

**Elections for
National Minority
Councils Slated**

**Election Lists for the
National Councils to Be
Submitted by October 19**

48 Minority News

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Slaven Bačić: Elections for HNV Members Again by the Electoral Assembly

**"Haus Regina"
Center Open
to Citizens**

**"Beauty of Diversity"
Festival Organized in
Bela Crkva**

HIGHLIGHTS



Elections for National Minority Councils Slated

On August 17, Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Government Branko Ružić slated elections for national minority councils for November 4. Of the twenty-two national minority communities that will elect members to their national minority councils in 2018, 18 have met the requirement for direct elections, while 4 will go for electoral assembly elections. The deadline for submitting the lists for direct elections is 15 days prior to the date of direct elections, whereas the deadline for electoral assembly elections is 30 days prior to the elections. The Minister once again called all citizens, members of national minority communities living in Serbia, to exercise their right to vote and to enroll in the Special Voters List.



"Beauty of Diversity" Festival Organized in Bela Crkva

The sixth international and multicultural festival "Beauty of Diversity" was held on July 13-15 in the organization of the Association "Czech Word Kruščica" and the National Council of the Czech National Minority. Guests from the Czech Republic, Romania, as well as from Smederevo, Padina, Plandište, Kruščica and many other towns and villages participated in the Festival. After they had thanked to all those who helped the organization of the Festival, the participants danced a kolo together and in this way, interwoven in different costumes, showed again in the best possible way how beautiful the diversity promoted by this Festival is.



Request to the Municipality of Vrbas to Introduce the Montenegrin Language into Official Use

The legal team of the Montenegrin Party sent a letter to the president of the municipality of Vrbas, Milan Glušac, requesting that the local self-government introduce the Montenegrin language into official use by the end of September 2018.

The Party reminded in its statement that, as provided by the amendments to the Law on the Official Use of Languages and Scripts, local self-government is obliged to introduce in equal terms the language and the script of the national minority into official use if its members constitute 15% of the population in that territory.

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As Years Go By...

A year ago, this same part of the newsletter was dedicated to the then two hot topics - education in the mother tongue and national councils of national minorities - from the perspective of the expected NMC elections. A year later, these same issues still require our attention, although education remains a bit overshadowed by the coming national councils' elections.

However, even before the beginning of the summer holidays, members of national minorities who deal with education repeatedly encountered a problem concerning student surveys on level of interest in the study of elective subjects, including the mother tongue study. Namely, as they said, once again the deadline for submission of the questionnaires was not respected. In some schools, the documents were delivered one or two days before the end of the school year, and, as a consequence, students, as well as their parents, did not have enough time to make their mind up and fill them out. Opinions about this problem were divided. One part of the public believes that decisiveness of studying the mother tongue cannot be affected by the time of delivery of the ballot, because "who has decided to attend classes of the mother tongue knows it even before the questionnaires are delivered", while others saw it as a yet another degradation of the status of members of national minorities.

There is not much time left before the beginning of the school year, and, according to the current situation, this school year will not start without usual troubles either, this time when it comes to pupils of the first and fifth grades of elementary schools who attend classes in minority languages. The printing of textbooks for these classes is delayed to a large extent, despite the agreement signed between the Ministry of Education and the National Council two years ago precisely to avoid such situations. A strong will that existed two years ago has somehow faded along the way, and all that has remained seems to be just another dead letter on paper.

30 different national minorities live in Serbia



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Elections for HNV Members Again by the Electoral Assembly

More than two years ago, the President of Croatia and the then Prime Minister of Serbia signed a document on improving relations and resolving open issues between the two countries. A number of provisions concerned the position of the Croatian minority in Serbia and the rights guaranteed to members of the Croatian minority. For the Minority News, the President of the Croatian National Council, Dr Slaven Bačić, presents his view of the current situation.



During the public hearings on the draft amendments to the minority laws which have recently been adopted, the national councils of national minorities, professional public, and civil society made numerous comments and objections. To what extent is the Croatian National Council satisfied with the amendments to the minority laws?

We also submitted comments and objections to both minority laws. I think that the entire process was more formal in nature, it tackled a few ambiguities in the system, and did not strive to introduce some new rights or improve-

ments. When it comes to the rights, there are several new elements that were more important. One of them is the introduction of a record of national self declaration, since this is one of the parameters on the basis of which the representation of minorities in the public administration can be assessed. The nationality will be entered in the birth registry books, but, unfortunately, for the child only. We proposed that the method used before 1965 be reintroduced, that not only the nationality of the child, but also the nationality of the parents, be entered, because I believe that national affiliation, above all, is a feeling that is acquired in time. It

is very difficult to declare that a child who has just been born is of a certain nationality. Of course, we have this tradition that the data on the newborn children are usually entered into the birth registry books based on the nationality of the father, but, if the child grows up in a different environment, this can change. This process has started, but I regret that it has not been consistently implemented, this information should also be entered into marriage registries, as it used to be, as well as in the registries of the deceased, and then we would have a more precise record. The new Law also introduced a significant novelty that MPs in the

Serbian Parliament can speak in their mother tongue, and also, if a national minority makes more than 2%, its members are able to address the republic authorities in writing in their own language. Some of the legal solutions we suggested would have greatly helped in resolving some practical matters. I will give you an example. Most of our competencies are based on the provision of opinion on various proposals to the state authorities. Among the most important ones is the one that relates to the competition for the distribution of funding for cultural and information activities. We provide opinions and suggestions, and it often happens that we are requested to deliver an opinion in two to three days, and that we do it by phone only. We proposed that a deadline of 15 days be envisaged, so that the process of considering thoroughly all proposals can be carried out, and that, if our opinions and suggestions are not accepted by the state authorities, we are provided with the explanation. Regrettably, our objections and suggestions were rejected. I think it would have been very useful if they had been accepted.

We can say that the adoption of the laws was an overture for what is to come in November, for elections for national councils of national minorities. Will the representatives of the Croatian National Council be elected by electoral assembly or directly in the coming elections?

