

**The Budgetary  
Fund for Minorities  
Activated**

**The Minister of Education  
Meets the Delegation of the  
Coordination**

# **36 Minority News**

may 2017



## **ZAHARIJEV: The Council's Emphasis on the Textbooks in the Mother-Tongue**

**The Bunjevacs Celebrate  
330 Years of  
the Migration to Bačka**

**"Days of Ukraine"  
in the Cultural Centre  
of Novi Sad**

# HIGHLIGHT



## The Budgetary Fund for National Minorities

After 15 years, the Budgetary Fund for National Minorities has been activated. Additional funds in the amount of RSD 1,800,000 have been earmarked for the projects dealing with culture, information, education, and the official use of language of the national minorities in Serbia.



## Minority Media in Focus

On May 10, a debate on the situation in the minority media was organized in Subotica. A study based on the results of the research of minority and multi-lingual media carried out by the Centre for Development of the Civil Society was also presented at this event.



## Fifteenth Anniversary of NIU „Hrvatska riječ“

On May 8, NIU „Hrvatska riječ“ marked the fifteenth anniversary of its work, resulting in many publications. The „Hrvatska riječ“ Weekly, the only informational-political printed media of Croats in Serbia, is published every Friday. In addition to this weekly, NIU „Hrvatska riječ“ also publishes a children's insert – „Hrcko“, as well as a youth magazine „Kužiš?“.



## The Weekend Marked by Folklore and Tradition

Representatives of the Slovak National Community and folklore fans had an opportunity to visit the 47th Folklore Festival „Tancuj, Tancuj...“ on May 27. Numerous folklore ensembles and guests from Slovak villages in Vojvodina, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia came to the Bačka village Gložan to take part in the festival.

# EDITORIAL 36

## Light at the End of the Tunnel

This month, the members of the national minority communities received a piece of good news – after fifteen years, the Budgetary Fund for National Minorities has eventually been reactivated. As the press announcement of the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self Government noted, in addition to the regular funding that national minority councils receive already from the Office for Human and Minority Rights, supplementary amount of RSD 1,800,000 has also been allocated for support to the national minorities' information projects in Serbia. The criteria and the dates of the call for the proposals have not been defined yet, but it does not prevent the minority communities to start preparing their project proposals immediately.

The representatives of the national minorities have pointed out to the area of information as one of the most critical issues the minority communities deal with. If we look back and think of the way the privatization of local media was brought to completion, we will see that, during this process - considered by many as ultimately unsuccessful - a number of minority media outlets were closed. Many communities were left without any media outlets in minority languages, which deprived the national minorities from their constitutional right to be informed in their mother tongue. However, few media outlets have survived the privatization and have struggled to secure a position in the media market, as well as the media outlets founded by the national minority councils.

The findings of the most recent research of the Centre for Development of Civil Society, point to the fact that the state does not provide the same conditions to all national minorities to exercise their right to be informed in their mother tongue. As the study notes, the information in minority languages is “on its knees” out of Vojvodina. Some minorities do not have any media contents in their mother tongue, and the others have these contents in the online media only, without continued – or without any – support from the state. The activation of the so-called Minority Fund gives hope that things will change for the better. And whether the Fund will meet these high expectations, it is yet to be seen.

## 30 different national minorities live in Serbia



VLADIMIR ZAHARIJEV, THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL  
OF THE BULGARIAN NATIONAL MINORITY:

# THE COUNCIL'S FOCUS IS ON TEXTBOOKS IN THE BULGARIAN LANGUAGE



**T**he Bulgarian national minority in Serbia was founded after WWI. Nowadays, Bulgarians are majority in the two municipalities: Dimitrovgrad and Bosilegrad, where the office of the Bulgarian National Minority Council is located. The President of the Bulgarian National Minority Council, Vladimir Zaharijev, speaks for this issue of the Minority News.

**When did the migration of Bulgarians to the territories of our state start and where are they concentrated today?**

The Bulgarian national minority in Serbia was founded after the WWI. During the first half of the 20th century, the Bulgarian population was compact in the municipalities of Dimitrovgrad i

Bosilegrad, and in the parts of the municipalities of Babušnica i Surdulica. After the WWII and later, during the economic expansion in the country, the economic migration of the population started and Bulgarians move to all large cities in Serbia, mainly to big economic centres: Vranje, Leskovac, Niš, Zaječar, Bor and Belgrade. There is another

group of Bulgarians in Serbia, who settled in Vojvodina, around Pančevo (Ivanovo, Belo blato etc.) and Zrenjanin. This group moved from Romania in 1868, and they originate from north-west Bulgaria, from the city of Čiprovci. They are descendants of refugees who fled to avoid Turkish persecution after the Čiprovci uprising had fallen through



in 1868. They are Catholics, refer to themselves as Palčens and speak the Palčen language, which is a Bulgarian dialect with the Romanian influence, and they also use Latin alphabet.

