minority, just like the larger national minorities, is not fighting for their rights and is not trying to preserve their language and culture. Regardless of their numbers, they are facing similar problems like other, larger, national minorities. Jozo Sapun, the president of the National Council of the Ukrainian National Minority, spoke for our Bulletin about the status of the Ukrainian national minority.



## In which parts of Serbia do the majority of the Ukrainians live?

According to the latest population census, there are 4,903 Ukrainians living in Serbia. Of that number, 80% live in the Autonomous Province of the Vojvodina, in the municipalities of Kula, Vrbas, Novi Sad, Indjija, Sremska Mitrovica. When they came to Serbia, they populated larger communities where they could find jobs. There are around 600 Ukrainians in Belgrade, but due to the size of the city and due to the fact that they are scattered all over the city, they were not able to organize themselves.

## Did Ukrainians manage to preserve their identity, and which percentage of Ukrainians speaks their mother tongue?

Preservation of one's national identity isn't the problem of the Ukrainian community only, but of all national

communities living in Serbia. The assimilation is present among all of them. As far as the speech is concerned, we cannot brag about a great

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number of Ukrainians who preserved their language. There is maybe some 30% of Ukrainians who speak their mother tongue on a daily basis. The rest are children from "mixed" marriages. It is very hard to speak Ukrainian in everyday life. The only places where the Ukrainian language is nurtured are schools and some cultural and artistic societies, that is, associations where Ukrainians are presidents.

## In which schools can children learn the Ukrainian Language with Elements of National Culture?

The Ukrainian Language with Elements of National Culture, as an elective subject, is taught in two elementary schools in Kula, in Vrbas, where it was taught in even three elementary schools, and now it is taught in only one. It is also taught in one school in Novi Sad and in the community of Budisava, in Sremska Mitrovica and Indjija. The classes in Kula, Budisava,



Novi Sad and Sremska Mitrovica are financed by the Ministry, while the classes in Vrbas and Indjija are financed by the National Council of the Ukrainian National Minority. These are classes with less than 15 pupils, so we decided to take this step since it is in our interest that the Ukrainian language is taught wherever it is possible, regardless of the number of children.

**Are you satisfied with these classes and are there any problems concerning textbooks?**

The quality of classes depends on a teacher. For example, we have a lady from Ukraine who moved into our country and started a family, who is an excellent pedagogue. All teachers are born in Ukraine and we must be satisfied with their work. Regarding textbooks, the National Council of the Ukrainian National Minority and the Provincial Secretariat for Education reached agreement with the then Institute for Textbooks about the printing of textbooks for the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades of elementary schools. This project has been completed, the textbooks were printed. For the time being, we only plan the printing of a textbook for the 5th grade, and when this textbook is out, we will print textbooks for other grades. Children are attending classes, they want to learn. We are aware that one cannot learn a lot at two lessons a week, but we are still satisfied that we can learn our language and try to prevent the disappearance of the Ukrainian identity from the territory of Serbia.

**We believe that you will persevere. Minority communities preserve their identity through numerous cultural and artistic events. Does this hold true for the Ukrainian national minority?**

The Ukrainian community is active in the five Vojvodina municipalities that I mentioned earlier. They have associations which nurture the Ukrainian culture and tradition. Every association holds an annual concert, every association ensures to celebrate our religious holidays such as Christmas, Easter, St. Nicholas...The National

Council of the Ukrainian National Minority is organising the Festival of the Ukrainian Culture, Kelena, which this year was held for the 13th time. Six years ago we started organising the festival of Ukrainian children creativity, Veselka. Days of Taras Shevchenko, the greatest Ukrainian writer, are also



marked, as well as days of Ivan Franko, days of Lesja Ukrajinka. These are the most important events which every community organises in keeping with their abilities.

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**We must address the subject of privatisation of local media, which is a very sensitive issue for minorities for reasons that are known. What is the situation like when it comes to your national minority?**

I must mention that the National Council of the Ukrainian National Minority, together with the Government of the Autonomous Province of the Vojvodina, has founded the Ridne Slovo publishing. The Ridne Slovo

newspapers are issued once a month and 10 issues of children's magazine Solovejko are printed during the school year. We have shows on Radio Novi Sad, 20 hours every month, we have the Ukrainian Panorama show on the 2nd channel of the Vojvodina Radio-TV, and the Paleta show, which

is subtitled in Serbian. Regarding the privatisation, TV Backa and Radio Vrbas have been privatised in Vrbas. After the privatisation, these media outlets were shut down, so that it was not only we who were harmed, but the majority people and other national communities as well. The privatisation was conducted in Kula as well, but fortunately, the owner

accepted conditions and radio shows in Ukrainian are still broadcast, just like in Indjija. We wanted to reach the Srem TV as well, but unfortunately, we did not find a common language with the owners of this media outlet.

