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Development of Slovak-Serbian cultural and scientific ties: Matica slovenská's cooperation with Matica srpska and the Archives of Vojvodina

Abstract: The text provides an overview of specific events and activities organized by or attended by the Matica slovenská, in efforts to strengthen Slovak-Serbian ties, especially those between the Matica srpska and Matica slovenská. In that context, the text lists the congresses organized by the two institutions, which represent a platform for cooperation of the two Matikas and the Slavic peoples' institutions, which developed significant cooperation during their existence in the field of the two peoples' history research and culture. The text also features significant anniversaries of both Matikas, as well as planning joint publishing projects and joint participation in cultural events.

Keywords: Serbian-Slovak cooperation, Pavel Jozef Šafárik, Congresses of Slavic peoples' Matikas and institutions

Introduction

Long-term friendly relations between Slovak and Serbian cultural institutions have started acquiring a new, more dynamic dimension in recent years. Martin-headquartered Matica slovenská, which was founded in 1863 during the era of Hungary

and the Habsburg Empire, has been systematically developing cooperation with significant institutions in Serbia, primarily with Matica srpska, which was founded first in 1826, and as such was a symbol of cultural awakening of the Slavic peoples. Its cooperation with the Novi Sad-based Archives of Vojvodina is equally as intense, which is also marking

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a significant jubilee this year – a centennial of its founding.^[2] The cooperation relies on historical ties between the Slavic peoples, the tradition of scientific and cultural exchange and the care for Slovak community in Vojvodina. History has taught us to speak in a language of mutual respect and support, which we aim to preserve and improve upon.

When discussing *Matica slovenská*, it should be emphasized that the pillar of Slavic cultural, scientific, and social cooperation has existed since its very inception. Slavic contexts have been an immanent part of Slovak native life throughout all its historical stages, up to the present day. Slovak patriot, historian, librarian, archivist, and registrar assistant professor Anton Augustín Baník (1900–1978), offered in the late 1940s perhaps the most precise definition of the attitude *Matica slovenská* had toward ideas of Slavic reciprocity. Among other things, he stated: “Traditions of the Slovaks are inextricably and deeply tied with the history of the entire Slavs. *Matica slovenská* is simultaneously the historical protector and live carrier of the spirit of Slavic solidarity of Slovaks. More precisely, *Matica slovenská* came into existence as a reflection of a direct show of sublime feelings, imbued with Slavic brotherhood, on the occasion of the thousandth anniversary of the arrival of the Slavic apostles Constantine Cyril and Methodius among our ancestors. Apart from that, *Matica slovenská* has developed over time in a way

that it has become the front-most protector among its sister institutions in the Slavic space of the initial, original meaning of the original idea, as conceived in the first third of the last century. However, *Matica slovenská*, as an organization of the lovers of the Slovak people, is not just an institution that relies on the Slavic brotherhood’s higher interests. It carries out its mission simultaneously on the broad social foundation of universal brotherhood, on the sincere rapprochement of man with man, and therefore has a positive attitude towards every honest citizen of any nationality, especially when they also have a special understanding, respect, or love for the life efforts and needs of Slovaks” (Group of Authors, 2020, p. 99).

After all, a truly clear Slovak and *Matica* proof of the embodiment of Slavic cooperation was the historically first president of *Matica slovenská*, Bishop Štefan Moyses (1797–1869). In him, the Slovak, Slavic and humanistic ideal of the native national aspiration found its supreme model, especially since he was not only a great Slovak, an enthusiastic Slav and a noble man, but also a deeply religious high church dignitary and benefactor, who was deeply touched by social injustices. The first president of *Matica slovenská* actively participated in the fight for cultural and political rights of Slovaks and South Slavic national movement. He also developed close cooperation with the representatives of Czechs, Moravians, Serbs, Croats, and Ruthenians^[3] in the

[2] Available at: <https://slovenskeslovo.sk/matica-slovenska-posilnila-spolupracu-s-krajanmi-a-archivom-vojvodiny/>

[3] A similar concept was advocated by another great Slav and Ruthenian-Slovak hard worker Adolf Dobriansky (1817–1901), who was also a member of the second wave of national revival, but he also belonged heavily to the third Štúr phase. Dobriansky even proposed a plan for the creation of a form of state formation of Czechs, Moravians, Slovaks and Ruthenians, more than eighty years before the creation of the first Czechoslovak Republic in 1918. More in the documentary: *Adolf Dobriansky – Visionary of Slavic unity*, published on March 19, 2021 [online], available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=skv2_V88MA8

context of growing Magyarization and Germanization in 19th-century Central Europe under the Habsburg Monarchy. In his everyday practical life, Štefan Moyses uncompromisingly defended the basic national and cultural rights of Slavic peoples and did not hesitate to risk his social position (Group of Authors, 2020, p. 99).

