

Report on  
THE SIXTH SARAJEVO UN WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK  
Sarajevo, February 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017

International Forum Bosnia's Centre for Interfaith Dialogue is pleased to report the completion of its programme to mark the Sixth Sarajevo UN World Interfaith Harmony Week in February 2018.

Continuing its tradition of holding the Sarajevo UN World Interfaith Harmony Week since its inception in 2013, and particularly after the success of the activities for 2017, which won Second Place in the King Abdullah II of Jordan Prize for that year, the organisers and participants decided to prepare a programme for 2018, again under the patronage of Sarajevo Old Town Municipality.

The programme opened on **February 1<sup>st</sup>** with *Good News for Bosnia: On the publication of the Čajniče Gospels: A Bosnian Manuscript from the early 15th Century*, a public presentation and discussion of a diplomatic edition of the only manuscript monument of the mediaeval Bosnian Church still held in Bosnia. This was followed the next evening by *Love Horizons*, a concert by the Sarajevo-based string quartet aMAS. On February 3<sup>rd</sup>, there was a public discussion by well-known intellectual and academic figures from Bosnian public and academic life of *Challenges to Social Pluralism in Bosnia*, continuing the well-received event from last year. The final two events were *An Evening with the poet Darko Cvijetić and his new collection, Konopci s otiskom vrata (Ropes with the imprint of a neck)* on February 6<sup>th</sup> and a public lecture and discussion on the theme of *Discovery and protection of the historical path from Bentbaša through Šehova korija to the Goat's Bridge (Kozija ćuprija) along the left bank of the Miljacka*, on February 7<sup>th</sup>. All events took place at the Great Hall of Old Town Municipality.

The first event was a public presentation entitled *Good News for Bosnia: On the publication of the Čajniče Gospels: A Bosnian Manuscript from the early 15th Century*, edited by Erma Ramić Kunić and published by the Sarajevo-based Institut za jezik, 2017. The presentation and discussion took place on Thursday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018, at 19:00, in the Great Hall of the Sarajevo Old Town Municipal Buildings. The event, and so the programme as a whole, was opened by Mr. Ibrahim Hadžibajrić, the mayor of the Sarajevo Old Town Municipality and main sponsor of the Sixth Sarajevo UN Interfaith Harmony week.

The Čajniče Gospels are the only major surviving Bosnian mediaeval manuscript still kept in Bosnia. In 2013, the BiH Commission to Preserve National Monuments declared it a national monument of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The manuscript itself was the work of five Bosnian scribes. Philological research to date, which has looked at the palaeographic, phonetic, and morphological aspects, has established to a considerable degree of certainty that the text follows a Bosnian

redaction, whose exemplars are derived from an even older tradition. Erma Ramić Kunić's lexicological study of the manuscript provides the basis for a new and clearer understanding of the features of this Bosnian manuscript and its importance for understanding the unique religious tradition of Bosnia, its independent mediaeval church, and the question of mediaeval Bosnian Manichaeism. Discussing the new book and its importance as a contribution to the study of Bosnian heritage were Prof. Mile Babić OFM, Prof. Alen Kalajdžija, Prof. Mehmed Kardaš, Prof. Lejla Nakaš and the editor Dr. Erma Ramić Kunić. Nerin Dizdar chaired the discussion. <https://youtu.be/iSs4d-93NLw>



*Opening night with the public discussion Good News for Bosnia: On the publication of the Čajniče Gospels: A Bosnian Manuscript from the early 15th Century*

The event the following day, **February 2<sup>nd</sup>**, was *In the Horizons of the perennial love* a concert by the aMAS string quartet. The concert started at 18:15 and lasted an hour and a half. The programme for the concert was based around works by Beethoven and Schubert. The quartet members are Tamara Arsovski (violin), Ilma Hodović (violin), Jeremy Joseph (harpsichord) and Belma Alić (violoncello). <https://youtu.be/x92-hp4btYg>



*Concert by the aMAS string quartet in the Horizons of the perennial love*

This was followed on **February 3<sup>rd</sup>** by a public discussion on *Challenges facing social pluralism in Bosnia*, which started at 19:00, also at the Sarajevo Old Town Municipality Great Hall. The speakers were Prof. Samir Beglerović of the Sarajevo University School of Islamic Studies, Prof. Anto Domazet of the Economics Faculty, Dr. Orhan Jašić of the School of Islamic Studies, Prof. David Kamhi of the Sarajevo Music Academic and prominent member of the Jewish Community in Sarajevo, Ivo Marković OFM, Prof. Krsto Mijanović of International Forum Bosnia and Dr. Žarko Papić, also of International Forum Bosnia. Prof. Asim Zubčević of the School of Islamic Studies and IFB chaired the discussion.