### **How many Bulgarians live in Serbia today?**

According to the 2011 census, there are over 18,000 Bulgarians in living in the Republic of Serbia; however, I personally believe that this number is several times higher. Why they decided not to declare themselves as Bulgarians is a different issue!

### **Every national community in Serbia has something that makes the community distinct and unique. What is typical for the Bulgarian community? What makes the Bulgarians recognizable?**

The Bulgarians in Serbia are honest and hard working people. Our compatriots are skilled and diligent professionals, from builders to philosophy doctors, and they are dispersed all over Serbia. Our old customs, our culture, traditional costumes, and reputation of being good hosts make us recognizable.

### **How have you organized the schooling system, can the children have classes in their mother tongue?**

Members of the Bulgarian national minority in Serbia, in line with the existing legislation, are able to get education in their mother tongue. The National Minority Council, with support of the Ministry of Education and other relevant institutions, has been trying to provide and promote conditions for a quality education in our mother tongue. I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to invite the parents from the municipality where the conditions for education in the mother tongue have been met use this right, which guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia.

### **Many minority communities still struggle with lack of textbooks. What is the situation in this regard in the case of your community?**

In March 2015, when we took over the leadership in the Bulgarian National Minority Council, there was not a single textbook translated in Bulgarian language. We defined this issue as our top priority in the first session of the Education Commission, which we formed in the Council. We came to

the conclusion that the priority textbooks for preparation, translation, and printing for the School Year 2015/2016 should be the textbooks for the first and the fifth grade of the elementary school and the first grade of the high school. The director of the Textbooks Institute in Belgrade, Dragoljub Kojičić, has helped us a lot in this process. He has showed us the procedural way how to get the textbooks, and we have succeeded in securing the first textbooks, for the elementary school after 30 years, and for the high school after 50 years. Later, in March 2016, after our

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Council, and subsequently the Government of the Republic of Serbia, had ratified the Action Plan for Execution of Minority Rights, we signed the Memorandum with the Ministry of Education and the Textbooks Institute. This Memorandum enabled us to translate, prepare and print the textbooks for the second, third, fourth, and sixth grades, without art and music culture textbooks. The textbooks were finished in September 2016 and distributed to the schools. In December 2016, we signed the Annex to the Memorandum on the basis of which we started the preparation and translation of the textbooks for the seventh and the eighth grades of the elementary school, again without art and music culture textbooks. These textbooks will be ready in September 2017, when we expect to sign a new Annex, which would allow us to start the preparation of art and music culture textbooks for all eight grades of the elementary school. This process should be finished

in a year and the textbooks distributed to the schools in September 2018. Thus we will complete the textbooks for the elementary school. We hope to be able to sign a similar Memorandum with the relevant institutions of the Republic of Serbia for high school textbooks as well, so that this process, too, can be brought to completion. Also, we are yet to prepare additional 30% of history, geography, art and music culture textbooks, and we hope that the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Bulgaria and other relevant institutions will help us in this endeavour. In short, this is a historic achievement of this National Minority Council, of course, with great support of all stakeholders in this process.

### **Are the language studies organized on the university level as well?**

Presently, there are no universities and colleges on the territory of the Republic of Serbia where students can study Bulgarian language in an organized and institutionalized way. The only exception is the Belgrade University, where the Bulgarian language can be studied as a foreign language. We hope that conditions will be created to study Bulgarian in more universities and colleges in the Republic of Serbia in the near future.

### **You marked the Day of the Bulgarian Education and Culture this month. How did the Council contribute to this celebration?**

Yes, the Day of the Bulgarian Education and Culture is celebrated on May 24. In line with the tradition, the National Council, with support of the municipalities where Bulgarians live and the cultural and educational institutions, organized a formal celebration with rich cultural and artistic program for the children and other citizens.

### **National minorities are famous for their numerous festivals and events that contribute to promotion of their culture. Which are the most important events for the Bulgarian community?**

There are numerous festivals and events in the Republic of Serbia that promote culture, language, tradition, customs, and other characteristics of the Bulgarian national community. The Bulgarian National Minority Council, within his jurisdiction and financial capabilities, organizes and provides sup-

port to few of these events that contribute to promotion of our culture. Last year, our Council declared ten festivals and cultural happenings as events of special importance for the Bulgarian national community: “Bugarijada” in Vojvodina, “Nišava Horovod”, “Kraište Sings and Dances”, “Easter Festival”, etc.

