

**Consultations
on Reporting Procedures
on the Implementation of the
Minority Action Plan**

**Project “Carpathian
Parallels” Brought to
Completion**

35 Minority News

april 2017



**Ruthenians
in Serbia:
A Tradition-
Cherishing
Nation
with No
Motherland**

**Conference “Roma
Women in Serbia -
Achievements, Challenges,
and Perspectives”**

**“Gergina 2017”
Festival – Keeper of the
Tradition of Vlah Old
Music**

HIGHLIGHTS



Strengthening of the Capacity of the National Minority Councils

Two-day training sessions have been carried out for the representatives of the national minority councils as a part of the Government's activities aimed at the strengthening of the capacity of the national minority councils. The goal of these sessions is to introduce the representatives of the national minority councils to the principles of good management, program planning, budgeting and reporting, from the perspective of the increased efficiency and transparency in the work of the national minority councils, particularly in regard to the use of the funds allocated from the budget of the Republic of Serbia.



Agreement on Reporting on the Implementation of the Minority Action Plan

On April 25, 2017, the representatives of the Coordination of the National Minority Councils met in Belgrade with the Director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights to discuss the reporting on the implementation of the Action Plan for the Execution of the Minority Rights. The meeting was organized in line with the Coordination's request to change the methodology for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Action plan.



How Well Do We Know Each Other

The 11th cycle of the high schools quiz "How Well Do We Know Each Other", which is a part of the Provincial Government's Project "The Affirmation of Multiculturalism and Tolerance in Vojvodina - Confidence Building Measures among the Youth", started with qualification competition on the 18th of April.



Conference "Roma Women in Serbia – Achievements, Challenges, and Perspectives" Organized

On April 11, the conference "Roma Women in Serbia – Achievements, Challenges, and Perspectives" was organized in the Palace Serbia, during which the public was informed on the difficult position of this multiple-discriminated minority in our country and the efforts to change their position.

EDITORIAL 35

Searching for a Place under the Sun

The right to a decent and dignified life is something we were all born with. Yes, we all have the rights to education, medical care, employment, but, can we all, in reality, execute these rights? This question can frequently be heard around specific dates, perhaps most often when the International Day of the Roma, the citizens of the world without a motherland, is to be marked.

Let us remind ourselves that April 8, as the International Roma Day, has been celebrated since 1971, when the Roma from 25 countries met for the first time and founded the Union of the Roma. For full 46 years we have tried to mark this day. On this day, there is not a single news program that does not feature a special report about the Roma. A representative of any national community can only be pleased with the fact that public pays so much attention to their national day. However, more importantly, it would be even more pleasing if the public provided system solutions to the problems linked to this community for years. As a nation without a motherland, the Roma people are forced to be in the process of constant migration and to be subjected to persecution, even genocide. Is this where the intolerance towards the Roma comes from?

We do not have an answer to this question, but negative experience of the past cannot be used as an excuse for the future. Despite numerous reforms carried out by our state, the Roma people are still the most discriminated minority community in our country. A high level of discrimination, unemployment, segregation in education is still present in our society. In the annual report of the Commissioner for Protection of Equality, out of the total number of complaints of ethnicity-based discrimination, as many as 40% of the complaints are the Roma population related. The Government of the Republic of Serbia ratified the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma in the Republic of Serbia 2016-2025. But, how is it possible that an Action Plan for the implementation of this Strategy has not been ratified yet? How can we follow the implementation of the measures envisaged by the Strategy, if we lack such an important mechanism? Last month, a Coordination Body for the Monitoring of the Strategy was created, too, pointing to the start of the implementation of the Strategy, but is this sufficient?

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A Tradition-Cherishing Nation with No Motherland



Settlement of Ruthenians in these territories began in 1751. They migrated from present Slovakia, Carpathian Ukraine and the north-east Hungary. The life of the immigrants has changed over centuries, but their language, culture, and customs have remained the same. While Ruski Krstur is considered to be the central settlement of the Vojvodina Ruthenians, the institute that has jurisdiction over protection and promotion of the Ruthenian culture is seated in Novi Sad. The Cultural Institute of Vojvodina Ruthenians was founded in 2008 and is presently headed by acting director, Ivana Dudaš.

What was the main goal of the Institute's founders?

The Cultural Institute of Vojvodina Ruthenians was founded by the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and the Ruthenian National Minority Council. I believe that the main objective at the time was to increase the level of the national culture, i.e. development and promotion of the culture of Vojvodina Ruthenians. Since the moment it was founded, the Institute has had four directors and acting directors, Miroslav Keveždi, Janko Bučko, Sergej Tamaš, and, since August 2016, I have held the acting director's position.

There have been quite a few directors since the Institute was founded. We suppose there have been many projects as well?

