



DESMOS

THE INTERNATIONAL LINK
OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN SCOUTS

LE LIEN INTERNATIONAL
DES SCOUTS CHRETIEN ORTHODOXES

6TH DESMOS CONFERENCE
APRIL 29-30, 2011.
BELGRADE
REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

CONFERENCE FACTS

The 6th DESMOS CONFERENCE was held on April 29-30, 2011, in the premises of the Hotel Kasina, in Belgrade, Republic of Serbia.

The Conference had on the Agenda a number of important issues, including the elections for the new Executive Committee of The Link. The Key-Note speaker Fr. Gligorije Marković had the presentation "Orthodoxy and Young People". The Conference also brought 2 resolutions:

- Resolution on The Relevance of Spirituality in Scouting
- Resolution of Courtesy



The Conference attendance:

20 delegates from 11 countries:

- Bosnia-Herzegovina/Republic of Srpska
- Cyprus
- Finland
- Greece
- Israel
- Jordan
- Lebanon
- Montenegro
- Palestinian Authority
- Romania
- Serbia

5 countries sent the Appointment of Proxy (Armenia, Macedonia FYRO, Moldova, Poland, Russia)

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

On the evening of **Thursday, April 28, 2011**, the host NSO organized the boat trip on Sava and Danube rivers with the dinner.

The participants had the opportunity to experience Belgrade from a perspective different than usual, and it was also the opportunity to relax and have an informal exchange.



On **Friday, April 29, 2011**, the Conference participants had the meetings in The Patriarchate of the Serbian Orthodox Church with His Holiness The Serbian Patriarch, and in the City Hall with the Assistant Mayor of Belgrade.

His Holiness Irinej, The Serbian Patriarch, received the Conference participants in the premises of The Patriarchate of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Belgrade, at 10h.

All the participants of The Conference were presented to His Holiness, as well as the basic facts about The Conference and about The Link.

The Patriarch gave His Blessing to all the participants of the 6th DESMOS Conference. He blessed the event and The International Link of Orthodox Christian Scouts DESMOS.



Leaving The Patriarchate, The Conference participants crossed the street and entered the Orthodox Cathedral Church of St. Michael the Archangel.

The Cathedral Church of St. Michael the Archangel (Serbian: Саборна Црква Св. Архангела Михаила, *Saborna Crkva Sv. Arhangela Mihaila*) is a Serb Orthodox Christian church in the centre of Belgrade, Serbia. It is one of the most important places of worshipping the country. It is commonly known as just *Saborna crkva* (The Cathedral) among the city residents.

The cathedral was built from 1837 to 1840 by order of prince Miloš Obrenović, according to the design and plans of Adam Friedrich Kwerfeld, a builder from Pančevo.



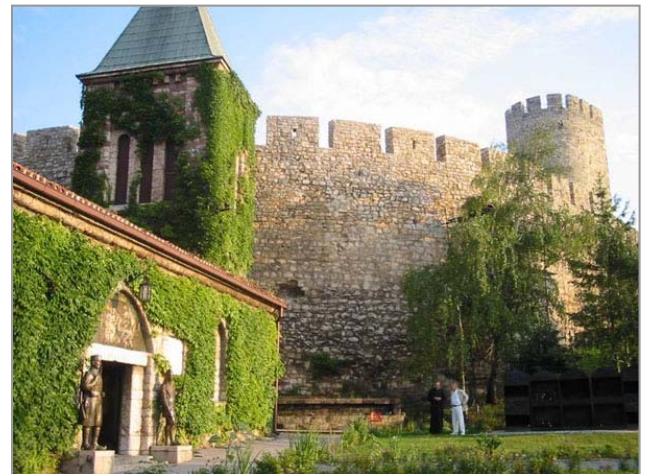
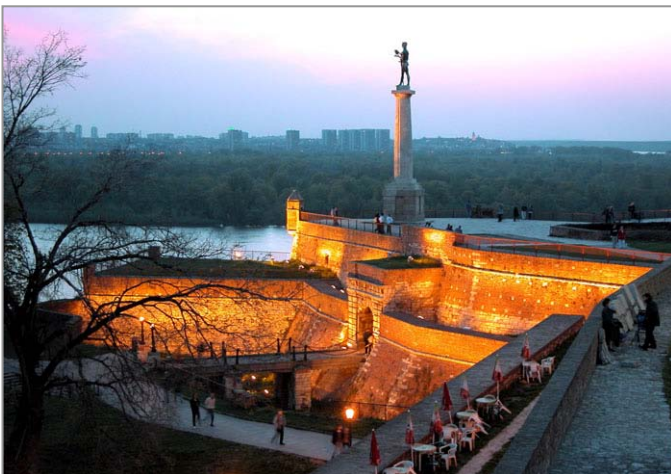
The church was built in the style of classicism with late baroque elements. The church is dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel. The interior is richly decorated. The gold-plated carved iconostasis was made by the sculptor Dimitrije Petrović, while the icons on the iconostasis, thrones, choirs and pulpits, as well as those on the walls and arches were painted by Dimitrije Avramović, one of the most distinguished Serbian painters of the 19th century.

