

**Day of Slavic  
Literacy and  
Culture Marked**

**Ružić: Together We Will Solve  
the Problem of Transcription  
of Albanian Names**

# **53** **Minority** **News**

**May 2019**



## **Radko Vlaykov: Enlargement of the European Union Has Remained a Priority for Bulgaria**

**Bulgaria Allocates 10,000  
Euros for the Renovation of  
the Cultural Center in Ivanovo**

**Day of the Czech  
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# HIGHLIGHTS



## Paunović: 255 Million Dinars Allocated from the Budget for the Improvement of the Position of National Minorities

Director of the Government Office for Human and Minority Rights Suzana Paunović said that the state allocated 255 million dinars in the 2019 budget for the financing of 22 national councils in Serbia and the Union of Jewish municipalities, which is 10 million dinars more than 2018. She noted that support for the improvement of the position of national minorities was also ensured through the funds of the Budget Fund for National Minorities, where, for this year, 30 million dinars were earmarked for projects in the field of culture.



## Conference "German National Minority and Europe" Organized in Sombor

On May 23, Konrad Adenauer Foundation organized a conference "German National Minority and Europe" in Sombor. The Secretary General of the President of the Republic of Serbia, Nikola Selaković, Speaker of the Assembly of AP Vojvodina, István Pásztor, mayor Sombor, Dušanka Golubović, the Director of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation for Serbia and Montenegro Norbert Beckmann-Dierkes and the President of the National Council German National Minority in Serbia Mihael Plac participated in the conference.



## Contents of the Website of the Ministry of Construction in the Roma Language

The Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure of the Government of the Republic of Serbia announced that, on May 12, the website of this Ministry in the Romani language started to operate, where members of the Roma population can follow the most important news from the Ministry in their mother tongue. The website of the Ministry in the Romani language, launched at the initiative of Deputy Prime Minister Zorana Mihajlović, is unique in the Balkans, as, for the first time, the web presentation of a state institution is translated into this language.



## More than 800 Children at the "Festival of Romanian Folklore of the Children of Vojvodina"

On May 17 and 18, at the Cultural Center in Dolovo, the 8th "Festival of Romanian Folklore of the Children of Vojvodina" was held. About 800 children participated in the festival. In August, another large festival, "Festival of Romanian Folklore", will also be held in Dolovo. Every year, the "Festival of Romanian Folklore of the Children of Vojvodina" gathers several hundred pupils of school age, the best vocal and instrumental soloists, children's folk ensembles, choirs and orchestras of elementary schools and cultural and artistic societies of the Romanian national minority.

# EDITORIAL 53

## A Holiday With a Strong Message

An editorial for this issue of the Minority News was created on the eve of the Slavic Literacy and Culture Day. Every year, many cultural and artistic programs pay tribute to Slavic enlighteners Cyril and Methodius, who, in 863, decisively began to spread literacy among Slavs. This holiday reminds us in a certain way that it is necessary to constantly expand our own language and culture, but also to respect and adopt other cultures, because in this way we contribute to the cultural diversity of our country, and even beyond.

Language, as an important link in the chain of diversity, becomes increasingly vulnerable. According to some research, there are between five and six thousand indigenous languages in the world, but at least one language per month dies. Although such events are typical of the countries of Latin America or the African continent, we must not sit quietly and hope that something will not befall our country, our "Europe in small".

Recently, one portal published an article about the disappearance of language diversity in Novi Sad, in a city where numerous national minorities live. The article has caused numerous comments, with some agreeing with the written, and, of course, the other ones challenging it. Looking at the current situation, we can say that the truth is somewhere in the middle. Minority languages in our country will not and can not quickly disappear. Certainly, it depends on the very members of the minorities who are fighting for their own language, their culture, as well as on numerous state institutions, although sometimes the impression is that more is being said about the importance of minorities for our country than done specifically to improve the situation at hand. Let us just recall the privatization of local media and the situation that followed. Although it is often emphasized that there are still programs in minority languages in many media, there are also media that have reduced the contents in minority languages or have given up on them completely. At the same time, the Public Service of Radio Television Serbia still does not have a program in minority languages. Furthermore, problems exist in the field of education, above all in high thresholds for the formation of the classes in minority languages, as well as with printing of textbooks.

Although we are rather optimistic that minority languages in our country will not disappear, this situation poses a threat to everyone. Many years of facing problems in education, information, the area of culture, or the right to the official use of mother tongue can have grave consequences, with members of the national minorities slowly suspending and unconsciously giving up their acquired rights. And then we will have a first hand experience what the disappearance of a language means.

## 30 different national minorities live in Serbia



and ONE newsletter for all



# Enlargement of the European Union Has Remained a Priority for Bulgaria

**I**n the first half of 2018, at the beginning of the Republic of Bulgaria's Presidency of the Council of the European Union, we had our first interview with the Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria in Serbia, H.E. Mr. Radko Vlaykov. During this interview, we looked into the priorities of the Bulgarian Presidency and the position of the Bulgarian minority in Serbia. Almost a year after the Bulgarian Presidency was brought to completion, and on the eve of the Day of the Bulgarian Education and Culture and Slavic Literacy, a holiday of great importance for Bulgarians, and the elections for the European Parliament, we have a chance to talk to Ambassador Vlaykov again to sum up the results of the last year's Presidency and analyze the current political trends in the European Parliament and their potential impact on the continued enlargement of the EU after the elections.



**On May 24, Bulgaria celebrates the Day of Bulgarian Education, Culture and Slavic Literacy, as one of the very few countries in the world that has designated celebration of the education and culture as a public holiday. Can you tell us more about the origins and importance of this Holiday?**

Thank you for the wonderful question, because May 24 is indeed the brightest holiday for every Bulgarian. We are delighted that this holiday does not apply only to Bulgaria, but to all countries that were connected or related to Cyrillic, with the work of the holy brothers Cyril and Methodius. Allow me to say couple

of things about history, how this holiday was celebrated through centuries. Since the 11th century, the church celebrates May 24 as the day of the holy brothers of Cyril and Methodius. Ever since the 11th century! You realize that this is a very long tradition. And as a joint civil and church holiday, it is celebrated in Bulgaria since 1851. The marking began in Plovdiv, and since 1957, this day has been an official holiday, up to this day. We are infinitely happy to respect the work of the holy brothers Cyril and Methodius, who have done a great deal of their work – together with their students and followers - not only for the Bulgarians, but also for all the Slavs

around the world.