I can say that, during the tour of duty of the previous director, the Institute worked with great success, with a number of projects of

great importance for the Ruthenian community implemented during this time. Let me mention a few of them. We published a book of songs "The Red Rose", comprising of folk songs and popular and children music, as a part of the 50th Red Rose Festival, the most important festival for the Ruthenian national minority. Furthermore, we published a far-reaching book "Ruthenian Folk Costumes", which includes description of folklore steps, as well as detailed description of the folk costumes, sequence of putting its their elements on, explanation on the ways the hair is combed... Couple of years ago, a project "Research of the Ruthenian History in Vojvodina and the Republic of Serbia" was launched. We have cooperated on this project with the Vojvodina Museum and the Provincial Institute for Heritage Protection and we have carried extensive field research on the history of the Ruthenians. A part of the project also focused on scanning of the glass plates,

which were part of the inheritance of the family of photographer Budinski from Ruski Krstur and donated to the Greek Catholic parish in Krstur. Another part of the project included polling of the people on the ground, who were asked if they could recognize the individuals from the old photographs. As a result, a two week exhibition of the Ruthenian history was organized at the Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade, as a part of the "Days of Ruthenian Culture 2016". Last year, we also implemented the project "Carpathian Parallels", with financial support of the Open Society Foundation, which has just been brought to completion. During the implementation of this project, we have had genuinely good cooperation with other national minorities.

Do you cooperate with other national minorities on other projects, as well?

Absolutely. Every year, we earmark special amount in our financial plan for one multicultural project. Last year, we organized an exhibition in Slovakia, and, this year, if other Institutes set aside similar funds, we plan to organize a theatre play "Wings of Panonia", directed by Miroslav Benka, a Vojvodina Slovak Director. Most of the cultural institutes and a few of the national minority councils have supported this idea. In this multicultural project, we plan to engage the most prominent actors from all national minorities. However, while both the idea and the project are very inspiring, I cannot guarantee that it will be implemented this year. We carried out a similar project last year – A. Chekhov's "Wedding", directed by Lidija Stevanović, with participation of Ruthenian actors, as well.

How does the Institute support the Ruthenian Culture?

Every year, the Institute funds the celebration of the Ruthenian National Day, which is organized in a different town every year. Furthermore, the Institute funds expert support to the cultural and artistic societies. This year, we issued an open call for proposals for co-funding of the events envisaged in the official schedule of events of the Ruthenian minority. After the new Board of Directors has been appointed, we will disburse the funds based on the results of this call. Thus, the Institute provides support to the Ruthen-

ian festivals, some of which have a 50 year long tradition.

How many of such festivals exist?

I can say that we have a lot of festivals, however, twenty of them are included in the official timetable, which has been endorsed by the Culture Board of the Ruthenian National Minority Council.

How can we recognize Ruthenian culture? Is there anything special that makes it unique?

I think that we are a mix of different cultures. We arrived in these territories 270 years ago, and anyone who comes from the countries of our origin is fascinated how we have managed to preserve our language, our songs, our national costumes after so many years... And yet, we have also embraced the culture of our new homeland. You can see the influence the German national community, of the Hungarian national community... This influence is easily visible in the language, but also in gastronomy. When we started talking about representing Ruthenians for tourism purposes, I was asked the same questions on the things that make Ruthenians stand out. I did not know what to reply at that time either. Slovaks, for instance, have a recognizable wreath that a bride wears on her wedding day. We, too, have a wreath, but it is not as colorful, as it the case with the Slovaks. Our girls used to wear a black ribbon – “barsonj” – they had two curled braids, and, after the wedding, they would remove the “barsonj” from the bride’s head and replace it with a bridal cap. As soon as she would give birth to a child, she would start covering her head with a scarf and wearing black clothes.

What are Ruthenians like nowadays?

To some extent, they cherish their tradition. I believe that some of them are unaware how valuable their history is, how important it is. Also, I think that we have no problem to embrace other cultures. We are bilingual. Without any problem, from an early age, we study and use both our mother tongue and Serbian, and also a foreign language. One of the major problems is that Ruthenians are dispersed all over Vojvodina, because of which the Ruthenian identities are multi-leveled. We are a small community and we definitely face the problem of our number decreasing in time, but, perhaps, we might be looking at it from a wrong perspective. When I mentioned the multi-leveled identity, I referred to numerous mixed marriages. The individuals coming from these marriages might not feel as Ruthenians only, but also as Ruthenians and Slovaks, or Ruthenians and Serbs, and will not declare themselves as Ruthenians. To this end, we are at the decisive moment now, since

we have to attract these people with complex identities, as well. In addition to school, cultural societies can play an important role in this process, too, as they need to win over the children in lower grades of elementary schools, this is the age to start with these activities. The “Traditional Songs Festival” is the most popular event, both in terms of number of participants and in terms of audience, and mainly elderly take part in this festival. All cultural societies have traditional songs sections, whereas children folklore, children plays are more difficult to find... This is something we should work on.

What are the specific projects the Institute will work on until the end of this year?

Our national holiday is on January 17, which means that the preparations for the celebration of the next year’s National Day have to be done this year. We plan to have the next celebration in Subotica, and we need to agree on all the details with the local self-

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government there, so that the funds can be allocated in time. The Culture Board of the National Minority Council and the Institute’s Board of Directors have already started discussing a possible change of the concept of the National Day celebration. Up to now, the emphasis has been on a formal recital, during which we would present the best the Ruthenians have. It would include songs, poetry, a performance by the national band, etc. Accompanying events have included exhibitions, book presentations... In a word, the program has been abundant. I would like to note that, every year, the Institute publishes a bilingual monograph on the town where the National Day celebration is organized at. Every year, the celebration is organized in a different town in order to motivate people from the local communities and to give them an opportunity to be the hosts to the Ruthenians from other towns.