Unfortunately, this time, the elections will be carried out through the electoral assembly, due to the insufficient number of registered members of the Croatian minority in the Special Voters List. The main problem is our large territorial dispersion, fewer than 58,000 citizens have declared as Croats in Serbia, of whom 10,000 in Belgrade and in central Serbia, namely 7,500 in Belgrade and 2,500 in central Serbia, and, out of those 10,000, only a few hundred are registered in the Special Voters List. This means that most have been registered in Vojvodina and this drastically

raises the threshold, from 40 to 60 percent, which we cannot objectively achieve. There has been an increase of 4,000 voters in the List, compared to the previous elections, but we still lack more than 2,000 for direct elections. It is likely that in the next census there will be fewer members of all national



minorities, including the Croats, and then we will probably be able fulfil the quota.

How is the Croatian National Council preparing for the elections and what are the plans for the coming period?

I do not have some great powers. I was elected on one list, as a member of the Democratic Alliance of Croats in Vojvodina, but I have to act here as a representative of the Croatian National Council, not as a representative of a single list or one party. We have undertaken several activities that we think are important for the elections, such as the question of the verification of the signatures for the elections for national councils, since, in the past, it was done by the courts, municipal and city authorities, etc. It is the public notaries now, who have the exclusive right to verify the signatures, and the question is whether these services will be free, as before. The Law on National Minority Councils provides that no fees shall be

paid for national councils, but notaries do not work for free. This is a formal question. On our initiative, the Ministry issued the opinion that this provision applies to notaries as well. And the conclusion is that the signatures should be certified free of charge by the Public Notary Chamber.

To what extent is there interest in the Croatian community, especially among young people, for engaging in the work of the National Council, and will this be seen in the elections, or, more im-

We have a number of young people who are engaged in the work of cultural and artistic societies or work in the field of information, rarely in some other spheres, but there is one provision that is very positive in this regard - all decisions made by the National Council must be publicly announced on their website. I think that this is of great benefit to the entire community, because they can get acquainted with the powers of the National Council and then may look differently at the whole issue of our work.

Importantly, in the composition of the HNV after the November elections?

Yes, this is one of the biggest problems, because, when we look at the structure of the Croatian community according to the latest census, it is one of the oldest communities. On the other hand, since Croatia is a member of the European Union, many young people, if they apply for and receive the Croatian citizenship, go to the countries of the European Union, most often to Ger-

many. We have a number of young people who are engaged in the work of cultural and artistic societies or work in the field of information, rarely in some other spheres, but there is one provision that is very positive in this regard - all decisions made by the National Council must be publicly announced on their website. I think that this is of great benefit to the entire community, because they can get acquainted with the powers of the National Council and then may look differently at the whole issue of our work.

We mentioned the younger population, and we cannot but also look into the issue of education. The Minister of Education of the Republic of Croatia, Blaženka Divjak, during her official visit, announced the establishment of the Croatian Language Department at the University of Novi Sad. On one occasion you said that the field of education is one of the better resolved areas, where a visible progress has been made in the recent period. How much progress has been made in regard to the establishment of the Croatian Language Department and what does it mean to the Croatian community?

The greatest progress has been made in what was most talked about in the media - the issue of textbooks for teaching in the Croatian language. We, unfortunately, resorted to solving this problem ourselves in 2012 through translation of textbooks - we translated the textbooks into Serbian, into Croatian, into Latin. However, two years ago, as a result of the Action Plan for the Exercise of the Rights of National Minorities, all national minorities that have classes in their own language, perhaps seven or eight minorities, have signed dual agreements with the Ministry of Education and the Institute for the Publishing of Textbooks, breaking the deadlock in regard to this issue, which troubled not only us, but also all other minorities. The textbooks problem has been well resolved based on the aforementioned agreements. Lectures of the Croatian language at the Novi Sad University represent a very important step forward for us. It is the same model

that exists for the Serbian language study abroad. In this case, the lecturers will be financed by Croatia and we expect them to be closely connected with the teaching in the Serbian language due to the insufficient language competence of those who teach in Croatian language. It often happens that, although the lectures are formally conducted in Croatian, they are, in fact, carried out in the Serbian language, as teachers are not familiar with the ter-

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minology. In time, this language course should evolve into the Croatian Language Department, similar to the Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian, and Ruthenian languages department at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad.

In order to improve the position of Serbs in Croatia and Croats in Serbia, an intergovernmental mixed committee for national minorities was formed, overseeing the implementation of the guaranteed rights. To what extent will the work of this committee contribute

to the improvement of minority rights in Croatia and Serbia?

The Intergovernmental Mixed Committee monitors the implementation of the Bilateral Agreement on the Protection of Minorities between Serbia and Croatia, signed in 2004, and ratified in 2005. I have been a member of this Committee since 2009. I have participated in several sessions, the last one this year in Monoštor, which was the seventh session, and the fourth I have participated in. The Committee makes recommendations to the governments of both countries, more precisely there are recommendations for one or the other side, and recommendations to both parties, which are sent to governments and line ministries. The extent to which these recommendations have been met is assessed at the next meeting of the Government's Mixed Committee. What we have come up with about education, textbooks and some other issues in the most recent session is very favourable in comparison with the results of the previous, sixth session, which we had in Vrhovine in Croatia.

Before the November elections, in October, the Croatian minority will mark one of the four holidays of the Croatian community in Serbia, the birthday of Ban Josip Jelačić. Can you tell us more about the celebration of this significant holiday?

Every national minority in Serbia has four holidays. We have also tried to take territorial distribution of national holidays into consideration. The birthday of Ban Josip Jelačić is important for the Srem Croats. When it comes to the Croats in Serbia, i.e. in Vojvodina, I think that Ban Jelačić is the most important figure primarily related to Croatian history. We celebrate it solemnly, the marking of the holiday starts with a holy Mass at Petrovaradin, where he was christened, then we have a solemn cultural and artistic program in the big hall of the Novi Sad Spens. I think that the fact that it is not only marked in Subotica, but in Novi Sad, too, is very important, because there are not many Croatian cultural events in Petrovaradin and Novi Sad. We always celebrate it well and people are always happy.

