
ALBANIAN-SERBIAN ONLINE DICTIONARY PROJECT LAUNCHED IN KOSOVO

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The International Organisation for Migration launched the project to produce a 20,000-word Albanian-Serbian online dictionary in Pristina on Monday, aimed at helping the countrys ethnic Albanians and Serbs communicate better.

The IOM plans to complete the Albanian-Serbian online dictionary project, believed to be the first of its kind, by September 2019.

Albanian and Serbian are the two official languages of Kosovo. Other languages like Turkish and Roma are in official use in municipalities in which the people who speak them make up at least five per cent of the local population.

Five Kosovo municipalities □ Kamenica, Mamusha, Dragash, North Mitrovica and South Mitrovica □ have already benefited from an IOM project, supported by the British embassy in Kosovo, offering free language courses in Albanian and Serbian.

IOM project coordinator Svetlana Rakic said that experts from Kosovo and Serbia have been recruited for the dictionary project.

We have identified the barrier that languages constitute so we have started building an online platform, Vocup, with the support of the UK embassy and [the UNs Kosovo mission] UNMIK, Rakic said.

Pristina-based journalist Una Hajdari said that in recent decades, the countrys Albanians and Serbs have not been learning each others languages.

Unlike my colleagues, I speak and report in two languages, Albanian and Serbian. There are also shortcomings in translations of the two respective languages due to the fact that since the end of the [1998-99] war, there was no initiative, neither from the Serb nor the Albanian side, to learn the others language, Hajdari said.

She added that the last bilingual Albanian-Serbian dictionary in Kosovo was published in 1985.

Slavisa Mladenovic, Kosovos Languages Commissioner, is convinced that the dictionary will help to facilitate coexistence among Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo.

We expect that this will improve relations between the two communities. For the first time after 30 years, Pristina and Belgrade experts sat at a table [to work in the project], Mladenovic said.

This will make work in the [public] administration easier and will represent an important facet in the reconciliation of the two communities, he added.

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