The Institute will, this year, also fund the publishing of a two-book Ruthenian dictionary, by profession Julin Ramač. We should also bring the project “Research on the History of Ruthenians in Vojvodina and the Republic of Serbia”, which I mentioned earlier, to completion, the results of which would be sum up in a monograph. We will continue to publish master works in Ruthenian language and alphabet, within the “Vladimir Garjanski” project of innovation editions.

You will have your hands full with different projects. Will you have sufficient funds to implement them?

The Institute’s total budget amounts to rsd 6,600,000. Will this be enough? It depends. It is never enough, but we have to stretch according to our means. It is great, of course, when we receive money from other sources, however, this year, we have not had much luck in different competitions on Republic and Provincial level. We have many good projects, nice ideas, but we need funds to bring them to life. For the time being, we have put many ideas on hold. The Ruthenian community is specific since we do not have a motherland and, therefore, we cannot rely of support that some other national communities receive from the countries of their origin. The Institute receives funding exclusively from the Provincial budget.

This does not prevent you from cooperating with other countries...

Of course, not. Our objective is to cooperate with all national minorities, and with all countries, as well. During previous years, the Institute organized the folklore workshop with participation of lecturers from Slovakia and Ukraine.

We mentioned the number of events that you organize every year, we talked about the Ruthenian identity. Which culture do Ruthenians give advantage to, traditional culture or the modern one?

I think that Ruthenians are still more inclined towards the tradition. We do have events with modern contents, but the tradition prevails. The young people prefer modern events, and these projects are implemented by the Youth Working Group within the National Minority Council. They have certain funds at their disposal, issue calls for proposals for applications submitted by societies or youth sections, and implement these projects. For 20 years, we have organized “Dnjovka” – a multimedia youth festival in Ruski Krstur, which promotes the youth, their creativity, and their modern rebellious character. In addition to the strategically important projects that promote the traditional culture, the Institute is committed to supporting modern activities, as well.

Strengthening of the Capacity of the National Minority Councils

Source: Office for Human and Minority Rights

Training sessions for the representatives of the national minority councils, which were carried out on April 5-6, are part of the activities of the Government aimed at strengthening of the capacity of the national minority councils, and these sessions are continuously organized, Suzana Paunović, the director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights, said.



are part of the obligatory activities envisaged by the Action Plan for Chapter 23.

In addition to the staff of the Office for Human and Minority Rights, the trainers in the sessions are Timo Sorsa of the Finnish National Institute for Health and Welfare, and Mihaela Brezar from the Nationality Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia. The training is organized as a

The objective of these sessions is to train the representatives of the national minority councils on the principles of good management, program planning, budgeting and reporting, from the perspective of increased efficiency and transparency in the work of the national minority councils, particularly in regard to the use

of the funds allocated from the Budget of the Republic of Serbia, Paunović assessed.

Paunović noted that the organized sessions are also confirmation that the capacity for the implementation of the measures and activities envisaged by the Minority Action Plan is strengthened every day. The aforementioned sessions

part of the EU twinning project "Support to Promotion of Human Rights and Zero Tolerance to Discrimination", which has been implemented by the Office for Human and Minority Rights and the Commissioner for Protection of Equality, in partnership with the Austrian Human Right Institute "Ludwig Boleman" and the Slovenian Office for National Minorities.

Agreement on Reporting on the Implementation of the Minority Action Plan

Source: Coordination of the National Minority Councils

On April 25, 2017, the representatives of the Coordination of the National Minority Councils met in Belgrade with the Director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights to discuss the reporting on the implementation of the Action Plan for the Execution of the Minority Rights.

The meeting was organized in line with the Coordination's request to change the methodology for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Action plan, and as a follow up to the January 31 meeting the representatives of the Coordination

of the National Minority Councils had with Ana Brnabić, the Chairperson of the Republic Council for National Minorities and the Minister of Public Administration.

The participants in the meeting agreed to include the comments of the national minority councils in the Report of the Implementation of the Minority Action Plan, which is prepared quarterly by the Government's Office for Human and Minority Rights.

In an effort to enhance the reporting process, the representatives of the national minority councils gave their

proposals and comments on the Third Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan, as well as on the methodology of the collection and systematization of the data into quarterly reports.

The Coordination's delegation consisted of Ana Tomanova-Makanova, the president of the Slovak National Minority Council, Darko Sarić Lukendić, the president of the Executive Board of the Croatian National Council, Vasvija Gusinac, deputy president of the Bosnian National Council, and Emil Lulić, representing the Hungarian National Minority Council.

Four Communities, One Goal

Photo: Hlas Ljudu

The Project Carpathian Parallels, which was implemented by the Cultural Institute of Vojvodina Ruthenians, funded by the Open Society Foundation, was brought to closure by a round table, during which the participants and the organizers examined the experiences acquired during the implementation of the Project and signed a protocol on mutual cooperation. The round table took place in the premises of the Cultural Institute of Vojvodina Ruthenians in Novi Sad on April 21st.