**How do you celebrate this holiday in Bulgaria? Is it also marked by Bulgarian communities abroad?**

I have already mentioned that this is the brightest holiday for all Bulgarians because it is celebrated from an early age. Everybody celebrates it - children in kindergarten, pupils in schools, as well as retirees and elderly people who remember their childhood. On this day, every Bulgarian expresses great respect for their teachers, their professors, for their schoolmates, their fellow students, and each of them remembers the year

they learned the Cyrillic letters, the year in which they received the education that gave them the basis for life. So this is truly a national holiday that has always been celebrated from the hearts of the people. People have never been forced to go out in the streets to show their enthusiasm for this holiday. We, Bulgarians, have always celebrated it voluntarily and with a great and genuine desire. Until 1990, until the beginning of the democratic change, all Bulgarians - pupils, students, workers were obliged to attend various festive events that they did not feel any ownership of. For example, the celebration on November 7th was a mandatory event, people had to march in front of the mausoleum in Sofia, where the party leadership, headed by the then party dictator Todor Živkov, sat and observed them march. The Bulgarian people were forced to participate in the mass celebration of November 7th, which was in no way connected with Bulgaria. It has been completely different on May 24. Ever since I can remember it, from my earliest childhood, it has been the brightest holiday for all Bulgarian generations. You can see flowers, you can see smiles, you can see great gratitude especially to the people in the field of education and culture, who have, through their work, enlightened the generations of Bulgarians throughout the centuries. It is a beautiful holiday, celebrated by Bulgarian communities all over the world. Everywhere where the Bulgarian communities live, including Serbia, there are a number of events organized by our cultural and educational organizations. Many of our compatriots will join us on May 24, when, together with the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Serbia, we will organize a concert in Belgrade - a concert of one of the most famous Bulgarian folklore group - "Bulgarians" and one of the most famous Serbian folklore groups - "Lola". This will be another manifestation of how close we, the Slavs, are, as people who use the same alphabet ... Our folklore is also very close, we have had common roots through centuries, and it will be an occasion for the Bulgarians and Serbs to mark this day together. Allow me to say two more words on this occasion. I am very impressed, filled with hope and happiness - any of these words that I use would not fully express my

feelings about the decision made by the Government of Serbia, which will soon be ratified in the Parliament, to designate May 24 as the official state holiday in the Republic of Serbia. This is great news, we have been talking about it for several years. I am very happy that the Serbian Government has made this wise decision, particularly from the perspective of Serbia's path to the European Union. I would like to say one more sentence in this regard. Bulgaria's entry into the European Union in 2007 has already legalized the Bulgarian language as one of the languages of the European Union, but what is more valuable, not only for Bulgarians, but also for Serbs and many other countries, is that the Cyrillic alphabet has become the third official alphabet in the European Union - after the Latin alphabet and the Greek alphabet. What we did twelve years ago will apply on Serbia and its future EU membership. I am very impressed with the activities of the Ministry of European Integration and Minister Jadranka Joksimović. They do a lot to divulge the suspicions and fears of the Serbs that they would lose their Serbian identity by entering the European Union. It is not true at all. And one example is a series of brochures "Myths about the European Union", which say, for instance, that the Serbs will be able to continue making rakia once Serbia joins the EU and that the Bulgarians have already legalized it. More importantly, the Cyrillic alphabet will be preserved, it is the official alphabet, and I can really see a European approach to preservation of our identity in the European Union in the fact that the Government of Serbia has decided to proclaim May 24th an official state holiday in Serbia. That is why I am very impressed and excited at this moment. Lastly, let us remind ourselves that 55 nations in the world currently use the Cyrillic alphabet, over 400 million people. The work of the holy brothers of Cyril and Methodius is unique, it has not affected only Bulgarians, it has not affected only Serbs; it has touched the lives of all Slavs, and we have a special opportunity to celebrate it with you.

**During the EU Presidency in 2018, Republic of Bulgaria invested a lot of effort in reaffirming the EU perspective for the countries of the Western Balkans.**

**Exactly a year ago, at the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Sofia, the EU leaders confirmed their continued unequivocal support for the European prospects of this part of European continent. Have you been able to keep this momentum with succeeding Presidencies?**

I am very pleased to say that even before Bulgaria took over the EU Presidency, we had made great efforts to convince our partners in the European Union, the Member States and European institutions, that we must shift the focus of the European Union, our European Union, on the countries of the Western Balkans, and put the issue of the enlargement of the European Union back on our agenda. I think that our efforts, even before we took over the Presidency, achieved a lot, we came across a lot of understanding. Our arguments were strong: the European Union cannot be complete as long as we have a white spot on the map where the six countries of the Western Balkans are. We were able to convince our partners, of course, it cost us a lot of effort, because, in many countries, there is still a distrust of whether or not enlargement is needed, especially in some of the smaller old democracies that are part of the European Union. However, I think that what we did during our Presidency, both before and after, showed that these six countries of the Western Balkans work diligently, fully committed to their future in the European Union. During our Presidency, there was no Council meeting, there was no meeting, including the summit on May 17, not a single important event in the European Union where the member states gathered, to which we did not invite the countries of the Western Balkans. I want to emphasize here especially the role of Serbia, which was very active in this process. President Aleksandar Vučić and Prime Minister Ana Brnabić visited Sofia several times, came to Brussels to the Council sessions, and I genuinely believe that they felt part of our European family. We also contributed to making them feel this way. This has given additional impetus to the reforms in Serbia. It is clear that certain criteria have to be fulfilled for the membership in the European Union, and, in order to meet these criteria, many reforms, judicial system reforms, human rights reforms, economic reforms, such as the



strengthening of the market economy, reforms in the state administration have to be carried out. In general, every area of our lives should be looked at from this European perspective. What we have said several times and discussed here with our Serbian partners is that Serbian citizens should not look at these reforms as something that is done because Brussels wants it. This is something that is in the interest of the citizens of Serbia! It is very important that people realize that a better life will be provided by a better organization of society, a better organization of the state. We strive to apply models that have been proven in decades in the most advanced countries of Europe. As the mechanism of governance in these countries contributed to becoming stronger together, why would not we apply it in each of our countries? On the basis of the Bulgarian experience, I can say that the reforms in our country encountered resistance from the people, because substantive changes were made in the field of economy or in other areas, but people eventually understood their importance. And if today you ask any Bulgarian whether they wanted to leave the European Union, I am sure that nobody would want it, because the benefits of living in the European Union are obvious. That is why I consider it extremely important for the citizens of Serbia to understand the importance, to understand the perspective, to have pro-European politicians. I have already mentioned the President, the Prime Minister, I may also include several government ministers, you have a wonderful non-governmental sector, extremely strong non-governmental organizations working in these areas, which also contribute to informing citizens on the one hand, and, on the other hand, controlling government activities. Citizens of Serbia should understand that it is precisely this symbiosis that is in their interest and that the European Union is Serbia's perspective. It is not easy, but rest assured, in the future, it will be better for every citizen of Serbia.

