

**Serbia among Leaders  
in Work with National  
Minorities**

**Amendments to Both  
Minority Laws to Be  
Ratified by Mid-December**

# **41** **Minority** **News**

october 2017



**Anamarija  
Viček:  
Results  
Show that  
We Are on  
the Right  
Course**

**Media Platform “Minority News”  
Presented at the International  
Civil Society Summit  
in Istanbul**

**Secure Enhanced  
Visibility of  
Roma in  
the Society**

# HIGHLIGHT



## Serbia among Leaders in Work with National Minorities

The Prime Minister of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, Ana Brnabić, noted in the session of the Council for National Minorities that diversity is respected in Serbia and added that our country will continue to implement the minority policy, which makes Serbia recognized in the EU as a leader in the work with national minorities and respect of their rights.



## Media Platform "Minority News" Presented in Istanbul

The International Summit "City and Civil Society" was organized in Istanbul from October 20-22, 2017 by the Office of the President of the Republic of Turkey, Rexhep Taip Erdogan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of European Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, and the Esenler Municipality. The Summit brought together 192 participants from the academic and civil sector from 158 organizations in 60 countries of Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas and Australia. The "Minority News" Media Platform was presented in this summit.



## Four National Minority Cultural Institutes Participated in the Belgrade Book Show

At the 62nd Belgrade Book Show, the stand of the Provincial Secretariat for Education, Regulations, Public Administration, and National Minorities – National Communities and the Provincial Secretariat for Culture, Public Information, and Relations with Religious Communities, brought together representatives of four cultural institutes of national minorities – Hungarian, Slovak, Ruthenian, and Croatian, which presented their publications.



## "Hlas Ljudu" Weekly Celebrates its 73rd Anniversary

On October 19, the weekly in the Slovak Language, "Hlas Ljudu", celebrated its 73rd anniversary. On this occasion, a reception was organized, which was attended by the representatives of the Provincial Government, the Slovak National Minority Council, the Slovak Heritage in Serbia, and other dignitaries, and years of service awards were presented to the staff members, as well as the annual journalist awards.

# EDITORIAL 41

## Equality in Practice, Too

Based on the sunny and warm days in early October, many expected that the Indian summer will continue in the news affecting the lives of all of us.

In the first days of October, a session of the Council for National Minorities was held. The Serbian Prime Minister, Ana Brnabić, said on this occasion that the intention of the Serbian Government is to implement a clear and sustainable policy of enhancement of the living conditions for the majority community and national minorities alike. The aforementioned commitment has been evidenced by numerous meetings between the ministers and the representatives of the national minority councils. During these meetings, traditionally, the prevailing issues are those that imply an unequal treatment noted by the one side, and promises that this status will be changed, by the other one. In some cases, for certain national minority communities, these promises are met. For the others, they remain promises only.

Representatives of the national minority councils, too, agree with this statement. They have emphasized many times that their participation in the working groups for preparation and monitoring of the legislative framework has not been truly inclusive and equal. As it has been noted for so many times, they are frequently consulted pro-forma only, and their comments and suggestions are not taken into serious consideration. As an example, the Bosniak National Council submitted as many as 498 proposals during the drafting of the Action Plan for Exercise of Rights of National Minorities, and, as the BNC representatives claim, not even one of the aforementioned 498 proposals has been accepted and included in the draft. They have never been notified on the reasons why their proposals were dismissed.

In late October, the Serbian Government accepted the dual education proposals submitted by the Union of Vojvodina Hungarians (SVM). As some media reported, this is a group of proposals that strengthen the competencies of national minority councils, i.e. the protection of education in the mother tongue. Whether this will yield any result in practice will be known next month. Any constructive proposal should be properly regarded, irrespective if it is submitted by the majority or a minority. If we take advantage of every opportunity to boast about our national minorities and their values abroad, why can't we make sure that these very minorities feel as equal members of the society? After all, we are all citizens of the same country.

## 30 different national minorities live in Serbia



and ONE newsletter for all



# Our Results Show that We Are on the Right Course

**I**n the previous twelve months, the Ministry of the Education, Science, and Technological Development, with other relevant institutions and the national minority councils carried out numerous activities to ensure that the pupils who attend classes in the national minority languages start the new school year ready. We talked about these activities and future plans for enhancement of education in the mother tongue of national minorities with Anamarija Viček, State Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development.



**It is noted in the recently published Report on the Implementation of the Minority Actions Plan that the most substantive progress has been achieved in the education of the national minorities. What would you select as the most important achievements in this regard?**

I believe that it is important that all activities carried out by our Ministry in regard to the education in the Republic of Serbia are planned and implemented with special needs of the national minorities in mind. To this end, I would like to give a few examples. For instance, in the working groups in charge of the preparation of the plan and program for a new high school final exam, which will be introduced in the coming years, we formed special working subgroups for national minorities, i.e. for national minority languages. The final exam for these high students will include the Mother Tongue in addition to the Serbian Language. This is only one example. Simultaneously, we work on the minority languages education in the education system in the Republic of Serbia as a whole. If we need to harmonize something linguistically – we do it in cooperation with the national minority councils. They participate in the working groups, as well. We send every document the Ministry is to ratify to the national minority councils for their opinion and their comments. I think that what we have done with the class registers for the fifth grade is also important, since, as of this year, we have a few

new subjects, as well. Beginning of any school year can be quite challenging, as there are always many things to be completed, and there are sometimes delays in this process. We have been trying hard to find a solution to ensure that the new class register is translated in the national minority languages. Despite the delays, I have to note an exceptional cooperation with the national minority councils, who provide suggestions and instructions how to enhance the system as a whole.

