

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

January 17, 2005

No 11

**Top story in this issue:**

**CURRENT ISSUES OF MINORITY RIGHTS**

Countries in the region, more or less pressured by international community, have passed minority protection laws which for the most part don't lag behind current European standards. However, it is evident that not even quality laws can make up for the lack of democratic tradition and functionality of democratic institutions as well as still negative social, cultural and political atmosphere regarding minority rights, relations between majority and minority and inter-ethnic tolerance in general. The missing "new spirit" that should be inaugurated is an unavoidable elements of the culture of tolerance. Without it, laws alone cannot resolve "old" minority issues and problems. Post-conflict and transition societies cannot face new challenges and adopt culture of diversity which is becoming an important infrastructure of democratic societies.

— — —

*Usage and publishing of all articles from this newsletters, whole or in parts, is free provided citation of the source. Articles are written in their original language, and may be freely adapted to language standards of the community where they are published.*

\*\*\*\*\*

## **I BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

### **1. THE SPECTRUM OF OUR ANIMOSITIES BEYOND ETHNIC DIVISIONS**

**Dusan Babic**

In addition to the hostilities caused by ethnic or religious affiliations and political options favouring ethnic interest or taking it in absolute categories, increasingly high amount of animosities is being generated and articulated, which are of a different inspiration and provenance. These, of course, can be politically motivated, or regularly are so, indeed. However, it is becoming an evidently widespread practice to shape and articulate divergent political positions within a single ethnic corps.

### **2. Failure to cooperate with the Hague Tribunal**

#### **MINORITIES ARE THE GREATEST LOSERS IN THE NATIONALIST CONCEPT OF POWER**

**Dusan Babic**

The anti-Hague lobby is particularly strong in Serbia, which reflects strongly and negatively on political situation in Republika Srpska. The recent political crisis in BiH remains exactly the result of the lack of cooperation with the Tribunal, especially in the contexts of the fact that two war crime indictees - Radovan Karadzic and General Ratko Mladic - are still at large. So far, Republika Srpska has not arrested any of the suspected war criminals, which brings to the conclusion that their authorities either support this dark background of the past, or lack the strength to square away with it.

### **3. The Chinese in Republika Srpska**

#### **A LOVE PASTED FROM SERBIA**

**Katarina Panic**

According to data obtained through the Centre of Public Security Banja Luka, out of the number of 650 registered foreigners in Banja Luka area, 150 are Chinese. According to rough assessments, their real number is three to five times higher. In order to get necessary documents, they approach the RS Ministry of Interior with a variety of requests: tourist visits bring them a three-month stay in the country, while working licences, joining with family members, education and jobs provide the stay of up to one year. On the other hand, they are denied the stay in RS for the reasons of possessing invalid documents, or because of their involvement in illegal activities, like people trafficking, illicit trade or illegal border crossing.

## **II CROATIA**

### **1. CONSTITUTIONAL LAW ON RIGHTS OF NATIONAL MINORITIES HAS TO BE CHANGED**

**By Igor Palija**

Two years after the passing of Constitutional law on the rights of national minorities (December 2002) one might say that there have been spotted certain gray areas and mistakes on a normative level and that the law needs to be changed. What's good in the law can be badly implemented, but what's bad cannot be implemented well in any case.

Representatives of national minorities have to start lobbying and preparing terrain for changes and additions of the Constitutional law in order to raise the level of protection of national minorities and to make the Law unambiguous, clear, easy to implement and serving only to protect and promote rights of national minorities.

### **2. BI-LATERAL AGREEMENT - IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN MINORITY RIGHTS PROTECTION**

**By Antonija Horvat**

Signing of the Agreement in mutual protection of national minorities between Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro, written primarily due to minorities living in both countries and their connections with mother states, is getting the forms of a historical event and is touted as an important stage in

politics of Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro. Time will show whether the agreement will truly contribute to efforts to provide for legal and other protection of minorities in both countries or it will remain overshadowed by the attribute of historically important turning point in relations between the two countries.

### **3. NO JOBS IN TOWNS, NO WORKFORCE IN VILLAGES**

**By Goran Vezic**

Property return and reconstruction in northern Dalmatia and Lika are processes that are at an end. Lack of employment thus came out at the first place on the list of problems Serbian returnees are facing. They are still not adequately represented in state and legal institutions, as well as state-owned firms, which forces them to look to agriculture.

## **III SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO**

### **1. LACK OF INSTITUTIONAL PROTECTION**

**By Miroslav Kevezdi**

In the Republic Parliament, elected on parliamentary unscheduled elections in December 2003, there are only 7 members of national minorities of all 250 representatives. According to the new regional electoral system from September 2004, the census for parties of national minorities has been abolished. However, that did not have much effect: 11 of 120 representatives were given to Association of Hungarians of Vojvodina, while representatives of other national minorities have eventually found themselves on coalition lists, «majority» parties, or citizens groups.

National councils of minorities have been formed, but many people are not satisfied with it's work. Also, a republic Council for national minorities has been established, however, it is not the true representative of national minorities interests.

It cannot be said that all national minorities insist on political representation through party organizations. Minorities are interested in effective participation in making decisions about their uniqueness, in authority and administration. These rights are regulated with law which unfortunately is still not applied.

### **2. LOVE BOSNIA - MAKE BUSINESS IN SERBIA**

**By Ejub Stitkovac**, freelancer and publisher from Belgrade

Different statements from several Bosnian minority politicians about the position of Bosnian minority in Serbia and Montenegro can be heard each day. It all depends on whether the statements are for Belgrade, Srajevo or some other foreign media.

The main issue is- how much have Bosnian parties done on promotion of culture and tradition of their culture. Among Bosnian minority there are two main political streams. First one is lead by the preident of Bosnian National Council - Sulejman Ugljanin, one of the founders of party of Democratic Action in Sandžak and a great admirer of personality and deeds of Alija Izetbegović. Serbian analitics and politicians consider him a great nationalist. On the other side there is the actual minister of human and minority rights Rasim Ljajić, whos Democratic Party of Sandžak cooperates with all smaller parties in Serbia of citizens orientation. He is considered moderate and balanced politician who cares about political affirmation on much larger space then Sandžak.

Two strongest streams of Bosnian minority parties have shown political immaturity which has it's roots also in the fact that none of the mentioned leaders still have a strong and defined stronghold in Bosnia and Herzegovina, after the death of Alija Izetbegović.

### **3. EDUCATION EMPLOYEES - WEAK LINK IN RIGHTS TO EDUCATION**

**By Zoltan Bunjik**, provincial secretary of education and culture of Autonomuou Province of Vojvodina

The Law regarding minority rights and freedom rights regulates the right of members of national minorities to education in their mother tongue in the institutions of pedagogic, elementary and secondary education.

Among university education it is regulated that cabinets and faculties for education of

pedagogues, teachers and professors of languages of national minorities will be provided, as well as the obligation of universities to form instructorships on languages of national minorities.

In order to be able to completely realize their rights in practice, it is of extreme importance to provide an adequate education of professional pedagogic staff, able to teach in languages of national minorities. However, problems of education of future teachers have been more than distinct during longer period of time due to systematic degradation of positions of teachers which caused many of them to leave the profession and quit the job, lack of interest of students for the teaching profession and lack of necessary staff for education of future teachers.