



ETHNIC MINORITIES IN SERBIA

An Overview

February 2008

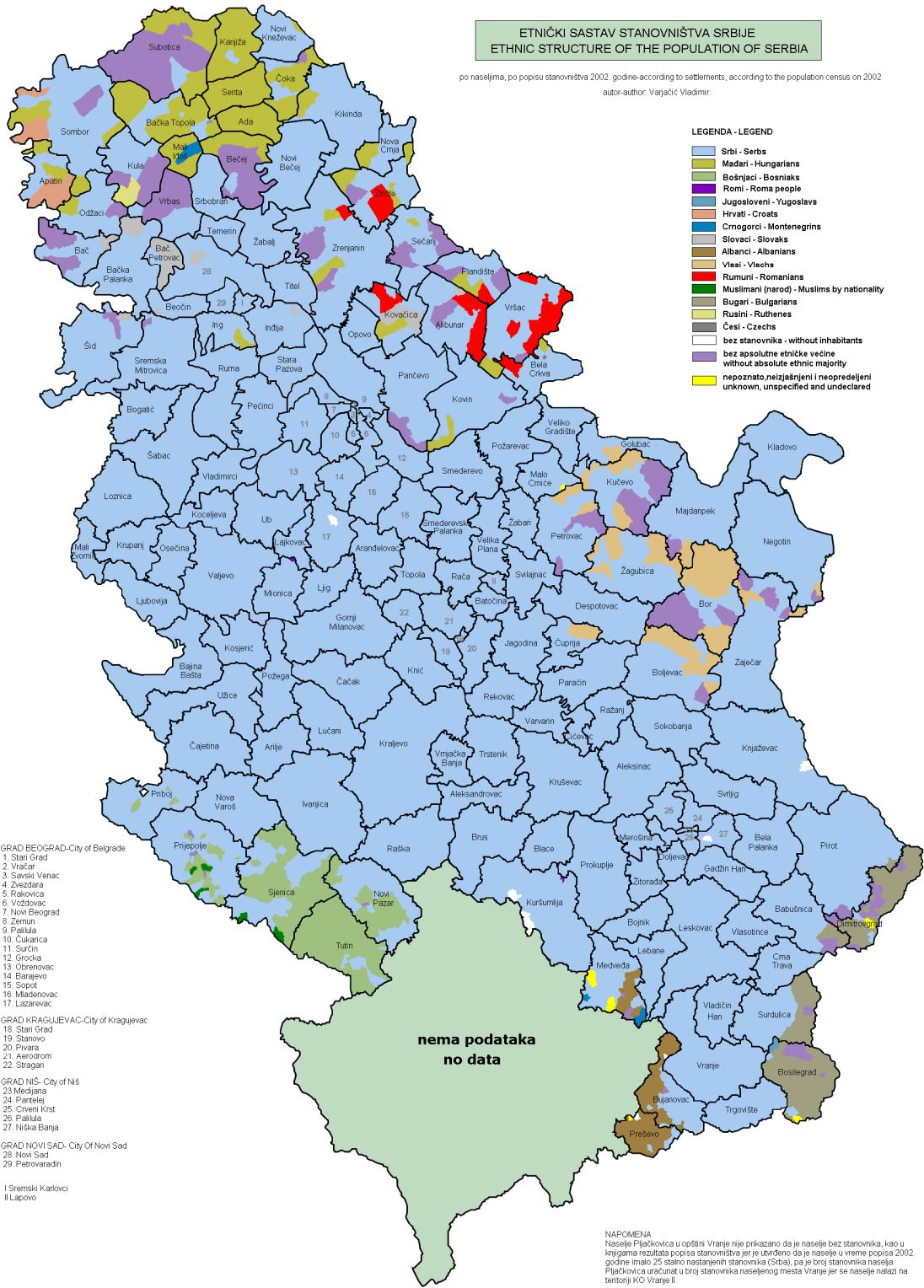
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ETNIČKI SASTAV STANOVNIŠTVA SRBIJE
ETHNIC STRUCTURE OF THE POPULATION OF SERBIA

po naseljima, po popisu stanovništva 2002. godine - according to settlements, according to the population census on 2002
autor: autor: Varjačić Vladimir



- LEGENDA - LEGEND
- Srbi - Serbs
 - Mađari - Hungarians
 - Bošnjaci - Bosniaks
 - Romi - Roma people
 - Jugoslaveni - Yugoslavs
 - Hrvati - Croats
 - Crnogorci - Montenegrins
 - Slovaci - Slovaks
 - Albanci - Albanians
 - Vlasi - Vlachs
 - Rumuni - Romanians
 - Muslimani (narod) - Muslims by nationality
 - Bugari - Bulgarians
 - Rusini - Ruthenes
 - Česi - Czechs
 - bez stanovnika - without inhabitants
 - bez apsolutne etničke većine - without absolute ethnic majority
 - nepoznato, neizjašnjeni i neopredeljeni - unknown, unspecified and undeclared

- GRAD BEOGRAD - City of Belgrade
1. Stari Grad
 2. Vračar
 3. Savski Venac
 4. Zvezdara
 5. Rakovica
 6. Voždovac
 7. Novi Beograd
 8. Zemun
 9. Palilula
 10. Čukarica
 11. Surčin
 12. Grocka
 13. Obrenovac
 14. Barajevo
 15. Sopot
 16. Mladenovac
 17. Lazarevac
- GRAD KRAGUJEVAC - City of Kragujevac
18. Stari Grad
 19. Stanovo
 20. Pivara
 21. Asovac
 22. Stragari
- GRAD NIŠ - City of Niš
23. Medijana
 24. Partelej
 25. Česni Krst
 26. Palilula
 27. Niška Banja
- GRAD NOVI SAD - City of Novi Sad
28. Novi Sad
 29. Petrovaradin
- I Sremski Karlovci
II Lapovo

nema podataka
no data

NAPOMENA
Naselje Pijačkovica u opštini Vranje nije prikazano da je naselje bez stanovnika, kao u knjigama rezultata popisa stanovništva jer je utvrđeno da je naselje u vreme popisa 2002. godine imalo 25 stalno nastanjenih stanovnika (Srbi), pa je broj stanovnika naselja Pijačkovica unet u broj stanovnika naseljenog mesta. Vranje jer se naselje nalazi na teritoriji KO Vranje II.
izvor: Demografija I, časopis za demografska i ostala društvena istraživanja, strana 115.
izdavač: Institut za demografiju, Beograd, 2004. godina