**The media in one’s mother tongue can contribute greatly to the promotion of one’s culture, and the community as a whole. The Bulgarian newspaper „Novo bratstvo“ was launched again last year. What was the reason for a break that lasted for several years?**

The problems of the News and Publishing Institution “Bratstvo” existed for many years, and all managements of the Council have tried to solve them, but mostly without any success. The consequences of the aforementioned problems were easy to be seen. The “Bratstvo” newspaper was not published for several years, the publishing company had enormous debts, the employees were desperate over their unsolved status. This Council has, from the very start, engaged in an active campaign to solve the problem of (non)receiving information through printed media, as well as the related problems of the publishing company as a whole and the employees. Since this problem exceeds the financial and other capabilities of our Council, it was necessary to bring aboard the Government of the Republic of Serbia, with all the ministries and relevant institutions, the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria, the municipalities of Bosilegrad and Dimitrograd and other institutions that can contribute to the preservation of information in the Bulgarian language. We raised this problem to the attention of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria, Mr. Plevnevliev, during his visit to Belgrad on March 16, 2015. Both Chiefs of States, Mr. Nikolić and Mr. Plevnevliev, agreed that this problem had to be resolved as soon as possible so that the “Bratstvo” could resume its work. Regrettably, nothing was done in this regard, and we were forced to take new steps. In an effort to provide the information to the Bulgarian national minority through printed media, the Council used its own funds to register a new institution, “Novo Bratstvo”, and launched the publishing of a biweekly newspaper in the

Bulgarian language on July 1, 2016. All remaining workers of the old News and Publishing Institution „Bratstvo“ have been engaged in the newly formed organization (total of 7 employees). In 2017, too, thanks to economically savvy operations, the Council has managed to secure financial support for unimpeded work of the “Novo Bratstvo” for the first nine months. We are presently looking for a solution for stable funding for the remaining three months in 2017

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and the coming year. During the visit of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria, Mr. Gerdžikov, to Bosilegrad in April 2017, we requested a financial support for the “Novo Bratstvo”. We also briefed Mr. Brajović, the State Secretary of the Ministry of Information about the problem of the News and Publishing Institution “Bratstvo” (“Staro Bratstvo”). We informed him that the Bulgarian national minority in Serbia, and earlier in Yugoslavia, had a newspaper in its mother tongue as early as in 1949. By solving the problem of the old “Bratstvo”, not only would we solve

a problem of a publisher, but, more importantly, a social problem of the workers, which is of utmost importance for us. In the meeting with Mr. Brajović, we offered a few solutions, and, in light of his efforts in support of the social rights of journalists, I strongly believe that he will do his best to find an adequate solution for the problems of the employees of News and Publishing Institution “Bratstvo”.

**You have mentioned that you have informed the officials of the Republic of Bulgaria about the problems in the news and publishing institution „Bratstvo“. How would you generally describe the cooperation with your motherland?**

We have very good relations with the Republic of Bulgaria. The cooperation exists in the area of education, where majority of high school graduates continues their education at the universities in the Republic of Bulgaria. This is also facilitated by favourable conditions provided to the Bulgarian Diaspora by the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria, which include dual citizenship, cross-border cooperation, health insurance and free medical care provided at the Military Medical Academy in Sofia, close personal contacts, cultural cooperation, sports cooperation, youth cooperation, etc. We are very grateful for the support and care that the Republic of Bulgaria provides to its compatriots who live abroad and this is a good example of a good cooperation.

**The cooperation between the two states exists. Is there any cooperation between the Bulgarian National Minority Council and other national minority councils?**

Yes, we do cooperate with all other national minority councils in line with our competencies. This cooperation is most visible in the work of the Coordination of the National Minority Councils.

**Shall we sum up for the end of this interview: generally speaking, are you satisfied with the visibility of your community in the country as a whole?**

The Bulgarian National Minority Council in Serbia has constantly worked on enhancement of visibility of our community through all our activities. I can say that we are satisfied, but there is still room for improvement.



# Budgetary Fund for National Minorities Activated

Source: RTV/BNV

**M**inister of Public Administration and Local Self Government, Ana Brnabić, noted in the May 23 meeting of the National Minority Council she chaired that, after 15 years, the Budgetary Fund for National Minorities in the allotment of the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self Government has been activated.



as well as the willingness of the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self Government to change the methodology in order to include the national minority councils as partners in this process.

The meeting was attended by the representatives of the national minority councils and the representatives the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Min-

In addition to the regular funding allocated to the national minority councils by the Office of Human and Minority

special training has been organized for the national minority councils on the EU funded projects.

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Rights, additional amount of RSD 1,800,000 has been earmarked for support to projects that promote culture, informational, education and official use of language of the national minorities in Serbia, Brnabić said.

President of the Hungarian National Minority Council, Jene Hajnal, pointed out that the national minority councils appreciate concessions aimed at their inclusion in monitoring of the implementation of the Minority Action Plan,

istry of Culture and Information, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development, the Office of Human and Minority Rights, and the Directorate for Cooperation with Churches and Religious Communities.