The special value of the church is its treasury. The relics of Serbian saints king Uroš and despot Stefan Štiljanović, as well as the heads of the Church and Serbian rulers of the Obrenović dynasty (Miloš, Mihailo and Milan).

The cathedral is a popular tourist attraction in Belgrade. However, for tourists, it is best to visit the church during weekdays as the church usually holds weddings, baptisms etc. during the weekend.

Taking advantage of the nice weather, DESMOS group then walked to nearby central park KALEMEGDAN.

Kalemegdan (Serbian Cyrillic: Калемегдан, from Ottoman Turkish: *كالمعقدان* Kalemegdan) is a fortress and a park in an urban area neighborhood of Belgrade, the capital of Serbia. It is located in Belgrade's municipality of Stari Grad. Kalemegdan was declared Monument of Culture of Exceptional Importance in 1979, and it is protected by Republic of Serbia. Etymologically, the word Kalemegdan (Turkish: *Kale meydanı*) means "Fortress Square" in Turkish.



Kalemegdan is located on top of the 125.5 meters high ending ridge of Šumadija geological bar. The cliff-like ridge overlooks the Great War Island (Serbian: Veliko ratno ostrvo) and the confluence of the Sava river into the Danube, and makes one of the most beautiful natural lookouts in Belgrade.

It borders the neighborhoods of Dorćol (north and north-east), Stari Grad (east) and Kosančićev Venac (Savamala; south). It is encircled by three streets: *Boulevard of Vojvoda Bojović*, *Tadeuša Košćuška*, *Pariska*, and the railway along the riverside.

Kalemegdan is the core and the oldest section of the urban area of Belgrade and for centuries the city population was concentrated only within the walls of the fortress, thus the history of the fortress, until most recent history, equals the history of Belgrade itself (see: Timeline of Belgrade history). First mention of the city is when it was founded in the 3rd century BC as "Singidunum" by the Celtic tribe of Scordisci who had defeated Thracian and Dacian tribes that previously lived at the fort and around.

The most beautiful and biggest park in Belgrade, which is also the most important cultural and historical complex, in which the **Belgrade Fortress** stands high above the Sava and Danube confluence. The name Kalemegdan applies only to the spacious plateau surrounding the Fortress, which was turned into a park in the eighties of the XIX century. When the Fortress served as Belgrade's chief military stronghold, the plateau was a place from which the enemy was kept under observation and where preparations were made for combats. Its name derives from the Turkish words *kale* (fort) and *megdan* (field). The Turks also called it *Fichir-bair*, which means "the contemplation hill".



Its conversion into a park began by Prince Mihailo Obrenović's order, once the Fortress was surrendered to the Serbs (**1867**). The conceptual designs were made by Emilijan Josimović, the first Serbian urbanist. The greenery was planted between 1873 and 1875, when the commanding officer of the Fortress was Colonel Dragutin Žabarac, who was an aide-de-camp to Prince Miloš Obrenović during his second rule.

The planned development of Kalemegdan began in 1890, when the military authorities handed the park over to the Belgrade civilian authorities. The mayor of Belgrade at that time, Nikola Pašić, approved the first credit amounting to 10,000 dinars for the regulation of Kalemegdan. In 1905, the park was expanded with the development of Mali Kalemegdan, which spreads from the **Cvijeta Zuzorić Art Pavilion** to the Zoo.