**The Sofia Priority Agenda, which was adopted during the Summit, outlined new measures for enhanced cooperation with the region. What have been specific steps taken in this regard in the last twelve months?**

I will reiterate the statement made in my answer to your previous question and emphasize again that for, Bulgaria, since the end of the Presidency until today - and in the future, this a long-term commitment. It will remain on the top of our agenda and we will continue to work within the European Union on the case of Serbia and other countries of the Western Balkans. You can hear this guarantee both from our Prime Minister and from the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ekaterina Zaharieva, you can hear this from every Bulgarian politician and diplomat and see our sincere intentions. Our Presidency was not just one conjectural moment, it was not a one-time initiative. Until Serbia and other countries have become members of the European Union, we have committed to contributing to the positive changes in these countries, their better treatment in the European Union, and we will continue to do so. This is indeed a serious commitment. We also discussed these issues with our Austrian partners during their Presidency, they did a number of things that showed consistency, and now the Romanian Presidency has a similar approach in treating this issue. I believe it will be the same with the Finnish Presidency, and we have had quite active contacts with them in order to keep this topic in focus. I can tell you that we have great expectations for the Croatian presidency in the first half of 2020. All announcements point to the fact that Croatia has prioritized this issue and will make sure that it remains high on the priority list for the European Union, too. This, of course, fully satisfies us, as our attitudes fully correspond with those of our Croatian friends and partners. Next year, a summit will be held with a focus on these countries, to keep the momentum on this topic, and it will be up to Serbia and other countries now to take advantage of this opportunity. We are trying to help in every way - both as a country on a bilateral basis and as a member of the European Union. You know that, on the basis of the Sofia Declaration and other formats, substantive funds are constantly being allocated and a number of projects are being implemented in many areas. I would just mention some of them. This is primarily the development of

infrastructure in the region, the energy connectivity, the connectivity of people, such as the educational programs that make up Erasmus 2. The connectivity has also been enhanced by suspension of roaming charges, first between the countries of the region, which will be followed by the activities undertaken for initial reduction, and then subsequent abolishment of roaming charges with the countries of the European Union, too. Each of these activities is focused on the preparation of Serbia and other countries for membership in the European Union. I can list many numbers that are the result of the Priority Agenda defined in the Sofia Declaration. I am sure you are familiar with the Annex to the Declaration defining the 6 priorities. Namely, € 190 million earmarked for railroad and ports infrastructure, 11 new projects, more than 300 km of railroads modernized, 400 km of road infrastructure, Corridor 8, which is significant for the whole region, will be built. In addition, € 30 million has been allocated from the budget of the European Union for the energy efficiency package in the Western Balkans. And I have already mentioned educational connectivity and mobile telephony. I can say that these projects will be of benefit not only to the countries of the Western Balkans, but to the European Union as a whole, too. For example, a better connectivity between Bulgaria and Serbia will become a reality by modernization or electrification of the railway in the territory of Serbia. After a modern railway has been built, then there will be a fast connection between Sofia and Belgrade and the travel between the two capitals will last less than 3 hours. Therefore, all these activities have been designed with citizens in mind, to help them understand the importance of joining the European Union. And our interest is that Serbia joins the European Union, because we are convinced that being in the same family will strengthen our friendship further and enhance the security of the region. It will be a moment of reconciliation of those who were once enemies, regardless of whether it happened in the last several decades or many years ago. It will create the climate of good neighbourliness and a common future.

**Elections for the European Parliament are taking place at the time of this**

**interview. What is your assessment of the impact of a likely growth of polarization in the EP after the elections on the enlargement process?**

This is an excellent and timely question. It is true that, in this cycle, the elections for the European Parliament are different from the previous ones. The European Union has undergone a complex crisis recently, and there are many sceptics who say that the European Union will fall apart, that it will not exist in the future, etc. However, I think that these crises have made the European Union stronger in recent years. We have seen that, when we have a common approach to the most difficult problems, we can only be stronger. I will only mention one example that Serbia, although not a member of the European Union, also suffers the consequences from – the migrant crisis. This has been a very difficult issue and I am happy to note that Bulgaria has provided an excellent example of how the EU's external borders should be preserved. Our relationship with Turkey is largely based on the understanding that Bulgaria is an obstacle to a migrant wave towards the European Union and countries that are not its members, including Serbia. The migrant crisis is not the only issue I am referring to. The numerous crises that have emerged over the past years, during the current mandate of the European Parliament, have led us to truly re-examine our position in each member state and clearly say what

we want. Whether we want a strong European Union, or we want every member state to close its borders, isolate itself, and let the sceptical voices that say that the European Union will collapse become stronger and win. From the standpoint of the Bulgarian society, I can categorically claim that we are fully committed to a strong European Union, but these elections will not be national elections. These elections will, to a great extent, decide on the trends of the European Union's development. Every major European party and its member national parties clearly expressed their determination on the future direction. And citizens in the member countries, who vote for their representatives in the European Parliament, know that their deputies will join one of the larger or smaller political groups and will follow one or the other line. I am convinced that the determination of European citizens – and I am not talking about Bulgaria alone, I am talking about the whole of the European Union – will result in the continued influence of the European People's Party. The recent forecasts have confirmed that the pro-European views on the strengthening of European institutions with parallel preservation of the identity of the member states are prevailing and that the European People's Party will remain to be the strongest parliamentary group in the European Parliament. However, understandably, they will not be able to rule on their own. The European Socialists Party is likely to be part of the ruling

majority, as it has been the case so far, and this block will bring together all pro-European parties. The most dangerous thing for the European Union and for the citizens of every member state would be if nationalism, the extreme nationalism that has been on the rise, prevailed. I pray that this does not happen. The prospects for this are slim, but such risks still exist. I hope that what is truly European, what is common to us, what unites us, and not what separates us, will triumph. Nationalist tendencies and parties do not unify us, they can only break us apart. And we in the European Union should unite, because, if we are united, we will be able to bring the whole of Europe together, and the issue of membership of the countries of the Western Balkans will be much more undeniable. I understand very well that these elections are important for the countries like Serbia. I strongly believe that it would be best for Serbia and other countries of the region if the current division of forces in the European Parliament and the European Commission is maintained after these elections, since the current ruling majority has proven its commitment to enlargement. And we will be the brightest red light that will glow all the time, because we will always be the one who will keep the flag of such an agenda high. That is why I think that preserving the current power division in the European Parliament and the European Commission is best for Serbia and the countries of the Western Balkans.

## Paunović: 255 Million Dinars Allocated from the Budget for the Improvement of the Position of National Minorities

Source: Beta



In May 22, Director of the Government Office for Human and Minority Rights Suzana Paunović said that the state allocated 255 million

dinars in the 2019 budget for the financing of 22 national councils in Serbia and the Union of Jewish mu-

nicipalities, which is 10 million dinars more than 2018.

She added that support for the improvement of the position of national minorities was also ensured through the funds of the Budget Fund for National Minorities, where, for this year,

30 million dinars were earmarked for projects in the field of culture.

Paunović noted that more than 15 million Euros have been allocated from public funds since 2013 to finance the work of the national councils of national minorities in Serbia.



# The Day of Slavic Literacy and Culture

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

**E**very year, the countries of central, southeastern and eastern Europe mark May 24 as the Day of Slavic Literacy and Culture. In memory of the brothers Cyril and Methodius who departed from Constantinople in 863, with the intention of spreading literacy and Christianity in the then Pannonia and the Great Carniola principality, connecting later millions of Slovenians, numerous cultural and artistic programs are held on this day.



By creating the first Slavic script - Glagolitic, the first Slavic alphabet, used to translate the Old Testament, as well as church books, the Byzantine brothers created the first Slavic literary language and laid the foundations of Slavic literature. These facts are more than a good reason not only in our country, but in other European countries, that every year, we point to their contribution to Slavic literacy and culture in general, and we point to the cultural heritage and affirm Slavic literature, music, and art.