The meeting was held in a constructive spirit and with active participation of all representatives of the national minority councils present. The Ministry noted as particularly important that all attendees agreed on the methodology of reporting on the implementation of the Action Plan. Brnabić also said that, in cooperation with the Office for EU Integrations, a



# Plenary Session of the Coordination of the National Minority Councils

Source: Bosniak National Council



In May 12, 2017, the Coordination of the National Minority Councils held its plenary session in Novi Pazar to discuss the work of the Coordination in the previous period and plans for the future.

The Coordination representatives presented reports on their participation in the working groups for preparation of amendments to the minority legislation, the activities of the Coordination in preparation, implementation, and monitoring of the Minority Action Plan, and the activities in regard to the education in minority languages. Furthermore, the Coordination ratified the draft agenda for the upcoming meeting of the Republic National Minority

Council proposed by the Council's Chairperson, Minister Ana Brnabić, which was to be held in Belgrade in the last week of May.

The session attendees were also briefed on the Draft Law on the Budgetary Fund for National Minorities. The Coordination members decided to clear it and suggest amendments as soon as possible, so that it can be expeditiously forwarded to the relevant state institutions.

In the final part of the session, the Coordination made a decision that, for the next twelve months, the presidency over this body will be assumed by the Hungarian National Minority Council, whose president held the position of

the Coordination's Deputy President for the previous twelve months. A new Deputy President will be appointed in the next session of the Coordination which is to be held in Subotica in early June.

Representatives of the national minority councils, who took part in the plenary session of the Coordination, also attended the celebration of May 11, the Bosniak Day of the Flag, as guests of the Bosniak National Council.

The Coordination of the National Minority Councils consists of representatives of 21 national minorities. From July 2016 through May 12, 2017, this minority body was presided by the Bosniak National Council.

# Minister of Education Meets with the Delegation of the Coordination

Source: Slovak National Minority Council



In May 31, a delegation of the Coordination of the National Minority Councils met with the Minister of Education, Mladen Šarčević. The delegation consisted of Svetlana Zolnjan, Aniko Jeras, Suzana Kujundžić Ostojić, Esad Džudžo, Darko Sarić Lukendić, and Vitomir Mihajlović. The State Secretary, Anamarija Viček, Assistant Minister for Secondary Education, Aleksandar Pajić, and Assistant Minister for Preschool and Elementary Education, Vesna Nedeljković also attended the meeting.

The participants in the meeting examined the network for enrolment in the first grade of the secondary school for students from Slovak, Hungarian, Croatian, and Bosniak national minorities and potential for expansion of the network or re-inclusion of a number of professional profiles in the existing high school network. The Ministry committed to looking again into the possibility to introduce certain professional profiles in the education in the national minority languages.

Special attention was given to the polling of students of all nationalities in all schools in Serbia, who can now choose to study languages of fourteen national minorities in Serbia as a facultative subject. To this end, the representatives of the Coordination pointed out a positive response to this subject within a reformed fifth grade curriculum, where the subject will be treated as a special optional category, with no competition with other facultative subjects. This subject will continue to have such a status in the future, as well, and other grades will be reformed following the same model. The polling of the students in the elementary and high schools will be carried out in June, and the parents will have to return the polling forms by June 28, when the students' annual degree reports will be issued.

The Coordination requested that the polling forms be kept in school archives and made available for inspection to the national minority councils. The Ministry promised to respond promptly to any inquiry in this regard received from a national minority council from, with a spe-

cial database "Dositej" used for this purpose. The groups for the mother-tongue education will be formed in the school directorates with presence of national minority councils' representatives. The groups will be formed in cycles, based on the Instructions for Forming of Teaching Classes and Groups, which provide that mixed classes can be formed of 3 grades and more for a group of 10 students. Specific characteristics of each individual national minority shall be taken into account in forming the groups.

Lastly, an agreement has been made that all national minorities (Romanian, Ruthenian, Croatian, Hungarian, Slovak, and Bosniak) shall send their addendum to the curriculum for history, art, and music classes, the natural history, history, and the world around us classes, with the attached evidence that these addendi were sent to the National Council for Education more than 90 days ago. The addendi shall be sent both electronically and by mail and shall be forwarded to the Minister who will use his discretionary right to decide on them on case by case basis.



# Kuntić: Trivialization of the Media and Uniformed Information Affecting the Minority Media as Well

Source: Magločistač

**K**alman Kuntić, representative of the Provincial Secretariat for Culture and Public Information, noted in a debate in Subotica, organized on May 10, that the current trend is a trivialization of the media and uniformed information, which may have a significant impact on the information in the minority languages as well.