Before the First World War, Kalemegdan spread to the now still existing stone stairway (leading to the lower terrace). The ground beyond this stairway remained completely untouched and overgrown with weeds until 1929. In 1931, the park expanded also to Upper Town. Monuments to many famous cultural and public persons were erected in the park. Kalemegdan now includes the **Military Museum**, **Cvijeta Zuzorić Art Pavilion**, **City Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments**, Zoo, a children's amusement park, a large number of sports fields, restaurants and so on.

The meeting with Assistant Mayor of Belgrade was scheduled for 12h, in The **CITY HALL**.

The City Hall Building is also known as **Stari dvor** (Serbian Cyrillic: Стари Двор) meaning **Old Palace**, was the royal residence of the Obrenović dynasty. Today it houses the City Assembly of Belgrade. The palace is located on the corner of Kralja Milana and Dragoslava Jovanovića streets in Belgrade, Serbia.

The palace was built between 1882 and 1884, according to the design of Aleksandar Bugarski, in the style of academism of the 19th century, with intention to surpass all existing residences of the Serbian rulers.



A number of important events from the time of the political power of the Obrenović dynasty are linked to the Old Palace: the Palace was built when Serbia was proclaimed a Kingdom; in that same building, King Milan abdicated in favor of his son, Aleksandar, on February 22, 1889. Between 1903 and 1914, the Old Palace was the residence of the Karadjordjević dynasty. In 1919 and 1920, meetings of the Provisional National Assembly took place there. Royal festivities and receptions of foreign guests took place there until 1941.

Nowadays, the palace is home to the City Assembly of Belgrade. Visitors can take a tour inside the Old Palace. Tourists can sign up to visit the Old Palace at the tourist stands throughout Belgrade.

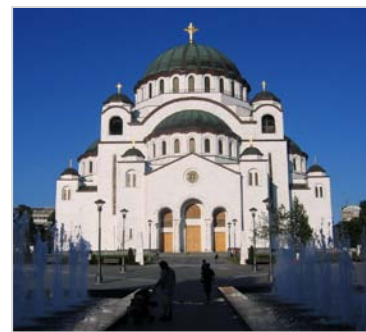
Assistant Mayor, Mr. Aleksandar Šapić, received The Conference participants in the Red Lounge of the City Hall building and expressed warm welcome to DESMOS representatives, wishing them pleasant time in Belgrade.

DESMOS President and Secretary General presented to the Assistant Mayor our Link, its Mission, Vision, objectives and activities, and offered him the appropriate gifts.



On **Saturday, April 30, 2011**, the excursion was organized for the Conference delegates. The idea was to offer the participants the opportunity to see at least one part of Serbia and get acquainted with its landscapes, culture and tradition.

The first phase considered the sightseeing of some parts of Belgrade and visit to the Orthodox Christian Temple, **St. Sava Cathedral**, in Belgrade central area.



The **Cathedral of Saint Sava** (Serbian: Храм Светог Саве or *Hram svetog Save*) is an Orthodox church in Belgrade, Serbia, the largest Orthodox cathedral on the Balkans, and one of the largest Orthodox cathedrals in the world. The church is dedicated to Saint Sava, founder of the Serbian Orthodox Church and an important figure in medieval Serbia. It is built on the *Vračar* plateau, on the location where his remains were burned in 1595 by the Ottoman Empire's Sinan Pasha. From its location, it dominates Belgrade's cityscape, and is perhaps the most monumental building in the city. The building of the church structure is being financed exclusively by donations. The parish home is nearby, as will be the planned patriarchal building.

It is not a cathedral in the technical ecclesiastical sense, as it is not the seat of a bishop (the seat of the Metropolitan bishop of Belgrade is St. Michael's Cathedral). In Serbian it is called a *hram* (temple), which is in Eastern Orthodoxy another name for a church. In English, it is usually called a *cathedral* because of its size and importance.

The church is centrally planned, having the form of a Greek Cross. It has a large central dome supported on four pendentives and buttressed on each side by a lower semi-dome over an apse. Beneath each semi-dome



is a gallery supported on an arcade.

The dome is 70 m high, while the main gold plated cross is another 12 m high, which gives a total of 82 m to the height Cathedral of Saint Sava. The peak is 134 m (439.6 ft) above the sea level (64 m [210 ft] above the Sava river); therefore the church holds a dominant position in Belgrade's cityscape and is visible from all approaches to the city.