**Despite substantive progress, great expectations we had for the beginning of the school year were not fully met and students from a few national minorities did not start the school year with the textbooks in their mother tongue. What was the cause of this delay? What do you see as the biggest problem?**

We must keep in mind that textbooks in national minority languages already exist in many cases. When we look at the statistics and when we talk what remains to be done and what we still lack, we often forget to look at the Textbooks Catalogue, the Catalogue of the Approved Textbooks which is available to the public at the Ministry's website, where we have accurate data on the textbooks available in every national minority language. If we talk about the specific problems, for instance with the Bosniak National Council, we have worked intensively to overcome the problems with some of the wording in the draft textbooks, which is not acceptable as it is not in line with the standards prescribed by the Textbooks Institute and the Institute for Promotion of Education. We have been actively engaged in finding solution to this problem, an Annex to the Memorandum was signed between the Ministry, the Textbook Institute, and the Bosniak National Council has been signed to allow that textbook appendices, which were problematic, be printed subsequently. Of the three appendices, for three subjects, two have been approved, and one was rejected. As they insisted that the set be printed, we could

not start printing the approved materials. This is a special concession we have made in order to have the textbooks approved and printed. Another concession is timeframe related. By the Law on Textbooks, we need to respect prescribed timetable. In the case of the textbooks in the national minority languages we are rather flexible in this regard. Namely, if a textbook is not approved in the first round, we send it back to the author for correction. In the case of national minorities, they are corrected as many times as necessary. In the case of the textbooks in the Albanian language, we had numerous meetings with the Albanian National Minority Council. According to the Memorandum signed between the Ministry, the Textbook Institute, and the Albanian National Minority Council, all three parties have to carry out their part of tasks. The Albanian National Mi-

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Every year we allow the classes to be combined on the school level. For instance, if there are ten children from the first to the fourth grade who would like to study the Mother Tongue with the Elements of the National Culture, one class can be formed. In the past, the children from the first to the eighth grade were combined to form one class, but this was not pedagogically correct. This year, for the first time, we have a Regulation that prescribes that a class can consist of the pupils from the first to the fourth grade only, or from the fifth to the eighth grade only, and I believe that this is a great solution from the pedagogical perspective.

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nority Council has not submitted the names of the authors, i.e. the names of the translators, and this has blocked the whole process. We cannot move on before we receive the names of the translators, as this is the procedure prescribed by the Memorandum. I sincerely hope that this procedure will be simplified after bilateral agreements have been signed with the countries of origin of those national minorities recognized by these countries. Bosniaks joined this process later than the others. A few weeks ago, when they formally recognized Bosnia and Herzegovina as their motherland, we started the preparation of a bilateral agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina. These bilateral agreements are made between our Ministry and relevant ministries in the respective countries, and they will be reciprocal agreements. In these countries, our Ministry will provide the same support to the Serbs who live there. I believe that this will be a success story, but it takes time, the procedures are long, as these are international agreements, but our Ministry has already made the first step. We have sent the invitation letters to the relevant ministries in the respective countries. At this moment, the only two replies pending are from Albania and Croatia. As soon we receive replies from them, we can take the next steps.

**For the youngest members of a few national minorities it is not possible to organize complete education in the mother tongue, predominantly because of the small number of these minorities' population and because these minorities are too dispersed. How does the state provide support to preservation of their language, culture, and tradition?**

In the case of eight national minorities it is possible to organize a complete education, from elementary to high school, in their mother tongue, but the size of the community is indeed a decisive factor. For the national minorities who meet the criteria, even kindergartens have classes in minority languages. The schools where it is not possible

to organize classes in the minority languages can provide facultative subject "Mother Tongue with Elements of the National Culture. When this possibility does not exist, or there is no interest among the local population – as it is parents who should express interest in education in the mother tongue for their children, or there are not enough children to meet the prescribed number of 15 children for opening of this class, the Ministry tries to be as forthcoming as possible. Since September, we have processed dozens of requests for formation of classes with fewer pupils than 15. There is absolutely no problem if there are 8, 9, or ten children, these classes are automatically approved. The absolute minimum is five pupils. There are cases when we have to combine several classes to come up with the aforementioned minimum. The national minority councils are required by the Law to give their opinion on such requests before the Ministry issues its decision. My impression is that in the last two years this procedure was successfully completed. The procedure is the same for the forming of groups for the Mother Tongue with the Elements of National Culture, given the small number of children in most of the schools. Every year we allow the classes to be combined on the school level. For instance, if there are ten children from the first to the fourth grade who would like to study the Mother Tongue with the Elements of the National Culture, one class can be formed. In the past, the children from the first to the eighth grade were combined to form one class, but this was not pedagogically correct. This year, for the first time, we have a Regulation that prescribes that a class can consist of the pupils from the first to the fourth grade only, or from the fifth to the eighth grade only, and I believe that this is a great solution from the pedagogical perspective.