Elections for National Minority Councils Slated

Source: Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government

On August 17, Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Government Branko Ružić slated elections for national minority councils for November 4, 2018.

Members for national minority councils will be elected in 2018 by 22 national minority communities, 18 of whom have met the requirements for direct elections (Albanian, Ashkali, Bosniak, Bulgarian, Bunje-



vac, Vlach, Greek, Egyptian, Hungarian, German, Polish, Ruthenian, Slovak, Slovenian, Ukrainian, Czech), and 4 for electoral assembly (Macedonian, Croatian, Montenegrin, and Russian).

The deadline for submitting the list for direct elections is 15 days prior to the holding of direct elections, that is, 30 days prior to the elections by electoral assembly.

"After four years, we have slated regular elections for national minority councils as bodies that are very important for the preservation of tradition, culture, use of language and script. The interim assessment of data on August 15 showed that almost 475,000 of our citizens have already been registered in the Special Voters List," Ružić said.

The Minister once again called on all citizens living in Serbia, who are members of national minorities, to exercise their right to vote and to register in the Special Voters List.

Ružić said that the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government received praises for these laws from international institutions.

"In the past period, we have worked in synergy with the national councils of national minorities in seeking the best solutions for exercising their rights. Our country today is a good and internationally worthy example of a state that has raised the level of human and minority rights to the highest interna-



tional standards. We should be very proud of this fact, as well as of the fact that national minorities comprise 13% of the overall population in our country," the minister said.

Regular elections for members of national councils of national minorities are held every fourth year.

A national council can have no less than 15 and up to 35 members. In the case of a national minority whose population, according to the results of the last census, is less than 10,000 citizens, the national council has 15 members, whereas, if the number exceeds 100,000 citizens, it has 35 members. A council can also have 19, 23 and 29 members depending on the results of the population census.

Lists of Candidates for National Minority Councils to Be Submitted by October 19

Source: Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government

The deadline for submission of the lists of candidates for the elections for members of the national councils of national minorities is October 19 at midnight, while the deadline for establishing and publishing the consolidated list of candidates in the Official Gazette is October 24.

The Republic Electoral Commission adopted these deadlines at a session held on August 21, as well as the deadline for adoption of the Decision on the Conclusion of Special Voters Lists of National Minorities, set for October 19, prescribing also that the Decision shall be published in the Official Gazette the day after. The

final number of voters shall be established by November 1 at midnight.

The Commission's recommendation is that the lists of candidates be submitted in the National Assembly every day from 9 am to 6 pm, while weekend submissions have to be announced on Fridays until 5 pm.

The Commission also adopted a Decision on the Forms for Conducting Electoral Actions in the Direct Election Procedure for the National Councils of National Minorities, scheduled for November 4.

The Decision on the Forms for Submission of Lists of Candidates for Members of Na-

tional Councils of National Minorities in Elections through Electoral Assemblies was adopted, as well as the Decision on Forms for Conducting Electoral Actions in the Process of Election for National Councils of National Minorities through Electoral Assemblies.

The Rules of Procedure for the polling commissions for direct elections for members of national councils of national minorities were adopted at the same session, with the amendments to Articles 31, 40 and 48, as well as the decision on the color of the ballot box control checklist, the color of ballots for voting in direct elections, and the color of ballots for voting through electoral assemblies.

Registration in the Special Voters List

Source: Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government

The Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government has called members of national minorities who meet the general conditions for the right to vote in the Republic of Serbia to register in the Special Voters List and thus exercise the right to elect and be elected in the elections for national minorities councils, which will be held in the autumn of this year.

The Ministry points out that the national minorities' councils are bodies that most effectively exercise the constitu-

tionally guaranteed minority rights to self-government in education, culture, information, and use of language and script.

Registration in the Special Voters List is only possible based on a citizen's personal request, which practically means that, without the personal engagement of members of national minorities throughout the process, these rights will not be fully exercised.

A voter's data shall be provided on a special form which, in writing, shall be

submitted to the municipal or city administration, based on the place of residence. The request form can be downloaded from the Ministry's website. The application shall be filed with the authorities in the place of residence (i.e. temporary place of residence for internally displaced persons).

The Ministry reminds that a decision on whether a particular national minority council will be elected in direct or electoral elections depends on the number of entries in the Special Voters List.

Paunović: Joint Work on Human Rights Continues

Source: Office of Human and Minority Rights

Opening the seventh session of the Council which monitors the implementation of the recommendations of the UN human rights mechanisms, the President of the Council, Suzana Paunović, pointed out that the Council continues in its full capacity to monitor the implementation of the obligations that our country has taken in the field of protection and enhancement of the human rights situation.

In the presence of independent state bodies, citizens' associations and international organizations, the Council members considered the activities undertaken since the last session of the Council, as well as the obligations to be undertaken in the coming period in the implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations.

She informed members of the Council and noted that the UN Human Rights Council, at its 38th session in Geneva on June 29, 2018, adopted the Report on the Republic of Serbia, which practically completed the Third Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review of Serbia.

The adoption of the report was preceded by a debate involving 12 UN member states. In addition to the UN member states, six international non-governmental civil society organizations participated in the debate.

In its report on Serbia, the Human Rights



Council noted that our country has demonstrated its commitment to protection of human rights in the way it prepared itself and took part in the Third Cycle of the UPR. The best indicator of this assertion is the strengthening of institutional capacities in preparation for the whole process, strengthening of the reporting process itself, the involvement of all relevant domestic stakeholders in the preparation for the Third cycle, and the high level of cooperation that has been achieved among them.

Special attention was given to the Council's session on developing indicators for the successful implementation of the recommendations of the UN human rights and human rights treaty bodies.

The use of appropriate indicators in the field of human rights as means of measuring the impact will enable an objective assessment of our respective progress achieved in ensuring full exercise of human rights, Paunović said.

Paunović pointed out that it is precisely for this reason that it is important to develop

them in an inclusive process, which brings together representatives of line ministries responsible for the implementation of recommendations, civil society organizations, and independent state bodies.