The church is 91 m (298.5 ft) long from east to west, and 81 m (265.7 ft) from north to south. It is 70 m (229.65 ft) tall, with the main gold-plated cross extending for 12 more metres (39.4 ft)

Its domes have 18 more gold-plated crosses of various sizes, while the bell towers have 49 bells of the Austrian Bell Foundry *Grassmayr*.

It has a surface area of 3,500 square meters on the ground floor, with three galleries of 1,500 m² on the first level, and a 120 m² gallery on the second level. The Cathedral can receive 10,000 faithful at any one time. The choir gallery seats 800 singers. The basement contains a crypt, the treasury of Saint Sava, and the grave church of St. Lazar the Hieromartyr, with a total surface of 1.800 m².

The facade is in white marble and granite and, when finished, the inner decorations will be of mosaics. The central dome will contain a mosaic of Christ Pantocrator. To give a sense of the monumental scale, the eyes will each be about 4 meters wide.

Three hundred years after the burning of **Saint Sava's** remains, in 1895, the *Society for the Construction of the Cathedral of Saint Sava on Vračar* was founded in Belgrade. Its goal was to build a cathedral on the place of the burning. A small church was built at the future place of the Cathedral, and it was later moved so the construction of the Cathedral could begin. In 1905, a public contest was launched to design the church; all five applications received were rejected as not being good enough. Soon, the breakout of the First Balkan War in 1912, and subsequent Second Balkan War and First World War stopped all activities on the construction of the church.



After the war, in 1919, the Society was re-established. New appeals for designs were made in 1926; this time, it received 22 submissions. Though the first and third prize were not awarded, the second-place project, made by architect Aleksandar Deroko, was chosen for the building of the Cathedral.

Forty years after the initial idea, construction of the church began on May 10, 1935, 340 years after the burning of Saint Sava's remains. The cornerstone was laid by bishop Gavriilo Dožić-Medenica (the future Serbian Patriarch Gavriilo V). The project was designed by Aleksandar Deroko and Bogdan Nestorović, aided by civil engineer Vojislav Zadžina.

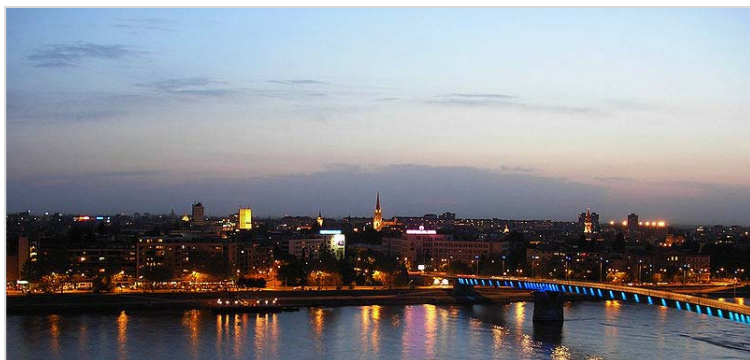
The work lasted until Second World War Axis invasion of Yugoslavia in 1941. The church's foundation had been completed, and the walls erected to the height of 7 and 11 meters. After the 1941 bombing of Belgrade, work ceased altogether. The occupying German army used the unfinished church as a parking lot, while in 1944 the partisans and the Red Army used it with the same purpose. Later, it was used for storage by various companies. The Society for Building of the Cathedral ceased to exist and has not been revived.

In 1958, Patriarch German renewed the idea of building the church. After 88 requests for continuation of the building—and as many refusals, permission for finishing the building was granted in 1984, and Branko Pešić was chosen as new architect of the church. He remade the original projects to make better use of new materials and building techniques. Construction of the building began again on August 12, 1985. The walls were erected to full height of 40 meters.

The greatest achievement of the construction process was lifting of the 4,000 ton central dome, which was built on the ground, together with the copper plate and the cross, and later lifted onto the walls. The lifting, which took forty days, was finished on June 26, 1989.

As of 2009, the church is mostly complete. The bells and windows had been installed, and the facade completed. However, work on the internal decoration of the building still remains largely unfinished.

The next phase of the excursion was the visit to the town of **NOVI SAD**, in the northern Serbian Province of Vojvodina and the nearby **PETROVARADIN Fortress**.



The participants had the opportunity to feel the atmosphere of this quite particular town in which we meet the mixture of ethnic groups, religions, mentalities, architectural solutions ...