**Many ethnic communities see the embassies of their countries of origin as their support. How would you assess the cooperation with the Embassy of Ukraine in Serbia and in general with your country of origin?**

The National Council of the Ukrainian National Minority and the Ukrainian community have good cooperation with the Ukrainian Embassy, but only in the field of culture. This is the area which interests us and we want to cooperate in this field. The National Council has signed a memorandum of understanding and cooperation with the Ternopiljska, Lavovska and Ivano-Frankivska Districts in Ukraine and this cooperation is at a very high level. We can really brag about this cooperation. This is the cooperation in culture and education, even in the field of information. I will mention that the Radio-TV Vojvodina has signed cooperation agreements with these districts. The problem is the bad situation in Ukraine because of which there is a lack of money. We've been through the similar situation. We hope that this will stop soon and that we will cooperate like in previous years; we hope that we will go to Ukraine and receive guests from Ukraine.

# A Roundtable on the Implementation of the Action Plan Was an Opportunity to Exchange Opinions



On Wednesday, December 21, the Centre for Migration Studies organised a roundtable on “the implementation of the Action Plan for the Realisation of Rights of National Minorities.” The roundtable was organised with the support of the Open Society Foundation.

The director of the Centre, Biljana Jovic welcomed the participants of the roundtable saying that the time is right to see to which extent activities from the Action Plan for 2016

status of minorities in an artificial manner.”

Radulovic noted that the Office had not received any input on the 1st

tribute to a quality of the report, since this is an important document which should present implemented activities concerning all minorities,” Radulovic said.

## Ugljanin: Minorities Did not Have an Opportunity to Take an Active Part

Sulejman Ugljanin spoke on behalf of the Coordination of National Councils of National Minorities and on behalf of the Bosniak National Council. He noted that all minorities since the beginning have taken an active part in the working group. “We concluded that the working group that was formed by the Government of the Republic of Serbia did not submit to any minority representative any minutes from any session, while our representatives informed us that none of our proposals was included in the agenda nor did they have an opportunity to speak about them,” Ugljanin said.



have been implemented. One of the first speakers was Vlado Radulovic, a representative of the Office for Human and Minority Rights. “The Office prepared a report on the basis of reports submitted by those tasked with implementing the activities,” Radulovic said. “The Office director called on participants to submit comments on the report on the implementation of the Action Plan. It is in no one’s interest to present the

and 2nd quarter of 2016 from 15 holders of activities: all local government units, the Council for Inter-Ethnic Relations, the National Library of Serbia, the Regional Chamber, the Press Council, the Journalists Association, and the National Councils of the Albanian, Ashkali, Bosniak, Greek, Vlasi, Roma, Slovak and Montenegrin National Minorities. “I appeal to all holders of activities to get involved in the process and con-

He reminded that during the drafting of the Action Plan, the Bosniak National Council had submitted 498 proposals, but, as he said, did not receive any response on why none of the proposals was accepted. “Regardless of dissatisfaction, minorities had the desire to take part in the work, but they were not able to take part in an analysis, that is, in the





preparation of the report. All Coordination members agreed to form working teams of experts, of which we informed the relevant minister and prime minister in October and November. But, we did not get an opportunity to speak with them. We ask the Working Team to enable minorities to take an active part in all processes concerning the Action Plan. Minorities know the best what their problems are and they know the best how to solve them," Ugljanin said.

He also noted that the training for monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan was held on December 15, whereas the implementation of the Action Plan should have been discussed the following day. He is of the opinion that persons who have just started education were not fully ready for the discussion.

Enis Imamovic, a representative of the Bosniak national minority, also took part in the discussion. He has said that minorities have rights on the paper, but that the reality is completely different. "We must keep focus on politics which determine the level of rights and the level of law enforcement in practice. This level is unfortunately very low," Imamovic said.

Asked by moderator B. Jovic if there are differences in the implementation of activities between larger and smaller minority communities, Joze Sivcek, the president of the National Council of the Czech National Minority, who also spoke on behalf of the Slovenian and German National Councils, and the Alliance of Jewish Municipalities, said that non-harmonisation of joint principles and

else, to the disappearance of some of the communities," Sivacek said.