Ethnic Minorities in Serbia – 2002 Census

ETHNIC GROUP	2002 CENSUS RESULTS
Albanians	61,647
Askhali	584
Bosniaks	136,087
Bulgarians	20,497
Bunjevaks	20,012
Croats	70,602
Egyptians	814
Greeks	572
Germans	3,901
Hungarians	293,299
Jews	1,158
Macedonians	25,847
Roma	108,193
Romanians	34,576
Ruthenians	15,905
Slovaks	59,021
Ukrainians	5,354
Vlachs	40,054

KEY SOURCES

1. Statistical overview according to the 2002 Census
“Etnicki Mozaik Srbije” (Ethnical Mosaic of Serbia)
Ministry for Human and Minority Rights
Belgrade 2004
2. “Manjine u Srbiji” (Minorities in Serbia)
Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia
Belgrade 2000
3. Law on the Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities
Federal ministry of National and Ethnic Communities
Belgrade 2002
4. “Albanci u Srbiji” (Albanians in Serbia)
Humanitarian Law Centre
Belgrade 2003
5. “Istorija Sokaca, Bunjevaca i Bosanskih Hrvata” (History of Sokac,
Bunjevac and Bosnian Franjevci)
P. Bernanrdin UNYI OFM
Subotica 2001

INTRODUCTION

This handbook provides a brief overview of the minority groups in Serbia, including a sketch of each minority's history, census data, religion, political orientation, language, culture and media. This guide is intended as an introductory reference handbook for those working with minority groups in Serbia, and not as a comprehensive study of these groups.

According to the 2002 census, the population of Serbia numbers 7,498,001 persons, 6,212,838 of whom are ethnic Serbs¹.

According to Article 2 of the 2002 Federal Law on the Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities, national minorities are defined as groups of citizens of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia who, although constituting a minority within the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, are sufficiently represented, belong to a group with a lasting and firm connection to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, possess some distinctive features, such as language, national or ethnic belonging, origin or religion, which distinguish them from the majority population, and whose members show concern for the preservation of their common identity, including culture, tradition, language or religion.

Serbia is a participating State of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and has therefore obliged itself to adhere to the organization's commitments, many of which relate to the rights and protection of national minorities.

Serbia has also ratified two main Council of Europe Instruments that secure minority rights: the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities (in 2001) and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (2006). Furthermore, Serbia has signed bilateral agreements on minority protection with four neighboring countries: Romania (2002), Hungary (2003), Croatia (2004) and Macedonia (2004).

Article 14 of the Serbian Constitution, which came into force in 2006, affirms the protection of national minorities as one of the constitutional principles of the Serbian State. This principle is further secured through other Constitutional provisions.

The Constitution is not the only guarantee of minority rights, as several laws and bylaws currently regulate this area. The most important of these is the 2002 Federal Law on the Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities (the 2002 Law). The Law was adopted at the federal level, but when Serbia was proclaimed the successor state of the former State Union Serbia and Montenegro, the Law became part of republican legislation.

The right of members of national minorities to education in their mother tongue and the official use of minority languages are regulated in the 2002 Law, and are further

¹ Results for other ethnic groups are given in the table at the end of the text.

elaborated in specific laws, such as the 1991 Law on the Official Use of Language and Scripts, the 2002 Law on the Fundamentals of Education, the 2004 Law on Civil Procedure, the 2003 Criminal Procedure Law and the 2001 Law on General Administrative Procedure.

The 2004 Law on Changes and Amendments to the Law on the Election of Members of the Parliament facilitates national minority representation in the Serbian Parliament by abolishing the five percent threshold for national minority parties and coalitions of national minority parties. This improved minority representation in the 2007 Parliamentary Elections, in which five minority political parties, including two Roma ethnic parties, won eight seats in Serbian parliament.

The religious orientation of persons belonging to national minorities is heterogeneous. Most Bosniaks, Albanians, Roma and Egyptians are Muslim, while Croats, Bunjevcs and the majority of Hungarians are Roman Catholic. Protestant congregations of various sizes are also present in Serbia.

A

ALBANIANS

History

Albanians trace their roots to the ancient peoples of Illyria. During the 17th Century, as a consequence of Ottoman conquests, the Serbian population shifted to northern parts of present day Serbia, and many Albanians migrated to what is now southern Serbia. Following the collapse of Ottoman rule in the Balkans, a substantial number of Albanians found themselves in Serbian territories after the border between Albania and its neighbors was established in 1912-1913.

Statistics

According to the latest census, conducted in 2002, there are a total of 61,647 Albanians, constituting 0.82 percent of the total population. Outside of Kosovo, the Albanian population is mostly concentrated in South Serbia, in the municipalities of Bujanovac, Presevo and Medvedja. Albanians constitute the absolute majority population in Presevo (31,098 out of 34,904 citizens) and in Bujanovac (23,681 out of 43,302 citizens), and a significant number in Medvedja municipality (2,816 out of 10,760 citizens).

Religion

Albanians living in Serbia are predominantly Muslim.

Politics

Currently there are four significant Albanian ethnic parties: the Party of Democratic Progress led by Riza Halimi and Nagip Arifi, the Democratic Union of the Valley led by Skender Destani, the Democratic Albanian Party led by Ragmi Mustafa and the Movement of Democratic Progress led by Jonuz Musliu, the former political leader of the Liberation Army of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja. In the 2006 elections, two out of four Albanian ethnic parties submitted a list, and due to the abolition of a census for minority parties, won one seat in the Serbian parliament (Riza Halimi).