At the debate organized at the Vinko Perčić Gallery, during which a study on the minority media was also presented, Kuntić said to the journalists that local information has been in a deep crisis, that the radio has been diminished to a mere jukebox, the number of readers of the printed media has been on a steady decline, and an everlasting lack of funding has been a major problem for the journalists in all media outlets.

„Journalism is among the lowest paid professions in Serbia, which inevitably has an impact on the quality of information, and the investigative journalism can only be an illusion under these circumstances. The freedom of media in Serbia is in the middle of the scale”, Kuntić said.

He reminded that one of the problems in the minority media is the shrinking of funds to the media founded by the national minority councils as well as the decreasing number of the readers of the printed media.

„Information on the local level has fallen apart, not only in the minority languages, but in the Serbian language as well. People love to receive local information, but they are not ready to pay for it. Even the Magyar Szo struggles with the decrease in the number of readers and this, too, can have an impact on the position of the media. It is necessary to strengthen other platforms, the internet above all, since it is a media outlet that will reach the highest number of users in the future”, Kuntić said.



He believes that it is a must to keep the same level of funding, which is in Vojvodina currently around Euros two million, and, at the same time, start financing the media founded by the national minority councils in Central Serbia as well.

In response to the journalist's question on the level of influence by the minority political parties and the national minority councils on the editorial policy of the minority media, Kuntić said that it is a com-



mon situation, although not normal, because – “who has the money, in a way, he also has the power and attempts to steer the things”, and added that a problem is also underdeveloped civil sector and civic awareness to oppose the aforementioned trends.

„I cannot see much difference in the attempts of the government and local self government to exercise maximum control over the media. The problem is the

extent that we, as citizens, tolerate it”, Kuntić said.

The President of the Executive Board of the Centre for the Development of the Civil Society (CRCD), Vladimir Ilić, said that the research on the minority media had been done with journalists, editors, and readers of 12 national communities in Vojvodina and representatives of the national cultural “elites”.

„The number of followers of the minority media and as well as the number of readers of the printed media have been in steady decline, not only when it comes to the news, but also analyses and commentaries. The latter puts in jeopardy the possibility of transferring more complex contents and serious political thinking targeting the minority population”, Ilić said.

He noted that censorship and self-censorship in the minority media are common characteristics of the majority of the media, regardless if it is electronic, printed, or online media, or whether they provide information in the majority or minority languages.

„They are dominant, they are recognized as such, and this a structural fact, linked to the attributes of the political and the overall social system in Serbia”, Ilić said.

He added that in Serbia, with the existing political and social-economic system, it is not possible to protect the Serbian majority or national minorities from the censorship or self-censorship.

During the debate “Minority Media in Serbia Today – How to Proceed” organized by the Centre for the Development of Civil Society, a study based on the research of minority and multilingual media, providing media contents in 16 minority languages, including Hungarian, Croatian, and Bunjevac language, was also presented.



# Competition for Media Contents on Slovak Community in Serbia

Source: Slovak National Minority Council

**O**n May 9, 2017, the Slovak National Minority Council opened the sixth competition for annual award “Ana Njemogova Kolarova” for the best media contents on the Slovak national minority in Serbia. The Competition will be closed on July 15, 2017.

This award will be granted to the best media contents dealing with any aspect of life of the Slovak community or a Slovak individual in Serbia.

The media contents can be published in any language other than Slovak, in the printed or electronic (radio, TV, internet) media.

The media contents submitted in the competition must be published

or broadcast in the last twelve months – from August 1, 2016 through July 15, 2017.

Every journalist can send up to three pieces of media contents. The contents in national minority languages must also be translated in Slovak or Serbian.

The award consists of a diploma and monetary prize in the amount of Euros 250 in dinars for the author.

Applications for this competition can be submitted by individuals or media outlets by mail to the address of the Slovak National Minority Council, Bulevar Mihajla Pupina 1/IV, 21000 Novi Sad, with annotation “for media competition”.

Ana Njemogova-Kolarova (Padina, 1951 – Bratislava, 2008) was our director, writer, and journalist, the Editor of Children’s Desk and the Principal Editor of the Artistic Programs Desk of Radio Television of Vojvodina.

She was the author of numerous radio and theatre plays for children, which were broadcast on the Radio Novi Sad, the Radio Beograd, the Radio Sarajevo, and the Radio Skopje stations. In the nineties, she continued her life and career in the Slovak Republic.

For her work in documentary and artistic movies (screenplay and director) she received many awards in prestigious international festivals, including the Montreal Movie Festival (Canada) and the Short Film Festival in Siena (Italy).