The goal of the project was to connect the young people, to facilitate an exchange of experience and to recognise traditional cultural and historical values.

Four students each from high schools in Vrsac, Kovacica, Ruski Krstur, and Srbobran participated in the project. By taking part in the workshops and visits to the institutions, which commenced in Vrsac in November, then proceeded in Kovacica in January, and in Ruski Krstur and

and research general common roots first and then present the outcomes in individual communities.

The workshops were also organised on the common history of Vojvodina, and the participants in these workshops gave presentations with the help of their men-

willingness to participate in the work of their local communities.

"We picked baroque as a theme, since it connected the European culture which had been dispersed up to that point. When baroque came to these areas, the communities in these territories got together and established themselves", Jelena Perkovic said. "We did not look into the rights of national minorities; instead, we looked into the ways how to use best the existing minority rights together with the majority community".

Headmasters of the schools included in the project also took part in the round table discussion, as well as the students' mentors, who spoke highly about the project. As they pointed out, the classes in the field have given good results, because, learning history from a textbook is one thing and learning history at the place where the history was created is something totally different.

The representatives of the Provincial Government – Dragan Milic, the assistant Provincial Secretary for Sports and Youth and Miroslav Ilic, the assistant Provincial Secretary for Relations with Religious Communities, also assessed the project highly and pointed out that intercultural dialogue and common values history are Vojvodina's great assets, and that the young people should recognize it and cherish it, as well.



Srbobran in February, the participants in the project tried to find common points in life and development of these communities. As Jelena Perkovic, who was in charge of the program contents of the Project, pointed out in the round table discussion, their goal was to investigate

tors on the arrival of their ancestors to the territories of nowadays Vojvodina. They also talked about the youth optimism and volunteerism. The participants agreed that it is necessary to motivate their peers to take part in the activities for their communities and also expressed

How Well We Know Each Other

Source: Provincial Government

The 11th cycle of the high schools quiz “How Well We Know Each Other”, which is a part of the Provincial Government’s Project “The Affirmation of Multiculturalism and Tolerance in Vojvodina - Confidence Building Measures among the Youth”, started with qualification competition on April 18.

This year, teams from 12 high schools from all over Vojvodina qualified for semi-finals.

This project has been implemented by the Provincial Secretariat for Education, Legislation, Public Administration, and National Minorities - National Communities and it has been carried out in co-



multi-thematic and multicultural program, aimed at strengthening of the interethnic confidence among young high school students in Vojvodina. The

pending on the language they use in their classes, can receive questions and reply in their own language. Therefore, in this cycle, in addition to the Serbian language, the students will also compete in Hungarian and in Slovak. This year's competition brought together 44 high school teams from the whole territory of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina.

The initial qualification competition took place in Subotica on April 18-19. On the first day, the competition took place at the Open University and the participants competed in the Hungarian language. On the second day, the competition was in Hungarian and in Serbian.

Among host cities there is also Kovacica, where the competition was organised in Slovak and in Serbian, Sremska Mitrovica, Sombor, and Vrbas were among the host cities, as well.

operation with numerous organisations and institutions in Vojvodina. The project has been envisaged as a complex

biggest news of this year's competition is definitely its multilingual nature and the possibility that the students, de-



Conference „Roma Women in Serbia, Achievements, Challenges and Perspectives”

Source: www.espreso.rs

At the Palace Serbia, on April 11, a conference was held under the title “Roma Women in Serbia, Achievements, Challenges and Perspectives”, at which the public was informed about the difficult position of this mul-

and we are all aware of problems they face.

The Head of OSCE Mission to Serbia, Andrea Orizio, noted that, if we talk about improvement of the position of Roma women, Serbia makes big efforts,

start their own business and to employ a Roma member of staff. This way, he added, we think we are truly helpful. Anything else would be just talking the talk. Without specific financial resources, we cannot address this issue seriously, Ivanišević concluded.



tiply discriminated minority in our country and about ongoing efforts to change their position.

Roma women, as members of a minority community in Serbia, are at the very bottom of the social margins. They have rights, but not possibilities, and very often they lose their trust in the institutions, fearing that, if they complain about a denied right, the system could deprive them from other rights, as well – the participants in the conference “Roma Women in Serbia, Achievements, Challenges and Perspectives” said.

As Gordana Stevanović, the Deputy Ombudsman, pointed out, if we look at the percentage of Roma women who ask the Ombudsman for help, this number is very small in comparison to the total number of complaints, so it might seem that Roma women do not have any problems with institutions of the system. However, she added, this is not the reality

but there is also a lot that needs to be done. The OSCE is here as a partner to help Roma community in Serbia, especially Roma women, Orizio concluded at this meeting.

Nenad Ivanišević, the Secretary of State at the Ministry of Labor, said that his ministry recognized Roma people as a hard-to-employ category, so he is making an appeal to all employers to hire Roma people, advising, at the same time, Roma women to get activated and to start their own businesses. The Ministry offers a minimum of 200.000 dinars as an incentive to individuals to

The Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, Brankica Janković, said that the true position of Roma men and women is best described by the fact that every complaint this institution receives in regard to the position of minority communities, is about the Roma community. She added that it is necessary to point out good examples and encourage and stimulate others this way, too. Janković also noted that she has heard very good and motivating proposals exactly from Roma women, who are architects, lawyers, doctors, etc.



