



REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

HISTORICAL, LEGAL AND CULTURAL OVERVIEW

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OVERVIEW OF THE STATE REGULATION OF SERBIA



Republic of Serbia

The Republic of Serbia is a country that is mostly located in the central part of the Balkan Peninsula, and to a lesser extent it is situated in the southern part of the Pannonian Plain. Serbia is a European country. It borders in the north with Hungary, in the northeast with Romania, in the east with Bulgaria, in the south with the Republic of Macedonia, in the southwest with Albania and Montenegro, and in the west with Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The population of Serbia is around 7 million. The capital of Serbia is Belgrade, with 1,659,440 inhabitants.

Republic of Serbia is a Parliamentary Republic. It is based on the rule of law and social justice, the principles of civil democracy, human and minority rights and European principles and values. Serbia is also a military neutral country. Serbian language and Cyrillic script are official in the Republic of Serbia. The Republic of Serbia is a secular state. The Republic of Serbia protects the rights of national minorities. The country guarantees equality between women and men and develops a policy of equal opportunities.

Human dignity is inviolable and everyone is obliged to respect and protect it. Human life is inviolate. Any inciting of racial, ethnic, religious or other inequality or hatred is prohibited and punishable.

Right to Asylum: Any foreign national with reasonable fear of prosecution based on his race, gender, language, religion, national origin or association with some other group, political opinions, has the right to asylum in the Republic of Serbia. The procedure for granting asylum is regulated by the law.

Serbia became an independent country after the independence referendum, when Montenegro withdrew from the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro in 2006. For its foreign policy goal Serbia has set entering into the European Union. Serbia is making efforts and trying to fulfill its obligations to become a member of the European Union. The candidate status for joining the European Union was received in 2012. For now, Serbia is a member of the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and many other international organizations. With the Serbian passport, one can travel without visa to 104 countries.



National Anthem Of Serbia



Coat of arms of Serbia



The flag of Serbia

Serbia has three national symbols. Those are its anthem, a flag and a coat of arms. The anthem of the Republic of Serbia is an anthem of the Kingdom of Serbia “God of Justice” from the second half of the 19th century. Republic of Serbia has a national flag that is a tricolor with horizontally laid colors: red, blue and white. In addition to the national one, there is also a civil flag that is the same as the national one, but with a small coat of arms placed in the third of the flag’s length from the left to the right, in the blue field. The coat of arms is made of a two-headed white eagle with a shield on its chest, with a Serbian cross on it. Above the eagle’s head there is the crown of the medieval Serbian dynasty of Nemanjić. In that way, modern Serbia has symbolically established the connection with the old Serbian country of the Nemanjić dynasty that ruled from 1166 to 1371.

ANCIENT HISTORY

The area of today’s Serbia was inhabited 40,000 years ago. It was at that time the most popular living area in Europe. There, the largest and most developed settlements in the Neolithic period were formed - Lepenski Vir in Đerdap, Starčevo near Pančevo and Vinča near Belgrade,

which today represent significant archaeological sites visited by large number of domestic and foreign visitors. In the ancient history, on the territory of today's Serbia, many nations had lived. Town of Singidunum (Belgrade) was founded in the 3rd century BC by the Celtic tribe Singi from the Scordisci tribal alliance at the confluence of the Sava and Danube rivers. Roman conquests on the Balkans began at the end of the 3rd century BC. By the beginning of the new era, the Romans had already conquered Pannonia all the way to the Danube. Important Roman roads were passing through Serbia. The roads connected ancient Roman cities in Serbia: Sirmium, Singidunum, Viminacium, Naisus. Fifteen Roman emperors had origins from the Balkans, from which, ten were from the area of Serbia. Even six of them were born in Sremska Mitrovica (the Roman city of Sirmium) and its surrounding area. One of the greatest Roman emperors Constantine the Great was from Niš.



Lepenski Vir

At the end of the 4th century, the military breakthrough of the hordes of Huns sparked the great moving of people that lasted until the arrival of Ugar in the Pannonian Plain in the 10th century. In the second half of the 5th and early 6th century the region of the Balkans started to loot the barbarous horsemen backed by the Slovenian infantry. By the first half of the 7th century the colonization of Slavs in the Balkans was mostly completed. The Slavs believed in the existence of a greater number of Gods. Since the surrounding territories were Christianized, Christianity began to infiltrate between the Slavs as well. This process lasted for centuries. It was followed by the awakening of literacy. Thus, the Slavs in the Balkans began to use several letters: Glagolitic, Cyrillic, and Latin. Today, Cyrillic and Latin are in use in Serbia.

The arrival of a larger number of Serbs in the Balkans is associated with a period around 630. They came from Boyka, which was located mostly in the territory of today's Poland. There was a memory of the name of the oldest Serbian prince. His name was Višeslav. Like the other Balkan people, Serbs also accepted Christianity. After the great break in the Christian Church which divided it into the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Church in 1054, Serbs became Orthodox.