One of the conclusions of the roundtable was that it is necessary to improve the communication between the holders of activities with the aim of resolving problems that still exist. The director of the Centre for Migration Studies, Biljana Jovic, noted that, when it comes to areas covered by the Action Plan, it is still possible to try to achieve the best possible results through adequate reporting and monitoring.

She also called on those present to send their suggestions regarding the implementation of the Action Plan which will be published on the Minority News internet portal and the



goals is very visible in the report. "The problem is that political agendas are imposed as the foundation for organisation of contents and the drafting of the Action Plan and a report. The content of the report is the problem to which all National Councils point out. A disappearance of any of these communities in a few years or so will be the greatest failure of the Action Plan, our state and all minority communities. This would mean that we did something wrong, and we are on a good way to emigration, assimilation or something

Bulletin. Muhedin Fijuljanin (the Bosniak National Council), Mirko Bajic (the Bunjevac National Council), and Vitomir Mihajlovic (the Roma community) also took part in the discussion. Cedomir Backovic, the head of the negotiation group for chapter 23, Ivan Bosnjak, the state secretary in the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Governance, Borce Velickovski, the president of the National Council of the Macedonian National Minority cancelled their participation for justified reasons.

# International Human Rights Day Marked

Source: Tanjug

**D** International Human Rights Day was marked in our country on December 10, and the director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights, Suzana Paunovic, said that Serbia has taken a good path.

"If I should assess the year 2016, I would say that Serbia has taken a good path and is making further steps when it comes to human rights," Paunovic told Tanjug, adding that disabled persons, particularly disabled women, are still the most threatened social groups.

Regarding the marking of International Human Rights Day, Paunovic said that this year this day in Serbia is dedicated to minorities living in Serbia.

She added that the year 2016 was marked by the opening of chapter 23. "For us who are dealing with the subject of human rights, the opening of chapter 23 was certainly the most important event, but this is an important event for the citizens of Serbia also," Paunovic noted, adding that Serbia has a clearly defined Action Plan for this negotiation chapter.

Ombudsman Sasa Jankovic reminded that many citizens are feeling injustice because of discrepancies between the rights they have on the paper and in the real life.

"The poorest persons, disabled persons, women, victims of violence, workers, losers in privatisations, residents of substandard settlements, children of the street, are some of traditionally the most vulnerable groups in Serbia. The position of independent journalists is becoming increasingly difficult. Also, the opposition and their sympathisers have increasingly more objections," Jankovic said. He noted in a press release that "the law should be equally valid for all in every place and at any time," ad-



ding that this often is not the case because of the status in society or close ties with the government. Jankovic said that positive steps have been taken when it comes to the rights of LGBT population, where maybe the greatest progress was made, but the discrimination against them is still far from being abolished, and their protection is still insufficient. He also noted that refugees from Syria and other countries are sometimes housed under inhuman conditions in Serbia and that first serious incidents have occurred. The Serbian Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Governance, Ana Brnabic, wished everyone a happy Human Rights Day, and expressed belief that only a joint struggle against all forms of intolerance and extremism can produce results.

In 1948, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which prescribes that these rights are universal and that eve-

ryone is entitled to them without distinction of any kind such as national, state, ideological, social and cultural identity. The Declaration comprises of approximately 30 articles, but the following principles are considered to be the most important:

- right to life, liberty and security of person
- right to education
- right to employment, paid holidays, protection from unemployment and social security
- right to full participation in cultural life
- freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman treatment or punishment
- freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- freedom of expression and opinion



# “Serbia’s Mosaic” in Belgrade gathered representatives of 15 national minorities

Source: eastside.rs

Photo: Hlas Ljudu



**P** On the occasion of International Human Rights Day, the Fair of National Minorities was held for the first time in Belgrade under the motto “Serbia’s Mosaic.” A total of 15 national minorities presented their cultural heritage, cuisine and old trades.

The first Fair of National Minorities was held on December 10 in Belgrade on the occasion of International Day of Human Rights which this year in Serbia was dedicated to national minorities. The Fair was organised by the Of-

fice for Human and Minority Rights under the motto “Mosaic of Serbia.” Fifteen National Council of National Minorities took part in the Fair, and they are Council of Ashkalis, Slovaks, Roma, Montenegrins, Bosniaks, Germans, Bulgarians, Hungarians, Romanians, Croats, Bunjevci, Ruthenians, Ukrainians and Vlahs, who presented

their culture and customs, folklore, publishing, handicrafts, old trades and gastronomic specialities.

