

**Paunović:
Implementation of the
Minority Action Plan
is Regularly Monitored**

**Special Report of the
Ombudsman on the Councils
for Interethnic Relations
Presented**

40 Minority News

september 2017



**David
Montijas:
Pančevo
Jews Still
Without
an Office**

**Local Self-Governments Play an
Important Role in Implementation
of National Minority Rights**

**The Day of the
Bosniaks Marked**

HIGHLIGHT



Fourth Report on the Implementation of the Minority Action Plan Presented

The Fourth Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan for Implementation of the Rights of National Minorities, covering the second trimester of 2017, was presented on September 13. The Report noted that 63% of due activities have either been implemented or are being successfully implemented.



Textbooks Still not Available to All National Minorities

On September 28, the Center for Migration Studies organized a round table discussion "Implementation of the Minority Action Plan: Education in the National Minority Languages, School 2017/2018 Year". Participants concluded that, although a notable progress had been made in the education in the national minority languages, many problems remained unsolved.



Local Self-Governments Play an Important Role in Implementation of the Rights of National Minorities

On September 27, in Novi Sad, a training was organized on reporting procedures for the Action Plan for Implementation of Rights of National Minorities. Representatives of 41 local self-governments in Vojvodina attended the training.



The First Class Outside Subotica

On September 1, at the "22 Oktobar" Elementary School in Monoštor, 26 first graders started their first school year. Among them, there are six first graders enrolled in the Croatian language class. They are the first in the West Bačka Region who will attend all classes in the Croatian language, which is organized for the first time in a school outside Subotica.

EDITORIAL 40

Through Hardships to National Minority Rights

One more September began with an unavoidable question – will the members of the national communities have an unimpeded access to education in their mother tongue? We asked the same question a year ago, and also two years ago... We asked this question with a good reason, since the same old problems repeat every year – lack of textbooks, problems with forming the classes in minority languages, etc. It would not be fair to say that no progress has been made in resolving these problems. Yes, efforts have been made, some progress has been achieved, but there are still major impediments. There are many difficulties on the way to unimpeded education in the mother tongue, which is guaranteed by the law, and these difficulties substantively prolong the time for implementation of the envisaged.

Let us look at the case of the Bosniak community, although, regrettably, there are many similar examples. In March 2016, representatives of the Bosniak National Council, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development, and the Textbooks Institute, signed the Memorandum on Cooperation for Publishing Textbooks in Bosnian Language and Alphabet. One year later, in March 2017, at the conference on the education in the minority languages from the perspective of the EU integrations process, organized by the Center for Migration Studies, it was noted that a single textbook in the Bosnian language had been completed, despite the original plan to have them completed and available by the beginning of the school year 2016/2017. In July, we received the news that all obstacles had been removed for printing of the textbooks in the Bosnian language, and, one month later, Annex 2 to the Memorandum on Cooperation for Publishing Textbooks in Bosnian Language and Alphabet was signed, and the Textbooks Institute was tasked with completing all missing textbooks before the beginning of the school year 2017/2018. The problem that was supposed to have been resolved before the beginning of the previous school year has spilled over into the ongoing school year as well.

However, as she was presenting the Fourth Report on the Implementation of the Minority Action Plan, Suzana Paunović, the Director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights, noted that the greatest progress had been made in the education in the national minorities' languages. Yes, some progress is evident, but, if we are to judge on some examples among the national minority communities, this progress has been very slow. The progress is visible, so are the shortcomings, but it is not quite clear where the cause of the problem is.

30 different national minorities live in Serbia



and ONE newsletter for all

Pančevo Jews Still Without an Office

According to some archives, Jews lived in Pančevo at the Turkish times. The first synagogue was opened in 1876, whereas the second one was built from 1907 to 1909. During the WWII, the German forces used it as a warehouse, it was sold in 1955, and fully destroyed in 1956. After the demolition, only an auxiliary building remained, which was almost fully destroyed in a fire in 2007. We will not be wrong to say that the Jewish community has struggled with numerous hardships, fighting for the property that was taken away. We talked to David Montijas, the President of the Jewish Community Pančevo, about this and many other issues.



On February 12, 2016, the National Assembly ratified the Law on Elimination of Consequences of Nationalization of Property of the Holocaust Victims without Surviving Family Members, which provides that the Association of Jewish Communities be paid Euro 950,000 annually for the next 25 years. Will this decision have a positive impact on the status of Jewish community in the areas of importance for this community in the Republic of Serbia?