**Numerous activities have been carried out in regard to the Serbian as the Second Language classes. What do you see as the most significant result of the in-**

## **roduction of this subject?**

I think that this is a very important question. The national minorities have the right to be educated in their mother tongue, and although pupils study all subjects in their mother tongue, the Serbian as the Second Language is a mandatory subject. This is important as it enables the young people to have access to a larger labor market if they speak the language of the country they live in. This duality is specific for the Republic of Serbia and we are the regional leader in this regard. On the one hand, the education legislation enables the national minorities to exercise their constitutional and legal right to education in the mother tongue. On the other one, the state has engaged intensively to create preconditions that they learn the language of the state through the subject the Serbian Language as the Second Language. It is interesting to note that, as early as in 2006, the Pedagogic Institute of Vojvodina made this initiative and prepared differentiated curricula and programs, but the initiative did not develop further from this stage. With the OSCE support, a major project has been implemented in the municipalities of Bujanovac, Medvedja and Preševo. This is a very interesting project and can be replicated in other parts of the country. This project facilitated creation of a differentiated framework for the Serbian Language as the Second Language classes in the aforementioned municipalities. This is particularly important, since, on the one hand, we need to take into consideration the mother tongue of a child. There are languages that are similar to the Serbian language, and it is not the same if the child's mother tongue is Bosnian or Slovak, or Hungarian, or Albanian. These are languages that are completely different and the methodology of the Serbian language study has to be adequate. This was exactly the approach implemented in the project, with the Standards for the Serbian as the Second Language, which were ratified this year. This is just

the first step in a lengthy procedure, but if we take into account how long we had waited for these Standards, this is a very important step. We are in the process of preparation of a new curriculum for the Serbian as the Second Language, the same way our Ministry has planned the overall reform of the curricula, based on the benchmarks. When we have the new curricula completed, we will start the preparation of the new textbooks in line with the new curricula. I believe that the provisions of the Minority Action Plan for the Chapter 23 show that we are on the right course. Despite certain delays, I strongly believe that we have moved in the right direction and taken the right steps to gain momentum.

**What are the plans of the Ministry for the coming period? What are the most important activities in regard to the education in the national minority languages and what do you see as the biggest challenge in this process?**

I believe that the practice the Ministry has established thus far that, whenever we consider an education related issue, we keep in mind the specific needs of the national minorities and the education languages, will continue to be as affirmative and as successful. Our Minister is a member of the Council for National Minorities chaired by Prime Minister Brnabić. We regularly meet and follow all reporting to the international organizations coordinated by the Office for Human and Minority Rights.

I think that the key to our success is that this is our joint endeavor. This is not only the task of the Ministry, this is also the task of the national minority councils, and our cooperation is outstanding. Every time we open a new issue or revise a regulation that affects the national minorities as well, we always consult with their representatives. I truly believe that we are on the right course and that we only need to continue building on what we have achieved thus far.



# Serbia among the Leaders in Work with National Minorities

Source: Office for Human and Minority Rights

**T**he Prime Minister of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, Ana Brnabić, said that differences are respected in Serbia and added that our country will continue to implement the policy on the basis of which we are recognized in the EU as one of the leaders in work with national minorities and observance of their rights.

In the first session of the Council for National Minorities, Brnabić emphasized the importance of a continued engagement with the national minority councils, noting the Government's commitment in this regard.

She pointed out that the priority in the coming period will be a full implementation of the Action Plan for Execution of Rights of National Minorities in Serbia, adding that the fourth report had been completed and that the work on the fifth reports commenced with full cooperation with the national minority councils.



The Prime Minister expressed expectation that she will meet again with the national minority councils in the near future, and assessed that the Action Plan is a living matter, and, in order to keep it in line with the time and the needs of the national minorities, it is open for a possible revision.

In reply to the question whether she had a chance to talk to the representatives of the Albanian national minority after the information that Kosovo offered passports and citizenship to

"In the previous reporting period, around 65% of the envisaged activities have been implemented, and we experienced delays in implementation of around 10% of the activities predominantly linked to the launch of implementation of a number of projects and to the dynamic dependent on the ratification of certain legislation", Paunović said.

She also noted that, since the beginning of the calendar year, local self government units with national minority population, the Councils for Interethnic Relations, and higher education units have been included in the reporting process, adding that, in order to improve the quality of the implementation of the Action Plan and the reporting, training sessions had been organized for more than 70 local self-government units and their staff during September.

"I expect the quality of the reporting and dynamic of the implementation of the Minority Action Plan to be even better and more visible in the coming period," Paunović concluded.

The President of the Hungarian National Minority Council, Jenő Hajnal, expressed satisfaction over the fact that the Prime Minister presided over the Council for National Minorities.

"Our cooperation will be particularly intensive in the coming months and this is important for us, since the legislation that regulates human and minority rights includes strategies for culture, media, and the education laws, which are of outmost importance for us," Hajnal concluded.