In Belgrade, the celebration of this holiday began in the park dedicated to Vuk Karadžić, where the ambassadors of Bulgaria, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Belarus, Ukraine, Charge d'Affaires of the Republic of Northern Macedonia, diplomats from the embassies of Russia and Montenegro, representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia and students studying

the Bulgarian language at the University of Belgrade laid flowers at the monument to Cyril and Methodius. In the evening, the Embassy of the Republic



of Bulgaria and the Embassy of the Republic of Slovakia, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia, organized the "Slavic Literacy Day" event. The event was held in the Kombank Concert Hall,

where the exhibition "The Traces of Cyril and Methodius - Photographic Biography of the Patrons of Europe" authored by Pavel Demes, the first Slovak Minister of Foreign Affairs, was open first, followed by the folk dance concerts by the Academic Cultural Artistic Society "Ivo Lola Ribar" and the guest folk dance ensemble from Bulgaria "Bulgare".

After the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia has ratified the Bill on Amendments to the Law on State and Other Holidays, which has already been approved by the Serbian Government, the Day of Slavic Literacy Day will be officially declared a working national holiday and will be formally celebrated in Serbia as of 2020.



# Serbia Is a Role Model for the State Treatment of Minorities

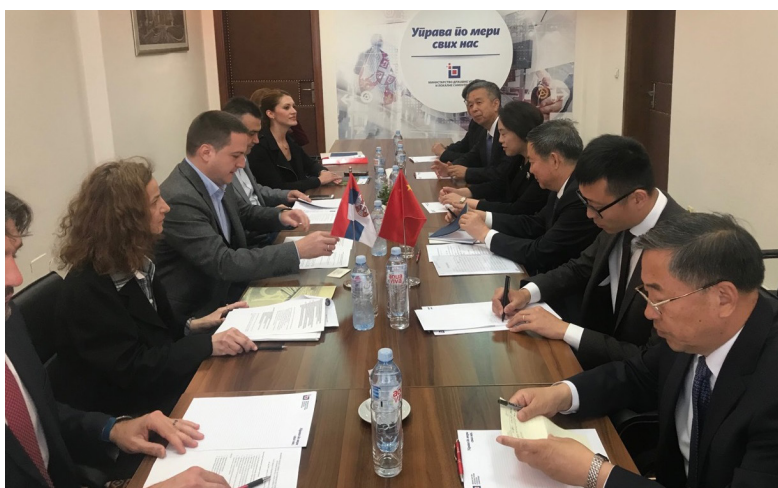
Source: MDULS

**O**n May 23, the Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, Branko Ružić, met with a delegation from the Ethnic Affairs Committee of the All-China People's Congress, led by Xiao Huien.

The interlocutors agreed that Serbia and China are characterized by a comprehensive partnership and strong friendship, and that the mutual goal is further implementation of the agreements reached and the improvement of cooperation.

Regarding the promotion of human and minority rights in Serbia, the Minister pointed out that the past period was marked by the enhancement of the legislative framework for the realization of minority rights in Serbia, and that on November 4, 2018, elections were held for members of national councils of national minorities.

"In Serbia, there are now 22 national councils of national minorities and we are richer for two more councils – of Russian and Polish minorities," Minister Ružić said,



adding that, before the elections, the Special Voters List, which counts adult citizens voluntarily enrolled as members of a minority,

registered 510,000 voters.

He noted that Serbia is more advanced in the field of minority policies than some countries of the European Union, and that it often receives praise from the world for the in this field.

"We have made it possible to register data on nationality in all registries, we pay special attention to the employment of minority members, we print toponyms in the language of a minority if it accounts for 15% of the overall population in that community, and finally, we have improved the work of national councils with focus on reduction of excessive politicization," Ružić underlined.

## Protection of the Rights of National Minorities is Beneficial for the Entire Society

Source: Independent Trade Union of Educational Workers of Vojvodina

**T**he Council of Europe and the European Union will continue to support the protection and promotion of the rights of national minorities in Serbia, as this is not only beneficial for the entire society, but also significantly contributes to the process of European integration of Serbia. This is one of the conclusions of the presentation of the Expert Report on the Existing Models of Education in the Languages of National Minorities in Serbia organized by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development on 10 May and the joint project of the European Union and the Council of Europe "Strengthening the Protection of National Minorities in Serbia".

Anamarija Viček, State Secretary at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, emphasized in her introductory speech the importance of this independent expert report on impro-

ving the model of education in the languages of national minorities, as well as the fulfillment of one of the activities arising from the Action Plan for the Realization of the Rights of National Minorities. "This gives an

added perspective to the new report on the implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in the Republic of Serbia, and recommendations given to the institutions of Serbia



in April this year. Progress achieved in the training of minority language education teachers was commended, and it turned out that education in minority languages works well and gives good results,"Tobias Flesenkemper, head of the Council of Europe's Office in Belgrade said.

Claudine Brohy, of the University of Freiburg, who is a member of the Committee of Experts on the European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages, prepared an expert report on existing models of minority language education in Serbia and other countries with recommendations for changing existing models of education in minority languages. Representatives of state institutions, national councils of national minorities and international organizations



attended this presentation, organized within the framework of the "Strengthening the Protection of National Minorities in Serbia" program,

as part of the joint program of the European Union and the Council of Europe, "Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey".

## Ten Million Dinars for Promotion of Multilingualism in the Territory of AP Vojvodina in 2019

Source: PS for Education, Regulations, Administration and National Minorities - National Communities



**The Provincial Secretariat for Education, Regulations, Administration and National Minorities - National Communities, through a public competition, has allocated significant funds to improve multilingualism in local government units on the territory of AP Vojvodina, where the languages of national minorities - national communities are in official use.**

This year, of ninety-seven applications from twenty-three municipalities and towns from the territory of the AP Vojvodina received during the competition, 80 were approved, with ten applications filed by municipal and city administrations, ten applications from educational institutions, forty two applications from the local communities and twenty-two applications from other budget users, i.e. public enterprises



and institutions. Most applications came from the City of Subotica,

followed by the municipalities of Kanjiža and Novi Bečej.

«The Province provides continued traditional support to the official use of the language of national minorities in accordance with the Constitution and positive regulations of Serbia, as well as with the Action Plan for the Realization of the Rights of National Minorities, adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia in 2016 in connection with integration into the European Union. The funds allocated

through the call for proposals are aimed for three purposes: for the creation and placement of boards and signs printed in the languages of minorities that are in official use, then for the production and printing of multilingual forms and other publications, as well as for the development of multilingual electronic administration,” the Deputy Prime Minister of the Provincial Government and Provincial Secretary Mihalj Njilaš said at the ceremonial delivery of the agreements in the lobby of the Provincial Government.

Units of local self-government, in which the statute of the city or municipality determined the official use of the languages and scripts of national minorities - national communities for the territory of whole local self-government or certain populated places, as well as local communities and other bodies, organizations, and budget users from

the territory of AP Vojvodina were eligible to take part in this call for proposals.

The total fund of the call for pro-

posals for 2019 was 10,000,000.00 dinars, which is over five hundred thousand dinars more than in the previous years.