Extra-ordinary local elections were organized in 2002 in accordance with the 2002 Law on Local Elections. The elections and pre-election preparation was organized with the wide support of the international community including the OSCE. This resulted in Albanians leading local government in Bujanovac and Presevo and the participation of the Albanian ethnic party in the Medvedja municipality since 2002.

Since 2002 several attempts have been made to establish a National Council of the Albanian National Minority, but there has never been a formal initiative submitted to the competent Central authority. Although there is no obligation for a national minority to establish a national council, the fact that there is no Albanian National Council negatively impacts the rights of the Albanian national minority in the spheres of education, culture, media and the official use of their language.

Language and Education

The Albanian language is in official use in Bujanovac, Presevo and Medvedja, and full education in Albanian is available through primary and secondary schools, which

contributes to the relatively poor knowledge of the Serbian language among this population.

Media and Cultural Groups

There are a couple of cultural Albanian institutions in Bujanovac and Presevo such as cultural artistic society “Veliki Trnovac” and the “Bujanovac Cultural Centre.”

In 2007, the newspaper “Perspektiva” was published in the Albanian language in Bujanovac, and several RTV stations broadcast programmes entirely or partially in Albanian. These include RTV Spektri, RTV “Bujanovac RTV” in Bujanovac, RTV “Presevo” and TV “Aldi” in Presevo and radio “Medvedja” in Medvedja.

ASHKALI

History

Ashkali are an ethnic group related to the Roma. Their origin is disputed. Ashkali are often regarded as Albanized Roma, but some believe they are descendants of Turks or Egyptians. Ashkali have a similar culture to both Roma and Albanians. There is a theory that the Ashkali are descendants of Roma who are said to have come to the Balkans from Palestine (their name deriving from Ashkelon, a city in Israel).

Statistics

Ashkali live predominantly in Kosovo, though in 1990 several families moved to Novi Sad. According to the 2002 census, there were altogether 287 Ashkali living in the Novi Sad region.

Religion

The majority of Ashkali are Muslim.

Politics

Ashkali are primarily represented by the NGO “Matica Askalia.” headed by Abedin Dino Toplica..

Education and Language

Ashkali speak Albanian as a first language there is no official education is provided in Albanian for the Ashkali living in the Novi Sad area.

Media and Cultural Groups

Due to their small number, the Ashkali are not represented by their own media or cultural organizations, beyond activities conducted by Matica Askalia.

Useful links

www.ashkali.org.yu - webpage of the NGO “Matica Askalija”

B

BOSNIAKS

History

Bosniaks began moving to the south-western region of Sandžak in the late 17th and early 18th centuries to escape the persecution of converts to Islam after parts of Montenegro were retaken from the Ottoman Turks. Additional migrations followed from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Slavonia. This geographical area has today been divided between Serbia and Montenegro. Six Sandzak municipalities belong to Serbia (Novi Pazar, Sjenica, Tutin, Prijepolje, Nova Varoš, Priboj), and five to Montenegro (Pljevlja, Bijelo Polje, Berane, Mojkovac and Rožaje).

Statistics

According to the 2002 Census results, after Serbs and Hungarians, Bosniaks form numerous group in Serbia. According to the most recent census, they number 136,087 accounting for 1.82 percent of the country's population. Approximately half of the Sandžak population consists of Bosniaks and persons registered as Muslims, while the other part consists of Serbs and Montenegrins, along with a few Albanians and Roma. Bosniaks are the majority population in the municipalities of Novi Pazar (76.28%), Tutin (94.23%) and Sjenica (73.34%). The city of Novi Pazar, with a population of 55,000, is the cultural and political centre of Bosniaks in Serbia.

Religion

Bosniaks are primarily Muslims. In 2007 the religious community of Sandzak was divided between Mufti Muamer el Zukorlic, the Novi Pazar Mufti of the Islamic Community in Serbia, and Adem Zilicic, the newly elected Reis of the Islamic Community in Serbia.

Politics

There are two main Bosniak political parties (coalition List for Sandzak and Sandzak Democratic Party) headed by Sulejman Ugljanin, the Mayor of Novi Pazar, and Rasim Ljajic, the current Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Welfare. Bosniak political parties are the ruling parties in three municipalities: Novi Pazar, Sjenica and Tutin, and the head of the Prijepolje municipality is also a member of Bosniak ethnic party. Both parties are represented in the Serbian parliament. The "List for Sandzak" ran independently and won two seats, while SDP in coalition with the Democratic Party won three seats.

Bosniaks elected their National Council in September 2003 and Sulejman Ugljanin is also the president of the Council.

Education and Language

One of the first aims of the Bosniak National Council was to introduce the Bosnian language, which uses the Latin alphabet, in formal education. The language has been included in public education since 2005, as an optional subject for children in the first, second, third and fourth grades

Bosnian language has been introduced into official use in three municipalities: Novi Pazar, Sjenica and Tutin.

Media and Cultural Groups

There are numerous cultural associations as well as NGOs with particular focus on democratisation (for example Impuls in Tutin, Urban IN in Novi Pazar and Flores in Sjenica) and human rights (Sandzak Centre for Human Rights). There are a variety of local print and television media serving the Sanžak region. While none is directed specifically to the Bosniak ethnic group, as the vast majority of Sanžak residents are Bosniaks it can be concluded that this minority receives adequate media access.

Useful links

www.bnv.org.yu - webpage of the National Council of the Bosniak National Minority

www.sanjak.org - webpage of Sandjak related information

www.islamskazajednica.org- webpage of the Islamic Community in Serbia

www.cbs.org.yu - webpage of the Center for Bosniak Studies

BULGARIANS

History

The presence of a Bulgarian minority in the territory of Serbia is the result of the Peace Treaty of Neuilly, signed between the Entente and Bulgaria on November 27, 1919. For strategic reasons, the Treaty gave Bulgarian territories inhabited by a compact Bulgarian population over to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, leaving a number of Bulgarians outside the territory of their kin state.