The Prime Minister announced that completion of Draft Law on Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities and the Draft Law on National Minority Councils is in its final phase.

"It is important that we, as the Government, submit the two draft laws to the Assembly for ratification as soon as possible and continue to work on the priorities identified by the national councils, namely the education and information. To this end, we will allocate funds from the National Minorities Budget Fund for information in minority languages", Brnabić said.

the Albanians from South Serbia, Brnabić said that this issue was not mentioned and that it is possible to talk only about the matters in line with the Constitution and the laws of Serbia.

The Director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights, Suzana Paunović, said that the Government endorsed the Action Plan for Execution of Rights of National Minorities in March 2016, and that the Council regularly discusses this Action Plan, adding that over 400 actors participate in the quarterly reporting on the implementation of the Plan on the ground.

# Amendments to Both Minority Laws to Be Ratified by Mid-December



**O**n October 25, the Center for Migration Studies, with support of the Foundation for Open Society, organized a round table discussion on pending amendments to the Law on Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities under the umbrella of the Minority News Project.

The participants in the round table included representatives of the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self Government, the Institute of Social Sciences, the Human Rights Lawyers Committee, the Coordination of the National Minority Councils, and the individual national minority councils.

In her opening address, the Project Director, Biljana Jovic, noted that the topic is of outmost importance of the national minorities in Serbia. She reminded the participants in the event that representatives of the Coordination of the national minority councils, civil society, and the expert organizations submitted their comments and proposals during the public debate on the draft law. "Before the final draft enters the Parliamentary procedure, it

is important to determine if the relevant authorities were receptive to these comments at all, whether they made relevant changes in the draft law, or this was yet another exercise of a pro-forma democratic procedure", Jovic said.



Ljiljana Bekcic addressed the attendees on behalf of the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government. She pointed out that the Ministry's priority in the previous months was to prepare amendments to the Law on Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities, as well as the amendments to the Law on National Minority Councils. She reminded the

participants that ratification of these amendments have been envisaged by the Action Plan for Exercise of Right of National Minorities. "The extraordinary parliamentary elections slowed down the activities in preparation of the draft amendments. After the Government

had been formed, the conditions were put in place to form a Working Group, which prepared the Draft Law. The public debate was organized in December 2016, and, on September 13, we received the evaluation of the draft from the European Commission. Upon receipt of the evaluation, we organized a meeting with the representatives of the Coordination, who looked into the draft law and the recommendations received from the European Commission".

Bekcic also reminded other participants on the course of the amendments. "I would like to note that the Law on Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities was ratified in 2002, at the time the federal state still existed. In 2006, after Montenegro had declared independence, this Law became the republic law. In 2006, when the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia was ratified,



it was necessary to make terminology adjustments, i.e. harmonize a number of provisions of the Law on Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities with the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia." As she explained further, additional amendments were necessary in light of the requirements defined by the Minority Action Plan, predominantly in regard to the creation of legal provisions for entry of national background data for members of the na-

tional minorities in official registers, in line with the constitutional principle on freedom of declaration of ethnic affiliation. As she said, as a consequence to this, the amendments to the Law on National Registry Books were required, and this process is about to be completed soon. The third group of amendments provide basis for affirmative measures for national minorities, by introducing legal provisions that will ensure equality of all employees in the public sector.

As Ljiljana Bekcic said, the law should be ratified mid-December, at the same time as the Amendments to the Law on National Minority Councils. This information provoked strong reaction of all participants, who were visibly surprised, since the positions of the organizations taking part in the debate are profoundly different from the solutions proposed by the state in the case of the Law on National Minority Councils.

## BAŠIĆ: There Should Be Only One Law for Minorities and Their Self-Governments

Goran Bašić, the Director of the Institute for Social Sciences, assessed that there should be one law that would define the position of the national minorities, their immediate participation in the public life, and the position of the minority self governments. As he said, the existing laws should have been changed for more relevant reasons than the state provided in the justification document. "This Law should have been changed to provide a direct participation of national minorities in all social processes, because, at the moment, we have a segregation model of multiculturalism and because gap between the national minorities and the majority is getting deeper and wider every day. The draft law at hand makes absolutely no changes whatsoever in this regard, it will not enable us to build a healthy minority policy and help this situation improve. I believe that we



should have waited for the new Constitution to be endorsed and only then proceeded with the amendments to the minority laws, regardless of the delay this would cause in implementation of the Chapter 23 Action Plan." As he

elaborated, a delay in the Chapter 23 would have caused less damage than ratification of a law without a clearly defined social policy which provides for long term stability of democracy and relations among people who live in this country.

Representatives of the Bosniak National Council, Muhedin Fijuljanin i Ahmedin Škrijelj, agreed fully with this position. Fijuljanin noted that a single law should regulate the minority policy in the country, it should be a supreme law regulating the minority policy as a whole, whereas Škrijelj, who is also a member of the working group for preparation of the draft, pointed out that the legitimate needs of individual national minorities, have been totally ignored in the process. "The Bosniak National Council has submitted a number of comments, even a full draft law proposal, and they have been immediately rejected without any elaboration."