The President of the National Council of Roma National Minority, prof. Vitomir Mihajlović, talked about the importance of equal representation of both genders, especially Roma women, who are multiple discriminated. Besides the education, which is the key of success of every human being, social visibility and inclusion in all segments of the integration are very important to Roma women, too, Mihajlović concluded.

The Role of Health Mediators Presented on the Network for Roma Issues

Source: Permanent Conference of Towns and Municipalities

The Secretary General, Djordje Staničić, said that the Permanent Conference of Towns and Municipalities (PCTM) has a representative in the Coordination Body for the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma 2016-2025. Staničić noted that the PCTM shall define its work in this body through Network for Roma Issues as well, thus creating a link between the local and the central level.

In the April 20 conference organized in Belgrade, the Network for Roma Issues assessed that the work of health mediators, who were introduced by the program “Implemen-

Republic Health Security Fund branch offices, and local self-governments. The role of health mediators is to keep records of members of the Roma community, to work with them on increasing awareness on the necessity to have the children inoculated and on the importance of adequate diet and hygiene. The health mediators secure better insight of the medical institutions in the conditions in these settlements, and point to the local residents the importance of timely visits to physicians.

Assistant Minister in the Public Health and Program Health Protection Sector at the Ministry of

Judicial System and Fundamental Rights. In light of the fact that there are 70 health mediators in Serbia as a whole, who do not have the system sustainability as long as they have project engagement only, it is critically important to standardize their job and include them in the health care system. He noted that the “Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma 2015-2025” is important, as it puts focus on the local self-government level, where, realistically, the policy of social-economic strengthening of the Roma does take place.

Deputy Director of the Health Clinic in Nis, Jasmina Ranković, pointed out that the clinic has cooperated with Roma organizations for over 15 years and that the 2009 introduction of health mediators helped this cooperation to improve further. “In the City of Nis, the mediators cover 14 settlements and 27 villages of the total number of 63 villages that administratively belong to the city. In the period January 1, 2013 - December 31, 2016, the health mediators made 12,742 house calls, 686 children have been inoculated, and 570 women have had systematic gynecological checkups”, Ranković said.

Representative of the Department for Social Activities of the City of Leskovac, Bratislav Nešić, said that the work of the health mediators in the Leskovac Health Clinic started in 2008. The average number of visits to pregnant women has been 94 per year, and to new mothers 105 per year. A more intensive cooperation with the Roma community on the improvement of their position in Leskovac started in 2014, when the City Council formed a Mobile Team for Roma Inclusion.

The conference was organized as a part of the project “Institutional Support of PCTM – Phase II”, which is financially supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.



tation of the Action Plan for Roma Health Protection” implemented by the Ministry of Health, has improved the health of the Roma population. The participants in the conference looked into the effectiveness of the health mediators from the moment the program had been launched, the living environment in the Roma settlements, and future plans in this regard.

In 2008, the Ministry of Health supported the project of introducing the health mediators in the health care system in Serbia and provided financial support for engagement of 75 health mediators. The health mediators are part of the community nurse service in local health clinics, and they work closely with other medical staff at the clinics, with the Centers for Social Services,

Health, Vesna Knjeginjić, said that the number of the engaged health mediators is insufficient. Ms. Knjeginjić noted that the Ministry of Health is facing serious challenges at the moment, including the insufficient number of health workers in Serbia, and added that the work of the health mediators will continued to be project-funded.

Expert of the Regional Cooperation Council, Osman Balić, said that the health mediators have worked in Serbia for eight years in a “chaotic, informal system” and added that he expects their job to be institutionalized and number increased, as envisaged by the Operational Conclusions of the Seminar on the Social Inclusion of Roma in the Republic of Serbia, as well as by the Action Plan for the Chapter 23: Reform of

Mirović: Such Crimes Must Never Happen Again Anywhere in the World

Source: Provincial Government



On April 26, the Prime Minister of the Provincial Government, Igor Mirović, speaking at the commemorative gathering in the Novi Sad synagogue on the occasion of marking the 73rd anniversary of the day when Novi Sad Jews were deported to death camps, reminded that in that very building the final act of the bloody drama started, in which almost two thirds of the 4300 Jews, who had lived in Novi Sad before the World War II, died.

Paying respect to the innocent victims, Mirović said that such crimes must never happen again anywhere in the world.

“The bloody drama they were victims of was a part of the most horrible criminal project in the history of the mankind, in which over 6 million innocent people died only because they were Jews”, the Prime Minister reminded.

In his statement to the press, Prime Minister Mirović said that the Holocaust brought about enormous suffering to the Jews, which has made a permanent deep scar in the history of the mankind. He reminded that it was caused not only by Nazi Germany, but also by Horthy Hungary. As he said, the commemoration should also serve as a reminder to remember and raise voice against the enormous evil that we witnessed in Novi Sad and Serbia as a whole, and to react to all attempts to revise history and resurrect fascism, to even a slightest hint that there is a danger that such an evil can happen again somewhere.