Novi Sad (Serbian Cyrillic: Нови Сад), is the capital of the northern Serbian province of Vojvodina, and the administrative centre of the South Bačka District. The city is located in the southern part of Pannonian Plain on the Danube river.

Novi Sad is Serbia's second largest city, after Belgrade.^{[3][4]} According to the data from March 2011, the city has an urban population of 292,508, while its municipal population was 380,291.



It is located on the border of the Bačka and Srem regions, on the banks of the Danube river and Danube-Tisa-Danube Canal, facing the northern slopes of Fruška Gora mountain.

The city was founded in 1694, when Serb merchants formed a colony across the Danube from the Petrovaradin fortress, Habsburg strategic military post. In 18th and 19th centuries, it became an important merchant and manufacturing centre, as well as a centre of Serbian culture of that period, earning the nickname *Serbian Athens*. The city was heavily devastated in the 1848 Revolution, but it was subsequently restored. During the history, it maintained multi-cultural identity, with Serbs, Hungarians and Germans being the main ethnic groups. Today, Novi Sad is an industrial and financial centre of Serbian economy, as well as a major cultural hub.



The urban area of Novi Sad has a population of 216,583 and is generally divided into three parts: "Novi Sad proper" (with population of 191,405), situated on the left bank of Danube, and Petrovaradin (population of 13,973) and Sremska Kamenica (with population of 11,205), on the right bank of the Danube.

Novi Sad is a typical Central European town. There are only a few buildings dating before 19th century, because the city was almost totally destroyed during the 1848/1849 revolution, so the architecture from 19th century dominates the city centre. Around the center, old small houses used to dominate the cityscape, but they are being replaced by modern multi-story buildings.

During the socialist period, new blocks with wide streets and multi-story buildings were built around the city core. However, not many communist-style high-rise buildings were built, and the total number of 10+ floor buildings remained at 40-50, most of the rest being 3-6 floor Apartment buildings.

City's new boulevard (today's *Bulevar oslobođenja*) was cut through the old housings in 1962-1964, establishing major communication lines. Several more boulevards were subsequently built in a similar manner, creating an orthogonal network over what used to be mostly radial structure of the old town. Those interventions paved the way for a relatively unhampered growth of the city, which almost tripled its population since the 1950s, and traffic congestions (except on a few critical points) are still relatively mild despite the huge boost of car numbers, especially in later years.

In the 19th century, the city was the capital of Serbian culture, earning the nickname **Serbian Athens**. In that time, almost every Serbian novelist, poet, jurist, and publicist at the end of 19th century and at the beginning of 20th century had lived or worked in Novi Sad some time of his or her career. Among others, these cultural workers include Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, Mika Antić, Đura Jakšić, etc. Matica srpska, the oldest cultural-scientific institution of Serbia, was moved from Budapest to Novi Sad in 1864, and contains a library (the Library of Matica srpska) with over 800,000 books.



The Serbian National Theatre, the oldest professional theatre among the South Slavs, was founded in Novi Sad in 1861.



Today, Novi Sad is the second cultural centre in Serbia (besides Belgrade) and city's officials try to make the city more attractive to numerous cultural events and music concerts. Since 2000, Novi Sad is home to the EXIT festival, the biggest music summer festival in Serbia and the region; and also the only festival of alternative and new theatre in Serbia.

Zmaj Children Games, International Novi Sad Literature Festival, Sterijino pozorje, Novi Sad Jazz Festival, and many others. Besides Serbian National Theatre, the most prominent theatres are also Youth Theatre, Cultural centre of Novi Sad and Novi Sad Theatre. Novi Sad Synagogue also houses many cultural events in the City. Other city's cultural institutions include Offset of the Serbian Academy of Science and Art, Library of Matica Srpska, Novi Sad City Library and Azbukum. City is also home to cultural institutions of Vojvodina: Vojvodina Academy of Science and Art and Archive of Vojvodina, which collect many documents from Vojvodina dating from 1565.

Petrovaradin Fortress (Serbian: Петроварадинска тврђава or *Petrovaradinska tvrđava*, Hungarian: *Pétervárad vár*, German: *Peterwardein*) is a fortress in Novi Sad, Serbia. It is located in the province of Vojvodina, on the right bank of the Danube river. The cornerstone of the present-day southern part of the fortress was laid on October 18, 1692, by Charles Eugène de Croÿ. Petrovaradin Fortress has many underground tunnels as well (16 km of underground countermine system).