## Croatian Community

# Fifteenth Anniversary of the NIU „Hrvatska riječ“

Source: Croatian National Council

**F**ifteen years ago, on May 8, 2002, the majority of deputies in the Assembly of the

Autonomous Province of Vojvodina made a decision to create a news publishing institution “Hrvatska riječ”. This was one of the most important events for information in the mother tongue in the modern history of Croats in Vojvodina. The initiative to found the NIU “Hrvatska riječ” came from the Croatian Academic Society. The then deputy of the Croatian People’s Alliance in the Vojvodina Parliament, Kalman Kuntić, brought this initiative into the complex and relatively slow Parliamentary procedure and ensured its ratification. This was followed by intensive consultations in the Croa-

tian community and numerous activities in regard to the actual creation of the institution, which was successfully

tutional framework for the citizens of Croatian ethnicity to implement the right to information in their mother

tongue in a printed media format. Furthermore, the objective was also to create an institution that will contribute to promotion of cultural, scientific, and literary work of Vojvodina Croats by newspaper and book production. For the last fifteen years, NIU “Hrvatska riječ” has been the only independent professional media outlet of the Croats in Serbia, which

publishes the printed news. Its historic role is as important as its informational function, since it records all events and processes in the Croatian community in Vojvodina and the Republic of Serbia.



brought to completion when the first issue of the “Hrvatska riječ” Weekly was published on January 31, 2003.

The founders of NIU “Hrvatska riječ” aimed at creating an adequate insti-

# “Days of Ukraine” at the Cultural Centre of Novi Sad

Source: Cultural Centre of Novi Sad

The “Days of Ukraine” festival took place at the Youth Debate Club of the Cultural Centre of Novi Sad from May 16 to May 24, 2017. For eight days, Novi Sad audience had an opportunity to learn more about the Ukrainian culture and enjoy in a rich program, which consisted of debates, round tables, exhibitions, and screenings of Ukrainian movies.

The “Days of Ukraine” festival was opened by an exhibition, “History of Ukrainian and Serbian Relations” at the Youth Debate Club, and continued with a round table discussion “Novi Sad and Ukrainian Regions – the History of Brotherhood”.

The exhibition featured 20 displays with narrative and photographic contents on the history of Ukrainian and Serbian friendship, from the time of Old Russia, through Cossacks, Ukrainian monks in the Fruška Gora monasteries, to the WWII, settlement of Ukrainians and Ruthenians in Serbian territories, and contemporary cooperation between Ukraine and Serbia (with greatest achievements in culture, science, and education). This exhibition shows that the Ukrainian and Serbian peoples have always been bonded by close friendship, similar culture, and tradition.

The event was opened by HE Ambassador of Ukraine in Serbia, Oleksandar Aleksandrovič, the Director of the Novi Sad Cultural Centre, Bojan Panaotović, the Speaker of the Novi Sad City Assembly, Zdravko Jelušić, and the leader of the delegation of the Lvov City Government, Natalija Bunda.

Ambassador Aleksandrovič greeted the hosts and the guests and noted that



– The modern world has two paths – the one that leads to abyss, gaps, conflicts, wars, hatred and disaster, and the other, which leads to cooperation and cultural, economic, and other symbiosis. From the very first minute we met in my office a year ago, HE Ambassador Aleksandrovič made the impression of a positive and well-intentioned man. In this first meeting we decided to celebrate a week of Ukraine at the Cultural Centre of Novi Sad – Bojan Panaotović, CCNS director said.

CCNS director said.

Panaotović noted that the Mayor of Novi Sad, Miloš Vučević, supported this idea fully, since Ukraine and the Ukrainian culture have a lot to offer to Novi Sad. In the same way, Serbia and the Serbian culture have many admirable values, and these values place both of our nations among the citizens of Europe.

Natalija Bunda, the head of the delegation of the City Government of Lvov, the city in Western Ukraine with population of around 720.000, which is called, because of its rich cultural heritage, the “Ukrainian Paris”, thanked the hosts for their cordial reception and expressed hope that this festival will strengthen the bonds between the two nations.

Ukraine and Serbia are so close, that “we sometimes forget about differences and are not always fully aware of the many bridges of friendship that connect us”.





# Celebration of 330th Anniversary of Bunjevac Migration to Bačka

Source: Bunjevci

The Bunjevac community in Sombor marked the 330th anniversary of the most recent Bunjevac migration to Bačka by a formal ceremony "Our Branch May Be Small, but It Is Great".

The event was organized under the patronage of the Sombor City Assembly, and in cooperation with the Bunjevac National Minority Council and all Bunjevac associations in Sombor – UG "Bunjevačko kolo", BKC "Lemeški Bunjevci", and "Bunjevački Media Centar Sombor".

The ceremony started by opening of the exhibition of the straw art work (straw



grad" wearing traditional folk costumes was also organized as a part of the event.