I have to say that this decision was the only decision that the Assembly has made unanimously. At that moment, I was very proud to be a Jew who lives in Serbia. This is the joint result of the then Prime Minister,

presently the President, and all political parties in the country, who showed a high level of understanding for our problem, since our community was at the verge of a complete extinction. Foreign donors, who had supported us in the past, announced that they would gradually withdraw their assistance, and that the state has to take over this responsibility. Most definitely, this will improve the status in the areas of importance for the Jewish community in the Republic of Serbia. When you say 950,000 Euros, it indeed sounds like a high amount, but, in reality, it is not that high. A special working group made a detailed budget on what this money will be spent for, with no

exceptions made. First, we will carry out research, collect evidence, and mark important Holocaust dates and commemorations in the Republic of Serbia. Then, we will fund scientific studies on the Holocaust and other crimes of neo-Nazis and their associates, the Holocaust publications, Jewish cultural events in Serbia, preservation of tradition, scholarships for students from the Jewish community, support to participation of young talented people in international competitions, financial support to the Holocaust survivors who, at the time, lived in the territory of the Republic of Serbia and presently reside in Serbia or abroad. I would like to note that, for this

purpose, we will use 20% of the money received annually, as well as the same percentage of the revenue made through the restitution of the real estate of the victims of the Holocaust. It is interesting to note that there are more Holocaust survivors in Israel and in some other countries, than in our country. We also plan to have joint project of different Jewish municipalities. In Serbia, we have Jewish Communities in Beograd, Subotica, Zrenjanin, Pančevo, Zemun, Sombor, Kikinda and Niš. Legally speaking, there is also the Jewish Municipality Priština, but it is not included in this project. This information is based on the budget proposal and relevant financial management documents for 2017. Next year, the percentages might be different, with the exception of the 20% for the Holocaust survivors. All delegations, embassies, Jewish organizations insisted on it. The Claims Conference pays to the Holocaust survivors around 300 Euros every month as a form of war compensation.

There have also been some nice occasions recently. In September, you celebrated Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, and Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, which is also one of the most sacred Jewish holidays. In December, you will celebrate Hanukkah. How do you mark these holidays? Is there any special tradition linked with them?

Yes, we do have special tradition for each of these holidays. When we celebrated Rosh Hashanah, we organized transportation for our members and went the Belgrade Synagogue for the first evening, and we celebrated the second evening in Pančevo. We prepared traditional meals, I read psalms, and we also had instructors, Dragana Stojanović and Sonja Viličić, who interpreted the psalms, since you cannot grasp the true meaning of psalms and the Bible in general if you just read them in a desiccate way. It is therefore good to interpret and explain what the Bible says.

There are four synagogues in Serbia, and only the Belgrade Synagogue provides religious services. What kind of impact does this have on the assimilation and religious life of members of your community?

There is a synagogue in Belgrade, where all holidays are actively marked by religious services, and there is the Beit Chabad prayer home led by Rabbi Joshua Kaminecki, which is located at 61 Kneza Miloša St. Furthermore, there is a small synagogue in Subotica, where all holidays are marked, and it is always full. Of all smaller Jewish municipalities, Subotica is the only one that provides all services. I also have to note that in Novi Sad, too, there is religious service for major holidays.

There has been no synagogue in Pančevo since 1956. What kind of plans does the Jewish Community Pančevo have to revitalize religious and cultural life in your town? Will you be able to repossess part of the property that belonged to the old synagogue through in the process of restitution?

We are not lucky in regard to the confessional restitution. In the fifties, under the threat of nationalization, under the pressure, everything was practically lost, sold, or destroyed. The Pančevo Synagogue was demolished, and its remains, where auxiliary building with the housing for the sexton was, remained intact. However, since there was no caretaker of the building, it was set on fire at one point, and now it is a ruin, which we have been trying to put under our control. The Town showed understanding to our plea, and, four years ago, a decision was made to transfer the ownership rights to us. However, the Republic Property Directorate stopped it, as the process was not legally done correctly. According to the new law, the Town cannot claim ownership over this property and therefore cannot give us something that they do not own legally. We tried to preserve the authenticity of the front wall, and the idea was to repossess this property in order to build a temple and a building where our offices will be. At the moment, we rent the office.

First, we will carry out research, collect evidence, and mark important Holocaust dates and commemorations in the Republic of Serbia.

Then, we will fund scientific studies on the Holocaust and other crimes of neo-Nazis and their associates, the Holocaust publications, Jewish cultural events in Serbia, preservation of tradition, scholarships for students from the Jewish community.

Zemun Synagogue, which was sold to the Zemun Municipality in 1962, was returned to the Jewish Community based on the Law on Restitution of Property to Churches and Religious Communities. Does the Association of Jewish Communities have any plans to bring the former synagogue to its original purpose?

I have to correct you first, all Jewish Communities are autonomous and the Association is only a form of an umbrella organization. We have all become members of the Association, we have an Executive Board, and all decisions are made in the Executive Board sessions and the Assembly of the Association of Jewish Communities. I cannot comment what will happen in Zemun, as it is not under my jurisdiction, but, as far as I heard, the Restitution Agency has its legal restrictions and cannot return the property if it had been sold at one point. However, if there is a political will, a good will of the City, the original owner can be given another building of the same value as the synagogue in the process of restitution. As the synagogue was more important for the Jewish community than the other building, they exchanged the properties. Whether the synagogue will resume its function in the foreseeable future, it will depend on the Jewish Community Zemun. I believe that we all have a common goal, to repossess all the synagogues and bring them to the original purpose, but this will take a long time. First, we need to educate more Rabbis, one Rabbi cannot serve in all communities. For instance, in Subotica, there are a Rabbi and a sexton, and, at the moment, it is the sexton who performs religious service. We lack this in Pančevo, we do not have anyone like that. We would have to educate this individual first, and it would take three to four years for us to create conditions for provision of religious services in our community.