Sonja Tošković, Executive Director of the Belgrade Center for Human Rights, emphasized the importance of cooperation between the government and the non-governmental sector as a partner in this complex process, because both stakeholders share the same goal, which is the improvement of the state of human rights.

Paunović informed the members of the Council and other attendees that the Office of Human and Minority Rights, in cooperation with the UN Team in Serbia, has launched a National Campaign on the occasion of marking the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In addition to Council members, an expert of the UN Committee for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Damjan Tatić, representatives of the UN Human Rights Team in Serbia, UNICEF, the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, independent state bodies, civil society organizations with whom the Council has memoranda of cooperation and organizations that have expressed the initiative to strengthen the cooperation with the Council through the form of the Memorandum, also attended the meeting.

The "Home Guardian" Visited Aradac, a Banat Village Known for Accordion Players and Desserts

Source: Foundation 021

On July 27, the village of Aradac near Zrenjanin, with slightly more than 3,000 inhabitants, marked its traditional festivity, rich in cultural and historic heritage.

The 021 Foundation with its partners chose exactly this day for the cultural event "Home Guardian" in order to promote the richness of culture and heritage in Vojvodina, with the accent on the centuries old Slovak national heritage of the village of Aradac.

nija", the association of pensioners and KUD "Mladost" presented their handicrafts. The participants were greeted by the children who attend the "Bratstvo" Primary School.

The real attractions are Aradac accordion players - meškarkas. Anka Puderková (65), Anna Hucokova (80), Zuzana Zelenáková (62) and Mara Vozafová (62) have been playing together all over the world for 40 years and represent traditional Slovak songs on rare accordions (there are only

songs from the rich opus with which they had travelled, as they say, around the world. Only a few weeks ago they attended the shooting of the "Military Academy" sitcom, and they also performed for numerous state officials and competitions.

Their costume is a combination of traditional and modern elements. Skirts are up to the middle of the calves, wide and rich in colors and patterns, and the upper parts are either embroidered (traditional version) or in light, shimmering colors (a more modern version). The Association "Ruža" used dolls to present different traditional costumes, and the meaning of certain elements of the costume was explained by Maria Viljajik.

"The girls wore the costume without any covers on their heads. Young, married girls had a unique piece on the head, placed in a special way and recognizable for Aradac. Women with children were dressed more traditionally, had scarves and thus differed from others," Maria explained. Her association has been in existence for more than 25 years and was formed from the section of the local board of the Slovak Heritage.

The dancers of KUD "Mladost" presented Aradac folklore with a temperamental dance which was rewarded with many rounds of applause.

Certainly one of the more recognizable parts of the Slovak tradition is the cuisine. Members of the associations participating in the event pleasantly surprised the attendees with the opportunity to taste herovka, strudel, trutula, peaches, and other traditional sweet and savoury delicacies.

The ceremony was also attended by representatives of the Provincial Secretariat for Economy and Tourism, within which the Council for Social Entrepreneurship was recently constituted. In the coming months, another 10 Vojvodina towns and villages will be presented and connected through the "Home Guardian", and the final event will be organized in Novi Sad.



In cooperation with the Zrenjanin Center for the Development of Civil Society, a rich cultural program was prepared in the premises of the Aradac Local Community. The visitors first had the opportunity to attend the opening ceremony of the exhibition of works painted in the art colony by famous painters who create in this area of Vojvodina. Đorđe Kovačev, Đorđe Beara, Pavel Pop, Marta Kiš Buterer, Daniela Morariu, Dominika Morariu and Đerđi Ačaj, as well as sculptor Andreja Vasićević Baco, presented the multiculturalism and the richness of Vojvodina from their personal perspectives in their works.

The true presentation of cultural heritage took place in the yard of the local community, where the women's association "Ruža", the Citizens Association "Harmo-

a dozen in the whole village). They mastered the skill on their own when they were young girls, when it was still "fashionable" to play the accordion.

"It's not like that now. In the past, youngsters were interested in such activities, but girls have less and less time to play. We will continue to play the accordion as long as we live and as long as we are healthy, because we love it too. We expect two more girls to join us, they are currently learning to play the accordion," Mara said. When asked whether it was the sign that the accordion group will be "rejuvenated" by the new members, she said: "They promised."

The accordion players, dressed in the traditional Slovak costume, played several

"Beauty of Diversity" Festival Organized in Bela Crkva

Source: www.pesma.rs

The sixth international and multicultural festival "Beauty of Diversity" was held in Bela Crkva July 13-15 in the organization of the Association "Czech Word Kruščica" and the National Council of the Czech National Minority.

The festival was officially opened by the Mayor of Bela Crkva, Darko Bogosavljević, who expressed his satisfaction that the festival was included this year in the list of events of importance for the municipality of Bela Crkva. The municipality of Bela Crkva is unique as it has the largest number of members of the Czech national community in Serbia and it is the only municipality in which the Czech language is in official use.

The audience also enjoyed in the performance of the music group "Cymbal's Music Valaško" from the Czech Republic.

On the second day of the festival held in Kruščica, singing companies and music sections performed, and the audience enjoyed in the Serbian, Czech, Romanian, and Slovak folk songs.

At the very beginning, the KUD "Djordje Kožbuk" from Guben performed, followed by the singing section of the "Czech Word Bela Crkva", the women's singing section of the Cultural Center "Mihal Babinka" from Padina, the choir of the "Sava Munčan" elementary school from Kruščica, "Poco a poco" from Rešica (Romania), as well as the singing company "Istok 10" from Vršac. Poet Verica Preda, who was born in Kruščica, and currently lives and creates in Vršac, recited her poem "Talk with the Plain".

At the very end, guests from the Czech "Cymbal's Music Valaš" performed the folk, Slovak and Moravian songs. This orchestra performs polkas, waltzes and czardas music. Musicians play on various in-



struments: violins, bass, clarinet, viola, as well as an unavoidable national instrument - a cymbal. The head of the orchestra is Vojtech Gerla, and the guest in the program was soloist Marta Santovjakova-Gerlikova.