Statistics

According to the 2002 census, a total of 20,497 Bulgarians live in the Serbian territory. They constitute majority in the municipality of Bosilegrad (70.86%) and Dimitrovgrad (49%) and there are a significant number of Bulgarians in the municipalities of Leskovac, Vranje, and Nis.

Religion

Most Bulgarians in Serbia are Orthodox Christians.

Politics

In Dimitrovgrad the president of the municipality, Veselin Velickov, was supported by the Democratic Party while in Bosilegrad Vladimir Zaharijev was elected for a second mandate as mayor from the Democratic Party of Serbia's list. Zaharijev was also a member of the Serbian Parliament from 2000 until 2004.

Bulgarians elected their National Council in May 2003. It has 21 members and the two most prominent figures are Dr. Angel Josifov, president, and Nebojsa Ivanov, acting director of the minority media outlet "Bratstvo." Members of the Bulgarian national minority keep close ties with Bulgaria as their kin-state, and according to NGOs estimations, approximately 2000 persons received Bulgarian citizenship in the last couple of years.

Education and Language

Bulgarian has been introduced as an official language in the municipalities of Dimitrovgrad and Bosilegrad. Pupils belonging to the Bulgarian national minority are entitled to have Bulgarian language classes as well as the optional subject “Bulgarian language with elements of national culture” in primary and secondary school. The brain-drain is very noticeable in both Bulgarian municipalities, as many students leave for Sofia and Belgrade.

Media and Cultural Groups

There are several cultural institutions representing the Bulgarian national minority, of which the Creative Center “Caribrod” from Dimitrovgrad is the most prominent. Currently there are three media outlets in the Bulgarian language: “Bratstvo” cultural gazette, “Most,” and the youth magazine “Drugarce,” all owned by the National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority.

Useful links

www.dimitrovgrad.org.yu - webpage of the municipality of Dimitrovgrad

www.caribrod.org.yu - webpage of the cultural centre “Caribrod”

BUNJEVAKS

History

Bunjevaks are a South Slavic ethnic group that originates from the region of the Dinara mountains on the border between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Over the years, a certain number of Bunjevci have accepted Croatian national identity and claim that all Bunjevci are Croats. On the other hand, there are Bunjevci who see themselves as distinctive from Croats and who advocate preserving of their own Bunjevci identity.

Statistics

Bunjevaks primarily located the region of Bačka in Vojvodina. According to the 2002 census, there are 20,012 Bunjevci in Serbia (out of which 16,254 or 10.95 percent live in Subotica).

Religion

Bunjevaks are mostly Roman Catholic.

Politics

Bunjevaks are not organized along the political party lines but have appointed some of the prominent Bunjevak members of other parties to promote and present Bunjevak interests in the political sphere. Bunjevaks elected their National Council in 2003. Since its creation the Council has had clear aims and objectives including minority education, support for cultural institutions and the establishment of minority media.

Media and Cultural Groups

Bunjevaks speak the Stokavian-Ikavian dialect of the Serbo-Croatian language. In September 2007, the subject “Bunjevci speech with elements of national culture” was introduced in the educational programme for primary school students after five years

of negotiation between the representatives of the Bunjevaci minority and the governmental authorities.

Culture and Media

Bunjevaks have established the monthly newspaper “Bunjevacke Novine” to promote and strengthen Bunjevak cultural identity.

Useful links

www.bunjevci.org.yu/site/- webpage regarding the Bunjevak community

C

CROATS

History

In the former Social Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Croats, as well as Bosniaks/Muslims and Macedonians were considered “constituent nations” and did not enjoy minority rights which were secured for so called “nationalities”. During 1990s and the Balkan conflicts Croats in Serbia found themselves in an ambiguous position and it was only after the adoption of the Federal Law on the Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities that they were enabled to fully exercise their minority rights.

Statistics

The Croat population in Serbia has declined since the 1991 census figure of 105,406 Croats, largely as a result of conflicts in Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia in the 1990s.

According to the 2002 census there are 70,602 members of the Croatian ethnic minority group in Serbia, 56,546 of which are concentrated in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina.

Religion

The majority of Croats are Roman Catholic.

Politics

The primary Croatian political party is the Democratic League of Croats in Vojvodina (DSHV), currently led by Petar Kuntić. The Party describes itself as supporting human, societal, and family values, particularly as articulated in international conventions, as well as increased attention to the needs of the Croat minority. The Party currently holds one parliamentary seat, and forms part of the Democratic Party (DS). Croats are a politically active and heterogeneous group, showing a steady turnout at all levels of elections, and a wide distribution of votes among many different political parties.

The Croat minority established a National Minority Council in December 2002, led by Josip Ivanovic. Ivanovic resigned in 2005 and was succeeded by Josip Pekanovic. Pekanovic was succeeded by Branko Horvat in 2006.

Education and Language

The Croatian language, which is similar to Serbian uses the Latin alphabet. Croats, both in Vojvodina and in Serbia generally, are a ‘dispersed’ group and do not represent a majority in any municipality. The Croatian language is in official use in Subotica municipality as well as in some villages in the municipality of Sombor including Sonta, Bački Monoštor and Bački Breg, and on the provincial level. Since 2004 pre-school and primary education in the Croatian language is available in some municipalities.

Media and Cultural Groups

A multitude of Croatian cultural centers exist in Serbia, including, for example, Hrvatski Kulturni Centar "Bunjevačko Kolo", Hrvatsko Kulturno-Umjetničko Društvo "Vladimir Nazor", and Hrvatsko Kulturno-Prosvjetno Društvo "Matija Gubec". Croatian media is available both through Radio Subotica, which broadcasts in Croatian daily for several hours, and more occasionally through RTV Vojvodina. Currently print media in Croatian includes the weekly newspaper “Hrvatska Riječ” as well as cultural periodicals and publications by the Catholic Church.