## LULIĆ: Numerous Diverse Perspectives

Emil Lulić, a lawyer in the National Council of the Hungarian National Minority, presented the positions of the Coordination of the National Minority Councils. As he said, the Coordination could not agree on a joint position in regard to the draft Law. "We know that the existing law has "worn out" over the years. The most important provisions that protect individual and collective rights have been transferred either to the Constitution or have been elaborated further in subsequent legislation, such as the Law on Na-

tional Minority Councils. We were unified on the legal force of the law and we agreed that the minority legislation should have supremacy over other laws, since they can only be ratified by a qualified majority. We were deeply hurt to hear that some of other laws represent an umbrella or system legislation, and that the minority laws are not as relevant. Some members of the Coordination insisted on a special provision in the draft Law that would clearly prescribe its supremacy over other legislation,

whereas other had a firm position that we should wait for the amendments to the Constitution, and, to this end, the given solutions, although temporary, can be considered as satisfactory", Lulić concluded.

The participants in the round table agreed that ratification of a new legislation in such a short timeframe is not what we need at the moment and that it would be much more effective and adequate to continue the debate and ratify the law next year.



# Continued Promotion of Languages and Culture of National Minorities

Source: Government of the Republic of Serbia

**I**n the meeting held on October 17, the Minister of Culture and Information in the Government of the Republic of Serbia, Vladan Vukosavljević, and representatives of the Coordination of the National Minority Councils noted a high level of understanding in regard to the preparation of the development of culture for the next 10 years.

The interlocutors agreed that it is necessary that Serbia gets an umbrella law in culture, and that tackled parts of the strategy in regard to the activities of the national minorities are undoubtedly important in this regard.

The interlocutors also looked into the affirmative measures for strengthen-



ing of the use of language and alphabet, the cultural institutes of the national minorities, as well as the publishing and librarian activities.

The meeting was attended by the President of the Hungarian National Minority Council, Hajnal Jenő, the president of the Executive Board of

the Croatian National Council, Darko Sarić Lukendić, the President of the Bunjevac National Minority Council, Suzana Kujundzić Ostojić, the Deputy President of the Bosniak National Council, Muhedin Fijuljanin, and the Secretary of the Romanian National Council, Dragan Marčel.

## Four National Minority Cultural Institutes Participated in the Belgrade Book Show

Source: Cultural Institute of the Vojvodina Slovaks

**A**t the 62nd Belgrade Book Show, the stand of the Provincial Secretariat for Education, Regulations, Public Administration, and National Minorities – National Communities and the Provincial Secretariat for Culture, Public Information, and Relations with Religious Communities, brought together representatives of four cultural institutes of national minorities – Hungarian, Slovak, Ruthenian, and Croatian - which presented their publications.

The Representatives of the cultural institutes talked about books in the minority languages, successes and challenges in book publishing, and problems the institutes face in their



work. Tamazs Varga talked about Hungarian publishing, Ana Hrčan Leskovac about Slovak publishing, Anamarija Ranković about the Ruthenian publishing, whereas Katarina Čeliković shared the experiences of the Cultural Institute of the Vojvodina Croats.

Radoslav Petković and Živana Živano-

vić participated in the talks on behalf of the Secretariat. They noted the need of a joint presentation of the publishing production and commended the initiative for participation of the cultural institutes' representatives in the Book Show. Nevertheless, they added, a public space should be created for joint presentation of these productions to

the readers. This first step in the joint presentation of the publishing productions showed that, in addition to a creation of a book, an additional engagement is needed to ensure its distribution, public presentation, magazine reviews, purchase, and translation, as well as to secure awards and incentives to young authors.

# Media Platform “Minority News” Presented in Istanbul

**T**he International Summit “City and Civil Society” was organized in Istanbul from October 20-22, 2017 by the Office of the President of the Republic of Turkey, Recep Taip Erdogan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of European Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, and the Esenler Municipality. The Summit brought together 192 participants from the academic and civil sector from 158 organizations in 60 countries of Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas and Australia.

The participants in the Summit



looked into 17 topics, from those directly linked to the Syrian crisis and refugee assistance, through poverty, social assistance and philanthropy, capacity building of civil society, and multiculturalism, to the visionary issues of the role of the civil society in energy preservation, and human rights from the perspective of urban architecture.

The Minority News Media Platform, consisting of the informational web portal, a monthly publication, and TV production “National Minorities Chronicle” was presented in the Summit as one of the best practice



examples, and the Project Director, Biljana Jović, was one of the key note speakers on the topic of coexistence and multiculturalism. The Platform’s contents and the relevant information about the initiative were presented on a display throughout the Summit and were received with a great interest among other participants and the visitors.

“We are honoured that the quality of our work has been recognized internationally and that we had an

opportunity to present it to a high number of prominent colleagues from all over the world. We have made many important contacts, numerous organizations expressed interest in launching similar initiatives in their communities with our help, and we have also made tentative agreements on participation in conferences in Asia, Africa, and Europe. A number of participants came from the academic and civil society organizations in the Middle East, and I personally found it very interesting to learn more about the specifics of work of the colleagues from this part of the world, who predominantly focus their efforts on the assistance to a high number of Syrian refugees in their countries”, the Minority News Project Director, Biljana Jović, said in an interview to the National Minorities Chronicle upon return from Istanbul.