Mirović noted that, on the day of commemoration, not only are we paying respect to the Novi Sad Jewish victims, but also to all those who suffered only because they belonged to other nations and other confession, and because they respected themselves and their tradition.

Reminding the attendees that around 2000 remaining Novi Sad Jews, who had been forced at gunpoint to leave their homes, were transported from the Novi Sad Synagogue to the German concentration camps never to return, the Mayor of



Novi Sad, Miloš Vučević repeated that the point of marking one of the most tragic days in the history of the city is not only to pay respect to the victims, members of the Jewish community, but also a clear warning that such a crime must never happen again.

“This increased attention and vigilance must be based on these victims, who were sent from Novi Sad, from this beautiful

WWII.

The attendees were reminded that most of the Novi Sad Jews, as well as 10,000 Jews from other parts of Backa, who had also been deported during that dreary spring in 1944, had been sent to the notorious Auschwitz, and most of them have never come back.

The Chief Rabbi in Serbia, Isak Asiel, noted in his address the importance of the message: “Remember, do not forget, do not stay silent, raise your voice”, and said that there can always be a voice, even a silent one, that can warn that an evil must be stopped.

Deputy Chief of Mission of Israel, Jenny Sedov, pointed out that words of the Prime Minister and the Mayor of Novi Sad, who said that such events must never be forgotten, represent a very important message, and that she was honored to hear this message at the Novi Sad Synagogue.



Synagogue, to the death camps, to the journey with no return, only few months before the city was liberated”, Vučević reminded and added that it was the most horrible genocide, the attempt to destroy one whole nation, which could not have been stopped until the last day of the

After the commemoration, PM Mirović, Mayor Vučević, representatives of the embassies of Israel and Hungary, and representatives of the Association of Jewish Communities in Serbia and the Jewish Community of Novi Sad laid wreaths in front of the Synagogue.

North Banat Festival of Folklore Creativity

Source: Dnevnik

The cultural and artistic society "Tisadjendje" from Novi Kneževac organized the ninth international "North Banat Festival of Folklore Creativity".

The folklore ensembles from the towns in Vojvodina and the neighboring Hungary, and the children from the "Happy Child" kindergarten performed in front of a big audience, and an exhibition of the traditional handcraft was also organized.

The festival was opened by the president of the Hungarian National Minority Council, Jene Hajnal, while, on behalf of the host, the Speaker of the Novi Kneževac Assembly, Nandor Ujhelji, addressed the audience and the participants.

It was noted that the festival contributes to learning more about the folk traditions of the Serbs, Hungarians, Roma, Romanians, Bunjevacs, and other national communities who live in the area.

By dancing the folk dances, everyone can build friendships and learn more about customs of a nation. Folk dances are particularly important for the communities who take pride in their choreographies, colorful costumes, and willingness to

learn the most difficult dancing steps", Jene Hajnal said. "Every folk dance is a work of art on its own, all moves, body positions, costumes, and the way of singing, show their origin. The folk dances once had a principal role in the social life of the residents in villages and towns alike. This magical festival is evidence that the folklore is very special, because, through a song and a dance, one can get to know the people they dance with, learn about the culture of other nations, and becomes aware of similarities and differences around them."



The ensembles from Senta, Srpski Krstur, Horgoš, Ostojićevo, Tornjoš, Bajmok, Bečej, Tavakut, Novi Itebej, Banatsko Arandjelovo, Kikinda, Kanjiža, Novi Kneževac, and the guests from Kiskunfélegyháza and Kunszállás, performed in the "North Banat Festival of Folklore Creativity".



The festival was organized with the support of the Municipality of Novi Kneževac, the Hungarian National Minority Council, the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia, the Provincial Secretariat for Education, Legislation, Administration, and National Minorities – National Communities of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and the "Betlen Gabor" Foundation from Hungary.

Slovak Community

Permanent and Deep Slovak-Serbian Literary Relations

Source: Provincial Government

In April 22, Dr Nebojša Kuzmanović, the Deputy Provincial Secretary for Culture, Public Information, and Relations with Religious Communities, participated in the traditional, 61st Literary Counseling in Bački Petrovac.

The theme of this year's event were Slovak-Serbian literary relations that have lasted for centuries and left deep marks in the cultures of both nations. Kuzmanović's presentation under the title "Zmaj and the Slovaks", highlighted the role of one of the most important Serbian

poets in strengthening and cherishing those relations.

"Young Jovan Jovanović, later on known as "Zmaj", was educated in Slovakia, where he established a deep spiritual relation with the Slovak nation, which he cherished to the rest of his life. Furthermore, he, too, wrote in the Slovak language as well, and his poetry was translated to this language by the most eminent Slovak poets and translators", Kuzmanović said.

Miroslav Demak, dr Dragan Stanić, Martin

Prebuđila, Miroslav Aleksić, Ljudmila Beređi-Stupavski, Radomir Andrić, Zdenka Valent-Belić and Zoran Đerić also talked about the Slovak-Serbian literary relations.