With the arrival of the Nemanjić dynasty to power, the Serbs have gained a prominent political role in the history of the medieval Balkans. In 1166, this dynasty was established by Serbian Mayor Stefan Nemanja. His son, Stefan Nemanjić, received from the Pope Honor III a royal crown and became the first Serbian king (First Priest) in 1217. During Stefan's reign, his brother

Rastko (Saint Sava) succeeded in creating the independence of the Serbian church in 1219 and became the first Serbian archbishop. He played a key role in building the Serbian sanctuary monastery Hilandar. The significance of raising this monastery for the Serbian country was great because all the great Orthodox countries had their monasteries there. Therefore, raising monastery on the Holy Mountain was not only a religious but also a foreign political act.



The Hilandar Monastery

During the time of Nemanjić dynasty, there were three painting and architectural styles: Raška architectural school, Serbian-Byzantine style and Moravian architectural school. With all three styles, the influence of Byzantium was visible, which, as the largest Orthodox country, had a great influence on the cultural life of the Serbs in the Middle Ages. From the Serbian Middle Ages, today the most famous fresco in the world, representing Archangel Gabriel, is located in the Mileševa Monastery. It is known by the name White Angel.

Many monasteries like Studenica and Zica come from the time of the Raška architectural school. The most famous and most influential Serbian medieval ruler was Stefan Dušan. He was proclaimed king in 1331, and then in 1346, he became the emperor. In his time, Serbia was the most powerful Balkan country. During the Dušan's rule, the Code was adopted. It is known as Dušan's Code. It was the highest legal act in the Serbian country. Its particularity in relation to the other European codes at the time was that it was written in the folk's language. When Uroš's son inherited him, Serbia began to weaken. This ruler was the last ruler of the Nemanjić dynasty. Serbia stopped being the empire.



White Angel - a detail of one of the best known frescoes in Serbian culture

After that, the regional rulers who did not have enough strength to oppose the upcoming military power of the Ottomans started to strengthen. The Serbs lost two battles against the Ottomans, 1371 at Marica and 1389, in Kosovo. The Battle of Kosovo was one of the greatest battles in Europe in the 14th century. This military crash inspired almost the entire late medieval Serbian literature.



Adam Stefanović - Battle of Kosovo

In addition to medieval architecture and painting, the Serbs also performed beautiful works in medieval literature. It is interesting that the authors of many important works were women, which shows how much they were respected on the Serbian court and how much attention was paid to their literacy. From unknown times, and certainly from the Middle Ages, the most widespread custom of the Serbs is “slava”—a patron saint day. This ancient national custom of the celebration of the patron saint among the Slavs, was best adhered by the Serbs. The Serbs celebrate the patron saint day continuously for the long time. Former old Slavic Gods, with the acceptance of Christianity, were replaced by Christian saints. Each family celebrates its own saint and it is most often celebrated once or twice a year (preslava). The most frequent celebrations of the Serbs are dedicated to the following saints and archangels: St. Nicholas, St. George, St. Stefan, and Archangel Michael. At that time, the Serbs invite their relatives and friends, but also welcome other people to their homes, and treat them by celebrating their family protectors.



The Monastery of the Patriarchate of Pec

Twenty years after the Battle of Kosovo, more precisely in 1402, a new medieval Serbian country was declared - Serbian Despotovina. It was occupied by the Ottomans in 1459. After the fall of Serbian Despotovina, the Serbian country disappeared. The only recognized authority of the Serbs by the Ottomans was the Patriarchate of Peć, and not only as a church institution, but also as a feudal institution. Throughout the 16th century, the Patriarchate worked on the development of Serbian literature and art.

Although a large number of Serbs continued to live in the Ottoman Empire, a lot of Serbs began to migrate to the surrounding Christian countries. This can be seen not only by the architecture of many Serbian monasteries that are still in Fruška Gora, but also by the literary reach of Serbian enlighteners, such as Dositej Obradović. The young Serbian bourgeoisie on the territory of southern Hungary was also taking care of the edification of young people. Thus one of the most important Serbian cultural institutions - Matica srpska (1826) - was founded in Pest.



The Matica srpska

Regarding the Serbs who remained to live under the Ottoman rule, that lasted more than 4 centuries, and was engaged in political, religious and cultural experience, it should be kept in mind that it shaped part of the present state in Serbian society. Many Turkish words, dishes, even some customs, were adopted by the Serbian nation.