In 1991 Petrovaradin Fortress was added to Spatial Cultural-Historical Units of Great Importance list, and it is protected by Republic of Serbia.

Exit (also known as **State of Exit**) is an annual summer music festival in the Petrovaradin Fortress of Novi Sad, Vojvodina, Serbia. It is staged annually since 2000 and usually lasts four days (since 2003).



Held in the picturesque setting of an 18th century fortress by the Danube, the festival quickly grew in stature and reputation. From its grass roots political beginnings, over to occasional problems with financing, and ending with wide praise it's lately receiving, Exit tries to stick to its initial mission of providing relevant entertainment to Serbian youth while also bringing pertinent social topics to the forefront.

The festival was started in 2000 by three University students from Novi Sad, Dusan Kovacevic, Bojan Boskovic, and Ivan Milivojev. In 2000 and 2001 the festival was organized through the Students' Union of Faculty of Technical Sciences and University of Novi Sad. In the meantime several NGO's and commercial companies have been involved in the organization. Since 2007, the festival has been a subject of several official and unofficial takeover bids.

UK Festival Awards 2007, together with Yourope, the European Association of the 40 largest festivals in Europe, awarded Exit as the Best European Festival. Public from all over the world voted for about a month, and among 10 festivals, Exit won this award that is being awarded for the first time in the category of the Best European Festival.

DESMOS Conference participants then visited the small town of **SREMSKI KARLOVCI**.

Sremski Karlovci (Serbian Cyrillic: Сремски Карловци) is a town and municipality in Serbia, in the autonomous province of Vojvodina, situated on the bank of the river Danube, 8 km from Novi Sad. In 2002, its population was 8,839.



In ancient times, a small Roman fortress existed at this location. The town was first mentioned in historical documents in 1308 with the name *Karom*. The fortress of Karom was built on the ruins of the ancient Roman

one. Until 1521, the Karom was a possession of the Hungarian noble families, of which the most well known were Báthory and Morović.

Turkish military commander Bali-beg conquered Karom in 1521, and in the next 170 years, the town was part of the Ottoman Empire. The Slavic name for the town - *Karlovci*, was first recorded in 1532/33. During the Ottoman rule, the town was mostly populated by Serbs, with the smaller part of population composed of Muslims. According to the Ottoman sources from 1545, the population of Karlovci numbered 547 Christian (Serb) houses, thus it was the largest city with a Serb majority in the whole Ottoman Empire. The city also had three Orthodox churches and a monastery.

Between 16 November 1698 and 26 January 1699, the town of Karlovci was the site of a congress that ended the hostilities between the Ottoman Empire and the Holy League, a coalition of various European powers including Habsburg Monarchy, Poland, Venice and Russia; the congress produced the Treaty of Karlowitz. It was the first time a round table was used in international politics.

After this peace treaty, the town was part of the Habsburg Monarchy and was included into the Military Frontier. According to the 1702 data, the population of the town was composed of 215 Orthodox and 13 Catholic houses, while according to the 1753 data, the population of the town numbered 3,843 people, of which 3,110 were ethnic Serbs.

The town was also the spiritual, political and cultural centre of the Serbs in the Habsburg Monarchy. The Metropolitan of the Serb Orthodox Church resided in the town.

To this day, the Serb Orthodox Patriarch retains the title of Metropolitan of Karlovci. The town also featured the earliest Serb (and Slavic in general) gymnasium (Serbian: *gimnazija/гимназија*, French: *lycée*) founded on 3 August 1791. Three years after this, an Orthodox seminary was also founded in the town: it was the second oldest Orthodox seminary in the world (after the Spiritual Academy in Kiev), and it is still in existence.



At the Serb National Assembly in Karlovci in May 1848, Serbs declared the unification of the regions of Srem, Banat, Bačka, and Baranja (including parts of the Military Frontier) into the province of Serbian Vojvodina.

The first capital of Serbian Vojvodina was in Karlovci, until it was latter moved to Zemun, Veliki Bečkerek, and Temišvar. In the same time the title of the Orthodox Metropolitan of Karlovci was raised to that of Patriarch, which thus established an Orthodox Patriarchate of Karlovci that existed until 1920 when it was joined with the Metropolitanate of Belgrade to form the new Patriarchate of Serbia.

