



Serbian week in the UK

Serbs in the UK

Срби у Уједињеном Краљевству

Overview

Why are Serbs in the UK an important community?

- As British citizens and residents with strong Serbian roots they contribute to multicultural society in modern UK

Why is now a good moment to raise awareness of our community in the UK?

- “Serbian Week in the UK” to inaugurate an active year with many events

History of Serbs in the UK

- XVIII century
- XIX century
- XX century
- The Great War
- Second World War
- Three waves of immigration post 1945

Map of Serbs in the UK

- London
- Oxford
- Birmingham
- Leicester
- Leeds
- Glasgow
- Cardiff



Serbian Organizations in the UK

- **Serbian Society**
- **Serbian Council of Great Britain**
- **Serbian City Club**
- **Serbian Orthodox Church**
- **Norwich-Novi Sad association**
- **Coventry-Belgrade twinning**

Serbian Society

- Charitable organisation established to nurture Serbian cultural heritage and promote Serbian culture in the UK
- Formed in 1995 by a number of enthusiastic Serbs; has been a cultural bedrock for the Serbian community in the UK since its formation
- Runs Saturday Serbian School for children (aged 3-14) teaching Serbian language; also formed children's theatre and plans to organise drama classes
- Runs Serbian School for foreigners and English school for Serbian senior citizens
- Organises various cultural events: exhibitions, plays, book readings and has its own stand at the Parson's Green fair

Serbian Council of Great Britain

- Independent, non-profit, non-political organisation established to promote the interests of the Serbian community in the UK
- Formed in 2002 in close collaboration with the Embassy of Serbia and Montenegro
- Works closely with other diaspora organisations, foremost the Serbian Society and the Serbian Orthodox Church
- Key aims include forming links with Serbian diaspora around the UK and representing their views in the UK and Serbia





Serbian City Club

- Independent, non-profit, non-political organization established to promote the interests of the Serbian professional community in the UK
- Founded in the late 1990's as an informal club for young Serbian professionals
- More than 400 members mainly London-based including scientists, doctors, bankers, lawyers, lecturers, civil servants, and others
- Monthly networking events, speaker events and “brain drain reversal” project

Joint events

- **Sponsored Summer camp for internally displaced children from Kosovo**
- **Provided funding and books for a primary school in Belgrade with Roma children**
- **Opera and theatre events: presenting eminent Serbian artists to the UK audience**
- **Strengthening of business links between the UK and Serbia: Promotion of the "reverse brain drain"**
- **Visit to NATO HQ in Brussels**
- **Peaceful demonstrations at Downing Street following Kosovo's unilateral proclamation of independence**

Integration and key issues

- **UK media coverage: Serbs are bad guys**
- **Majority of British Serbs perceive the UK media coverage of Serbia as one-sided and biased**
- **Some positive examples: coverage of Downing Street protest in February 2008, Exit music festival, sport**
- **Current visa restrictions hamper cultural, educational and other links with Serbia**
- **Serbs coming to the UK still require a visa, are paying high fees and occasionally are enduring a lengthy application and entry process**
- **UK support needed to ease visa regime**
- **Serbian in GCSE: re-establishing the status of the Serbian language in the educational curriculum**

Going forward

- **Strengthening ties with Serbia**
- **Better integration in the UK**
- **Platform for voices from Serbia to be heard**

Serbian week in the UK

- **Tuesday, January 13th**
 - **Parliament presentation “Serbs in the United Kingdom – the next generation”**
- **Thursday, January 15th**
 - **Conference on “Investment opportunities in Serbia” – Yorkshire Society, Leeds**
- **Saturday, January 17th**
 - **Concert “Trio Anima” with artists from Niš – St George’s Church, London**