Jewish Community Belgrade filed a restitution request in the Stari Grad and Vračar municipalities, which includes the building where the oldest bookstore of the famous Geca Kon has been for many decades. Do you know anything about this process, have any properties been returned?

I have heard something about it. What I am absolutely certain about is that the bookstore will always be the bookstore of Geca Kon and the building will not change its purpose. A formal owner may change, but the purpose will remain the same. I cannot give you any more details about this process, this is something within the jurisdiction of the lawyers of the Jewish Municipality Belgrade, and they are the only competent authority to reply to your question. However, this bookstore will always remain the oldest bookstore in Serbia.

Paunović: Implementation of the Minority Action Plan is Regularly Monitored

Source: Office for Human and Minority Rights

In her opening remarks on the occasion of presentation of the Fourth Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan for the Execution of the Rights of National Minorities, organized on September 13, the Director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights, Suzana Paunović, said that this report covered the second trimester of 2017 and that the implementation of the activities envisaged by the Minority Action Plan is regularly monitored.

Paunović noted that of the total number of 74 actors, 13 did not submit any reports, and 7 of those are the national councils of national minorities.

She added that 63% of activities due for this reporting period have either been completed or they are being successfully implemented.

The Office Director noted that the relevant Ministers shall brief the Council for National Minorities on the activities that have been planned and implemented.

Paunović reminded that the Office has continued to promote the reporting system for the implementation of the Action Plan, and that the Report includes the activities carried out on the local level. 73 local self-governments and 53 Councils for Interethnic



Relations have been included in the reporting process, Paunović concluded.

In the coming period, the Office will focus on further promotion of the Action Plan monitoring system, Paunović noted, and added that the Office will continue to sup-

port all participants in the reporting process in order to enhance their work and mutual cooperation.

Ivan Bošnjak, the State Secretary in the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, briefed the attendees on the activities of the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self Government and on the status of the amendments to the Law on Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities and the Law on the National Councils of National Minorities, which are being prepared in cooperation with the national councils of national minorities.

Around 60 participants in the event concluded that the training sessions had improved the quality of the reporting.

The meeting was attended by the representatives of the state institutions, independent institutions, international organizations and the national councils of national minorities.

Praises to Niš for its Efforts in Implementation of Minority Rights

Source: Tanjug

Director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights of the Government of Serbia, Suzana Paunović, opened in Niš training sessions for strengthening of the capacity of local communities for implementation of the Action Plan for Execution of Rights of National Minorities in Serbia. She thanked the Mayor of Niš, Darko Bulatović, for the town's efforts in regard to an effective implementation of human and minority rights of the Niš residents.

She noted that it is necessary for the local self-governments to engage actively in the implementation and reporting on the execution of the rights of national minorities who live in their territories.



"As a result of the training sessions we have organized, the capacity of the local self-government employees has been strengthened in regard to the issues of

importance for the national minorities", Paunović concluded.

As she said, aiming at the highest possible quality of the reporting on the implemented activities, the Office has provided continuous support to all individuals who participate in the reporting process in order to enhance their work and mutual cooperation.

She reminded that, since the first trimester of 2017, 76 municipalities and towns have participated in the reporting on the implementation of the Minority Action Plan, and that the invitations to engage in this process had also been sent to 53 local councils for interethnic relations.

Textbooks Still Not Available to All Minorities

Is there a substantive progress in education in minority languages, to what extent are the authorities open to comments and suggestions made by the national minorities - were some of the issues tackled by the participants in the round table discussion "Implementation of the Minority Action Plan: Education in the National Minority Languages, School 2017/2018 Year". The debate was organized by the Center for Migration Studies, with support of the Open Society Foundation.

Biljana Jović, the project director, noted in her opening remarks that although a visible progress has been made, a few important issues have remained unsolved. As she said, the authorities often only listen to the comments and suggestions made by the representatives of the national minorities and the civil society, without undertaking any action to solve the problems their attention has been drawn to. After she had briefly presented the Fourth Report on the Implementation of the Minority Action Plan, she reminded the attendees that the Annexes to the Memorandum on Publishing of Textbooks in Minority Languages were signed in succession from 2016 until the end of August 2017. However, as the debate showed, the signing of the Annexes has not yielded tangible results in the case of some minorities.

Shukri Ymeri addressed the participants on behalf of the National Council of the Albanian National Minority and noted that there are both successes and setbacks in regard to the education in the Albanian language. As he said, the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the Ministry of Education have the obligation to provide textbooks to all national minorities who live in Serbia, and meeting this obligation will put an end to the continuous problems many national minorities face in this

regard. He also noted that there are few problems with the available textbooks due to inadequate translation from the Serbian to the Albanian language.