They gave a new insight into the relations between Pavel Jozef Šafarik and Djordje Magarašević, relations between Janko Šafarik and the Serbian national and cultural elite, Serbian translations of the new Slovak drama, and the links between the Society of Slovak Writers with Slovak writers in Vojvodina, i.e. the renewed cooperation of this literary association with the Serbian Society of Writers.

Waiting for the Reading Book until September

Source: Bunjevačke novine

Good news is coming after the meeting of the representatives of the National Council of Bunjevac National Minority with the Institute for Textbooks. As the participants in the meeting confirmed, if everything goes according to the plan, a new textbook in the Bunjevac language – the Reading Book for the third and the fourth grade – will soon be published. The meeting was attended by dr Suzana Kujundžić Ostojić, the President of the NCBNM, and Mirko Bajić, the President of the Executive Board of the NCBNM, and, on behalf of the Institute for Textbooks, Milorad Marjanović, the Director of the Publishing Section of the Institute, and Romanca Jovanović, the Leader of the Section of the Institute in Novi Sad and the Chief Editor for Languages of National Minorities.

Talking about this meeting, dr Suzana Kujundžić Ostojić said:

„We talked about options how to finalize the already existing cooperation in regard to the preparation of the reading books for the third and the fourth grade. We



Authors of the textbook are Mirjana Savanov and Nevenka Bašić Palković, and it will be printed in 600 copies. A good planning secured necessary funds.

„If there is a good will, there are resources. Education is our priority is education and that is why we at the NCBMM did our best to make this happened, The Institute also did their best , we also have a support of

books was signed with the national minority councils.

„The work on publishing new textbooks is in its final phase, the manuscripts are being lectured, the illustration is in progress, which will be followed for preparations for printing, with some additional corrections. For us as a publisher, this means about one month of work more“, – Marjanović pointed out.

However, it takes a bit longer to publish a new textbook.

„There is a part of the job that does not depend on an author, the Institute, or the Council. It is the approval procedure, since we, as publishers, are obligated to request the approval of the appropriate Secretariat, and this procedure can last up to 90 days. Also, the Institute, as a public publishing company, must announce a tender for every book in line with public procurement procedures, and this takes time. We hope that everything is going to be finished by September and that this textbook is going to be published before the beginning of the new school year. This is not the beginning of our cooperation, I hope that it will be continued, because this is not the one time project“, Marjanović concluded.

Although the Memorandum with the Bunjevac community was not signed, it is clear that this community needs help in quality realization of the classes, in this particular case of the facultative course Bunjevac Language with Elements of National Culture.

ONE STEP FORWARD IN THE BUNJEVAC LANGUAGE CLASSES

Mirjana Savanov, the President of the Education Board of NCBNM, and also one of the authors, pointed out that the new textbook will be very important for the realization of the Bunjevac Language with Elements of National Culture class, and expressed hope that the process of publishing this reading book will be brought to completion by September, as it was concluded after the meeting.

„Now, as the publishing of this reading book will be a lot easier, it is very likely that it will be printed before the beginning of the new school year. We hope that Memorandum is going to be signed with our community, too, because it will make the whole process easier. We have the support of our country, and, after signing the Memorandum, we will be equal with others national minorities, who have already signed it“

promised earlier, while working on the previous textbooks, that we will continue our job, together with the Institute for Textbooks. We have been very satisfied with our cooperation so far. We also discussed technical things, filling needed positions, and doing everything necessary to finish the job and give children a possibility to have new textbooks already in the fall“, - the President of the NCBNM said.

the Ministry of Education, and, hopefully, of the Provincial Secretariat for Education, Administration and National Minorities – National Communities, too. When all these four sides work together, then the project must be finalized.”

Milorad Marjanović from the Textbooks Institute pointed out that this is a follow up to the activities started by the Ministry of Education last year, when the Memorandum on publishing of the missing text-

Formal Opening of the Square and the Summer Stage in Jabuka

Source: www.pancevo.rs

On April 12, the Mayor of Pančevo, Saša Pavlov, and the Ambassador of the Republic of Macedonia, H.E. Vera Jovanovska-Tipko, cut the ribbon and formally opened two new structures in Jabuka.

A new square and a summer stage in front of the “Goce Delčev” elementary school in Jabuka are the result of joint activities carried out by the Association “Ilinden”, the local community in Jabuka, the Oil Industry of Serbia (NIS) as the principal sponsor, and the Macedonian National Minority Council, who provided the logistic support.