Useful links

www.matijagubec.org.yu - webpage of the NGO “Matija Gubec”

www.hnv.org.yu - webpage of the National Council of the Croatian National Minority

E

EGYPTIANS

History

Like the Ashkali, Egyptians are Roma-related group but have over the last decades worked to establish an independent identity. The Serbian Egyptian minority’s history and relationship to the Egyptians of Egypt is debated. Egyptians trace their own origins either to Roma who migrated from Egypt or to Egyptian soldiers who came to the Balkans in the 4th century.

Statistics

According to the 2002 census, there are 814 Egyptians living in Serbia. The majority of Egyptians live in Belgrade (597) and Novi Sad (102). Also there are a number of Egyptian families displaced from Kosovo residing in Central Serbia and Montenegro.

Religion

Egyptians are predominantly Muslim.

Politics

Despite their small size, Egyptians elected and registered their National Council in May 2006, shortly before the dissolution of the State Union. The president of the National Council is Seladin Osman. The Council is mostly involved in projects of a humanitarian nature, as the majority of Egyptians live in poverty.

Education and Language

Most Egyptians in Serbia speak Albanian, however children who go to school study in Serbian language institutions.

Media and Cultural Groups

As this group is quite small, it does not have any formal media or cultural organizations.

G

GERMANS

History

Germans began to settle in the territories of what is now Hungary, Croatia and Serbia 800 years ago. During the 17th and 18th centuries the Austro-Hungarian Empire encouraged the resettlement of more ethnic Germans, and other groups, as they pushed the Ottoman Turks back from these territories. The number of Germans in Serbia fell drastically after the Second World War, as approximately 500,000 Germans fled or were forcibly deported from the region.

Statistics

According to the 2002 census, the German minority population totals 3901 persons, the majority of whom (3154) live in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina.

Religion

The majority of Germans in Serbia are Roman Catholics or Protestants.

Politics

Currently, there is no formal political party representing the interests of this group.

The National Council of the German National Minority was elected on 15 December 2007. There are 17 members of the National Council. There was only one electoral list headed by Andreas Burgermayer. The Council will stand for the protection of the German identity and also combating stereotypes against Germans.

Education and Language

While older members of the German minority speak local (Swabian) dialects of German and the common "Hochdeutsch," the younger generation speaks fluent Serbian. German is taught as a foreign language in many schools throughout Serbia, but it is not offered as the language for instruction at any level.

Culture and Media

There are a number of municipal level German minority associations active in Odžaci, Zrenjanin, Bela Crkva, Kikinda, Borča, Subotica and Bačka Topla, among others. Several umbrella organizations also operate on a wider scale. These include the Serbia-Montenegro Alliance of German Associations and the German Association

“Donau,” both based in Novi Sad. There is currently no media or theatre devoted specifically to the German minority.

Useful Contacts

German Association "Donau"
Kozaračka 6, Novi Sad
Tel: 505-507

“Karlowitz” German Association For Friendly Neighbourhood Relations
Sremski Karlovci
Tel: 881-707, 063/528-747

GREEKS

History

Most Greeks came to Serbia in the first half of the twentieth century (in 1915, 1922 and after the civil war in 1950), but there are also descendants of those who settled in Serbia in the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

Statistics

According to the 2002 census, 572 persons declared themselves as Greeks in Serbia, mostly in Belgrade (255) and in Novi Sad (100). The National Council of the Greek National Minority, however, claims that there are more than 15,000 Greeks currently in Serbia.

Religion

Most Greeks are Greek Orthodox. There is no Greek Orthodox Church in Serbia although there is a priest who holds a liturgy in the Serbian Orthodox Church Faculty.

Politics

Greeks elected 18 members of their National Council in May 2004. The first president of the council was Ana Trifunovic. In 2005, Vasilios Povelegios was elected as the second president. Currently the president of the National Council of the Greek National Minority is Ilija Spasojevic. There are no Greek minority political parties.

Education and Language

Greeks do not have any form of minority education, but they do conduct language courses of Greek language through the NGO “Riga od Fere.”

Media and Cultural Groups

The NGO “Riga od Fere” is of special importance to the Greek national minority in Serbia. It was established in 1923 with the main aim of protecting Greek identity, promoting friendship between two nations and representing a bridge between two countries. The branch office of the NGO was established in Novi Sad in 2002. There is currently no Greek media published in Serbia. According to the Greek National Council, the minority community had been stagnating in recent decades but it has recently begun to awaken and reassert its identity.

H

HUNGARIANS

History

Though parts of present day Vojvodina formed part of the Hungarian Kingdom in medieval times, most Hungarians currently living in Serbia are descended from migrations that began in the late 17th century when the Hapsburgs established control over these territories and continued through the 19th century.

Statistics

Hungarians are the largest non-Serb ethnic group in Serbia. According to the 2002 census, they numbered 293,299 or 3.91 percent of the Serbian population. Most Hungarians live in Vojvodina's Backa region. Ethnic Hungarians form a majority in the municipalities of Subotica, Kanjiza, Backa Topola, Mali Idjos, Becej, Ada, Senta and Coka. The Hungarian population in Serbia has dropped by approximately 40,000 since the 1991 census as the result of emigration to Hungary and Western Europe for various economic and political reasons.

Religion

Approximately 80 percent of the Hungarians in Serbia are Roman Catholic, while the rest belong to various Protestant denominations.

Politics

Currently, there are three active Hungarian minority political parties: the Alliance of Hungarians in Vojvodina (AHV), the Democratic Party of Vojvodina Hungarians (Andras Agoston) and the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Vojvodina (Pal Sandor). The AHV is one of the ruling parties at the provincial level. Its longtime president, Jozef Kasa, resigned in 2007, and he was succeeded by Istvan Pastor. There are three Members of the Serbian Parliament who were elected from the Hungarian ethnic party list in the Parliamentary election that took place in January 2007. They also participated in the Minority parliamentary caucus and in the Vojvodina parliamentary caucus.