Melaniya Rimar participated in the event on behalf of the National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority. She noted that the regular classes in the Ruthenian language are provided in three elementary schools, whereas the facultative subject "Ruthenian Language with Elements of National Culture" is available in around thirty schools. She emphasized that there is not a single textbook available for grammar



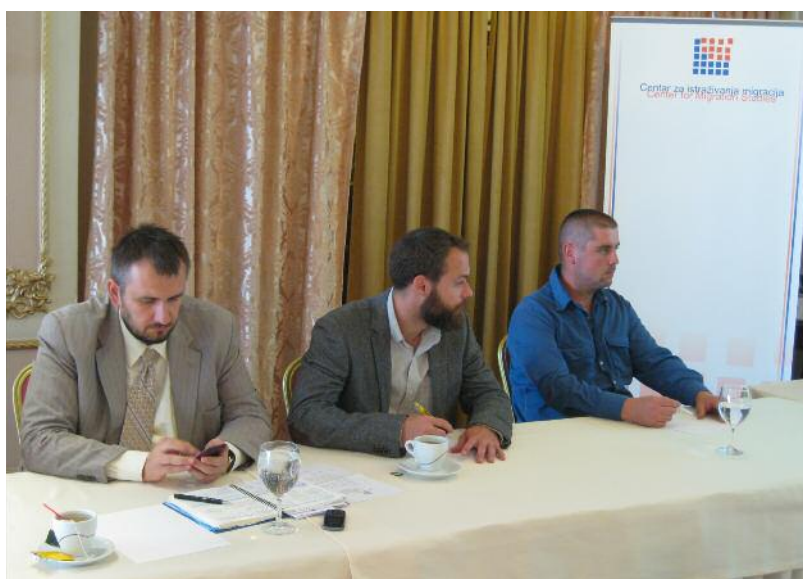
in this subject, and our problem is that the Bunjevac language still has the status of a speech and not a language", Bajić elaborated and added that the National Council of the Bunjevac National Minority will prepare the standardized grammar of the Bunjevac language by the end of the year, so that the preparations for formal registration of the Bunjevac speech as the Bunjevac language can start next year as well as the introduction of the facultative subject under the new name: "Bunjevac Language with Elements of National Culture".

Aleksandar Nedeljković, who addressed the participants on behalf of the Roma National Minority Council, noted that the Roma, as the largest minority, do not have a single textbook in their language. He also added

that it is necessary to have active participation of the representatives of the respective Ministry in such events in order to have them reply directly to the many questions the national minorities have on the issue at hand. In response to his comment, the project director, Biljana Jović, invited the participants to formulate jointly the questions, submit them to the institutions, and make the replies available to the general public by publishing them in the Minority News newsletter.

schools, and that an additional problem is a decreasing number of children who will attend the classes, including the facultative subject.

Number of children interested in the classes in the mother tongue is not a problem in the Bunjevac community. As Mirko Bajić said, the number pupils interested in the facultative subject Bunjevac Speech with Elements of National Culture steadily increases every year. "This year, 460 pupils enrolled



Special Ombudsman's Report on Councils for Interethnic Relations

Source: Ombudsman
Foto: Ombudsman/OSCE Mission to Serbia

Although it has been ten years since the Law on the Local Self Government prescribed that the multi-ethnic communities have to form councils for interethnic relations, the Ombudsman's Office has established in its report that these councils have either not been formed in all local self-governments or do not meet regularly. At the event in Palace Serbia in Belgrade on September 8, presenting the Special Ombudsman's Report on Councils for Interethnic Relations, Ombudsman Zoran Pašalić noted that, of the total number of 72 ethnically mixed local self-government units, the councils have been formed in 53 of them.

The Ombudsman's findings show that the only legal obligation that all local self-government units meet is that representatives of the national minorities in the councils are appointed based on the nominations made by the national minority councils. In practice, local self-government units have difficulties in recognizing which decisions affect ethnic equality. Based on the data collected from the local self-government units for this report, a conclusion can be made that it is required to define more precisely the area of jurisdiction of the council, i.e. which decisions affect ethnic equality and what this term means, Zoran Pašalić said.

Free assessment of the local institutions on which decisions affect ethnic equality is the reason why the local self-governments do not submit them or submit them selectively to the councils for their ruling. The councils do not work because of the imprecise legislation and because the terms "ethnic equality" and "in-



terethnic relations" are perceived as linked with unfavorable interethnic relations. As a consequence, the role of the councils and their activities are visible only in the cases of interethnic tensions and conflicts.

Therefore, in 2010, the Ombudsman sent recommendations to the local self-government units with ethnically mixed population 1) to form the

Administration and Local Self-Government, to define more precisely the term "ethnic equality" and the type of issues the councils should look into, by amendments to the Article 98 of the Law on Local Self-Government.

The Minister of Justice, Nela Kuburović, said that functioning of councils for interethnic relations is one more step in implementation of commitments Serbia has made in the process of the EU integrations, particularly in regard to the chapters dealing with the rule of law. She noted that good neighborly interethnic relations are the basis for development of tolerance, which is one of the fundamental values of a modern society. She particularly emphasized the importance of the Ombudsman, who, with other independent state institutions, has an important position in the Chapter 23.