When Serbian Vojvodina was in 1849 transformed into the new province named Voivodeship of Serbia and Banat of Temeschwar, town of Karlovci was not included into this province, but was returned under the administration of the Military Frontier (Petrovaradin regiment that was part of Slavonian Krajina). With the abolishment of the Military Frontier in 1881, the town was included into Syrmia County of Croatia-Slavonia, the autonomous kingdom within Kingdom of Hungary and Austria-Hungary.

In 1918, the town became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. In the 1920s, it became the headquarters of Russian White émigrés of General Wrangel whose monument remains to this day. It was also an early home to the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia. (Critics labeled this church the "Karlovtsy Synod" in its early days in an attempt to belittle its importance as an international Orthodox body.)

Between 1929 and 1941, the town was part of Danube Banovina, a province of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. During World War 2 (1941–1944), the town was occupied by the Axis Powers and it was attached to the Ustashe's Independent State of Croatia. During that time its name was changed to *Hrvatski Karlovci*. Since the end of the war, the town has been part of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina.

Between 1980 and 1989, Sremski Karlovci was one of the seven municipalities of Novi Sad City. Today, the municipality is not part of Novi Sad City, but a separate administrative unit of South Bačka District.

Most recently, the government of Serbia announced its decision to move the Constitutional Court of Serbia to this town as part of the national strategy for decentralization. Furthermore the government decided to make this move because of the historic importance of this town in Serbian history as well because of its relative proximity to the capital, Belgrade.

The court will probably occupy the building of the magistrate some time during 2010. In this way the government plans to symbolically, amongst other things, crown the reform of the judicial system and mark the separation of the three branches of government and emphasize their mutual independence.

After Sremski Karlovci, DESMOS group visited the **Monastery KRUŠEDOL**, at Fruška Gora mountain.

The **Krušedol monastery** (Serbian: *Манастир Крушедол / Manastir Krušedol*) is a Serb Orthodox monastery on the Fruška Gora mountain in the northern Serbia, in the province of Vojvodina. The monastery is the legacy of the last Serbian despot family of Srem - Branković. It was built between 1509 and 1514. The whole family including Đurađ Branković and Stefan Lazarević, as well as two Patriarchs of the Serbian Orthodox Church, were buried in Krušedol. It is shown on the 5 Dinar coin.

Krušedol Monastery was declared Monument of Culture of Exceptional Importance in 1990, and it is protected by Republic of Serbia.



The monastery church is dedicated to the Annunciation. The monastery was founded between 1509 and 1516, by Bishop Maksim and his mother, Angelina, who were supported by Walachian Duke Jovan Njagoja Basaraba. During the final retreat of the Turks from Srem, in 1716, the monastery was damaged and the church burnt down.

The renovation started in 1721, and was completed in the late 1760s. In 1726, a baroque bell-tower was added on to the West wing of the monks' quarters and between 1742 and 1750, the church underwent certain adaptations which did not significantly change its general original appearance. The monks' quartets were reconstructed and expanded in the same period.

The church was originally decorated with fresco paintings in the 16th century. Its interior was covered with new oil wall paintings between 1750 and 1756, done by Jovan Vasilijevic and Stefan Tenecki. On the West facade, there is a composition of the "Last judgment" from the end of the 17th century. The iconostasis was composed of icons differing in style and time of creation.

FRUŠKA GORA (Serbian Cyrillic: *Фрушка гора*, Hungarian: *Tarcal*, Latin: *Alma Mons*) is a mountain in the north of Syrmia, Serbia, sometimes also called *the Jewel of Serbia* for its beautiful landscapes, nature and countryside. Because of 16 monasteries situated at this mountain, Fruška Gora is often called **Serbian Mount of Athos**.

Thanks to its hospitable environment, there are also over a dozen Serbian Orthodox monasteries located on Fruška Gora.



According to historical data, these monastic communities were historically recorded since the first decades of the 16th century. Legends, however, place their founding to the period between the 12th and 15th centuries.

The monasteries are concentrated in an area 50 kilometers long, and 10 kilometers wide. In the course of centuries of their existence, these monasteries sustained the spiritual and political life of the Serbian nation.

Fruška Gora Monasteries were declared Monuments of Culture of Exceptional Importance in 1990, and are protected by Serbia.