The ceremony marking more than three centuries of the arrival of Bunjevac community was wrapped up by a performance by the tamburitza band TA "Velos" iz Novog Sada. During the concert, a fashion show of the traditional Bunjevac folk costumes owned by the GKUD "Ravan-grad" and GKUD "Sombor" and the costumes from the private collections was also organized. Aleksandra Medurić Kalčan, deputy president of the UG "Bunjevačko kolo" held another brief presentation, reminding the attendees of the history and numerous Bunjevac names and events recorded in the Sombor City archives.

art made by members of "Bunjevačko kolo" and BKC "Lemeški Bunjevci") at the entrance hall of the National Theatre in Sombor. The guests and visitors were addressed by the President of the Bunjevac National Minority Council, dr Suzana Kujundžić Ostojić, and by the representatives of the Bunjevac associations – Dejan Parčetić (UG "Bunjevačko kolo"), Stipan Budimčević (BKC "Lemeški Bunjevci") and Stanislava Lutkić (BMC Sombor), as well as the Speaker of the Sombor City Assembly, prim. dr Zoran Parčetić, who formally opened the event. The deputy president of UG "Bunjevačko kolo", Aleksandra Medurić Kalčan, briefed the audience on the straw art.

The parade of horse drawn carriages and young members of the GKUD "Ravan-





# Representative of the OSCE Mission to Serbia Visits the Czech National Minority Council

Source: Czech National Minority Council



On May 17, Milica Rodić, representative of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, who is in charge of the national minorities portfolio, paid a visit to the Czech National Minority Council.

Prof. dr Jože Sivaček, the President of the National Minority Council, Jaroslav Hoc, the Chairman of the Executive Board, Davorin Škornjička, the Secretary General, and Štefan Klepaček, member of the National Minority Council, attended the meeting on behalf of the Czech National Minority Council.

The mandate of the OSCE Mission to Serbia is to provide support to the institutions and

the civil society in the process of democratic development and the protection of human rights, including the minority rights. In order to promote the democratization process, tolerance, the rule of law and observance of the OSCE standards and goals, the Mission provides assistance and support in regard to the implementation of the laws in these areas and monitors the functioning of the democratic institutions and processes. With the objective to ensure better integration of the national minorities in all spheres of life, the Mission collaborates closely with the national minority councils in Serbia. To this end, the objective of the meeting was to exchange the information on the work of the Czech National Minority Council and the implementa-

tion of the rights of the Czech community in the areas of the Council's competencies.

The Law on the National Minority Councils and pending amendments to this Law were also addressed in the meeting. The interlocutors agreed that the changes of the Law were necessary, predominantly to define more comprehensively the areas that have not been adequately addressed in the existing legislation. Furthermore, the participants in the meeting paid a special attention to the issue of differences in the overall position of the numerous national minority communities and those with fewer members and the ways to overcome these differences.

## Bulgarian Community

# Bulgarian Language School Opened in Niš

Source: [www.far.rs](http://www.far.rs)



On May 4, a language school "Let's Learn Bulgarian" was opened in Niš at the premises of the homeland society "Caribrod" and the "Novo Bratstvo" magazine of the Bulgarians living in Serbia. The language course aims predominantly at helping Bulgarian minority preserve their

mother tongue, but it is also open for all other citizens and friends who love Bulgaria.

The headmaster of the school is Prof. Valeria Todorov, PhD. of the Veliko Trnovo University in Bulgaria. The school's first generation consists of fifteen students. At

the end of the one-semester course, the students will take an exam and receive a certificate on the level of proficiency acquired.

The organizer of the Bulgarian language course is the Bulgarian Homeland Society "Caribrod" from Niš.

# Day of Slavic Literacy Marked at the "14. Oktobar" School in Niš



On the occasion of May 24, the Day of Bulgarian Education and Culture and Slavic Literacy, the Bulgarian Homeland Society "Caribrod" organized a gathering of students of the Dimitrovgrad Elementary School "Hristo Botev" and the Niš Elementary and High School "14. Oktobar" in Niš on May 26.

The students from Dimitrovgrad prepared a musical-poetic collage for their friends in Niš to present the culture and tradition of their school and the Bulgarian national

minority, honouring Slavic missionaries and educators Cyril and Methodius. The recital featured the Shopska Folk Dance and Leskovac choreography by the third ensemble of the Cultural-Artistic Society "Caribrod" and performance by a young singer, Marija Georgiev.

The hosts enjoyed greatly in the program, and, after the recital, the students and teachers together danced a traditional kolo folk dance.

The Program was organized as a part of

the project "Cultural Centre Caribrod – Enhancement of Cultural, Information and Literary Networking in Serbia", implemented with support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria. The Homeland Society "Caribrod" from Niš, has, on the same occasion, organized an exhibition of the work of the media and publishing association "Bratstvo", and, in cooperation with the General Consulate of the Republic of Bulgaria in Niš, a debate on development of culture and education of the Bulgarian national community in Serbia at the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš.