The largest number of participants and audience gathered in Kruščica on the third day of the festival, July 15.



Pupils of the elementary school "Sava Munčan" presented two choreographies - the first, which is a blend of folklores and contemporary dance, was part of the program that pupils had performed in the Czech Republic at the "European Children's Day" event. Another choreography performed was "Captain John Peoplefox" by



Duško Radović.

Folklore sections of the "Czech Word Kruščica" and "Czech Word Bela Crkva" performed Serbian and Czech dances, KUD "Kantakuzina" from Smederevo presented Greek dances, while the Slovak dances were presented by the children's folklore ensemble of the "Marshal Tito" Primary School from Padina. Culture Cen-

ter "Debeljak" and Folklore Ensemble "Perdilo" performed choreography with dances from different parts of Hungary. Children from the village of Voluja, known for dancing on stilts, attracted a special attention. While they are very skilled in all dances from different parts of Serbia, most of them prefer Vlach dances, which preserve the tradition of their ancestors.

The Czechs living in the only Czech village in Romania, Gernik, have always tried to preserve folklore and folk customs, and their music and dances have a very long tradition. They also presented their tradition and arts during the performance in Kruščica. After them, KUD "Vuk Karadžić" from Plandište performed, bringing about the enthusiasm in the audience's and showing their playfulness and passion and why they are one of the best folk musicians in Vojvodina. Guests from Ostrova, KUD "Ostrovo", also performed at the festival and were warmly received by the audience.

After they had thanked to all those who helped the organization of the Festival, the participants danced a kolo together and in this way, interwoven in different costumes, showed again in the best possible way how beautiful the diversity promoted by this Festival is.

57th Slovak National Festivities

Source: Provincial Government/Hlas Ljudu

From August 10 to 12, a national holiday of Slovaks in Vojvodina – the Slovak National Festivities -took place in Bački Petrovac. This year, organizers - Bački Petrovac Municipality, the Slovak Heritage in Serbia, and the National Council of the Slovak National Minority - organized a rich cultural and artistic program, which attracted the attention of not only Slovaks from Serbia, but also foreign guests.

The festivities were opened by Djordje Milićević, Deputy Prime Minister of the Provincial Government, who noted that the preservation of a multinational, multi-cultural and multi-confessional harmony in Vojvodina and the exercise of the rights of national minorities in all segments, from education and culture, languages and scripts, to information in their mother tongues, are among the top priorities of the Provincial Government.

He also added that the Slovak community in Serbia is famous for its rich cultural tradition, proverbial dili-



gence, original and unrepeatable naive paintings, and the exceptional beauty of the Slovak folk costumes.

"And tonight, you Slovaks confirm not only your identity, but also your

very important place in everything that makes our Province and our country Serbia rich today and will continue to make us rich tomorrow," DPM Milićević said in his opening remarks.

The ceremony was attended by the Mayor of Novi Sad, Miloš Vučević, representatives of the Government of Serbia, the Embassy of Slovakia, the municipality of Bački Petrovac, the National Council of the Slovak National Minority and the Slovak Heritage.

The traditional "Meeting of Slovak Journalists" was also held within the framework of the Festivities, and the winner of the contest "Ana Njemoga Kolar", which is organized every year by the National Council of the Slovak National Minority for the media content published on the Slovak community by journalists who are not members of the Slovak minority, was announced.

The commission decided that the best media content in this year's competition is the radio program by Dragana Marinković, which was broadcast as part of the radio show "The Gold Apple" by Radio Belgrade 2.



The Exhibition "Four Great Painters of the Kovačica Naive Art"

Source: www.pancevo.mojkraj.rs / Hlas Ljudu

From August 14 to August 21, the gallery of the Historical Archives of Pančevo hosted the exhibition "Four Great Painters of the Kovačica Naive Art".

On this occasion, the works of Jan Husaric, Jan Knjazovac, Zuzana Halupova and Martin Jonaš were presented. 34 paintings by these great artists were shown, and the exhibition was organized by the Naiva Art Kult from Kovačica with the help of the Provin-

cial Secretariat for Culture and Information.

One of the authors of the paintings is Jan Husaric, who, according to Boško Nedeljkov, from the Naive Art Kult, was one of the best naive painters in this region, but also in the world.

Naiva Art Kult is headquartered in Kovačica and has about 250 paintings from 50 different authors in its collection and permanent exhibition.

After Pančevo, the exhibition will move to the Smederevska Palanka, where art lovers have a chance to see these art works at the "Smederevo Autumn" festival.

The next exhibition prepared by the Naiva Art Kult is in honor of the 50th anniversary of the death of Emerik Fejes, the great author who dealt with the urban naive. The exhibition will be held in Kovačica, Novi Sad and Pančevo in the second half of next year.

Bunjevac National Holiday, the Day of Dužijanica, Marked

Source: Bunjevac Media Center



On August 15, on the Assumption of Mary Day, Bunjevacs marked one of their four national holidays, the "Day of Dužijanica". The celebration started in the morning, with a thanksgiving mass at the Franciscan Church of St. Michael, and the program continued in the afternoon. First, the formal defile of the participants was held, followed by the Great Kolo Dance in front of the City Hall, the laying of the wreath at the Blaško Rajić bust, and the "Dužijanica Day" ceremonial academy. The celebration was brought to completion with the "Bandashica's Kolo Dance" at the "Spartacus S" restaurant.

The most dignified moment was when the Bandash and the Bandashica, Mario Vojnić Hajduk and Jovana Vidaković, presented the President of the National Council of the Bunjevac National Minority, Dr. Suzana Kujundžić Ostojić, with the wine and bread made of the wheat harvested



most sacred in every nation, that is most sacred to us. We have cherished it for centuries and we have remained different from the rest, but also recognizable. It is not that simple, it is not easy, unfortunately, not even today. Customs are kept alive through younger generations and the mother tongue - Dr Kujundžić Ostojić said and appealed to the authorities to help in the field of education, and also

reminded that the first Statute of Subotica in the eighteenth century was written in the Bunjevac language, which has, in the meantime, lost political battle.