# Standards for the Bosnian Language for the Final High School Exam Presented

Source: BNV



**O**n October 21, the Working Group of the Institute for Evaluation of the Quality of Education presented the Draft Standards for the Bosnian Language for the Final Exam of High School Education at the premises of the Bosniak National Council.

Esad Džudžo, the Council's Deputy President, gave opening remarks and noted that the educational standards for the Bosnian Language for the final high school education exam are a "cherry on the top" of the process of introduction of complete education in the Bosnian language.

He also pointed out that the educational standards represent a foundation for preparation of the final exam for the high school education, and that the students, who enrolled in the first year of high school this year, will be able, for the first time, to take their final exam in the Bosnian language, the same way the students of the final year

of the elementary school in the classes in the Bosnian language took their final exam in the Bosnian language.

Draft Educational Standards of the Bosnian Language for the Final High School Exam were prepared as a part of the project "Development of the Bosnian Language Standards", which was implemented by the Institute for Evaluation of the Quality of Education, through a working group consisting of the Bosnian language teachers, Melida Rebronja, Elvira Djekić, and Alisa Džemić, and a consultant, Prof. Sead Šemsović, PhD.

During the presentation, the members of the Working Group briefed the attendees on the defined scope, general and specific subject competencies, the scopes of the language, literature, and language culture through basic, medium, and advanced levels of draft standards.

Prof. Sead Šemsović, PhD, the consul-

tant of the Working Group and the author of the educational curriculum and textbooks in use in the Bosnian language classes, noted the importance of the standards in the process of the development of the education in the Bosnian language in the Republic of Serbia and added that the standards represent the over-arching norms of education.

The Project "Development of the Bosnian Language Standards", which was launched in early 2017 upon request of the Bosniak National Council, is presently in its final phase.

After any suggestions for amendments have been entered, the educational standards are ratified by the National Educational Council and they become a part of the educational process in the Bosnian language in Sandžak.

The presentation was attended by the Bosnian language teachers from Sandžak.

## RTV Programs in the Bulgarian Language As Well

Izvor: BNV

**A**s of October 19, the third radio channel of the Radio Television of Vojvodina broadcasts a production in the Bulgarian language.

This is the program "A Friendly Talk" („Приятелска дума"), which is broadcast every other Thursday from 14:15 to 14:45.

As a reminder, the three radio channels have broadcast programs in the Serbian,

Hungarian, Slovak, Ruthenian, Slovak, Roma, Ukrainian, Romanian, Croatian, Bunjevac, Macedonian, Albanian, German, and Montenegrin languages, and, as of October 19, in the Bulgarian language as well.

# Bošnjak Meets with Representatives of the National Council of the Croatian National Minority

Source: Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government

**N**ewly appointed Co-chairman of the Intergovernmental Mixed Committee of Serbia and Croatia and the State Secretary in the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, Ivan Bošnjak, met with representatives of the National Council of the Croatian National Minority in Subotica on October 9.

During the meeting, the interlocutors tackled the position of this national minority in Serbia and enhancement of the institutional framework for the exercise of their rights.

The representatives of the National Council of the Croatian National Minority expressed satisfaction over resolution of the issue of the elementary school textbooks, and pointed out that there is work to be done in regard to the textbooks for high schools and pre-school education.



The State Secretary noted that the two laws that promote rights and position of the national minorities and the work of the national minority councils are to be amended by the end of the year. Bošnjak announced that the meeting of the Intergovernmental Mixed Committee will be held by the end of the year.

The meeting, which was initiated by

the Co-chairman of the Intergovernmental Mixed Committee of Serbia and Croatia and the State Secretary Bošnjak, was attended by the Croatian Consul General in Subotica, Goran Bakota, representatives of the local self government and heads of three administrative regions, as well as the national coordinator for open issues with the Republic of Croatia, Nemanja Stevanović.

## Žigmanov Nominated for a New Term

Source: Hrvatska Rijec

**N**omination for the director of the Cultural Institute of Vojvodina Croats stirred a debate on the 65th regular session of the Croatian National Council held in Subotica on October 6. However, with a majority of votes (17 for, 5 against, 1 sustained), the councilmen decided to nominate the philosophy

professor from Subotica, Tomislav Žigmanov, who served in this position in the previous four-year term.

“The earlier work of Tomislav Žigmanov in the Institute has shown that he insists on professional activities and contents of high quality that promote, inspire, preserve, develop and organize the cul-

tural heritage of the Vojvodina Croats, producing, at the same time, new cultural events, carrying out scientific research, presenting the contemporary art, enabling and promoting auto-representational practices in the cultural life of the Vojvodina Croats, and strengthening self-reception of the national heritage”, the CNC decision specifies.