The Serbian Minister of Labour, Employment and Veterans’ Affairs, Aleksandar Vulin, has opened the Fair. He has said that the Serbian policy to-

us, but because we think that only thus Serbia can be successful,” Vulin has said, stressing that national minorities are an important part of the society because of cultural differences which make us even better. There are 118 printed media in minority languages in Serbia, of which 39 are mixed. More than 8,000 shows in minority language are broadcast in our state on 76 TV channels, and 103 radio stations broadcast 11,000 hours of shows in minority languages, which is an illustration that the rights of national minorities in Serbia are respected and improved.

Suzana Paunovic, the director of the Serbian Govern-

ment’s Office for Human and Minority Rights, has said that 26 national minorities live in Serbia, 21 of which have their National Councils. “We are a country which not only has good laws concerning the status of national minorities, but we try to enforce all these laws,” Suzana Paunovic has said.



wards national minorities is in keeping with highest world standards and that a few countries in the world can brag with such a policy. “Serbia respects its national minorities, loves them and wishes to improve their status. The fight for human rights in Serbia is developing and improving not because someone asks this from



# Koordinacija jedinstvena na sednici Republičkog saveta za manjine

Source: BNV

**K** The Coordination of National Councils reached agreement on a joint approach at a session of the Serbian Government's Council for National Minorities which was scheduled for Friday, December 16, in Belgrade. After a long, systematic and constructive discussion in which all present representatives of national councils took part, an agreement was reached on a united and joint presentation at a session of the Serbian Government's Council for National Minorities which means the following:

- Representatives of national minority councils will heed the call for the partici-

pation in a session of the Government's Council for National Minorities which is scheduled for Friday, December 16, 2016.

- They agreed and unanimously adopted positions on all items of a proposed agenda of a session of the Council for Minorities.

- The Coordination will ask that a debate on items for which conditions are not right be postponed for the next session of the Government's Council for National Minorities

- The chairman of the Coordination, Sulejman Ugljanin, will speak at a session of the

Government's Council for National Minorities on behalf of all minorities

- The Coordination expressed dissatisfaction because it, as a collective body of all minorities, was not invited to attend a session of the Government's Council for National Minorities, even though the Coordination was defined in the Action Plan for Minorities as one of the main factors in the process of implementation of the Action Plan

The Coordination of National Council of National Minorities is comprised of representatives of 21 national minorities which comprise 17% of the population of Serbia.

## A Session of the Council for Minorities Postponed

Source: B92

Photo: Beta/Milan Obradovic

**S** A session of the Council for National Minorities, scheduled for December 16, was postponed after the majority of presidents of national councils did not vote for a proposed agenda. The Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Governance has announced that the president of the Bosniak National Council, Sulejman Ugljanin, asked that three items be removed from the agenda. The session was attended by 26 out of the 28 Council members.

These items pertained to a report on the Action Plan for the Realisation of Rights of National Minorities, a draft bill amending and supplementing the law on the protection of rights and freedoms of national minorities and proposed priority areas of financing for 2017 from the Budget Fund for National Minorities.

Minister Ana Brnabic, who is chairing the Council, asked that Council members to vote on the request, in keeping with the Rulebook.

She has said that that these are three crucial subjects when it comes to the rights of national minorities in Serbia and that it is not clear why national councils do not want to discuss them, all the more because all par-



ticipants could have influenced the content of the agenda which was sent to them one week prior to the session.

Presidents of the National Councils of Bulgarians, Bunjevci, Roma, Montenegrins and Egyptians, all representatives of the Government, which was represented by Justice Minister Nela Kuburovic, state secretaries

in the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture and Information, a representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the director of the Administration for Cooperation with Churches and Religious Communities and the director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights, Suzana Perovic, voted for the proposed agenda.

The session was also attended by Vladimir Bozovic, an adviser to the Prime Minister. The session was marked by inappropriate address by the president of the Albanian National Council, Jonuz Musliju, to minister Brnabic. Musliju raised his voice and said that "dictatorships is being introduced here," to which minister Brnabic replied that the enforcement a law in Serbia cannot be called a dictatorship and

that the Action Plan was adopted and that changes to the Plan are not the subject but its implementation.

The Action Plan was adopted on March 3, 2016, and representatives of all National Councils and representatives of the OSCE and the Council of Europe took part in its preparation.