The same was true of the second Vice-President of Matica slovenská, Karol Kuzmány (1806–1866), who was a part of the second wave of national revival, that is, the Generation of Paneslavia,^[4] represented by individuals such as Ján Kollár and Pavel Jozef Šafárik, and characterized by intensive contacts and cooperation within the wider Slavic space, including the Serbian cultural and intellectual milieu. In the Slovak historical context, we divide the national revival into three phases and it is certainly no coincidence that the period of the emergence of the first maticas coincided with the second wave, namely the Slovak branch of the Generation of Paneslavia (1820–1835).

In the words of the contemporary matica historian Michal Eliáš (1934–2018), the Slavic maticas rank among the most important national-cultural associations, not only in the context of European history. They emerged as the first national and cultural institutions with a range of tasks essential for the formation of national communities. Alongside the national principle, they also promoted a civic principle – they united national communities regardless of religious affiliation, political belief, or social status. Through their rich publishing and cultural activities, they made a significant contri-

bution to raising the cultural level of the people and to the development of science, literature, the arts, and education. They established national libraries, literary museums, galleries, and other institutions that foster national, European, and global culture. By developing cultural ties, they contributed to bringing peoples closer together and to maintaining national consciousness. In Europe, we do not know of other cultural associations that have endured for so long and had such a wide scope of activity as the Slavic maticas. For their multifaceted work, they deserve respect, prestige, and recognition not only within individual nations but also within Europe, the European Union, and the world as a whole (Eliáš, 2010, pp. 18–19). It may be added that the same applies to the continuous cooperation between Matica srpska and Matica slovenská, which, albeit with varying intensity, has lasted throughout the 19th and 20th centuries up to the present day. It can therefore be concluded that, at present, Serbian–Slovak matica relations are experiencing their next historical renaissance.

Contemporary and historical cooperation starting point

The relationships between the Slovak and Serbian cultural milieus have deep historical roots. It is a fact that collective historical memory is, in certain respects, relatively short, and that scholarly literature often emphasizes the 19th century as the period marking the beginning of intensive Slavic

[4] The term “Paneslavia” (Všeslavia) was first used by Ján Kollár in the poetic composition “The Daughter of Sláva” (“Slávy dcera”), and later in his work *Sermons (Kázně a Řeči)*.

28 | cooperation. However, significant exchanges in education, art, and literature can also be observed in the 18th and 19th centuries: many Serbs (and not only Serbs from Southern Europe) studied at Slovak universities and grammar schools, particularly in Bratislava, Košice, and Kežmarok. At the same time, prominent Slovaks, representatives of the Slovak national revival, such as Pavel Jozef Šafárik and Ján Kollár, along with the reformer of the Serbian language, Vuk Karadžić, drew on each other's knowledge through the collection and systematization of the rich treasury of folk creativity. These Slavic connections cannot be reduced solely to the 19th century, quite the contrary. Population movements, personal contacts, and shared linguistic and cultural influences point to continuity of ties reaching further into the past, shaping a Slavic cultural and social milieu long before the era of modern national revivals in the 19th century. If we take into account the well-known scope of cultural and educational exchanges among Slavic peoples, it seems highly unlikely that they originated only within the past two centuries. Despite the fact that systematic historical research has focused primarily on more recent history, the historical echoes of Slavic mutuality must be much older and more deeply rooted in the cultural consciousness of both peoples.

There are many more examples of historical connections and Slavic cooperation in earlier history,

but for reasons of scope, we will focus on only a few. The very existence of Samo's Empire (623–658) points to an attempt by West Slavic tribes to create the first precursor of a state formation of our ancestors, to free themselves from Avar domination, and at the same time to resist the Germanic pressure of the Frankish state in the 7th century. The Chronicle of Fredegar refers to this polity as Samo's Empire, which encompassed the Lusatian Serbs, Slavic tribes in the territory of Bohemia, as well as Moravian, Danubian, and Carantanian Slavs.^[5] The names of several important West Slavic leaders have been preserved in history, such as Dervan, Valuk, and the central ruler Samo. Although the chronicles remain silent about events following Samo's death, it is likely that supratribal structures persisted in various forms. In 833, Frankish chroniclers record the emergence of another political entity of the West Slavs, later known as Great Moravia. The unification of the principalities of Moravia and Nitra, belonging to the same Slavic tribe, indicates the continuous development of political and social structures that built upon Samo's Empire (Durec, Gešper, 2023, pp. 15). From Great Moravia emerged the mission of Constantine Cyril and Methodius, who laid the foundations of Slavic literacy, ecclesiastical and early state administration, schools of philosophy, legal education, and a Slavic understanding of Christianity, which later spread to the Eastern