## “We Agree” - EU Supports Projects to Promote Social Cohesion in Multi-Ethnic Municipalities

Source: Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia

**T**hrough the EU PRO development program, the European Union (EU) will support 22 new civil society projects aimed at improving social cohesion in multi-ethnic municipalities from the two regions of Šumadija and Western Serbia, and southern and eastern Serbia.

Projects identified by the EU for almost € 400,000 are primarily aimed at contributing to improving the status of vulnerable groups and their social inclusion, as well as improving interethnic relations and fostering co-operation among multi-ethnic communities.

“The existence of a strong civil sector is a precondition for effective citizen participation in the most important processes of social development. Through the EU PRO project we support the policy of the Government

of the Republic of Serbia which presupposes the existence of a strong civil society on the one hand and even sustainable local development on the other one. We hope that grant receiving organizations will be able to contribute in this way to the quality of life of citizens in their local communities, improving the quality of a dialogue, multiculturalism and empowering women entrepreneurship,” Minister for European Integration Jadranka Joksimović said.

“The European Union provides su-

pport to the civil sector as the driver of positive change, and through the projects we support, we will contribute to the creation of a society dedicated to the well-being of all its members, in which people are protected from discrimination and which fosters solidarity and acceptance of diversity, whose institutions enable the protection of human rights for all citizens alike. That is what we mean when we say “EU FOR YOU”, the Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Serbia, Ambassador Sam Fabrizio said.



# Day of the Czech National Minority Council Marked

Source: BC info

**O**n May 16th, St. John Nepomuk's Day, the Day of the Czech National Minority Council was celebrated at the Town Gallery in Bela Crkva.

In addition to the members of the National Council of the Czech National Minority, the Deputy Ambassador of the Czech Republic in Belgrade, Miroslav Čančík, the President of the Bela Crkva Municipality Darko Bogosavljević, the Speaker of the Municipal Assembly of Bela Crkva Marjan Aleksić, the representatives of the Czech associations as well as numerous guests from other national minority councils: Romanian, Roma, Macedonian, Russian, Montenegrin, attended the celebration.

The guests were greeted by the President of the National Council of the Czech National Minority Ljiljana Stehlik, who presented the activities of the Council since the constitution of the new convocation in December 2018.

"Our goal is to involve young people in the activities and events organized by the National Council and we will work on this throughout the mandate. When I see smiling faces of children, this is our greatest incentive and motivation for further work. In the coming months, we will have traditional Czech festivals, first of all the big festival "Beauty of Diversity" mid- July. I would like to emphasize that in the middle of August we will organize a big rock festival in Češko Selo, with guests from the Czech Republic and Romania, as well as our domestic rock bands. In this way, we are planning to start a new tradition of the festival in this small, almost ethnically clean village, try to revive it, and return it to frameworks that we think it should be," the President of the National Council of the Czech National Minority, Ljiljana Stehlik said.

The President of the Executive Committee of the National Council of

the Czech Minority, Šiman Irović, also addressed the attendees, and emphasized the importance and preservation of primary schools in the territory of the municipality of Bela Crkva, where the Czech language is optional.

"I thank everyone who came to mark the Day of the National Council of Czechs, I want you to feel like at your



home because the Czech National Day is nothing but the Day of all of us here," Šiman Irović added.

For the outstanding contribution to the preservation of Czech cultural values, the National Council of Czechs awarded golden plaques to Stefan Klepaček, Karl Krutil and the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Belgrade, led by the Ambassador, his Excellency Tomas Kuchta.

"I have been in Serbia for several months only, but I am delighted with what I saw in Bela Crkva today. I felt the incredible desire and will for the work of



the National Council of Czechs in Bela Crkva, and when I heard the Czech Anthem, it was especially pleasant to me. Citizens of the Czech Republic are very happy that Czech national communities exist outside the motherland, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is trying to help protect the Czech language and culture in all these communities. Czech Republic's assistance to Serbia has already passed a figure of 2.5 billion dinars, this year we have continued this trend and we will continue it in the following years. Once again, I want to thank the National Council of the Czech National Minority for invitation and to wish them a lot of success in further work," Deputy Chief of Mission of the Czech Republic to Belgrade Miroslav Čančík said.

"Based on everything presented today, we can clearly see a shift in the work of the National Council of the Czech National Minority, we have seen a lot of activities and events that have been carried out for this short time, the ideas and inclusion of young people. The local self-government of Bela Crkva Municipality will always support the National Council in the form of various projects, of course, in accordance with the possibilities. We also support all national councils, not just the Czech National Council," Darko Bogosavljević, President of the Municipality of Bela Crkva said.

The children choir "Radost" sang children songs in the Czech language, while Ivona Bužek performed classical music.



# Contents of the Website of the Ministry of Construction in the Roma Language

Source: Government of the Republic of Serbia

**T**he Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure of the Government of the Republic of Serbia announced that, on May 12, the website of this ministry in the Romani language started to operate, where members of the Roma population can follow the most important news from the Ministry in their mother tongue.

The website of the Ministry in the Romani language, launched at the initiative of Deputy Prime Minister Zorana Mihajlović, is unique in the Balkans, as, for the first time, the web presentation of a state institution is translated into this language.

Mihajlović, who heads the Coordination Body for Monitoring the Implementation of the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma Men and Women, prompted other ministries to translate a portion

of their web contents relevant to the Roma community and their inclusion in society into the Romani language.

Roma have their country - it is Serbia. The Government does much to integrate the Roma community in the society. All the measures that the state implements to enhance conditions in the field of employment, education, health and housing of Roma people will be translated into the Roma language, she noted.

According to her, in addition to this site, the development of a multilingual web platform of the Coordination Body for Monitoring the Implementation of the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma Men and Women is in progress.

The translation of the website into the Romani language, apart from being a breakthrough in communication and better understanding, is aimed at reducing prejudice and fully integrating our Roma citizens into society, Mihajlović explained.

The project leader is prof. Ljuran Koka, from the Center for Roma and Ethnic Communities Education, who also works on the project "Introduction of Roma Language with Elements of National Culture in Elementary Schools in Serbia".



## The Government Is Striving to Provide Better Conditions for the Lives of Roma

**O**n May 13, State Secretary of the Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure Zoran Lakićević and adviser to the Deputy Prime Minister Nenad Ivanišević visited three Roma settlements in Leskovac, whose inhabitants were targeted by the hooligans.

Representatives of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure Zorana Mihajlović visited the residents of the settlements of Podvorce, Sat mahala and Slavko Zlatanović in Leskovac, where they spoke with the families of the Roma who had been attacked.

Ivanišević said that Serbia is the state of all its citizens, in which every national minority, including the Roma, should have the opportunity to progress and develop, and to make its members feel safe and secure.

Any kind of hatred and violence towards the Roma are inadmissible and we expect that the hooligans who attacked the representatives of this national minority in Leskovac will be brought to justice in the shortest possible time, he added.

According to Ivanišević, the Government and the Coordination Body for Monitoring the Implementation of the Strategy

for Social Inclusion of Roma Men and Women, with the Deputy Prime Minister, are aiming to provide better living conditions and equal participation of Roma in the society.

We are on the ground every day to tackle all problems, and we call on the Roma to participate actively in all programs of assistance that the Government offers, Ivanišević pointed out.