- I would ask all those who can help us to return where we once were and continue with the safe steps to help us,

as we are just looking for equality with all other national minorities – the President of the Bunjevac National Minority Council added.

Bogdan Laban, the Mayor of Subotica, confirmed that the Day of Dužijanica is every year a special time for Subotica.

- By linking this year's seed with the next year's grain, Dužijanica, more than any other event in our town, looks at the future, and it is important to note that it is not a common ceremony, but a manife-

station that has a much deeper meaning. It is a mirror of Subotica, a record and a signpost, a credible witness of time and a good-willed messenger of the future that indicates that it is of paramount importance that the legacy of ancestors be preserved for the glory and well-being of the generations to come.

Laban added that, for over three centuries, the Bunjevacs have built their own being, that they have been a solid and reliable support in all times.

- We must remain committed to preserving unity, love, respect and appreciation of the diversities as the foundation of our tomorrow and prosperity of our city.

Mihalj Njilaš, Deputy Prime Minister of the AP Vojvodina Government and Provincial Secretary for Regulations, Administration and National Communities, reminded that Dužijanica was written in the genes of every Bunjevac who is able to preserve his tradition, culture, customs, and his own autochtonism.

- The Bunjevacs celebrate Dužijanica with the highest human values, and also this way show that these values are embedded in the foundation of the existence of the Bunjevac identity. This is evidence that one's own tradition is preserved, and this tradition gives a special and extraordinary sumptuous note to a wide spectrum of Vojvodina diversity. The preservation and development of this diversity as a whole and every segment of it is one of the permanent priorities of the Provincial Government - Njilaš emphasized.

Ivan Bošnjak, the State Secretary at the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, delivered the greetings of Branko Ružić, the Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, and reminded that the state and minorities worked together on the adoption of the new laws in the past year.

- It is meaningless to adopt laws and action plans if we do not respect them and do



this year, the symbol of the Dužijanica holiday.

Speaking about the significance of this holiday, the President of the Bunjevac National Minority Council pointed out that it is difficult to explain what Dužijanica is and how Bunjevacs feel on the Assumption of Mary Day, when they thank God for another harvest and bountiful year.

- When our ancestors came to these places, they could not bring much with themselves, but they took their customs, language and religion, everything that is

Hungarian National Holiday Marked

Source: Provincial Government

The national holiday of the Hungarian national minority was celebrated by the academy held at the Novi Sad Theater on August 20.

Recalling that the Vojvodina Assembly decided to assign August 20 as a date of special importance for the Hungarian national minority, and therefore for the AP Vojvodina as a whole, the Provincial Prime Minister Igor Mirović stated that this is another confirmation of mutual respect and the seriousness of the policy pursued by the Provincial Government.

"It is a policy without which the AP Vojvodina would not be what it is, the most developed part of the Republic of Serbia, the driver of economic development and the region in which all citizens feel safe and satisfied," Mirović said, congratulating the holiday to



all members of the Hungarian national minority.

He assessed that relations between

the Republic of Serbia and Hungary had never been better in history, and that, as he noted, should be a sign for us for the future.

President of the National Council of the Hungarian National Minority, Hajnal Jenő, congratulated the members of the Hungarian national minority with the message that the interests of Hungary and Serbia are closely connected and that we must be friends.

The President of the Assembly of Vojvodina, István Pásztor, also attended the academy.



The Bust of St. István Consecrated in Čantavir

Source: RTV Pannon

The monument was placed in the yard of the church, and before the dedication ceremony, a mass was held.

Mass for the St. István holiday began with a gathering in which a new bread was consecrated. The believers also attended the dedication of the bust of St. István, which was placed in the church yard.

"We look forward to it, it is good that when we come to church we will see the essence of King István," Rosalia Ja-

nuszko from Čantavir/Csantavér said.

"It makes us happy and proud that we have something like this," Eva Horvat from Čantavir/Csantavér said, and Jozsef Horvat added: "It is very pleasant, I personally took part in preparations and I thank you for this gift."

The bust was donated to Čantavir/Csantavér by Janos Ver, who lives in Tápióbecske in the Pest County in Hungary, but shares the fate of the Hungarians of Vojvodina and helps them. "It is not good only to receive gifts, they should

be given, too. I have achieved long-standing acquaintances here. The Spirit of St. István is still needed today."

The bust is placed on a 1.4 tons stone. "This bust is also a place of community gathering, as our church is the fruit of unity. In the past, people gave money to the church, and now I remembered it, when we erected a monument, how wonderful the feeling of unity was, how we can work together today, not only here in Čantavir/Csantavér, but in the whole Carpathian basin," Robert Utcai, the local priest, said.

Request to the Municipality of Vrbas to Introduce Montenegrin Language into Official Use

Source: 021

Uhe legal team of the Montenegrin Party sent a letter to the President of the Municipality of Vrbas, Milan Glušac, requesting that the local self-government introduce the Montenegrin language into official use by the end of September.

In a public statement, the party reminded that the amendments to the Law on the Official Use of Languages and Scripts provide that a local self-government is obliged to introduce in equal terms the language and the script of the national minority into official use if its members in that territory comprise 15% of the total population.



"In the municipality of Vrbas, according to the last census, there are 7,353 members of the Montenegrin community, which makes 17.5% of the total population of the municipality," the statement read.

The party officials expect that the Municipality of Vrbas will fulfill its legal obligation within 90 days, as prescribed by the law, i.e. by September 28 at the latest.

The municipalities of Vrbas and Mali Idoš are the only municipalities in Serbia that fulfill the legally prescribed conditions for the introduction of the Montenegrin language into official use.

In the municipality of Mali Idoš, Montenegrin language was introduced in 2010 at the request of the Association of Montenegrins of Serbia "Krstaš", with support of the votes of the members of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians and the Montenegrin Party.

The Agreement of Montenegrin Associations in Serbia Signed

Source: www.aktuelno.me

On July 14, on the initiative of the Diaspora Administration, national associations of Montenegrins in the Republic of Serbia signed in Belgrade a Memorandum of Understanding for a joint appearance in the elections for national minority councils, which will be held in autumn of this year.