# Bosniak Community Marks May 11, the Day of Bosniak Flag

Source: BNV

**O**n May 11, Sanjak Bosniaks marked one of the most important national holidays, the Day of the Flag, celebrated in memory of May 11, 1991, when the Bosniak National Council of Sanjak was founded in Novi Pazar.

On the occasion of the national holiday, the Bosnian National Council carried out numerous activities and organized competitions with children and youth participation.

The central celebration was opened with traditional raising of the Bosniak national flag in front of the Bosniak National Council's main office and the Bosniak anthem "I Am Your Son".

Irfan Hamzagić, the captain of the Novi Pazar Volleyball Team, this year's winner of the National Serbian Volleyball Cup,

raised the flag together with the Council's President, dr. Sulejman Ugljanin

In his address to the audience, President Ugljanin reminded that, in rich Sanjak history, the call of the Bosniak National Council to the Sanjak youth to avoid the army draft refuse to go to war against any Yugoslav nation twenty-six year ago



Sanjak were the first who organized an institutional resistance against fascism during World War II.

The celebration of May 11 – the Day of Bosniak Flag – continued with a parade of folklore groups from Brčko, Rožaje, Sjenica, Tutin, Priština, Podujevo, Skoplje and Novi Pazar, the participants of this year's Bosniak Folk Festival – SBONI 2017.

After the parade, the citizens in Sanjak enjoyed in the program of the SBONI 2017 finals at the Concert Hall of the Cultural Centre in Novi Pazar.

## The Day of the Flag Competitions Award Ceremonies

**O**n the occasion of the Day of the Bosniak Flag on May 11, the Bosniak National Council awarded prizes to the winners of the literary competition "Oh, my homeland, I wish to tell you..." and the competition for the best slogan and the best poster promoting Bosniak national identity in Sanjak..

Sixteen elementary schools from Novi Pazar, Tutin, Sjenica, and Rožaje participated in the literary competition "Oh, my homeland, I wish to tell you..." with eighty-four works.

There were 26 slogans in the competition for the best slogan, whereas 10 designs were submitted in the competition for the best poster.

The objective of the competitions was to promote the level of creativity among the youth in Sanjak.

The Council's President, dr. Sulejman Ugljanin, awarded prizes and diplomas to the winners of the literary competition in both categories, as well as to the winners of the best slogan and the best poster competitions.

Emina Spahić, the fifth grade pupil of the elementary school "Jovan Jovanović Zmaj" in Novi Pazar won the first place in the first category (the fifth and the sixth grade) in the literary competition "Oh, my homeland, I wish to tell you...", whereas the winner in the second category (the seventh and the eighth grade) is Emin Biševac, the eighth

grade student of the elementary school "Jovan Jovanović Zmaj" in Novi Pazar.

The Expert Panel of Judges decided that the winner of the competition for the best slogan is Almedin Asotić from Sjenica, the author of the slogan „Bosniak, you must be persistent, you have who to fight for”.

The winner of the competition for the best slogan based on the number of internet votes is Šemsudin Ljajić from Novi Pazar, the author of the slogan "Bosniaks – tradition, religion, unity”.

The winner of the competition for the best poster based on the number of internet votes is Ishak Kamberović from Novi Pazar, the author of the poster "Our homeland, I kiss your beautiful lilies”.



# Weekend Marked by Folklore and Tradition

Photo: Hlas ľjudu

**O**n May 27, the 47th festival "Dance, Dance..." ("Tancuj, tancuj...") was organized in Gložan. This is the oldest folk festival of Vojvodina Slovaks. The village of Gložan, which is part of the Bački Petrovac municipality, was the host of numerous folklore ensembles from the Slovak villages in Vojvodina, as well as from Croatia, Hungary, Romania, and, understandably, Slovakia.

This is a competition event and, this year, the jury selected the performance of the Kovačica Creative Centre for Tourism, Art, and Culture as the best one in the festival. The members of the groups have also been awarded for the best traditional folk costume. SKUD „Ďetvan“ from Pančevo (Vojlovica) has been selected as the best orchestra, whereas the best group of singers was the women's singing



group of the SKUD „Jednota“ from Gložan.

The festival also featured a special event "On the Fair", presenting the women's associations, craftsmen, cooks, handicraft

manufacturers, wine and rakia producers from Bački Petrovac, Kisač, Gložan, Bačka Palanka, Pivnice, Selenča, Lalić, Padina, Kovačica, Aradac, Janošik, Lug, Erdevik, Boljevac, Dobanovci, and from abroad: Bekeščaba, Nadlak, Ilok i Našice.







**Centar za istraživanja migracija**  
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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.