H.E. Vera Jovanovska-Tipko said on this occasion: “As the ambassador of the Republic of Macedonia to Serbia, I am particularly pleased to attend this important event, which shows that the Macedonian community in Serbia is preserved and well taken care of. This project also shows social responsibility in implementation of tangible initiatives, such as the construction of the square and the summer state in front of the “Goce Delčev”



friendly countries. Think globally and act locally – this is the mission of the Embassy of the Republic of Macedonia, and, as a result of the cooperation with the local self-government and the work on a specific project proposed by the Macedonian community in Jabuka, this project, which will improve the quality of life of all Jabuka residents, has been brought to reality.

know each other even better and to strengthen the cooperation and the bonds between us. I would also like to note the excellent cooperation with the Macedonian National Minority Council. The Town of Pančevo participates actively in the protection and promotion of the cultural heritage, the language, the customs, and the tradition of the Macedonian national community and we constantly try to cherish and promote our traditionally good interpersonal and interethnic relations. Of course, I would also like to extend my appreciation to the Oil Industry of Serbia. We cooperate with them on the “Communities Project” every year and I would like to emphasize their very responsible attitude towards the local communities as well as their corporate social responsibility. Through their support programs they contribute greatly to the development in the sphere of culture, economy, tourism, education, etc. Today, we are all witnesses of this contribution in the form of the new square and the summer stage, Pančevo Mayor, Saša Pavlov said.



school where pupils can study the Macedonian language. This is a good example of a synergy between the Macedonian community in Serbia, the local self-government, and a company, who have all worked together to promote social development and a cultural and economic prosperity between the two neighboring

On behalf of the Town of Pančevo, and on my own behalf, I would like to thank the Ambassador for the wonderful cooperation. I have had a pleasure to meet with her on a number of occasions lately and talk about specific projects in the areas of economy, culture, education, and sports, with the objective to get to

During the ceremony, on the eve of Easter holidays, Macedonian Association “Ilinden” from Jabuka, with the support of the Macedonian National Minority Council, distributed gift bags to the children of pre-school and school age in the “Goce Delčev” School, consisting of the educational material and candies, which promotes the subject Macedonian language with the elements of the national culture.

Festival "Gergina 2017"- the Keeper of the Tradition of the Vlach Folk Music

Source: National Council of Vlach National Minority

Exactly like it started, with the promising performance of twenty anonymous young musical hopes of Vlach music, who showed love to the tradition, the instruments they played, or songs which they sang, the Ninth Festival of the Vlach Music "Gergina", on the closing evening, on April 18, showed all luxury of musical tradition thanks to the local and foreign participants. True music enthusiasts performed on the big scene of the Cultural Center "Stevan Mokranjac" and celebrated music, in honor of which the Festival "Gergina", the unique event this kind of music in Serbia, is organized every year on the second and the third day after Easter, now already nine years in a row.

The Festival "Gergina" started with its anthem, a song of the same name and which was, as always, inspiringly performed by the members of the ethno group "Gergina", which was followed by the performance of the big orchestra of Slobodan Pecić. Although the musical event lasted for almost four full hours without a break, no one in the audience found it too long, which only shows how interesting the selection of participants was. Every one of them put a part of themselves to the closing evening of the ninth festival season.

The performance of the vocal soloists and instrumentalists from Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria was divided into ten musical blocks. The star singers, who were in the center of everybody's attention, were undoubtedly the ladies, who did their best to touch the soul of the audience and make good atmosphere with Vlach songs.

Accompanying Programs of the Second Evening of the Festival

Two book promotions were organized as accompanying programs that preceded

ten in two languages with an accompanying CD, prepared by famous musicologist from Srpska Krajina, Dimitrije Mikan Obradović.



the big concert of the Vlach music. The book of Adam Orvad, a Danish musician, and one of the Festival participants, was presented in the Gallery of the Cultural Center. Orvad, a big fan of the Vlach music and an outstanding expert of the opus of

The Ninth Festival "Gergina" in the 2017 season, brought together over one hundred performers on both evenings, competitive and review, and over a thousand of visitors of the concert and the accompanying programs. The Festival was closed with carefully chosen words by dr Siniša Čelojević, the President of the Association "Gergina", who, inter alia, said: "According to the audience and all participants, we had a great festival and the closing evening was absolutely fascinating, thanks to the orchestra of Slobodan Pecić and the joint performance with Živa Dinulović and Dragan Njegušić. In addition to these spectacular shows, our goal is to promote young hopes of Vlach music who are the keepers of our tradition. The surprise of the Festival was Adam Orvad, the Dane who admirably plays Vlach music. We have just



Slobodan Božinović, prepared a book "Slobodan Božinović – Vlach Kolos" with an audio CD and sheet music books of 25 authors' kolos of the legendary Vlach artist. The publisher is the Association "Gergina", which, on the same evening, also promoted a book about the legendary trumpeter, Ilija Ika Petrišević. The book is writ-

wrapped out this year's event, and the impressions are still strong, but we have already started preparations for the tenth jubilee festival next year, which is going to be dedicated to the singing legend, Slobodan Domaćinović, from Radujevac. His contribution to the Vlach music was immense, he was briefly one of the Festival directors before his early death and departure from the musical scene. The Ninth Festival fulfilled all our expectations and we hope that years which will come are going to be even more successful, as well as our strivings to cherish the Vlach music and tradition", Siniša Čelojević, the President of the "Gergina" Association, said on the closing of the Festival "Gergina" in Negotin. Under the auspices of the National Council of the Vlach National Minority, the Association has been a successful organizer of this unique international musical event for ten years.



Centar za istraživanja migracija
Center for Migration Studies

This newsletter is funded by the Open Society Foundation, Embassy of the United States of America in Belgrade and the OSCE Mission in Serbia. Opinions expressed in Minority News newsletter do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Governments and organizations that fund this project.