The Agreement was signed by 13 associations from all over Serbia - Belgrade, Novi Sad, Subotica, Aleksinac, Vrbas, Kula, Lovćenac, Feketić, Crvenka, Zmajevo and Mali Idoš.

As provided by this Agreement, the national associations of Montenegrins in the Republic of Serbia, whose activities are based on affirmation and protection of Montenegrin identity values, are obliged to cooperate with each other in the upcoming elections for the members of the National Council of the Montenegrin national minority in Serbia. As-



sociations, signatories of the Agreement will, as announced, in mutual communication and cooperation, while respecting the interests of the entire Montenegrin minority in Serbia, form a unique electoral list for the formation of a future national council that will, in its work in a more productive and qualitative way, justify the purpose of its existence through specific projects and activities aimed at promoting Montenegro

in Serbia, the Montenegrin minority in Serbia and the protection of its special rights in the field of preserving identity, tradition, culture and education.

The signing of the agreement was attended by the representatives of the Diaspora Administration, and the Agreement, as emphasized, was open to all interested Montenegrin associations in the Republic of Serbia.

The Tenth "Days of Uzdin" End with a Poetry Festival

Source: Dnevnik

Photo: Literary Art Society "Tibiskus"

The jubilee tenth festival "Days of Uzdin", organized by the Literary Art Society "Tibiskus" from Uzdin, was closed with the international festival of poetry "Roads of Wheat Ears", which has a tradition of a quarter of a century.

The Days of Uzdin included 16 different cultural events, with numerous guests from our country and abroad.

Four very valuable books were published on the occasion of the 25th edition of the "Roads of Wheat Ears" Poetry Festival: "Memories" by Valerija Grozd, then a book of short prose "Remembrance", a book of poetry in the Serbian language "Fathers, Dreams, Mother" by Romanian poet Vasile Tariceanu from Ukraine translated by Vasile Barbu. The "Uzdin Monograph Album" by Elena Maria Murgu and Vasile Barbu was also published.

- International poetry festival "Roads of Wheat Ears" is of great importance because it promotes literature, prose and poetry in the Romanian language. This is the only festival of poetry in the Romanian language organized in Vojvodina and Serbia, and it is also appreciated among the authors in Romania, where similar festivals are being launched, some of them cease to exist, and we somehow manage to keep our festival alive - the president of the Society "Tibiskus" Vasile Barbu emphasized.

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the festival, a memorial plaque with the names of all the laureates since 1994 was posted on the building of the Cultural Center "Dojna", from the first laureate Petar Krdu, to this year's laureate, Gligor Leša. The main prize of the festival is named "St. George" because it is the protector saint of Uzdin, the Romanian Orthodox Church in Uzdin is dedicated to St. George, and so is the



Primary School.

Traditional awards were also presented to 40 authors. This year's laureate of the "St. George" prize is the ethnomusicologist Gligor Leša from Romania. The winners of the Romanian Culture

poet Nikolae Stejan from Bajamara (Romania). The poet's prize "Pilgrim on the Meridians", and "Profi Delita", the prizes to the meritorious residents of Uzdin, were awarded. The prize for literary debut in the Serbian language was awarded by poet Vasile Tariceanu from Ukraine.

- The Days of Uzdin, as well as the international festival of poetry "The Roads of Wheat Ears", were very successful - Vasile Barbu noted. - We were overwhelmed by the obligations, but we had many guests and many joys, so we are preparing for the events that we will organize in the coming period. In addition to artists from our country, many poets and artists came from abroad, from Germany, France, Romania, Moldova, and Macedonia.

During the "Days of Uzdin" a colony of artistic photography was held with photographers from Arad (Romania). An exhibition dedicated to the Romanian national costume was organized by the Association of Women "Granny". A guest of Uzdin was Romanian poet Lorin Chimponeri, and exhibits of artistic photographs "Greek Olives" and "Uzdin No Longer Exists" were also organized. After the "Days of Uzdin", the caravan of art photographers continued along the Danube valley in Romania and Serbia, in order to immortalize the beautiful moments near the great river, and present this art work at a special exhibition.

Award "Trajan's Bridge" are poet Vanga Mihani Tegri from Macedonia, poet Vasile Morar from Romania, and writers Jonel Stoic from Novi Sad and August Anka from Timisoara. Several other prizes were awarded, including "Djordje Bulik" in the field of culture and the "Tibiskus" and "Romanian House" awards.

The contemporary poetry award, entitled "Petru Krdu", was awarded to



"Haus Regina" Center Open to Citizens

Source: RTS

Whe Center for the Preservation of the Cultural and Historical Heritage of the Banat Germans "Haus Regina" has been opened in Zrenjanin with the exhibition "Retrospective / Nieberlungs" by the painter from Munich, Jimmy Stepanhoff. The Center represents several thousand Germans living in Banat today.



Stepanhoff, a native of Banat with 40 years of international artistic career, is most deserving of the Center's work, and the house is named after his mother, Regina.

"One day I came out of my sister's house across the street and I saw the posting "House for Sale" on the gate. When I entered I saw these three pine trees, I really liked it. I had a vision there, and I could not have even dreamed three years ago that things would work this way," the academic painter from Munich,

Jimmy Stepanhoff explained.

The Center offers all citizens the opportunity to get to know the German culture better, with the current modest library and the possibility of learning the language.

"We held language courses, first at the initial level, for our fellow citizens free of charge. Interest and response was really fantastic. We will continue with these courses, and now I see that there is interest in language courses on a higher level, too. Of

course, in addition to the courses, our activities include everything else that aims at nurturing and preserving our tradition," professor of the German language, Zorica Petrović said.

Today, the influence and heritage of the past of the Banat Germans is noticeable: from architecture, literature, music, to food. There are currently thousands of Germans living in Banat.