Lakićević said that the Ministry is making efforts to provide housing for the Roma people, and that these settlements can be helped through these budget lines and IPA funds, as well.



# Ružić: Together We Will Solve the Problem of Transcription of Albanian Names

Source: MDULS

**I**n order to improve the exercise of the right to official use of the Albanian language and script and use the personal name of members of the Albanian national minority, Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Government Branko Ružić held a meeting on May 17 in the presence of the Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, H.E. Andrea Orizio and the Director of the Coordination Body for the Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedja Municipalities, Danijela Nenadić, with the representatives of the cities of Leskovac, Niš and Vranje and the municipalities of Bujanovac, Medvedja and Preševo.

Thanks to the support of the OSCE Mission in Serbia, the Coordination Body and the National Council of the Albanian National Minority, the creation of a Catalogue of Albanian Names will



begin, which will enable the registrars in Serbia to enter the names of members of the Albanian national minority into the registries absolutely precisely and accurately.

"This job is extremely important for our citizens who are members of the Albanian minority and the exercise of all their rights," Ružić said, adding that, by September 3, they will be working on listing all the names from the registers of Leskovac, Niš, Vranje, Bujanovac, Preševo and Medvedja and their transcription into Albanian language and script.

According to the minister, members of the Albanian national minority have faced problems in the realization of certain rights if in different documents the personal name is transcribed differently. "The catalogue will also help register newborn babies and get basic documentation expeditiously through the "Baby, Welcome to the World" Project," he said.

Ambassador Orizio pointed out that the OSCE Mission in Serbia will continue to support such activities that aim to increase the opportunities for the realization of the rights of members of all national minorities in Serbia.

"I believe that we can carry out this complex work in the appropriate way and provide an instrument for the realization of human rights with joint forces," the Ambassador concluded.

## The Day of the Medvedja Municipality Marked with the Ceremonial Session of the Assembly

Source: Jugmedia and Coordination Body

**T**he Municipality of Medvedja celebrated its Day, the 75th anniversary of the liberation from fascism, with the ceremonial session of the Assembly and the award ceremony.

After the ceremonial opening of the reconstructed municipal building, the formal session of the Assembly in the Cultural Center began with the Serbian Anthem, after which the agenda was adopted by acclamation. The

acknowledgements were awarded to prominent individuals who contributed to the development of Medvedja last year. Prior to the award ceremony, the Mayor of the Municipality, Nebojša Arsić, addressed the guests, and then a short film on the achievements made over the twelve months was shown.

"Our pride is our multi-ethnicity and friendly relations between Serbs, Albanians, Montenegrins and Roma. We must preserve this harmony as the

heritage to the generations to come," Arsić said.

He added that the people of Medvedja today are on the right track, the way of recovery and progress.

"This is evidenced by numerous infrastructure projects, improved living conditions of our citizens, better successes of our children. We celebrate this year's Medvedja Day in a more beautiful town, which, year after year, becomes a place

of a better and more pleasant life for our citizens. The steps were difficult and painful, and every single day in the year was always too short for many things we had on our to-do-list,” Arsić said.

He also noted that in the past years the roads were reconstructed, bridges built, churches and mosques were constructed and renovated, sports fields, street lighting, kindergartens, the Health Center, and the municipal building were also renovated, and two more schools will soon be reconstructed as well as the rehabilitation center in Sijarinska Banja.

“We have a lot more to be proud of, but the most important thing is to believe in each other, to move forward together, and to leave disagreements behind us, because the general interest of the people of Medvedja is more important than anything else,” Arsić concluded.

The President of the Coordination Body



for Preševu, Bujanovac and Medvedja municipalities, Zoran Stanković, also addressed the participants, and said that, in the future, more funds will be allocated for Medvedja.

“For this year, we have allocated more funds, about 53 to 54 million dinars, which will be spent on infrastructure facilities, primarily for the network of roads in the territory of the municipality of Medvedja. At the same time, we have provided scholarship money for 63 high school students, who will receive the amount of 6,000 dinars for 10 mont-

hs, we have provided students’ accessories for 72 pupils, and we hope that in the following period we will continue with this activity, with the help from the Serbian government, which will be much bigger,” Stanković said.

Stanković added that the main focus is the employment of a large number of people, since several firms that had been in receivership were bought out

and that the state would do everything to help and employ a significantly larger number of people.

“Medvedja is an indisputable territory, and it is an obligation of the state to invest in its territory. I am confident that we will meet next year with even better results,” Zoran Stanković said.

After the award ceremony, a short entertainment program was organized, followed by the opening of the exhibition of Predrag Baja Luković, also a native of Medvedja.

## Bulgarian Community

# Bulgaria Invests 180,000 Levs in the Modernization of the Historic Complex “Neško’s Peak” Near Caribrod

Source: Embassy of the Republic of Bulgaria

**T**he agreement on the grant from the Republic of Bulgaria to the Municipality of Caribrod was signed on May 9 by the Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria to Serbia, Radko Vlajkov, and the Mayor of Caribrod, Vladica Dimitrov.

Bulgaria has allocated 180,000 Bulgarian levs for the construction of the electrical infrastructure of the Neško’s Peak Complex - a project of great importance for the local community



with a large Bulgarian population. The project, which is being implemented within the Bulgarian Development

Cooperation Program, is financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic Bulgaria.

The “Neško’s Peak” Memorial Cemetery is one of the most important cultural and historical monuments in the history of Serbia and Bulgaria, as the bones of the Serbian and Bulgarian soldiers killed during the war of 1885 were buried together in this Memorial Cemetery.

The project is part of the Bulgarian



Development Assistance Program for 9 countries in the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership amounting to about 3.5 million Bulgarian levs. In addition to this project in Bosilegrad, a number of other projects will be financed in Serbia, too, such as the program for convergence of Serbian and European education, as well as other projects. At a meeting in Sofia in April this year with Minister for European Integrations Jadranka Joksimović, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria, Ekaterina Zaharieva, stressed the importance Bulgaria gives to these projects and stated that it will continue with this support program in the future.

At the signing ceremony in Caribrod, Bulgarian Ambassador Radko Vlaykov said that the Europe Day is very special for citizens of Caribrod. "In addition to the traditional pilgrimage to the Neško's Peak Memorial Complex on the St. George's Day, today, on the Europe Day, we are signing an agreement, which is the foundation for the realization of a project that is



important both for tourism and for historical memory," the Bulgarian Ambassador said. Ambassador Vlaykov also noted that the Embassy in Belgrade will continue to cooperate with the municipality on other important projects after this project has been completed. He also pointed out that through this assistance the Bulgarian State notes the importance of support to Bulgarian communities in the countries of the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership. In this way, Bulgaria also supports democratic processes and European integration

of Serbia and other countries.

The Mayor of Caribrod Vladica Dimitrov expressed gratitude for the support of the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria to the Municipality of Caribrod. He emphasized that the Municipality and the Bulgarian State, with joint efforts, will, after many years, transform this memorial stone into a symbol of reconciliation. Dimitrov also said that this event is the best message that can be sent to young and future generations on Europe Day.