Assistant Minister for Public Administration and Local Self-Government, Ivana Antić, Director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights, dr Suzana Paunović, head of the Democratization Department of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, Jan Luneburg, and representatives of the local self-governments participated in the introductory part of the event.



Council as an obligatory independent body if they had not done it already, 2) that all institutions in the local self-government regularly and timely submit draft decisions affecting the ethnic quality to the Council for its ruling, and 3) that the rulings of the Council are taken into account when final decisions are made.

The Ombudsman also sent recommendation to the Ministry of Public

Local Self-Governments Play an Important Role in Implementation of Minority Rights

Source: Office for Human and Minority Rights



On September 27, in Novi Sad, a training session was organized for reporting on the Action Plan for Execution of Rights of National Minorities.

In her remarks at the opening the training session, the Director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights, Suzana Paunović, noted that the local self-governments in Serbia, where representatives of the national minorities live, have a key role in the implementation of their rights. She also commended the efforts of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina in regard to the more effective execution of rights of all citizens who live in the Province, particularly noting the commitment of the provincial authorities to continuous enhancement of the imple-

mentation of the rights of the national minorities live, prepare quarterly reports on implementation of this document. The Office for Human and Minority Rights provided training to the staff of nearly 70 local self-governments, who are expected to contribute to better insight in the situation on the ground in the coming months.



„Although the reporting process is much more complicated now, I firmly believe that the reports on the implementation of the Minority Action Plan will be of substantively better quality”, Paunović said, reminding that the Action Plan consists of 11 chapters and 115 activities implemented by 74 actors.

Mihalj Nilaš, Deputy Prime Minister of the Provincial Government and the Provincial Secretary for Education, Regulations, Administration and National Minorities – National Communities, noted that the Action Plan for Execution of Rights of National Minorities defines activities in a way that secures clear, precise, and chronological overview of necessary amendments to the legislative and institutional framework, enhancement of administrative capacity, and overall improvement of practices and awareness building.

Njilaš said that the objective of the training is to teach the local self-governments' representatives on the optimal and the most efficient reporting methods, data collection and analysis principles, and reporting uniformity in line with the defined format.

The training sessions in Novi Sad were organized by the Office for Human and Minority Rights and the Provincial Secretariat for Education, Regulations, Administration, and National Minorities – National Communities.



mentation of the rights of the national minorities.

In support of this statement was the fact that representatives of 41 local self-governments in Vojvodina attended the training session. She noted that the Action Plan for Execution of Rights of National Minorities, endorsed on March 3, 2016, envisages that all actors, including the local self-governments



New Head of Mission of the EU Delegation to Serbia Visits the Office of the Provincial Ombudsman

Source: Office of the Provincial Ombudsman



In September 20, His Excellency, Ambassador Sem Fabrizi, the Head of Mission of the EU Delegation to the Republic of Serbia paid a visit to the Office of the Provincial Ombudsman. The meeting took place as a part of the first visit of Ambassador Fabrizi to Novi Sad after he had assumed this post, during which he also visited other provincial and city institutions.

Prof. dr Zoran Pavlović, the Provincial Ombudsman, briefed Ambassador Fabrizi on the history and the ongoing activities of the institution he heads and provided him with his assessment of the general state of human rights in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. The interlocutors paid a special attention to the activities that the Office of the Provincial Ombudsperson, which



celebrates its fifteenth anniversary this year, has undertaken in regard to the protection of minority rights and freedoms.

The interlocutors also looked into the plans of the Provincial Ombudsperson in regard to the enhanced accessibility to free legal assistance to members of the most vulnerable social groups. This is one of the rights guaranteed by the Constitution, and the Office of the Provincial Ombudsman, in its reports for the years 2011 and 2013, already pointed to the unequal implementation of this right in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. It was concluded that the planned activities of the Office of the Provincial Ombudsman in all aspects of work of this institution, e.g. protection of minority rights, etc., are in line with the objectives defined in the Negotiations Chapters 23 and 24 in the process of accession of the Republic of Serbia to the EU, which makes this institution an important and logical partner in this process.

Competition for Annual Award of the Independent Association of Journalists of Vojvodina for Journalism in the Languages of the National Minorities

Source: NDNV



The competition is open for all journalists who published a minimum of three media contents in a national minority language between January 1 and December 15, 2017, which, in a highly professional and ethical way, promote the values of tolerance, multicultural society, and intercultural communication, i.e. critically identify political and social deviations.

All journalists engaged in any type of media - printed, radio, TV, online, or combination thereto - are eligible for nomination.

There are no genre restrictions in regard to the nominated contents, they can include all formats of journalism,



from reports through commentary to essays, although investigative and analytical contents will be particularly appreciated.

The deadline for submission of application is December 31, 2017.

The Award of the Independent Association of the Journalists of Vojvodina to the best journalist, who has

achieved extraordinary results in 2017 in reporting in the languages of the national minorities, aims at identifying and promoting extraordinary achievements of journalists who report in the national minorities' languages and are not visible to the general public. Thus we wish to promote multicultural processes in the society.