## A Team for Preparation of the School Center Project Formed

**O**n October 9, in the constitutive session held at the premises of the Croatian National Council, a team was formed for preparation of the school project. The Team coordinator, the Advisor to the CNC President for Development Projects, Jasna Vojnić, said that the project documentation should

be completed by the end of the year and that during the month of October, the team will visit Croatian school centers in Pecuh, Sarajevo, and Banjaluka, as well as the Serbian Grammar School in Zagreb. The next meeting of the Team has been scheduled for the following week, when the team members will look into the

adopted Strategy of Education in the Croatian Language in the Republic of Serbia. The other members of the Team for the preparation of the project are: Tomislav Žigmanov, Katarina Čeliković, Josip Bako, Darko Sarić Lukendić, Margareta Uršal, Dajana Šimić, Josip Stantić, Rev. Mirko Štefković, Kristijan Bartuš, Emil Lulić.



# “Hlas Ljudu” Celebrates the 73rd Anniversary

Source: Hlas Ljudu/Provincial Government



On October 19, the only weekly in the Slovak language, “Hlas Ljudu” celebrated its 73rd anniversary.

As a part of the celebration, the director of the News and Publishing Institute “Hlas Ljudu”, Samuel Zjak, presented years of service awards to the employees you have worked at the institute for 35, 25, 20, and 10 years. At the same time, the Weekly’s annual awards were presented. The committee granted the first prize to Juraj Bartoš, the second to Oto Filip, and the third to Jasmina Panik. As Vladimira Dorčova-Valtnerova, the acting Editor-in-Chief, said, these very names appear on the list of the award recipients almost every year for a good reason, as their work is marked by a professional approach to journalism and a critical discourse.

Awards to the Weekly’s best correspondent and the best associate in the youth magazine “Vzlet”, also one of the “Hlas Ljudu” publications were also presented.

The ceremony was attended by the president of the Slovak National Minority Council, Ana Tomanova-Makanova, the President of the Slovak Heritage in Serbia, Jan Brtko, the Assistant Provincial Secretary for Culture, Public Information, and Relations with Religious Communities, Djordje



Vukmirović, representatives of the News and Publishing Institute “Ruske Slovo”, etc.

“The Mission that your weekly has in preservation of the national and cultural identity of the Slovak community is extraordinary, and your 73 years long existence confirms competence of not one, but many generations of journalists and editors of the “Hlas Ljudu” in completing this mission,” Vukmirović said, extending congratulations on behalf of the Provincial Secretariat to the staff of the “Hlas Ljudu”.

He noted the extraordinary importance of information in national minority languages and added that the state’s support to its preservation and development will continue to be as maximal as possible.

“This is not just a result of desire to respect international standards or responsibilities envisaged by the domestic legislation. This is, above all, a profound, clear, and permanent commitment of the Serbian society and the evidence of its democratic nature,” Vukmirović emphasized.



# A Clear and Sustainable Policy of Enhancement of Position of All National Minorities

Source: Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government

**M**inister of Public Administration and Local Self Government, Branko Ružić, met with representatives of the Vlach National Minority Council and discussed the position of this minority and standardization of the Vlach language. He noted in the meeting that the Ministry is open to all national minority councils and emphasized that the Government of the Republic of Serbia implements a clear and sustainable policy of enhancement of position of all national minorities.



The Minister reminded that the work on the amendments to the Law on Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities and the Law on National Minority Councils is in its final phase and said that he expects that the solutions envisaged by the new laws would substantively contribute to the enhancement of the exercise of the rights and freedoms of the national minorities.

The President of the Vlach National Minority Council, Dragiša Radojević, pointed out the need for increased financial support to the work of the National Minority Council for organization of cultural events and the information in the Vlach speech.

In response, the Minister reminded that, after 15 years, conditions had been cre-

ated for allocation of money from the Budget National Minority Fund.

Closing the meeting, the Minister repeated that every national minority has the right to express its national affiliation and that the state institutions will continue to respect self determination of identity of national minorities in the Republic of Serbia.

## Bunjevac Community

# “Bunjevac Gold” in Sremski Karlovci

Source: Bunjevac Media Center Sombor

**O**n October 17, the Citizens' Association, “Bunjevac Circle” from Sombor, organized an exhibition of straw art, “Bunjevac Gold”, in Sremski Karlovci.

The art is exhibited in the beautiful environment of the Sremski Karlovci Museum, the legacy of Patriarch Josif Rajačić, in the “Homeland Collection” Hall.

In his opening remarks, the deputy president of the Association, Aleksandar Bošnjak, expressed gratitude to the hosts and the friends who helped the organization of the exhibition, whereas Aleksandra Medurić Kalčan, also the deputy president of the Association, talked about the Association and the work of the Straw Art Section. The curator of the Museum, Divna Gačić, conveyed satisfaction over organization of the exhibition at the Museum and proposed future cooperation.

There are thirty paintings and art works of the members of the Association in four large exhibition halls, and the opening ceremony also featured a show of formal Bunjevac folk costumes worn by the members of the “Bunjevac Circle”. A high number of visitors showed great interest in the straw art techniques.

The exhibition was organized with support of the Town of Sombor, the Provincial Secretariat for Culture, Public Information, and Relations with Religious Communities, and individual donations. The Exhibition will be open until November 15.

The first straw art workshop has been immediately scheduled for October 28 at the premises of the Sremski Karlovci

Museum, where the straw artists will demonstrate the straw art techniques.