# Roundtable on a Draft Bill Amending the Law on the Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities

Source: The Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Governance

**O**n December 22, 2016, a roundtable was held in the Serbia Palace as part of a public debate on a draft bill amending the Law on the Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities.

A number of representatives of the state bodies, independent bodies, national councils of national minorities, civil society and international institutions and experts took part in the roundtable. Police director Vladimir Rebic and the chief negotiator for Serbia's accession negotiations with the EU, Tanja Miscevic, also took part in the discussion.

The director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights, Suzana Paunovic, the president of the National Council



of the Bulgarian National Minority, Vladimir Zaharijev, and the director of the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights (JUKOM), Milan Antonijevic, addressed those gathered.

The state secretary in the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Governance, Ivan Bosnjak, thanked those present for heeding the call and for contributing to a public debate on

such an important topic. He also stressed that the Ministry will review every constructive proposal regarding the draft bill. Bosnjak said that the Ministry is absolutely open for dialogue and that it will continue with its work aimed at improving the rights of national minorities. He reminded that the Law on the Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National

Minorities was adopted in 2002, that the aim of these changes is to harmonise it with the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, systemic laws and the current strategic documents, such as the Action Plan for the Realisation of Rights of National Minorities.

The roundtable was organized with the support of the OSCE Mission to Serbia.

## Robert Sepi: State Should Finance Minority Media

Source: Komsijske Novosti

**T**he decision that the minority media will be financed exclusively by way of competitions and not directly by the state shows great lack of understanding of the problem by the Ministry of Culture and Information," the deputy Ombudsman, Robert Sepi, said at a presentation of an Ombudsman's Special Report on Information in Languages of National Minorities after Media Privatisation. He said that by this report, they tried to turn the attention of the relevant bodies to irregularities and problems after the privatisation and offered proposals to improve the situation when it comes to better informing of minorities."

"Competitions of local self governments represent an additional problem for the functioning of the media. They do not have clear criteria for allocation of funds, there are no deadlines by which they should be called, so some are called in October, which do not leave space for serious media outlets to count on these funds. Local self governments did not get instructions on how to act," Sepi added.

Ombudsman Sasa Jankovic said that "informing a majority about what a minority is doing and creating and how is it feeling is also important since all this contribute to a better mutual understanding."

"RTV (Vojvodina Radio-TV) broadcast programmes in 13 minority languages, but it has a completely different concept than the local media. One cannot say: 'You have RTV, you don't need local media,'" professor Dubravka Valic Nedeljkovic said. The Head of the Department on the Rights of National Minorities in the Ombudsman's Office, who worked on the report, noted that the report "is not comprehensive since it was made in September when the privatisation process had not been brought to completion, all competitions had not been called by local governments, and when funds had not been allocated where competitions had been called."



# The National Council of the Russian National Minority in Serbia Founded

Source: RTV

**O**n December 24, 2016, the National Council of the Russian National Minority in Serbia was founded. In the presence of 35 delegates, representatives of 300 Russian citizens who supported by their signatures the founding of this body, the Council was formed in the Russian Home, the Council announced.

A press release from the Russian National Council says that the Council has 15 members and professor Irina Miljkovic, of Krusevac, was selected the president of the Council. She stressed the readiness of the Council to work on preserving the identity and respecting the rights of the Russian minority in Serbia guaranteed by the Constitution and laws.

The National Council of the Russian National Minority has adopted the Statute, by which a legal procedure



has been completed and conditions have been met to file an application for registration.

The National Council of the Russian National Minority will, in the coming

days, file a request for registration with the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Governance and will launch a procedure for the establishment of a special voters' list of the Russian national minority in Serbia.

## The Roma Community

# Let's Meet Roma Women

Source: Romaworld

**T**he Indigo Group for Children and Youth organised a presentation called "Let Us Meet Roma Women" in Deli in Nis. Participants of the presentation were girls who took part in workshops as part of the project called "Reinforced for Changes." The project is being implemented with the support of the Open Society Foundation.

"Workshops included various topics. Every workshop had its own topic, but at every workshop we were saying that women, just like man, can have their carriers, be successful, and not only do the housework," said Jelena Kasumovic, the coordinator of the project.

She pointed out to some successful Roma women. "These women were successful in their carriers, but today they are women in a shadow. They did not get recognitions they should have gotten for their contribution to the whole society and Roma community. We made a research together with the girls and selected ten Roma women about whom we later talked." The presentation was organised on the occasion of International Human Rights Day, and in memory of 16 days of activism against violence against women. The presentation was supported by Natasa Tasic Knezevic, opera signer and professor of solo singing. "I came to support the event, Roma girls, because the whole world is before

them. As far as the status of Roma is concerned, I think that problems have not been solved. Roma are offered cleaning jobs by which they are characterised as persons who can do only that. They are not offered an opportunity to be equal citizens of this society in a way they really can," Tasic Knezevic said.

