

**REGIONAL HERALD FOR PROMOTION OF CULTURE
OF MINORITY RIGHTS AND INTERETHNIC
TOLERANCE**

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Top story in this issue:

**EDUCATION, CULTURE, LANGUAGE:
CAUSE OF MUTUAL ENRICHMENT OR DIVISIONS**

Conservation and affirmation of national identity is one of the key issues in each minority and their associations, as well as one of the most important goals of many of minority associations.

Preservation of cultural and national tradition of ethnic minority groups should undoubtedly contribute to quality, diversity and richness of culture in a community and fruitful mutual enrichment. However, in communities with recent experience of conflict and disturbed ethnic tolerance minority diversity and right to preserve national identity via own culture, education, language often become causes for absurd and irrational divisions, obstacles and misunderstandings instead of elements of mutual enrichment.

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I BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

1. OUR DIVERSITIES – AN ADVANTAGE OR A BARRIER TO COEXISTENCE

Dusan Babic

In any civilized society, the thesis from the headline would constitute an artificial dilemma. It goes without saying that diversity enriches any normal community. Unfortunately, things are different in this region. Here we are witnesses that diversity in the area of culture, science, education, and especially national, ethnic or religious background, mentality and tradition, is blown out of proportion to the point of bad taste, contrary to all logic and rational reasoning. All this irrationality is usually accompanied by tragic consequences. It is needless to stress that this backward and unfortunate practice particularly affects Bosnia-Herzegovina.

2. Education in BiH: BETWEEN ETHNIC HATE AND QUALITY EDUCATION

Namir Ibrahimovic

Members of minority communities have a big problem in the education process. The term *minority community* refers to real ethnic minorities (listed in the Law on the Rights of Ethnic Minorities) and the constituent peoples who are in minority in a certain region. They, as a rule, are not allowed to have classes in their mother tongue or religious classes. It happens often, for instance, that Islamic classes are attended also by children of the Orthodox and Catholic religious for the simple reason that they have nothing else to do while their peers deal with religious issues.

3. Ethnic Minorities in the Republika Srpska: PAINSTAKING EFFORTS TO PRESERVE CULTURAL AND LINGUAL IDENTITY

Branka Stevandic

In addition to language courses, ethnic minority associations also organize numerous cultural events. All their activities take place at the Minority Club, with the exception of KUD (Cultural and Art Society) "Taras Sevcenko," which has its own premises. Also fighting to preserve their language and culture are Croats who, although a constituent people in the RS under the Constitution, are an "ethnic minority" in practice. Before the war, some 220,000 Croats lived in the region covered by the RS entity, while today some 10,000 live in the entity. The average age of Croats has exceeded 65 years and they are afraid of biologically dying out in the RS.

4. President of Republika Srpska Association of Ethnic Minorities Vladimir Blaha: BIGGER PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT

Branka Stevandic

"An action plan enabling us to organize additional classes in ethnic minority languages has been adopted and signed, but there has been no concrete implementation of the plan. Classes for ethnic minority children in elementary schools should start this school year. The plan is for children to have two classes a week learning their own language, history and culture. We understand that it is difficult to provide staff for these classes and that the number of ethnic minority children is small, but we would also be satisfied if summer schools were organized for members of ethnic minorities where language, history and culture would be studied," says Blaha.

II CROATIA

1. SEPARATE SCHOOLS NOT ONLY SOLUTION

Mladen Obrenovic

Legal right of giving minority education in their own mother tongues and alphabets, although adapted to high European standards, causes much trouble in some areas.

Due to past war traumas and broken inter-ethnic relations, consumption of this right and unreserved insisting on it could lead into further ghettoization and disruption ethnic relations.

On the other hand, it is overlooked that minorities have other educational methods and contents at their disposal which can contribute to reconstruction and strengthening of inter-ethnic trust.

2. Interview with Kasum Cana, president of the Center for Croatian Roma culture: IF SITUATION DOESN'T IMPROVE, WE WILL COMPLAIN TO EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Goran Vezic

Situation in Medjimurje remains almost unchanged compared to beginning of schoolyear 2003. Roma children come to classes unprepared, they lack textbooks, there are occasional xenophobic, racial remarks and individual incidents. Ministers and vice prime ministers come and go, but the problems in Medjimurje remain the same, says Cana. He announced that Roma community will put a complaint to Roma representative in European Parliament if the situation doesn't improve soon.

"Whether Croatia is integrated into Europe or not doesn't matter, negative response is bound to come", says Cana.

3. Interview with prof. Mirko Markovic, assistant to Croatian minister of science, education and sport: BILINGUAL CLASSES MOST ADEQUATE FOR SERB MINORITY

Sanja Vukcevic

Constitutional Law on Rights of National Minorities created a legal frame and obligation to implement Law on Education in Language and Alphabet of National Minorities. Law regulations are a good basis, but not sufficiently used, says Markovic.

Analysing education models for members of national minorities, Markovic singled out Model B as most adequate for Serb minority. It is model of bilingual classes with natural science subjects lectured in Croatian and social (national) classes in minority language. He says separate schools are not a necessity but rather a result of re-integration and lack of goodwill.

III SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO

1. High-school for agriculture in Bačka Topola as a CENTER OF FRIENDSHIP

Ljubenko Zvizdić

By the beginning of September in Bačka Topola an international agricultural fair took place.

The model for it's organization were the developed, western countries: mini-fair in a town which is famous by some economical branch. Co-organizer and a host of this fair was high-school for agriculture, one of the best in Serbia and Montenegro. It was an opportunity for reportage about

host school which has classes in two languages that are attended by students of different nationalities without any problem.

2. CIVILIZATION IS THE WORK OF TRANSLATORS

Arpad Vicko, translator

In Vojvodina, the culture of translating has been on a very high level for a very long time. This (above all, positive) praxis has been truly neglected since the beginning of 90-ties, when “national issue” began the only acknowledged and current criteria of all other issues and appearances. If we had been translating more during those 20 years, we could have included more people in the global network of readers of world literature. Because, when they read a translated book, people won't only be closer to the author, but will also find themselves related to all those people who already read that same book, someplace else and in some other language.

3. DEVELOPMENT AND PRESERVATION OF INTERCULTURALISM IN NOVI SAD

Pavel Gatajancu

In multi-national Vojvodina, nations are the creator of culture. Every culture is a unique, special category, but multiculturalism is the advantage for the development of each of those special cultures. Because, if the dialogue with other cultures is denied, every possibility to learn something new and to enrich one's own culture is rejected.

Self-sufficiency has never been a good solution for any culture. Learning about differences and respecting them in the cultural tradition of Vojvodina is an optimal way for preservation of all cultures that live in this area.

4. MULTICULTURALISM AND WOMEN

Svenka Savić, Philosophic Faculty of Novi Sad

In Novi Sad, a research has been conducted with the intention to find out in which way do women belonging to major (Serbian) nationality, form and maintain stereotypes and prejudice towards women of other nationalities that live in the same area together with them.

The results show that stereotype ideas about others we live with in the same area: in the same building, street, city, region, country, do exist and are strengthened with the current political situation in the country.

It is a significant fact that Serbian women exclude German and Croatian women from responsibility for disagreeable historic events. We see in this a tool for cooperation on removing stereotypes which women from the major nation have towards women from national groups they have been living together with in the same city for many years, and for further building of multiculturalism in the region which in any case is know by being such.