Hungarians were the first minority to elect their National Minority Council on September 21, 2002. It is led by the Subotica lawyer Laslo Joza. The protection of the Hungarian national minority in Serbia and the corresponding protection of the Serbian minority in Hungary was strengthened by the ratification of the bilateral treaty on the protection of national minorities in 2002.

Education and Language

Most Vojvodina Hungarians speak Hungarian. The Hungarian language is in official use at the provincial level and at the municipal level in 27 municipalities. Hungarians are entitled to education in their language from primary school through university (University in Novi Sad).

Culture and Media

There are numerous Hungarian cultural institutions and two theaters (one in Novi Sad and one in Subotica). Theatre troupes from Ujvideki Szinhaz (Novi Sad Theatre) and the theatre "Kostolanyi Deze" in Subotica perform only in the Hungarian language. There are several weekly media outlets in Hungarian and one daily, "Magyar Szo," which are now owned by the National Council. Cultural and educational institutions receive extensive support from Hungary as their kin-state.

Useful links:

www.vmsz.org.yu - webpage of the Alliance of Hungarians in Vojvodina

www.magyar-szo.co.yu - webpage of the newspaper "Magyar Szo"

www.mnt.org.yu - webpage of the National Council of the Hungarian National Minority

www.hunemblg.hu - webpage of the Hungarian Embassy in Belgrade

J

JEWS

History

Jews first arrived in what is now the Republic of Serbia during Roman times. The Jewish communities of the Balkans remained small until the late fifteenth century, when Jews fleeing the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions found refuge in Ottoman-ruled areas, including Serbia. Jewish communities flourished in the Balkans until the turmoil of World War I. The surviving communities, including that of Serbia, were almost completely destroyed in the Holocaust during World War II. The Jewish community of Serbia now numbers 1158 members. Jews in Serbia belong to both groups, Sefards and Ashkenazi.

Statistics

Most Jews live either in Belgrade (415) or Novi Sad (400). A small number of Jews live in Subotica (89), Zrenjanin and Sombor, while the rest of may be found throughout Serbia. The number of Jews dropped from 2500 in 1990s to 1158 in 2002 due to the fact that many emigrated to Israel and other countries.

Religion

Judaism is the main characteristic of this minority, and is recognized as one of the traditional religious communities in Serbia.

Politics

Jews are not organized along political party lines.

Instead of a National Council, the Association of the Jewish Municipalities in Serbia represents the interests of Jews, although every municipality itself enjoys certain autonomy. The president of the Association of Jewish Communities is Aleksandar Necak.

Education and Language

In school, no classes are offered on Judaism, nor are any classes conducted in Hebrew, as there are very few interested children (10 in Subotica and 15 in Novi Sad).

Media and Cultural Groups

Jews and other interested persons can attend various courses and events preserving and promoting Jewish identity and culture. For example, the Jewish community in Novi Sad organizes Hebrew courses and art classes, while the community in Belgrade sponsors various activities such as lectures, and cultural and youth events. The Jewish community also publishes a regular Bulletin.

Useful sites

<http://www.jobegrad.org/> - webpage of the Jewish Community in Belgrade

www.jimbeograd.org - webpage of the Jewish Museum in Belgrade

M

MACEDONIANS

History

Macedonians are a South-Slav ethnic group whose kin state is the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The majority of Macedonians in present-day Serbia settled in these territories for economic reasons following the Second World War, at a time when both Serbia and Macedonia formed part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Statistics

There are currently 25,847 Macedonians living in Serbia, according to the 2002 census. This population is roughly evenly divided between Central Serbia and the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. They can be found in the highest concentrations in Belgrade, Pančevo, Plandište and Novi Sad, though they do not constitute a majority in any municipality in Serbia.

Religion

Most Macedonians are Orthodox Christians.

Politics

The primary minority party, the Democratic Party of Macedonians centred in Novi Sad, is not represented at the national level. On the district and municipal levels there are also ten citizens' associations promoting Macedonian identity, which operate under the umbrella of the Union of Associations of Citizens belonging to the Macedonian Minority in Serbia.

In 2004, Serbia and Macedonia signed an inter-state agreement on the protection of the Macedonian minority in Serbia and the Serb minority in Macedonia. Associations such as the "The Society of Serbian and Macedonian Friendship Šar – planina" seated

in Belgrade, and the “Municipal Society of Serbian-Macedonian Friendship” seated in Zrenjanin cover issues related to ethnic, cultural and economic cooperation in Serbia.

In 2005 Macedonians in Serbia also established a National Minority Council, which represents as a step towards safeguarding their interests. Jovo Radevski was elected as its president.

Education and Language

The Macedonian minority has undergone a degree of assimilation, as many Macedonian language rights were lost as the result of the break-up of the former Yugoslavia. As a result of this phenomenon, many younger Macedonians in Serbia no longer speak the Macedonian language and there is no program for education in Macedonian.

Media and Cultural groups

Steps taken to preserve Macedonian culture in Serbia currently include the publication and translation of Macedonian texts and their distribution in Serbian libraries, the commemoration of national holidays and significant dates, and the display of traditional art, folklore and other cultural activities. Macedonian print media consists primarily of the monthly political journal “Makedonska videlina” produced by the “Macedonian Information and Publishing Centre” in Pančevo. Limited Macedonian television is available through TV Novi Sad and local TV Pančevo, in addition to programs that reach the minority across the border from Macedonia. Macedonian is not used in official communications in Serbia, although the Macedonian National Minority Council is attempting to officialise its use in Pančevo and Jabuka, where Macedonians constitute over 25 percent of the population.

Useful links

www.mhrmi.org - webpage of the Macedonian International Rights Movement

R

ROMA

History

Roma are believed to have origins in the Punjab and Rajasthan regions of the Indian subcontinent. They began their migration to Europe and North Africa via the Iranian plateau around 1050 A.D.