Girls presented Roma women who are or were very successful in their carriers and extremely important both for the Roma community and the European society. Agnes Doroczi, Bronislava Vajs-Papusza, Marija Aleksandrovic, Elena Lackova, Livija Jaroka and Esma Redzepova are but some of the successful Roma women presented at the event.

# Reviving the Tradition

Source: Hlas Ljudu

**T**“Little trumpets” and Christmas “oblanda” cakes are again found on the tables of Slovak families throughout the Vojvodina. Some families from Backi Petrovac and Kulpin after many years started to produce these traditional cakes again. They bring machines for their production from Slovakia. Priests used to make

this cake in Slovakia back in the 18th century. Later, this was done by teachers. It was necessary to prepare two to three “little trumpets” or “oblanda” for each resident of a village, so the preparations would

have started as early as on December 12, on the day when St. Lucia is celebrated. One week before Christmas, pupils distributed these cakes and re-

cited Christmas carols. “Nowadays, they are not distributed by pupils or made by priests or teachers, but the smell of Christmas “oblanda” is again present.



Slovak Christmas “oblanda”, as a traditional Christmas pastry, is usually eaten with honey and garlic. Honey, as a symbol of goodness, and garlic, which symbolically should scare away all diseases. Nowadays, vanilla or cinnamon flavours are added of which the whole house smells, waking up old tradition.

## Roots 2

**O**n December 21, an exhibition of the Vojvodina Slovak artists, Roots 2, opened thanks to joint efforts by the Gallery of Fine Arts – Gift Collection of Rajko Mamuzic in Novi Sad and the National Council of the Slovak National Minority. The exhibition will be opened until January 20, 2017.

The second edition of the exhibition was opened by director of the Legacy of Rajko Mamuzic, Lazar Markovic, who has said on the oc-

casion that this year’s exhibition has a better concept than last year’s. He said that paintings have excellently fit in the Gallery, which, he says, is the result of efforts by the organiser of the exhibition, Jan Agarski. Jan Agarski has said that 25 artists are taking part in the exhibition. The composition is extremely interesting since artists who make the core of the Slovak artistic corpus, from those who belong to an older generation (Miloslav and Katka Pavelka, Jozef Klacik, Pavel Pop, Milan Sudji,

Maria Gasko, Laslo Kolar, Mihal Madacki) to artists in full artistic maturity (Mirjana Devetakovic, Rastislav Skulec, Jan Triaska, Mihail Djurovka, Djula Santa, Jan Agarski, Marian Karvala, Zvonko Pudelka, Miroslav Pavlovic, Zdenka Marija Madacki) to the youngest artists (Alen Klacik, Daniela Triaska, Andrea Mernjik, Svetlana Mihalj, Ljupka Erg, Emilija Vlencik). The award went to young Ana Andrejic. This artist will have an opportunity to exhibit her works in the Cultural Institute of the Vojvodina Slovaks.



# The Screening of a Film Titled “The Sandzak and Minority Policy in Serbia: What Do the Young People Think?”

**U**n Thursday, December 22, the screening of a film titled “The Sandzak and Minority Policy in Serbia: What Do the Young People Think?” was held in the Media Centre. A debate with young researchers from the Sandzak was held after the screening. The film was produced by the Forum 10 Academic Initiative with

programme titled “position and rights of ethnic minorities in Serbia,” that they are active in the Sandzak and that they cooperate with the Bosniak National Council. They decided to finance the project since it has a future. “Minority communities lack authenticity, which is not the case with the Sandzak. Civil society organisations active there are comprised

the opinion that the BNC is rather reserved.

Jasmina Eleskovic, a researcher in the project, dealt with the use of the Bosnian language and script, particularly in Tutin Municipality. She said that the Bosnian language and script are used to the full capacity in Tutin. “There is a problem only in state institutions where they are used only at the request of citizens,” Eleskovic said and recommended to the BNC to work on communication between institutions, to inform other municipalities that they are entitled to information in minority language, and to raise the awareness of the community on the necessity to use their language and script.

According to Haris Ibrahimovic, a researcher in the project, one of the ways to include young people in the BNC is for them to propose solutions, to act. He also proposed that young people be organized in groups in order to assume a part of the responsibility for minority policy.