# Bulgaria Allocates 10,000 Euros for the Renovation of the Cultural Center in Ivanovo

Source: RTV

**T**he Bulgarian Foreign Ministry has allocated funds for the reconstruction of the Cultural Center in Ivanovo. The grant agreement was signed in Pančevo. Ivanovo is one of the few places where Banat Bulgarian - Palčens live.

Ivanovo is a small multiethnic settlement in the territory of the Town of Pančevo, known for its specific culture. Serbs, Bulgarians and Hungarians live together in this village, and through various manifestations, nurture and preserve their identity. The place of gathering is the Cultural Center, hence the donation of the Bulgarian Government, which will be of benefit to all residents of the village.

"Although this grant is not big, I think it comes at the right time. When I visited Ivanovo, it was its residents who spoke about the need for the renovation of the Center in which they nurture their culture. What impresses me is when I listen to Ivanovo's anthem, which speaks of its Serbian, Bulgarian, and Hungarian residents, as it really proves how specific Ivanovo is, how much the tradition is preserved, and how important the Cultural Center is for all citizens," Radko Vlaykov, Ambassador of the Republic Bulgaria, said.

"This is a big thing for our Cultural Center, and with this grant we will repair the large hall and also do a new ceiling. The donation is about 10,000 Euros," Marko Guran, director of the

Cultural Center in Ivanovo, said.

Ivanovo is one of the few places where Banat Bulgarians live, who for years have been trying to preserve the Palčens language, which slowly dies, through workshops, and, of course, their folklore and customs.

"Serbs and Sekelj Hungarians and Banat Bulgarians live there for centuries, they have made a specific culture through coexistence, and the Center is definitely a place where they can nurture, develop and show it to others," Saša Pavlov, Mayor of Pančevo, said.

The reconstruction of the Cultural Center should be completed by the end of the year.

# The Issue of Returning the Croatian Center Is Being Solved

Source: Croatian Word

**T**he first visit of representatives of the new convocation of the Croatian National Council to local authorities in the area of Srem was to the City of Sremska Mitrovica on May 10. The delegation of the HNV consisted of the HNV President, Jasna Vojnić, Vice President for Srem Darko Vuković, President of the Committee on Culture Darko Sarić Lukendić, President of the Committee for Official Use of Language and Script Zlatko Načev and President of HKC Srem - Hrvatski dom Krunoslav Đaković. During the meeting with the Mayor Vladimir Sanader in the City Hall, the representatives of the Croatian National Council discussed the needs and problems of the Croatian community in the municipality of Sremska Mitrovica, and one of the topics was also how to solve the problem of the return of the Croatian Center to the local Croatian community.

The HNV's officials introduced the Mayor with members of the new convocation of the umbrella institution of Croats in Serbia and their activities.

"The plan of the new convocation of the HNV is to visit local self governments. What needs to be pointed out is that the local Croatian community in this city is satisfied with cooperation with the city administration and we want to continue this cooperation in the cultural, educational and every other segment in the future," Darko Vuković said.

He also expressed his satisfaction with the readiness of the local self-government to resolve the problem of the return of the Croatian Center to the Croatian community in the near future.

"The implementation of negotiations and agreements related to resolving the problems of the return of the Croatian Centre is very important to

"Through our budget plans and programs we help minority communities in the Town, as well as the cultural and artistic societies that exist within these communities. We want to continue this successful cooperation and I have to note that we did not have any inter-ethnic incidents in the past. We will try to solve all potential problems in direct communication with representatives of the Croatian

National Council," Sanader said.

He added that the Town of Sremska Mitrovica at the last session of the Town Assembly decided to introduce the language of national minorities in Bingula, where the Croatian language will be studied, too.

"Minority communities must be protected and must exercise the same rights as the majority population. When it comes to the Croatian Center, we will respect the agreement of Croatian President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović and Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić about the technique of solving this problem. Everything that is agreed at the level of the Republic, we, as a local self-government, will supporting fully. Given that there are some legal obstacles to be solved in this regard, we are ready to transform the type of ownership of the Croatian Center and sell it, since we cannot legally return it or simply leave it. I think we will solve this issue in due time. "

Meetings with the representatives of the highest-ranking local government officials, as announced, will continue in other places in Srem where Croats live in a significant number.



us and we are pleased that there is a willingness of the Town to solve this problem. We have realized that the problems of people living in the municipalities we visited are mostly the same, and they are primarily related to employment, education and culture. In five schools in this city, children attend Croatian language with Elements of National Culture, and a lot has been invested in the culture of all national communities. The festival "To Srem from Srem Residents", which will be held in this town on May 18, shows the bonds and connectivity of the communities in Srem on a cultural level. "

As Sanader pointed out, the Town will, as before, help the Croatian community, as well as all other minority communities in the territory of the province of Sirmium.



# Bunjevac National Minority Council Presents New Printed Editions to the Bunjevac Heritage Foundation

Source: Bunjevac Media Center

**O**n May 16th, Bunjevac National Minority Council's President Suzana Kujundžić Ostojić presented new printed editions of the Bunjevac National Minority Council and the UK "Center for the Culture of the Bunjevac" to the library of the Bunjevac Heritage Foundation. The books included the new edition of Dictionary of the Bačka Bunjevacs, Grammar and Spelling Guide for Bunjevac Language, a study on the Bunjevacs called "At the Crossroads of Centuries" and the book by Ana Vojnić Kortmiš, "Whenever".

"We look forward to being able to enrich the library of the Bunjevac Heritage Foundation with our new editions and we hope that they will be used for even better

acquaintance with both history and writing creativity of the Bunjevacs," Dr Suzana Kujundžić Ostojić said.

In the coming period, the Bunjevac Heritage Foundation will focus its work on the development of a library, as it possesses a substantive number of books in the Bunjevac language.



"These four new printed editions in the Bunjevac language will enrich the library of the Bunjevac Heritage Foundation, whose next project will be indexing all books, creating the catalogue of all editions, and forming the library in the most modern way, with the help of professional staff of the City Library in Subotica," Veljko Vojnić, the President of the Bunjevac Heritage Foundation said.



## KUD "Bunjevka" in the "Night of Museums"

**K**This year, "Bunjevka" Cultural and Artistic Society took part in the traditional international manifestation "Night of the Museums", and the Society prepared this event with the "Panel Conference".

The visitors of the Ethno House Kuntić enjoyed in several segments of the program "Bunjevka's Open Door" during the evening. The first segment was an ethno-exhibition – Folk Costume of Bačka Bunjevac "Oglavlja", then an open-air exhibition "In Honor of Fame and Freedom", children fashion show "Be Modern, Be Yourself", and, together with friends from the Cultural Artistic Society "Bratstvo", the evening of Bunjevac songs and dances "Kolo".



The participants were greeted by Kata Kuntić, the chairwoman of the Cultural Artistic Society "Bunjevka", and the event was officially opened

by Dr. Suzana Kujundžić Ostojić, the President of the Bunjevac National Minority Council.

# Greek Evening in Smederevo

Source: National Council of the Greek National Minority

**A**ssociation of Serbian-Greek Friendship and KUD "Kantakuzina" from Smederevo organized a social gathering with Greek music on May 17th within the project "Cultural Activities of the Greek Community of Serbia in 2019".