In Serbia there are three main groups of Roma: Arli/Erli in the South, and Gurbet and Kalderash in the North. The distinction is based primarily on the languages spoken by these groups.

Statistics

According last census there are 108,193 Roma in Serbia and 19,191 in the city of Belgrade. However there is general consensus that the number of Roma is several

times higher and estimates range from 250,000 to 400,000 persons. Some Roma NGOs claim that there are more than 750,000 Roma in Serbia. It is expected that the number will increase with cases of readmission from Western European countries, as the majority of these cases involve Roma families. Roma do not constitute a majority in any municipality in Serbia, but there are several municipalities, especially in South Serbia, with a significant percentage of Roma, such as Bujanovac, Vranje, Vladicin Han, and Leskovac.

Roma make up approximately 12% of the 221,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Kosovo. However IDP figures are based on registration and it is estimated that some 20,000 Roma IDPs in Serbia are not registered

Religion

Roma have usually adopted the dominant religion of the host country, while often preserving aspects of their belief system and indigenous religion and worship. In Serbia, Roma are Roman Catholic, Serbian Orthodox, and Muslim.

Politics

Since the beginning of the multiparty political system in Serbia, Roma have established several political parties. Currently, there are two Roma political parties, whose leaders are members of the Serbian Parliament. The Roma Party is led by Srdjan Sajin, a lawyer from Vojvodina, and the Roma Union is led by Rajko Duric, a publicist from Belgrade. There are local councilors of Roma ethnicity in several municipalities in Serbia.

Roma established their National Minority Council in May 2004 and elected Vitomir Mihajlovic, a teacher from Prokuplje, as president. After several conflicts and factions within the Council, a group led by former Council Executive Board director Srdjan Sain initiated extraordinary elections which have been scheduled for November 25, 2007. The elections were called off three days before the elections due to alleged fraud and inconsistencies in the registration process.

Education and Language

Most Roma live in extreme poverty and the level of illiteracy is as high as 80% of the overall Roma population. Despite several attempts and ongoing negotiations, the Romani language has not yet been standardized, and Roma in Serbia speak several dialects of Romani. Education in Romani is conducted in only a few schools in Vojvodina, and is limited to the elective subject "Romani language with elements of national culture."

Media

There are speculations that circa 150 Roma NGOs exist in Belgrade alone. Some of these date back to the early twentieth century, while others were established during the last two decades. Their principle focus of these groups is to provide humanitarian assistance to the Roma population, and only few have narrowed their objectives to cover employment, culture or housing issues. There are several local Roma radio and TV stations of which "Radio Nisava," established in 2000, is the oldest.

Useful sites

www.vojvodina-hrc.org - webpage of the NGO “Vojvodina Center for Human Rights”

www.nisava.org - webpage of the first Roma radio and TV in Serbia

<http://romani.uni-graz.at/romlex/> - webpage dedicated to the Roma language “ROMLEX”

www.mrc.org.yu - webpage of the NGO “Centre for Minority Rights”

ROMANIANS

Statistics

According to the 2002 Census, there are 34,576 Romanians in Serbia. Of these, 30,419 live in Vojvodina and 4157 in central Serbia. They account for 0.46 percent of the Vojvodina population, but do not form a majority in any municipality. They are mostly concentrated in the Banat municipalities of Alibunar, Vrsac, Pancevo, Zrenjanin and Kovacica in Vojvodina, and along the border with Romania.

History

Romanian populations from Oltenia began settling around the Danube area of Serbia in the 19th century. The population of Romanians subsequently increased as a result of the Treaty of Versailles which concluded World War I. Under the provisions of the Treaty, borders were fixed between Romania and the Kingdom of Serbs Croats and Slovenes and a substantial population of Romanians (75,223 people) found themselves in what is present-day Serbia.

Religion

Most of Romanians belong to the Romanian Orthodox Church, whose site in Serbia is in Vrsac.

Politics

There are currently no formal ethnic Romanian political parties active in elections in Serbia.

Romanians elected their National Council for the first time in December 2002. However, due to internal conflicts, extraordinary elections were called in September 2005. After those extraordinary elections, greater consensus was reached among the Romanian elite, and the Council has been working more smoothly since then. The president of the Council is Danijel Petrovic who is also president of the Zitiste municipality, and the acting president is Danijel Marcel.

The protection of the Romanian national minority in Serbia and the corresponding protection of the Serbian minority in Romania was strengthened by the ratification of the bilateral treaty on the protection of national minorities in 2004.

Education and Language

The Romanian language is in official use in nine municipalities and at the provincial level. Romanians are entitled to education in the Romanian language from primary school to university level (University of Novi Sad).

Media and cultural groups

Romanians express their cultural identity through several institutions including the Romanian Federation of Serbia, which has the goal of providing information and education about this minority group. Media outlets include “Timoc Press” sponsored by the Romanian Federation and the weekly paper “Libertatea” owned by the National Council. To date, assistance from their kin-state in matters of press and culture has been rather modest.

Useful links

www.romaniuitati.eu - webpage of the Romanian minority

www.rgnpress.ro - webpage of the press agency for Romanians Worldwide

RUTHENIANS

History

The Ruthenian minority is descended from a population who began to settle in Vojvodina 250 years ago. The origins of the Ruthenian ethnic group are disputed. While some argue that Ruthenians originate from Ukraine, others claim that they are a distinct Carpathian-Ruthenian people without a kin state. Until 1971, Ukrainians and Ruthenians were registered jointly.

Statistics

According to the 2002 census, there are 15,909 Ruthenians in Serbia. They live mainly in Vojvodina – in central Backa and western Srem, and do not constitute a majority in any municipality in Vojvodina.

Religion

Most Ruthenians are Greek Catholics.