There are 16 monasteries on Fruška Gora:



- BEOČIN - The time of founding is unknown. It is first mentioned in Turkish records dated in 1566/1567.
- BEŠENOVO - According to the legend, the Bešenovo monastery was founded by Serbian King Dragutin at the end of the 13th century. The earliest historical records about the monastery date from 1545.
- VELIKA REMETA - Traditionally, its founding is linked to King Dragutin. The earliest historical records about the monastery date to 1562.
- VRDNIK-RAVANICA - The exact date of its founding is unknown. The records indicate that the church was built at the time of Metropolitan Serafim, in the second half of the 16th century.
- GRGETEG - According to tradition the monastery was founded by Zmaj Ognjeni Vuk (Despot Vuk Grgurević) in 1471. The earliest historical records about the monastery date to 1545/1546.
- DIVŠA - It is believed to have been founded by Despot Jovan Branković in the late 15th century. The earliest historical records about the monastery date to the second half of the 16th century.
- JAZAK - The monastery was founded in 1736.
- KRUŠEDOL - **The monastery was founded between 1509 and 1516, by Bishop Maksim (Despot Đorđe Branković) and his mother Angelina.**
- KUVEŽDIN - Traditionally, its foundation is ascribed to Stefan Štiljanović. The first reliable records of it are dated in 1566/1569.
- MALA REMETA - The foundation is traditionally ascribed to the Serbian King Dragutin. The earliest historical records relating to the monastery are dated to the middle of the 16th century.
- NOVO HOPOVO - According to tradition, the monastery was built by the Despots of the House of Branković. The first reliable mention of the monastery is dated to 1641.
- PRIVINA GLAVA - According to the legends, Privina Glava was founded by a man named Priva, in the 12th century. The earliest historical records about the monastery are dated in 1566/1567.
- PETKOVICA - According to the tradition, founded by the widow of Stefan Štiljanović, Despotess Jelena. The earliest historical records mentioning the monastery are dated to 1566/1567.
- RAKOVAC - According to a legend written in 1704, Rakovac was founded by a certain man, Raka, courtier of Despot Jovan Branković. The legend states that Raka erected the monastery in 1498. The earliest historical records mentioning the monastery are dated to 1545/1546.
- STARO HOPOVO - According to the tradition, the monastery was founded by Bishop Maksim (Despot Đorđe Branković). The first reliable mention of the monastery dates back to 1545/1546.
- ŠIŠATOVAC - The foundation of the monastery is ascribed to the refugee monks from the Serbian monastery of Žiča. The reliable facts illustrating the life of the monastery date back from the mid 16th century.

The last destination of the DESMOS group within the excursion was the small town of **INDJIJA**, where the Conference participants were offered a meal in the premises of the local Church of the Holy Virgin Mary. The Conference participants were received and welcomed by the local priest, **Father Radiša**, and by the President of the Assembly of the Municipality of Indjija, **Mr. Aleksandar Kovačević**.



DESMOS Secretary General presented The Link to the hosts and introduced The Conference delegates.

DESMOS President offered the appropriate gifts to the President of the Assembly of the Municipality of Indjija, Mr. Aleksandar Kovačević, and to the priest Father Radiša.



After a warm welcome, nice meal and presentation of The Link to the hosts done by DESMOS President and Secretary General, the Conference participants took part at the evening service at the Church.

The Church "Vavedenje Presvete Bogorodice" (Church of The Holy Virgin Mary) was built in 1756, about 10 years after founding of the vary settlement of Indjija. It is a one building construction of smaller dimensions, which at the time of its construction was fitting to the needs of the settlement at the time, which had only 60 households. The Church Vavedenija Presvete Bogorodice in Indjija, as all the constructions that were built during the 5th and 6th decade of the 18th century, was built in the spirit of medieval tradition of the



Raska construction school. By its proportions, it falls under the most beautiful and most consonant constructions that remained from the 18th century in the Srem region. The inside of the church was painted at the end of the 19th century by Jovan Stajner, a painter from Sombor. Besides this work, he also gold coated the carve inn's of the root screen and reconstructed the Icons. The last big reconstruction of the church interior was done by an academic painter, Nikoda Brkic after the World War II, when he redid the walls and cupolas.

On the way back to Belgrade, in spite of a busy day schedule, the atmosphere in the bus was cheerful and the Conference participants enjoyed.