The Award will be given within the implementation of the project "Information in the Languages of the National Minorities - Rights and Responsibilities", which is carried out by the Independent Association of the Journalists in Vojvodina, with support of the Civil Right Defenders. The Award also includes a financial grant.

Enhanced Cooperation Important of Position of the National Minorities

Source: Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government



On September 9, the Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, Branko Ružić, met with the Director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, Suzana Paunović. The two interlocutors addressed the enhancement of cooperation of the two institutions, future joint activities, and issues of importance for further promotion of the position of the national minorities in the Republic of Serbia.



Ružić reminded that the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government is preparing two important laws in

the area of the protection of human and minority rights – the Law on Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities, and the Law on the National Minority Councils – and that it planned to present these laws to the National Assembly by the end of the year.

The Minister and the Director noted that the cooperation has

been very good thus far, and agreed to promote and intensify it further through joint activities and initiatives.

Support to Enhancement of Position of Vulnerable Social Groups

Source: Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs



Minister of Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, Zoran Djordjević, met with the Director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights, Suzana Paunović.

Suzana Paunović welcomed creation of a new department at the Ministry, which will focus on anti-discriminatory and gender equality issues, noting that this is particularly important in light of the new policies and legislation to be endorsed in this field.

The Director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights emphasized that her Office will provide full support to the Ministry's efforts to promote the position of the vulnerable social groups in Serbia.

Minister Đorđević noted that the Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs will intensively monitor and work on the increased social inclusion of the Roma national minority.



The representatives of the Ministry and the Office agreed to cooperate further on organization of the coming seminar on social inclusion of Roma men and women, which is to be organized jointly

with the European Commission in October.

Minister Đorđević and the Director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights also discussed the Draft Law on Gender Equality and the need to ensure that this law is fully applicable. The Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs will have the key role in this process. It is of outmost importance to have the law that is implemented in real life, and not the law that exists on paper only - it was concluded in the meeting.

The Ministry and the Office will continue to cooperate in preparation of the new Strategy for Prevention and Protection of Discrimination and the accompanying Action Plan.

The Day of the Bosniaks Marked

Source: BNC

On the occasion of September 28 – the Day of the Bosniaks – the Bosniak Intellectuals Congress Council, MDD Merhameti BZK Preporod, organized a special ceremony in Sarajevo under the patronage of the Bosniak Member of the B-H Presidency, Bakir Izetbegović.

Dr Sulejman Ugljanin, the President of the Bosniak National Council, attended the ceremony, whereas the delegation of the Sanjak SDA was led by Šemsudin Kučević, the Deputy President of the Party.

On September 28, 1993, the Bosniak Congress endorsed the Declaration on Use of Bosniak Historical

Name, and in 1994, Bosnia and Herzegovina endorsed a law which provided that the term “Muslim” be replaced by the word “Bosniak”.

The delegation of Sanjak Bosniaks visited



the Memorial Center “Kovači” and paid respect to the first president of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, late Alija Izetbegović.

During the trip, the delegation of the Council visited the exhibition on the centuries’ long Sufi tradition in Bosnia, which was on display at the Gazi Husrev-Bey Library and paid a call on the Central Office of MDD Merhamet in Sarajevo.

Furthermore, the Council’s representatives paid a visit to the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Council has signed the Cooperation Agreement with, and saw the exhibition on the traditional Turkish archery.

“The Position” and Bosniak Media Today

Bosniak national weekly “Position” (“STAV”) was promoted in the Bosniak National Council in Novi Pazar on September 22.

During the debate „Bosniak Media Today”, the publications of the Position Weekly’s library, novels “The Ashes Talk” by Dževad Karahasan, and the “Falconer’s Sonnet” by Irfana Horozovića, were also promoted.

The Position Weekly deals with the contemporary Bosniak politics, as well as the politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the region and the world, follows the most important social events of importance to the Bosniak community, and provides literary, movie, and theatre reviews.

The weekly will provide expert assessment of the economic and social developments in the region and in



the world, paying special attention to interviews with Bosniak politicians, scientists, cultural workers, and artists, thus offering diverse views of the present time. Filip Mursel Begović, the Editor-in-Chief, Hamza

Ridžal, a publicist and a journalist of the new weekly, and dr Sead Šemsović talked about the situation in the Bosniak media today and the development and the role of the Position Weekly.

Dr Radu Flora Memorial

Source: www.zrenjanin.rs

The traditional “Dr Radu Flora Memorial”, dedicated to the memory of the most prominent Romanian scientist, educational and cultural worker from these territories, university professor Dr Radu Flora (Banatsko Novo Selo, 1922 - Zrenjanin, 1995), was organized this year for the 25th time.

The Memorial participants gathered to mark two dates linked by destiny – September 5, the date when Professor Flora was born, and September 4, the day when he died. The central event took place in Zrenjanin on September 5, and the accompanying programs of the Memorial were organized in Professor Flora’s place of birth, Banatsko Novo Selo, and in Novi Sad, Vršac, Uzdin, and Belgrade.