Politics

Ruthenians are not politically organized along ethnic party lines. Ruthenians were the second national minority to elect their National Council in November 2003. The first president was Rafail Ruskovski, who at that time was Provincial Secretary for Information. Extraordinary elections were called in the spring of 2005, and Slavko Oros, the manager of the Cultural Centre “Musical Folklore Ensemble” in Ruski Krstur, was elected President.

Education and Language

Ruthenian language is in official use in five municipalities and at the provincial level. Ruthenians are entitled to have minority education in their mother tongue up to university level.

Media

The centre of Ruthenian culture is Ruski Krstur, a small village in the municipality of Vrbas in north Vojvodina. It has important Ruthenian educational institutions (primary and secondary school), a Ruthenian museum, publishing houses and an amateur theatre. Ruthenians also live in larger towns, such as Kula, Novi Sad, Sid, Sremska Mitrovica and Vrbas. The most important cultural institutions of the

Ruthenians in Serbia are the following: the amateur theatre “Petar Riznic-Djadja,” the Ruthenian Homeland Society and Matica Rusinska.

Useful links

www.ruskeslovo.tk - webpage of the newspaper “Rusko Slovo”

www.rusnak.info - webpage on the Ruthenian minority

www.nsrnm.org.yu - webpage of the National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

S

SLOVAKS

History

In the 11th Century, some sections of present-day Vojvodina were part of Greater Moravia. At the time, the border between the Slovak and Serbian settlements were to the north of present day Vojvodina. Current Vojvodina Slovaks are descendents of the immigrants from the 18th and 19th century, who emigrated from the territory of present-day Slovakia. The first settlers arrived in Backa from the Mt. Tatra region during the rule of Charles I. Though many Slovaks were “Hungarized” after World War I, the largest number of Slovaks (73,830) was registered during the 1961 census.

Statistics

According to the official results of the 2002 census, there are 59,021 Slovaks in Serbia, which represents 0.79 percent of the overall population. They are mostly settled in the province of Vojvodina (56,637), where they are the third most numerous ethnic group. Today, 56,637 ethnic Slovaks make up 2.7 percent of Vojvodina population. They constitute the absolute majority in the municipality of Backi Petrovac (66.41%) and a relative majority in Kovacica (41.07%).

Religion

Slovaks in Serbia are mostly Protestants (Lutherans).

Politics

There are no formal Slovak political parties. Slovaks are represented by the Slovak National Minority Council, which is situated in Novi Sad. Its president, Anna Tomanova Makanova, is also a DS representative within the National Assembly.

Education and Language

Like other ethnic Slovaks, Slovaks in Serbia speak the Slovak language, which is one of six official languages in Vojvodina. Slovaks can therefore receive primary and secondary education in their mother tongue.

Media and Cultural Groups

The city of Backi Petrovac is a cultural center for Vojvodina Slovaks, and is home to a number of Slovak special interest associations and folklore groups. Seven Slovak papers are printed in Vojvodina, the most popular and influential of which is “Hlas Ludu.” These papers are mainly intended for a specific target readership, such as religious groups. The television station Novi Sad broadcasts one 180 minute long

daily program in the Slovak language covering almost the whole territory inhabited by this minority apart from the southeast part of Banat and parts of Srem. A private TV Station in Backi Petrovac municipality has also been established.

U

UKRAINIANS

History

Ukrainians in Serbia are a group closely related to the Ruthenian minority, and the precise differentiation between the groups is debated. Indeed, until 1971 these ethnic groups were registered jointly for census purposes. They began to settle in Vojvodina in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Statistics

According to the 2002 census there are 5354 Ukrainians living in Serbia, 4635 of whom live in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, predominantly in Bačka and Srem.

Religion

The majority of Ukrainians are Orthodox Christians.

Politics

While there are no Ukrainian ethnic parties at the national level, the Ukrainian minority is represented by a National Minority Council. Since 2006, Miroslav Kalenjuk has served as head of the National Council.

Education and Language

Education in Ukrainian is available on a limited basis in Vojvodina, in the municipalities of Novi Sad, Kula, and Vrbas. In some of these educational programs study in Ukrainian is combined with teaching elements of Ukrainian national culture.

Media

Radio-Television Novi Sad offers limited broadcasts in Ukrainian. Local radio stations also broadcast some Ukrainian programs.

Useful links

www.vojvodina.sr.gov.yu - webpage of the Executive Council of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina

V

VLACHS

Statistics

Under the 2002 census 40,054 people in Serbia declared themselves as ethnic Vlachs. They live in eastern parts of Serbia, in particular in the municipalities of Kucevo (5204) Petrovac (3535) Bor (10064) and Boljevac (4162).

History

The Vlachs are an autochthonous population of eastern Serbia. Four viewpoints have emerged concerning Vlach identity: that the Vlach and Romanian are linguistic synonyms; that the two are really only one nation, with one root and one language; that only Romanians live in eastern Serbia, and Vlachs do not exist; that the Vlachs are a separate nation; and that the Vlachs are Romanized Serbs. The predominant view is that the majority of the population which identifies itself as Vlach is descended from groups originating from Banat, parts of Transylvania and Oltenia in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Religion

Vlachs are mostly Serbian Orthodox Christians.

Politics

There are several Vlach ethnic political parties, the most popular of which is the Vlach Democratic Party in Serbia (VDPS). In the 2006 election the VDPS signed a coalition agreement with the Democratic Party. The president of the VDPS is Predrag Balasevic.

In March 2005, persons who declared themselves as Vlachs elected the National Council of the Vlach National Minority. However the Council was only registered on 30 July 2007 after the appointment of the Ministry for Public Administration and Local Self-Government as the focal point for the registration of the National Minority Councils. The president of the Vlach National Council is Zivoslav Lazic.

Education and Language

There is no education in the Vlach language, either in primary or in secondary schools.

Media

Radio Zajecar has begun broadcasting in the Vlach language, and is supported by the Serbian Ministry of Culture.

Useful links

www.vdsstimoc.org - webpage of the Vlach democratic party of Serbia

www.timoc.org - webpage of the Council of Vlachs in Serbia