Within the project that will be implemented throughout 2019, the event in Smederevo was dedicated to the friendly relations of the Serbian and Greek peoples, and to the agreement on brotherly relations made by the Association that organized the gathering and the Cultural Association "Emanuel Kriaras" from Leptokarya.

The event was attended by guests from several cities, as well as official guests from Leptokarya: Deputy Pre-



sident of the Tourist Organization of Leptokarya, Janis Karakitsos, and a representative of the Cultural Association "Emanuel Kriaras", Konstantinos Tournidis.



The project is implemented with the support of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Serbia, the Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government of the Republic of Serbia, the city of Smederevo and the National Council of the Greek National Minority.

## Romanian Community

# More than 800 Children at the "Festival of Romanian Folklore of the Children of Vojvodina"

Source: RTV Pančevo | Photo: Dolovo Cultural Center

**O**n May 17 and 18, at the Cultural Center in Dolovo, the 8th "Festival of Romanian Folklore of the Children of Vojvodina" was held. About 800 children participated in the Festival. In August, another large festival, "Festival

Folklore of the Children of Vojvodina" gathers several hundred pupils of school age, the best vocal and instrumental soloists, children's folk ensembles, choirs and orchestras of elementary schools and cultural and artistic societies of the Romanian



of Romanian Folklore", will also be held in Dolovo.

Every year, the «Festival of Romanian

national minority. According to the director of the Dolovo Cultural Center and member of the Organizing Committee of this festival, Miroslav



Prvulja, during the two festival days, about 800 children participated in the event.

Prvulja noted that the folklore culture of the people is preserved in the villages.

The organization of the festival lasted more than two months and, as they said, this was just an overture to the big "Festival of Romanian Folklore", which will be held in Dolovo in August.



# Conference “German National Minority and Europe” Organized in Sombor

Source: RTV

**O**n May 23, Konrad Adenauer Foundation organized a conference “German National Minority and Europe” in Sombor, with participation of István Pásztor, Speaker of the Assembly of AP Vojvodina.

Pásztor noted that, regardless of the size of a national community, the institutional framework and energy within this community are crucial for its survival.

“In the past years in the Republic of Serbia, a great step forward was made in the creation of legal framework for the preservation of the identity of minority communities. This is the joint result of the majority and minority communities, the result of the entire society, because, if there had been no proper social climate, it would not have been possible. Today, Serbia is able to show Europe a good example of how the issue of relations between the majority and the minority can be resolved,” Pásztor said.

He added that within the German national



community, regardless of its size, there is great energy and ability to organize, set goals and achieve them, and that state institutions will always be a reliable partner in this process.

The Secretary General of the President of the Republic of Serbia, Nikola Selaković, pointed out that a good relationship with the Federal Republic of Germany is of great importance for Serbia, and that the indicator of the current good relations, among other things, is the good position of the German national minority in our country.

“Our task is to keep our identity and, regardless of differences, to seek common points that connect us, in order to build

a brighter future for the next generations,” Selaković said.

He also emphasized that the relations between Serbia and Germany grew out of the partners’ friendships and reminded that, since 2014, a number of German investments has increased, resulting in an increase in

the number of employees in German companies from 17,000 to 61,000.

Following the welcome address by the mayor of Sombor Dušanka Golubović, who spoke about the affirmative measures to protect the culture, language, scripts, and traditions of minority communities, the Director of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation for Serbia and Montenegro Norbert Beckmann-Dierkes and the President of the National Council German National Minority in Serbia Mihael Plac also addressed the participants. Plac noted that the German national community, by its participation in the creation of multinational Serbia, left a gift of unity for future generations.

## Slovak Community

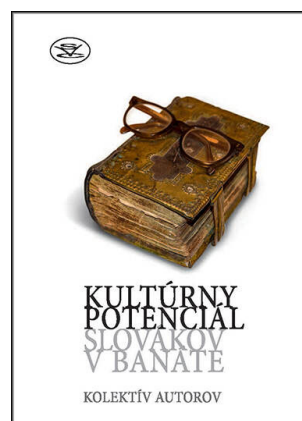
# Cultural Potential of Slovaks in Banat Presented

Source: Hlas Ljudu

**S**lovak Publishing Center from Bački Petrovac issued a publication “Cultural Potential of Slovaks in Banat”. Presentation of the publication, which was held at the Municipal Library in Kovačica, was attended by the authors, professors of the Department of Management in Culture and Tourism of the Faculty of Philosophy at the Konstantin the Philosopher University in Njitra.

A group of authors presented a similar

publication dedicated to the Slovaks in Srem a month ago. In the most recent publication, they focused on Slovaks in Arad, Bel Blat, Zrenjanin, Kovačica, Janošik, Padina, Hajdučica, Vojlovica and Belgrade. According to the director of the Slovak Publishing Center, Vladimir Valencic, for each data processing SWOT



analysis was applied - they listed the advantages of the cultural potential for a certain place, but also the shortcomings, with recommendations what to do.

The Slovak Publishing Center also announced that a similar publication on the Slovaks in Bačka will be published by the end of this year.

# Meeting Held with Representatives of the Ukrainian Delegation

Source: Provincial Government

**O**n May 22, representatives of the Ministry of Culture and Local Self-Government from Ukraine, dealing with the issues of national minorities, met with the Deputy Prime Minister of the Provincial Government and the Provincial Secretary for Education, Regulations, Administration and National Minorities - National Communities, Mihail Njilaš.

At the very beginning of the meeting, the Provincial Secretary presented the role of the Secretariat and its competences when it comes to national minorities - national communities, as well as their education.

“In the territory of AP Vojvodina, there are twenty eight national minorities - national communities. As members of national minorities, we have the right to our culture, our education, the right to official use of mother tongues in institutions, and, in addition, we can also be informed in our mother tongue. There is a long-established spirit of inter-ethnic coexistence between both the majority and the minority communities, which is a factor of stability, not only in the territory of AP Vojvodina, but in the entire Republic of Serbia,” Njilaš said. He emphasized that the rights of national minorities are reflected in four major areas: the



official use of languages and script, culture, public information and education.

The meeting was organized within the framework of the Council of Europe project titled “Protection of National Minorities, including Roma and the Languages of National Minorities in the Territory of Ukraine”.

In addition to representatives of the Ukrainian delegation, the representatives of the Provincial Secretariat for Education, Regulations, Administration and National Minorities - national communities and national councils of the Hungarian, Slovak, Ruthenian and Ukrainian national minorities also attended the meeting. The participants in the meeting discussed the

situation of national minorities.

As part of the EU accession process, the Government of the Republic of Serbia, as early as March 3, 2016, adopted the Action Plan for the Realization of the Rights of National Minorities, which is the milestone in the exercise of their rights. Thanks to this action plan, national minority councils have undergone reforms. There are twenty three national councils on the territory of the Republic of Serbia. Of this, seventeen councils are from the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and their work is co-financed by the Provincial Secretariat for Education, Regulations, Administration and National Minorities - National Communities through a call for proposals.







**Centar za istraživanja migracija**  
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