"This is the first true center of culture that will nurture the heritage, the cultural and historical heritage of the Banat Germans, as, thus far, Banat has been unfortunately neglected on the cultural map of the German community. A new era begins today," the president of the German People's Alliance for Serbia, Rudolf Weiss noted.

The Haus Regina Center will be open to citizens every day, and its premises will be available for concerts, literary evenings and social gatherings.

Bosniak Community

Agreement on Cooperation between the Bosniak National Council and the Municipality of Sjenica

Source: BNV

President of the Bosniak National Council, Dr. Sulejman Ugljanin, and the President of the Municipality of Sjenica, Mr. Hazbo Mujović, signed the Agreement on Cooperation in Sjenica on August 2, 2018.

The Agreement envisages that the Bosniak National Council and Sjenica Municipality jointly develop cooperation in areas of importance for Bo-



sniaks, respecting the competencies and rights they have at their disposal.

Signing of the Agreement in the Assembly Hall of the Municipality of Sjenica was attended by the members of the Bosniak National Council, members of the Assembly of the Municipality of Sjenica, members of the Municipal Council, school directors, and representatives of public companies and institutions.

Promotion of the Book "Bosnia and Bosniaks"

Source: BNV

The book "Bosnia and Bosniaks", by the author Prof. Dr Mustafa Kahramanyol, was promoted in the Bosniak National Council.

Prof. Dr Redžep Škrijelj, Vice President of the Council, Mr Esad Rahić, President of the Society of Sandžak Historians, and the author spoke about the book, which was published in Turkish, English, and Bosnian.

"Professor Mustafa Kahramanyol, in his scientific study, looks at our duration and touches our tradition, our



relations with Turkey, and notes everything that has been kept in our area," Prof. Dr. Škrijelj noted.

"Not so extensive, but condensed study "Bosnia and Bosniaks" by Prof. Dr Mustafa Kahramanyol will be of immense benefit to the wider audience, because it provides an abundance of historical, etymological and linguistic data. It also gives explicit explanations from the centuries-old past of the Bosniak people," Mr Rahić said.

For exceptional contribution to the protection and promotion of the position and exercise of the rights of Bosniaks in Sandžak, the Bosniak National Council awarded Prof. Dr. Mustafa Kahramanyol with the Plaque of the Council in 2015.

Bulgarian Community

Ambassador of Bulgaria Radko Vlajkov Visited the Association "Shopsko Oro" in Pančevo

Source: Pančevomokraj

Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria to Belgrade, Radko Vlajkov, visited the Association of the Bulgarian National Minority "Shopsko Oro" in Pančevo on August 14.

The meeting was attended by the Consul, Georgi Hristov, the Embassy's Second Secretary, Julian Kitipov, the Mayor of Pančevo, Saša Pavlov, and the City Manager, Maja Vitman.

The guests were greeted by the President of the Association "Shopsko Oro", Zoran Rajkov, Vice-President Ljubinko Markov, spokeswoman Danijela Ilijev-Gvozdenović and the oldest member, Sreten Rajkov.

The participants talked in a positive and friendly atmosphere. The Association, which fosters the culture and tradition of the Bulgarian national community in Serbia, was officially founded in 2013, and it was supported by the



Embassy of Bulgaria and the city of Pančevo.

Ambassador Radko Vlajkov was pleasantly surprised by the activities of the Association, which are based on the preservation of the traditional values, language and culture of the Bulgarian minority.

Mayor Saša Pavlov pointed out that the City will provide full support to the "Shopsko Oro" regarding premises and preparation, drafting of applications, and implementation of projects, in order to provide the necessary funds for the normal operation of this, for the Bulgarian community, important non-governmental organizations in Pančevo and its surroundings.

Meeting between State Officials of Bulgaria and the Consul General in Niš Held

Source: RT Caribrod



On August 16, Ilijan Todorov, Head of the Sofia region, Petar Haralampiev, President of the State Agency for Bulgarians in the Diaspora, and Edvin Sugarev, Consul General of the Republic of Bulgaria in Niš, met at the

premises of the Caribrod Cultural and Information Center. Between the two countries are continuously improved.

"We think that this is very good and we expect to sign the cooperation agreement between the two areas mentioned above soon, which will en-

even better results," Haralampiev said.

Consul General of the Republic of Bulgaria, Edvin Sugarev, who also attended the meeting in the Cultural Information Center "Caribrod", noted that the initiative is extremely important, because Pirot is a very promising city in the relations between Bulgaria and Serbia. "First, thousands of Bulgarians come to this city every week. Second, this city has a free economic zone, which is quite developed and in which there are already Bulgarian companies, and their participation may be even greater. And third, cultural initiatives, which are characteristic for the style of management of this city, can be enriched even further with Bulgarian contents. So I welco-



premises of the Caribrod Cultural and Information Center. After a brief meeting in Dimitrovgrad, the senior officials proceeded to a working meeting with the Head of the Pirot District. The aim of the meeting was to establish a strong mutual cooperation between the Sofia Region and the Pirot District.

"We launched the initiative together with the President of the State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad. We sat together, talked, he is very active in this region, and we have concluded that this can be a good start. We, on our part, have designed a project from the Sofia area, and we will give it to the Head of the Pirot District to add their proposals, then we will jointly make a compilation that both sides will be satisfied with, we will sign the agreement, and we will start to act," Ilijan Todorov, the Head of the Sofia Region, said, adding that he expects that the agreement will be signed as soon as possible.

According to Peter Haralampiev, all parties expect to achieve better and more efficient cooperation that will last and show that the relations bet-



hance further the cooperation for the benefit of the people who live here, regardless if they are Bulgarians, Serbs or Roma, that everyone can live better; to have more opportunities and initiatives for developing cooperation in the fields of culture, sports, education, economy, regional development. As you can see, both Bulgaria and Serbia have made significant efforts recently to intensify cooperation and achieve

me this initiative and I hope that it will be implemented soon."

The future cooperation agreement will include 26 municipalities, 22 of which are in the Sofia Region, located in the central part of Western Bulgaria, around Sofia, which borders the Republic of Serbia in the west, and the four municipalities of the Pirot District.



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