Life under the Ottomans was marked by uprisings and rebellions. Among them, for the political history of the Serbs, the most significant are the First Serbian Uprising (1804-1813) and the Second Serbian Uprising (1815). They are an integral part of a whole that we call the Serbian Revolution. The main reason why this name was given is because with the end of the Second Uprising and the obtaining of autonomy the social relations in the Belgrade pashadom have changed. Since then, feudal system has been abolished and conditions for the development of civil society have been created. In 1878, Serbia gained independence and became dukedom. Three years later, Serbia has received the status of a kingdom. The two Serbian dynasties were rotating on the authority: Obrenović and Karađorđević. In that period political life was developed in Serbia. Political parties arised, while the Parliament was working. Belgrade became the capital of Serbia.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Serbia received the first university - the University of Belgrade. At that time, artists, writers, architects and musicians from Serbia and the diaspora were increasingly cooperating. Serbs began to follow contemporary trends in European culture. At that time Serbian language and spelling were reformed. The reform was made by Vuk Stefanović

Karadžić (1787-1864). Creators from other cultural environments also left a significant mark in the Serbian culture of the 19th century. Thus, for example, Ivan Meštrović and Simeon Roksandić were important for the development of sculpture. Stevan Mokranjac and Kornelije Stanković were responsible for the development of music in Serbia.



Svetozar Miletic



Paja Jovanović - The Fencing lesson



Paja Jovanović - Migration of the Serbs

The peaceful development of Serbia was interrupted by two Balkan wars in 1912-1913, when independent Balkan countries almost banished the Ottoman Empire from the Balkan Peninsula. In these wars, Serbia expanded its territory on the south. However, a large number of Serbs died in those wars, so the people were exhausted. The next major blow to Serbia's peaceful development was the First World War (1914-1918). Europe faced a four-year conflict that brought millions of victims. With the great victory in the First World War, Serbia faced great losses: during the war, it lost almost one third of the total population or even about 60% of the male population.

After the war, in 1918, Serbia introduced its independence into the new state union of the South Slavs, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. In 1929 this country changed its name to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929. The Kingdom was a parliamentary monarchy. Nevertheless, at the time of its existence, cultural life was being developed well. Serbia has had two world famous painters, Paja Jovanović and Sava Šumanović.



Sava Šumanović

Writers Ljubomir Micić, Miloš Crnjanski, Oskar Davico and Rastko Petrovic made great achievements in the world of literature. The Serbs also recorded significant results in the world of science. In the United States, two world scientists of Serbian origin, Nikola Tesla and Mihailo Pupin, made exceptional achievements.

During the Second World War from 1941-1945 Germany and neighbouring countries occupy Yugoslavia. On 20th October 1944 Belgrade is liberated by the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia, with the help of the Russian Red Army. In 1945 the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia is proclaimed under the leadership of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia.

From 1945-1980 Josip Broz Tito, as Yugoslavian President, leader of the Communist Party, through skillful diplomacy during a time when the world is divided between the Warsaw Pact and NATO, manages to secure Yugoslavia a favorable position in international relations.

In 1956 Yugoslavia, Egypt and India found the Non-Aligned Movement and in 1961 the first Non-Aligned Movement conference was held in Belgrade.

In 1963 under the new constitution the name of the country is changed to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.



Josip Broz Tito - in the middle

With the death of Josip Broz in 1980, disappeared a person that by its authority represented one of the most important foundations on which the common country lay on. Instead, the government was represented by a collective representation made by representatives of the republics and provinces.

In 1991, a civil war broke out which led to the breakup of SFRY. In 1992 Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, comprising Serbia and Montenegro, is declared. The United Nations imposes economic sanctions on the state. Throughout the war, about 140,000 people lost their lives and nearly four million became refugees. The country was poor, and an additional rack happened in 1999 by NATO bombing it. In 2000 citizens' dissatisfaction caused by economic sanctions, wars and

difficult living conditions reached the peak. In October 2000 after elections, Slobodan Milosevic resigned due to pressure caused by the civil protests.

In 2001 Serbia got its first democratic government. In 2003 FR Yugoslavia became the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro.

In 2006 Serbia again became an independent country and the new Constitution of the Republic of Serbia is adopted.

In the past four decades, in the territory of today's Serbia, several universities have been established (Novi Sad, Niš, Kragujevac, Priština). In the field of literature, great literary achievements were made by: Ivo Andrić, Nobel Prize Winner for Literature 1961., then Borislav Pekić, Danilo Kiš and Milorad Pavić. Significant achievements were recorded in Serbian films directed by Saša Petrović, Dušan Makavejev and Dušan Kovačević. Among the world wide famous actors the most impressive performances were recorded by Miki Manojlović and an American actor of Serbian origin Karl Malden, Director and animator of Serbian origin Dušan Vukotić received an Oscar in 1961 for his animated film. The music scene kept pace with the flow of world music creativity. In the post-war period, Oscar Danon was composing, and opera singer Radmila Bakočević as well as violinist Stefan Milenković entered the world of famous world artists.

In the field of sport, the highest achievements have been done in team sports, especially in basketball, volleyball and water polo. In individual sports, Jasna Šekarić won the most trophies. Novak Djokovic is the first Serbian tennis player to be ranked No. 1 by the ATP and the first male player representing Serbia to win a Grand Slam singles title. He is a five-time ITF World Champion and a four-time ATP year-end No. 1 ranked player. Djokovic has won numerous awards, including the 2012, 2015, and 2016 Laureus World Sports Award for Sportsman of the Year.



Novak Djokovic - Wimbledon final 2018



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