The Town Hall in Zrenjanin hosted a reception for organizers and participants in the Memorial. On behalf of the Town of Zrenjanin, the Deputy Mayor, Saša Santovac welcomed the guests. Santovac noted that the Town of Zrenjanin thus keeps the memory of their prominent resident alive.



“I have to remind you that Professor Flora was the author of 90 books and



23 textbooks, which illustrates clearly his scientific work and his important contribution. The Town of Zrenjanin is certainly honoured to have had such a resident, the greatest scientist among the

members of the Romanian national minority in our country. We are looking into publishing all presentations made during the Memorial, symposiums, and scientific debates. Furthermore, today, on the day when Dr Radu Flora was born, we have the traditional Memorial in Baroque Hall of our Town

Romanian Language in Vojvodina celebrates its 55th anniversary and the 25th anniversary of this Memorial, in honour of the founder of our Society. Yesterday, we opened the Memorial in Vršac, where the professor worked and was the Headmaster of the Grammar School. He founded the Romanian Language Department at the universities in Belgrade and Novi Sad. Today, we traditionally organize the Memorial in Zrenjanin, with full support of the Town and its people of good will, as it has been the case in Vršac and other locations where we have organized our programs”, Marina said and described what Professor Flora was.

“He was a linguist, dialectologist, lexicologist, lexicographer, novelist, poet, author of anthologies, periodicals of the Society for the Romanian Language, organizer of Serbian-Romanian congresses, scientific events, and, of course, he was included in all cultural events, he cherished the Romanian literary language, but he also studied the Serbian language, the work of Vuk Karadžić, and contributed greatly to the cooperation between our two nations”, Lučijan Marina said.

As a part of the Memorial, a scientific symposium was organized at the Baroque Hall of the Town Hall, as well as the exhibition of handicraft and paintings, where the portrait of Professor Flora was displayed at the central position.



The First Class outside Subotica

Source: Hrvatska riječ

On September 1, at the “22 Oktobar” Elementary School in Monoštor, 26 first graders started their first school year. Among them, there are six first graders enrolled in the Croatian language class. They are the first in the West Bačka Region who will attend all classes in the Croatian language, which is organized for

tative subject “The Croatian Language with Elements of National Culture”, and I am very pleased to congratulate the children and their parents on introduction of the complete classes in the Croatian language in Monoštor. In the West Bačka Region, the conditions exist for education in the Croatian language in Sonta, too, and I hope that we will do the same thing in

year, we have completed all textbook sets and they are available for all grades of the elementary school. Furthermore, this year, we have managed to present parents with a small gift, a 10,000 rsd coupon for purchase of school supplies. It is particularly important for us that children attend the classes in the Croatian language, because it helps the preservation of the mother tongue and the feeling of belonging to the Croatian nation from a young age. What is even more important is that the textbooks, which are prepared in line with the curriculum of the Republic of Serbia, include the contents on the presence and culture of Croats in these territories. Therefore, the children will have an opportunity to learn more about their nation than it would have been the case if they had attended the classes in the Serbian language”, Sarić Lukendić said.

“I would like to emphasize good cooperation with the Croatian National Council and the Provincial Secretariat for Education, Regulations, Administration, and National Communities. We made a joint agreement and secured funds for this class. Although the legal minimum for a class for national communities is 15 pupils, we have opened classes with fewer pupils, too”, the head of the Sombor School Directorate, Borislav Staničkov, said.

At the “22. oktobar” elementary school in Monoštor, since the school year 2005/06, pupils have attended the facultative subject Croatian Language with Elements of National Culture, and, every year since, half of all pupils in the school have attended this facultative class.



the first time in a school outside Subotica.

The first school class was attended by the representatives of the Croatian community, the Consulate in Subotica, and the School Directorate. “This is the first class in the Croatian language in a school outside Subotica. Here in Monoštor, pupils have, for many years, attended the facul-

Sonta for the next school year”, the President of the Executive Board of the Croatian National Council, Darko Sarić Lukendić said and presented the first graders with the full textbooks sets.

„The Croatian National Council, in cooperation with the Governments of Croatia and Serbia, secured free textbooks. This

Albanian Community

First Newspapers in the Albanian Language in Serbia

Source: Južne vesti

As the “Presheva Jone” portal announced, a daily newspaper in the Albanian language will be available soon at the newspaper stands in Preševo, Bujanovac, Medveđa and Vranje.

The newspaper will be issued under

the same name - “Presheva Jone” - and will have the circulation of 1,000 copies.

An ambitious plan envisages that, after the release in South Serbia, the newspaper will become available in Macedonia, Kosovo, and West European

countries with large Albanian population – “Preseheva Jone” staff said.

As the portal noted, the new printed media, which will be committed to accuracy and objectivity, received support from the international journalists’ associations and other institutions.

Autumn Festival of Jewish Culture Organized in Subotica

Source: www.subotica.com

Foto: www.subotica.info

Uhe Autumn Festival of Jewish Culture, organized by the Jewish Community Subotica, took place from September 10-17, on numerous location in the town. The rich seven-day program presented the Jewish cultural and artistic creations.