The work of the Sombor straw artists is rightfully referred to as the “Bunjevac Gold”, as the results of the regional festival of amateur showed recently. The exceptional work of the members of the Bunjevac Circle Straw Art Section - the total of 5 works by Irena Vuković, Milica Kohut, Mina Ševo (oil on canvas), Ksenija Vuković, and Ilonka Bogišić – were selected in the municipal competition by the academic painter, Tanja Dimitrijević, and then exhibited in the Regional Art Festival of the municipalities of Sombor, Kula, Odžaci, and Apatin. Following the selection of the works in Kula, two straw art works – “Sombor Preparandija” by Milica Kohut, and “Breakfast” by Irena Vuković - were selected for the Provincial Festival, which will take place in Palić on November 5, 2017.



# Celebration at the Hungarian Language Department in Novi Sad

Source: [www.vajma.info](http://www.vajma.info)



he recipient of the Ervin Sinko Award is Zoka Hernjak.

On October 16, the Hungarian Language Department of the Philosophy Faculty in Novi Sad celebrated its 58th anniversary.

In the ceremony on this important occasion, the Department Head, Erzsebet Csányi, noted the importance of the many years of the work of a minority institution for the community, in light of the fact that students receive their academic education in the mother tongue, in the Hungarian lan-



guage, and that this importance cannot be measured by the number of

the diplomas issued.

The only other educational institution in Vojvodina that has a similar role is the Hungarian Department of the Art Academy in Novi Sad and the Teachers Faculty in Subotica - Erzsebet Csányi noted, adding that such an institutional system needs to be expanded by "courage of the bravest".

On the occasion of the anniversary, this year's recipient of the Sinko Ervin Literary Award, Zoka Hernjak, was presented with the prestigious prize for her first book "Morze", published by "zEtna".

## New Premises for the Youth Club in Mali Idjos



In the former Cooperative Center in Mali Idjos (Kishegyes), a reconstructed part of the building, where the Youth Club of Mali Idjos will work from, was formally opened.

The keys to the new offices were symbolically presented to the youth by the Deputy State Secretary for Youth of the Ministry for Human Resources in Hungary, Dr Boglarka Illes, and the president of the Local Community Council in Mali Idjos, Zoltan Mohacsi.

Speaking about the reconstruction of a part of the Cooperative Center, the member of the Municipal Council for Youth Affairs, Karol Kovacs, noted that the investment was carried out with support of the Republic of Hungary in the amount of 700,000 ft (around Euros 2,300) and that many young people will gather in these premises.

Zoltan Mohacsi also reminded that the Cooperative Center had been originally



built with the donations of the residents of Mali Idjos, but ended as private property during the privatization of the Cooperative. However, he

added, the residents succeeded in returning the ownership over the building to the village after they had taken the matter to court.

# Secure Enhanced Visibility of Roma in the Society

Source: Government of the Republic of Serbia

**D**eputy Prime Minister and President of the Coordination Body for Social Inclusion of Roma Men and Women, Zorana Mihajlović, said that the inclusion of Roma in the society is not the matter of one institution; instead, it is

specific steps that would contribute to the enhanced quality of life of this community.

“The Government wants the Roma inclusion in practice. Our job is to find employment to them, to enable all those

300 Roma men and women are enrolled in colleges and universities at the moment, which was not the case in the past, and that Serbia is the only country in Europe where, at the Higher Professional School in Vršac, Roma students receive academic education in their mother tongue.

“These are great results, but we have to do more. The fact that 11 Roma students graduated from the Academy for Forensic and Police Studies, and that none of them has been employed yet is alarming and we, as a society, have to help this situation change”, she emphasized.

The Senior European Commission Advisor for Coordination of Roma Policy, Martha Garcia Fidalgo, noted that Roma inclusion is at the heart of the European integrations of Serbia.

“Today we are looking at what we - the state, local self-governments, NGOs, international donors – can do together to enhance the position of Roma. The European Commission will provide assistance, since this is important for further EU integrations of Serbia,” Garcia Fidalgo noted.

The Chief Negotiator for Serbia’s accession to the EU, Tanja Mišćević, said that the inclusion of the Roma community in the social life in the country is very important for EU integrations of Serbia.

“This places us among the modern and developed European countries. This is a major endeavor and I am very grateful to DPM Mihajlović on the job well done, since, thus, as a team, we represent Serbia in the negotiations and, more importantly, in the reforms that we carry out,” Mišćević said.

The President of the Roma National Minority Council, Tefik Ramadanović, noted the importance of the seminar and the goal of securing enhanced visibility of Roma men and women in the institutions and the Serbian society as a whole.



the matter that should be worked on by the Government as a whole, nongovernmental sector, Roma associations, and our European partners.

In her opening remarks in the seminar on the social inclusion of the Roma men and women on October 19, Mihajlović noted that all stakeholders have to work together to provide better conditions for employment, education, health care and housing to the Roma community.

As she pointed out, it is very important ratify strategic documents, such as the Roma Strategy and the Action Plan and the Housing Law, which meets the international standards. However, it is more important to take

who pass entry exams to enroll in a faculty and provide Roma coordinators in every institution”, she said, pointing out the importance of bringing this process to the local self government level, since no results will be possible without cooperation with towns and municipalities.

Mihajlović reminded that more than







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