[5] The Byzantine writer Jordanes, in his 6th-century work *The Origin and Deeds of the Goths* identifies three Slavic tribes – the Veneti, the Antes, and the Sclaveni. Here, the Sclaveni are understood as a distinct Slavic tribe. Later, primarily Western chroniclers referred to all of them collectively as Slavs. The original ethnonym of the Slavs is still preserved by the Slovaks (Slovensko) and the Slovenes (Slovenija). Jordanes also recorded that the Slavs, together with the Goths (a Germanic tribe), exerted strong pressure on the southeastern part of the Roman Empire in the region of the lower Danube as early as the 4th century AD.

and Southern Slavs of the time. It should also be noted that both Matica slovenská in Turčiansky Svätý Martin (1863) and Matica slovenská in Ljubljana (1863–1864) were founded on the occasion of the millennium of the arrival of Constantine Cyril and Methodius.

The aforementioned connections would require a much more thorough analysis. If we return and make a conceptual leap toward Slovak–Serbian relations in the modern era, an exceptionally important figure was the prominent Slavist and thinker Pavel Jozef Šafárik, who served as a kind of living bridge of Serbian–Slovak cooperation (Parenička, 2025, pp. 55). As principal and professor of the local Orthodox grammar school, he spent 14 productive years (1819–1833) in Novi Sad and nearby Sremski Karlovci, making a significant contribution to the development of Serbian cultural and scholarly life. At the same time, he inscribed himself into the history of Matica srpska, becoming one of its first honorary members already at the time of its founding. He also actively published his works in the oldest continuously published scholarly journal, the *Letopis Matice srpske* (*Matica Srpska Chronicle*). P. J. Šafárik thus represents an important link among Slovak, Moravian, Czech, Lusatian Serb, Slovenian, and Serbian national, cultural, and scholarly life, with an influence extending even into the 20th century, when many of his ideas were realized (such as the creation of the states of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia after World War I in 1918). It is precisely from the historical legacy of P. J. Šafárik that contemporary cooperation between Slovak and Serbian institutions emerges, grounded in mutual respect, scholarly exchange, and support for Slavic cultural identity.

Congresses of maticas and Slavic cooperation

An important pillar of the international cooperation of Matica slovenská is represented by the congresses of maticas and cultural institutions of Slavic nations. As such, they build upon the historical tradition of Slavic reciprocity and cultural cooperation among Slavic peoples. The first European Congress of the Maticas of Slavic Nations was held in 2007 in Martin, and its final memorandum established guidelines for the years to come: “We, the representatives of the maticas of Slavic nations, at our first European Congress held from March 26 to 28, 2007, in Martin (Slovakia): I. declare that we perceive Europe as a continent of equal cultures, languages, and national identities, as a common home of cooperating nations, in which the Slavs occupy an irreplaceable place. II. support and promote the humanistic, democratic, and Christian traditions of Europe, which form the foundation of the cultural, spiritual, and social development of our continent in the 21st century. III. agree with a new form of democratic cooperation among maticas and recommend to the executive authorities of our states that the historically established maticas become an integral part of state cultural policy in the coming decades. IV. call for cooperation with other organizations that accept and support Slavic reciprocity and the values of European belonging. V. express the will to meet at future European congresses of Slavic maticas, thereby preserving and developing our cultural heritage. VI. Recommend to the decision-making structures of the EU that they accept the integrative aspirations of other Slavic

nations to become full and valued members of an integrated Europe” (Eliáš, 2010, pp. 146).^[6]

The second European Congress of the Maticas of Slavic Nations was also held in Martin, from July 31 to August 3, 2013. The third European Congress of the Maticas of Slavic Nations was held on February 4, 2014, in Ljubljana and indirectly contributed to the adoption of new legislation guaranteeing more substantial state funding for the activities of Matica slovenská by the Slovenian authorities.^[7] These events have become an important platform for discussing the future of Slavic cultural institutions in a globalized world.