The Festival, which, has, since last year, had the formal status of an event of special importance for the Town, was opened on Sunday by the concert "A Week of Jewish Prayers" in the Great Hall of the Jewish Community. On the second day of the Festival, the exhibition "Israel in Paintings" was opened at the Auditorium of the Open University, followed by the screening of a movie, „Mr. Gaga“. The following day, a lecture "How the Bread for the King of Spain Conquered Europe" or "Everything We did not Know About Jewish Food" was organized in the Great Hall of the Jewish Community.

The third Subotica concert of Jewish cantors from Budapest, "From the Dohán Street to Budapest", took place in the Great Hall of the Town Hall on Wednesday.

– On Sunday, as the crown of the event,



the „Braća Baruh“ Choir performed in the Franciscan Church. We are grateful the Franciscan Monastery for providing us with this outstanding space for the concert - Robert Kovač, the coordination of the Office of the Jewish Community Subotica said.



Because of the ongoing reconstruction of the Synagogue, this magnificent building was not available as a venue for any programs of the Festival.

– The restoration of the Synagogue is going well and we expect that all works will be brought to completion by the end of the year. In the beginning of the next year, we will have a formal opening ceremony of the Synagogue, and I hope that this will bring the 40-year-old dream of our small Jewish community to reality – Robert Sabadoš, the President of the

Association of Jewish Communities of Serbia, said.

The Festival is one of the very few programs, organized by the Jewish Community Subotica, which does not focus on remembrance of the tragic destiny of the Jewish community.

– As you know, we always invite you to share with us our moments of mourning. Jews suffered tragic destiny during the war, and, sadly, we have to organize these solemn and moving events.

The organization of the third Festival was supported by the Town of Subotica and the Hungarian Consulate General.

Hungarian Community

Hungarian Government Donates School Supplies

Izvor: RTV Pančevo

As a part of the program of the Hungarian National Minority Council, with financial support of the Hungarian Government, school supplies were distributed to first-graders who attend classes in the Hungarian language.

At the ceremony organized in the "Žarko Zrenjanin" Elementary School in Skorenovac, 11 first-graders received this gift. The event was attended by Janosz Arpad Potapi, Hungarian State Secretary for National Policy,

and Idržavni sekretar Mađarske za nacionalnu politiku, kao i Istvan Pasztor, Speaker of of the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina.

Beginning of a school year is a heavy financial burden to all parents. Therefore, the Hungarian Government distributed sets with school supplies to the first-graders. Aniko Jerasz, the President of the Executive Board of the National Council of the Hungarian National Minority, noted that this was the seventh year of Hungarian Government school

supplies donations at Vojvodina schools.

With this activity, the Hungarian National Minority Council wishes both to make the children happier about starting the school and to reduce the burden to the parents.

The first-graders were also welcomed by the State Secretary for Education, Anamarija Viček, the Provincial Secretary, Mihalj Njilaš, and Hajnal Jenő, the president of the National Council of the Hungarian National Minority.

Valeri Simeonov and Rasim Ljajić Met in Dimitrovgrad

Source: www.far.rs

On September 21, Dimitrovgrad was the venue of the meeting of high officials of the two neighboring countries, Valeri Simeonov, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic and Demographic Policy of the Republic of Bulgaria, and Rasim Ljajić, the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia and the Minister of Foreign and Domestic Trade, Telecommunication and IT Society.

At the press conference after the meeting, which tackled the economic issues in Western provinces, Simeonov said that these are unavoidable issues, since the economy represents the foundation of the position of a state.

“Both Governments agreed that the migration of the population from the Western provinces is primarily caused by the economic reasons”, the DPM of the Republic of Bulgaria said.

“The migration problem is not exclusive for Bulgarian national minority only – this is the problem that affects the country as a whole, and the Serbs and other national minorities migrate from these areas, as well, because of economic reasons only. There is no migration caused by political and security reasons, which was the case in the nineties. This problem exists in Bulgaria and Romania, too, although they are the EU member countries”, Ljajić noted.

In his address to the media, Ljajić also invited Bulgarian investors to invest in the area, and announced that the Government will pro-



vide substantive subsidies and tax exemptions for every investor, not only in this geographic area, but in all municipalities in Serbia. He also expressed belief that the most effective remedy for the problem of migrations is economy and improved living standard, and that the Governments of Serbia and Bulgaria will work in partnership to solve these issues successfully.

In today's meeting, the interlocutors decided to organize another meeting of the representatives of the two countries and form a joint task force, which will work on infrastructural issues, improvement of the living standard and the economic development of the region.

During the visit to Dimitrovgrad, Simeonov and Ljajić laid wreaths at a Vasil Levski monument at the center of the town, and, after the meeting, they paid a visit to the memorial to the soldiers killed in the Serbian-Bulgarian war at Neškovo Brdo, where they also laid wreaths.





Centar za istraživanja migracija
Center for Migration Studies

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