Vasvija Gusinac, the president of the BNC, spoke on behalf of the BNC. She feels that the project is a positive thing, but that the film itself looks unreal. According to her, people appearing in the film see the BNC as some sort of parliament or government, which is not true. She feels that it was a mistake that they did interviews only. She has noted that the BNC is constantly fighting for rights of which Bosniaks are deprived. She said that they should abide by the Framework Convention and the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages. Gusinac stressed that she will always support such initiatives but reproached the authors of the film for shortcomings regarding sources in the BNC. The participants of the discussion, which was held after the screening of the film, said that not only the BNC but other national councils are very much politicized, and stressed that a too big difference is made between young and elderly people, that a transfer of knowledge should be provided to young people, but that young people also must demonstrate some interest.



the support of the Open Society Foundation. The film was produced according to proposals and suggestions from 10 young people from the Sandzak who in the past few months did a research on various aspects of minority policy. Young people from the Sandzak presented their positions on the said subjects. Fahrudin Kladnicanin, the coordinator of the Forum 10 Academic Initiative, said that the aim of the Initiative is to enable young people to have access to the Bosniak National Council through seminars. He added that the Forum 10 also worked in the south of Serbia proper and with the Albanian community, and that they have good cooperation with the Bosniak National Council, but that there are certain disagreements.

Aleksandra Sanjevic, programme coordinator of the Open Society Foundation, has said that the Foundation has a pro-

of Bosniaks,” Sanjevic said. Regarding young people who spoke in the film, she noted that they had both critical and affirmative positions. She added that it is hard for young people to remain in Serbia and deal with social issues and informed those present that the Forum 10 came up with the idea to form a youth committee at the Bosniak National Council.

Fatmir Mavric, a researcher who analyzed the classes in the Bosnian language during the six month period, also took part in the debate. He concluded that the Bosniak National Council in the beginning had a problem with the parents, that parents were not informed enough about classes in Bosnian. He said that there are the most problems with classes in Bosnian in Prijepolje, Priboj and Nova Varos municipalities. His recommendation to the BNC is to work with the young people in the field of culture. He is of

# Bulgaria Financing Projects in the South of Serbia Proper

Source: Juzne Vesti

**R**The Republic of Bulgaria will finance with more than 208,000 euros ten projects in the south of Serbia proper in the field of culture, education and economy, which will, among other things, include the reconstruction of the Gymnasium in Bosilegrad, the Deko Petkov Library and various activities of the Caribrod Association in Nis. Four times more money was allocated this year for projects than last year and the Bulgarian Consul in Nis, Edvin Sugarev, says that projects were selected according to their importance for the Bulgarian national minority and everyone else in Serbia.

“The effect of the project is important for us, and not who is financing it and why. It is important that these projects are implemented in a multicultural area and we are honoured to take part in

building good relations between Serbia and Bulgaria”, Sugarev said.

The “Caribrod” Association says that the money Bulgaria allocates is of great importance not only for the Association.

“Just like before, we will organize roundtables on various topics such as the importance of national minorities, the nurturing of multiculturalism, gender equality, the role of the media in cross-border cooperation, the learning of Bulgarian, and the nurturing of folklore tradition and will organise various



humanitarian activities”, Association vice-president Olgica Velickov said.

She added that there are 939 Bulgarians in Nis and the vicinity, although according to unofficial data, more than 10,000 Bulgarians live there. They

have three associations with some 200 members. The Bulgarian Council of Ministers approved the financing of non-EU countries, of which money one half will go to Serbia where 17 projects worth a total of 326,500 euros will be financed. Agreements were signed by the Bulgarian Consul and representatives of institutions included in the project.

## The Montenegrin Community

# Literary Evening Dedicated to the Montenegrin Diaspora in the Erzebet Juhas Library in Backa Topola

Source: Krstas

**U**he Erzebet Juhas Library in Backa Topola organized a literary evening about the Montenegrin Diaspora where books written by Nenad Stevandic were presented. Stevandic is a publicist and a researcher of the Montenegrin Diaspora.

In addition to the author, experts in migrations in the area of the Republic of Serbia – historian Dragica Vukotic and historian Vladimir Kaljevic, who are representatives of the second generation of Montenegrin settlers in the Vojvodina, spoke at the literary evening. The following books were presented: The Montenegrin Diaspora through Diplomatic Archival Sources, Montenegrins in the Vojvodina, the Colonization 1945-



1948, Rata – A Montenegrin Colony in the Vojvodina, Frederic Burnam and Montenegrins, Highlanders in a Plain.