As with every other society in the world, plurality in Bosnia involves too many elements to list easily – from the generational to the religious, economic, political, and ideological, to name but a few. When social plurality is oriented towards a better future and is properly served by the political, cultural, and economic orders, these elements come together to help illuminate our responsibility towards the individual, our communities, and the world. They can, however, also be cruelly misused against both the individual and the world. Over the longer term and despite its richness, social plurality in Bosnia has tended to manifest as agony, not least because of a lack of any clear vision for a future in which plurality itself has a role to play. Instead of protecting and fostering it, as a good of the highest order, it has been subject to ideological misconstruction that promotes a culture of conflict and exclusion. The public discussion explored these questions and the various forms of political, cultural, and economic plurality in Bosnian society, with regard to present, past and future.



Public discussion on *Challenges facing social pluralism in Bosnia*

The programme continued on **February 6<sup>th</sup>** with *An Evening with the poet Darko Cvijetić and his new collection, Konopci s otiskom vrata (Ropes with the imprint of a neck)*, again at the Great Hall in the Sarajevo Old Town Municipal Buildings. The evening started at 19:00. The host for the evening was professor Almir Bašović, who discussed the poet Darko Cvijetić's recent collection of poetry with the poet and with professor Andrijana Kos Lajtman.

Darko Cvijetić's poetry exists quite outside the dominant frame of contemporary Bosnian and Slavic literature more generally, which is what makes it such an important contribution to them. His poetic oeuvre is unique in its choice

linguistic colouring, as well as in how it indites a relationship to reality. Humankind's vicious drives are the motive forces for this poetics of vulnerability, which draws its unique and painful beauty from a language of reduction and wonder. The programme for the evening included a musical prelude, interlude, and postlude by the classical guitarist Boško Jović.



*An Evening with the poet Darko Cvijetić and his new collection, Konopci s otiskom vrata (Ropes with the imprint of a neck)*

The final event was a public lecture and discussion on the theme of the *Discovery and protection of the historical path from Bentbaša through Šehova korija to the Goat's Bridge (Kozija ćuprija) along the left bank of the Miljacka*. This was held at on **February 7<sup>th</sup>** in The Great Hall, Sarajevo Old Town Municipal Buildings, and started at 19:00.

The old pathway along the left bank of the Miljacka river towards the Goat's Bridge was Sarajevo's link with the East, but also more than that. The entire valley over which the road passed, as it came finally to the Dervish Lodge at Bentbaša at Sarajevo's Eastern entrance, took on a number of sacral aspects over time. Its sacred peaks were Šehova korija and Popov gaj, but it also includes a number of individual caves, the spring of Ebu hayat and the graves of the dervishes Sheik Ahmed and Abdalmahmud. Its grassy slopes, thickets, and luxuriant hedgerows of lilac, elderflower, and haw frame the road as the sacred passage into and out of Sarajevo. This sacred landscape was brutally cut through and defaced by construction of the transit road towards Eastern Bosnia. Not least of the sins of this development project was the destruction as recently as the 1950s of the ancient Dervish lodge, whose foundation was coeval with that of the town itself. The neglect and degradation of this locality is thus symbolic of the need for the citizens of Sarajevo to renew their relationship with their own town, its history, traditions and heritage, regardless of their own religious background. International Forum Bosnia currently has a project for the study and protection of the ancient road and plans were presented at the discussion for the protection and restoration of the area.





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Speakers were architectural conservation and town planning experts Prof. Senka Ibršimbegović, Prof. Zina Ruždić and Dr. Merima Tica, while contributions were made by former member of the BiH Commission to Protect National Monuments, Prof. Amra Hadžimuhamedović and former Sarajevo mayor Prof. Rasim Gačanović, who heads a foundation for the preservation of the historical site of the old Dervish lodge. The discussion was moderated by Tarik Čengić of IFB.

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