Nenad Stevovic said that every person is sad in his own way and that the more they are distant from his Homeland Montene-

grins are feeling closer to their homeland. He feels that the life's path of every person is paved by segments from the past and that the one who neglects this, who does not know or forget where he came from, he will not find a way to a future. Having in mind that Backa Topola is a municipality with majority Hungarian population, Stevovic spoke about rich Montenegrin-Hungarian relations through history, stressing that they deserve a special monograph.

Lukijana Popovic and Aleksa Giljen read excerpts from the books. In addition to many guests, the literary evening was attended by the General Consul of Montenegro in Serbia, Dragan Kankaras.



# Joy of Giving at the Tavankut BCC

Source: Bunjevci



**A**s was the case in previous years, the Bunjevci National Council saw to it that children of the Matija Gubec Elementary School in Tavankut, who attend the elective subject of Bunjevac Language with Elements of National Culture get New Year's gifts before the winter vacation and the upcoming holidays. In addition to many Tavankut residents, the event was attended by Nikola Babic, the vice-president of the Bunjevci National Council.

The president of the Bunjevci Cultural Centre /BCC/, Milica Irsevic, praised children from upper grades who helped with preparations for this evening, such as the decoration of the Christmas tree, and the like, so that this event could pass as it should. And it passed well, which was seen when mixed dances from Serbia were performed by younger girls from the Tavankut Bunjevci Cultural Centre, for which they were given a big round of applause by both children and parents. Teacher Mirjana Savanov, who works in the Matija Gubec Elementary School in Tavankut, was the host of the program and called children by name to come to get their gifts. Children could not hide their happiness when Santa Clause appeared and welcomed those present. Their happiness was even greater when they learned that

this year in addition to sweet gifts, they will get the new, eighth edition of "Tandrcko and his Treasure" issued by the Bunjevci Information Centre. The book is interesting because it contains the best parts from all previous seven books. The children will have an opportunity to read that which older children read in previous years. We spoke with two pupils of the second grade, Milena Suknovic and Jovana Tumbas Loketic. They both love classes in Bunjevci lan-

guage because they learn many interesting things. Milena said: "I learned to sing Bunjevac songs, write short stories and play old Bunjevac games." So, no one should doubt that Bunjevac language classes are very interesting indeed! Jovana Tumbas Loketic told us that she likes candies, and that she will first eat chocolate and then all other candies. The reading of the new "Tandrcko's" book will also be a sweet pleasure, like it was for previous generations of pupils.



# A Project Titled “Contribution of Ruthenians to the Development of Novi Sad” Presented

Source: Ruske Slovo



**A**t a press conference held at the Vojvodina Ruthenians' Cultural Institute, the project called “Contribution of the Ruthenians to the Development of Novi Sad,” produced by the Ruthenian Journalists Association /NAR/ was presented at the Vojvodina Ruthenians' Cultural Institute. The project is comprised of ten radio shows where ten persons, who in the past 50 years contributed to the development of Novi Sad in the area of culture, arts, infrastructure and media, were presented.

Associates and colleagues, who speak of works of Pavle Zilnik, Ivan Kovac, Mihail Dodjus, Djuro Paparhaj, Irina

Davosir Matanovic, Irina Hardi Kovacevic, Melanija Rimar, Mihail Dudas, Miroslav Vislavski and Miron Konjuh, took part in the radio shows. The project was implemented by journalist and members of NAR, Jelena Perkovic, Marija Perkovic, Sanja Markovic, Asja Papuga, Anamarija Rankovic, the president of NAR, Martica Tamas, and Jasna Kovac. Jelena Perkovic said that the project brought many people closer, but that there is no much data on the Internet about the said persons and that this should be corrected. Sanja Markovic said that it was not easy to find people who would speak about deserving people and to choose only ten such persons. Marica Tamas said that the

radio shows about these persons are useful for the Ruthenian community, while Anamarija Rankovic noted that a good basis has been made for such projects, but that there is a great need for archival materials about deserving people. The former director of the Vojvodina Handball Club and sports journalist, Miroslav Vislavski, said that he sees this initiative as something nice and useful, since he has always worked in the interest of a wide population, which reflects on the national community whose spirit should be preserved. The project was financially supported by the Novi Sad City Administration of Culture, and Radio Novi Sad was a partner in project.







**Centar za istraživanja migracija**  
**Center for Migration Studies**

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