The fourth European Congress of the Maticas of Slavic Nations can be considered a significant turning point, which was held from June 4 to 6, 2019, in Martin. The congress was dedicated to important historical anniversaries – primarily the centenary of the restoration of Matica slovenská in 1919, as well as the commemoration of the Memorandum of the Slovak Nation of June 6–7, 1861 (Group of authors, 2020, pp. 101-102). The gathering brought together representatives of numerous Slavic cultural institutions, historians, Slavists, and cultural workers, and special mention should be made of the active participation of the Matica srpska delegation led by its president, Professor Dragan Stanić. It was precisely the Fourth Congress in Martin in 2019 that elevated the mutual interactions of

Slavic maticas to a new dimension and announced future congresses. As its core message, we also cite the still-relevant statement of representatives of Slavic scholarly, cultural, and social institutions: “We, the participants of the 4th Congress of Maticas and Institutions of Slavic Nations, held at the initiative of Matica slovenská on June 5 and 6, 2019, in Martin, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of its restoration, as legitimate representatives, have adopted the following statement: In the ongoing processes of globalization, liberalization, the rise of information, internet and cyber technologies and wars, of the post-industrial age and postmodernity, Slavic maticas and cultural institutions of Slavic nations must continue to promote and disseminate traditional conservative values, above all Christianity and patriotism. Particularly within the Slavic and European environment, we seek to preserve the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition, to support the establishment of pan-Slavic and national identity and historical consciousness, in which lies the essence and perspective of the Slavic civilisational mission. We develop this mission on the principles of the heritage of Saints Cyril and Methodius as patrons of Europe” (Group of authors, 2020, pp. 310).

On the occasion of the 160th anniversary of Matica slovenská, the Fifth Congress of Slavic Matica Institutions and Slavic Peoples was organised, which also marked the opening of the anniversary

[6] Representatives of 12 maticas from 8 European countries attended the congress. The congress addressed four main thematic areas: 1. Maticas of Slavic nations as a cultural, spiritual, and social phenomenon in Europe; 2. Slavdom and the Slavs in Europe at the threshold of the 21st century; 3. National integrity as a pillar of identity; 4. Cooperation among maticas in strengthening national and cultural identity. For more detail, see: Eliáš, 2010, pp. 140–148.

[7] Matica slovenská in Ljubljana, unlike Matica slovenská in Martin, is not a public-law institution but rather a citizens’ association.

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Marián Gešper and Nebojša Kuzmanović during an official visit to Matica slovenská in Serbia (Novi Sad)

Photo: Matica Slovenská

celebrations in Martin. It was held on 3 and 4 August 2023, with delegations from several Slavic countries, including Serbia, in attendance. Representatives of Matica srpska, along with other scholarly and cultural institutions, engaged in discussions on the possibilities for developing cultural cooperation, the preservation of Slavic cultural heritage, and the strengthening of national identities in the contemporary world. It was during these negotiations that contacts between Slovak and Serbian partners were significantly deepened, leading to the development of concrete research projects and publishing activities (Madura, 2023, p. 2).

Following this congress, several projects between Matica slovenská and Matica srpska developed fully, which was particularly evident in the field of Slovak–Serbian cultural cooperation. Building on the Fifth Congress, a delegation from

Matica Slovenská visited Serbia from 13 to 16 November 2023, led by President Marián Gešper. At the headquarters of Matica srpska in Novi Sad, the delegation was received by its President, Dragan Stanić. The discussions focused on the historical connections between the Slovak and Serbian national movements, the shared cultural heritage of Slavic peoples, and the legacy of Pavel Jozef Šafárik, as well as the *Letopis Matice srpske*, which in 2024 celebrated its 200th anniversary (Perný, Schvantner, Gešper, 2023, pp. 23–25). The delegation also deliberated on the development of cooperation between Slavic Matica institutions, the future organisation of the Congress of Slavic Matica Institutions, and joint scholarly and publishing projects. During their visit to the Association of Writers of Serbia in Belgrade, an agreement was reached to publish a special Slovak–Serbian issue of the literary

journal *Slovenské pohľady* (Slovak Views) in 2024. The journal will feature the literary and cultural work of Serbian authors, as well as Slovak authors residing in Serbia. This represented a significant step towards deepening cultural exchange between the Slovak and Serbian cultural milieus, while simultaneously highlighting the importance of the Slovak community living in Vojvodina and, more broadly, in Serbia.

A positive development has been the shortening of intervals between the congresses of Slavic Matica institutions. This was largely due to joint projects, professional exchanges, and visits, which generated new scholarly topics for future sessions. Another milestone in Slavic Matica cultural exchange – particularly Slovak–Serbian cooperation – was the Sixth Congress of Slavic Matica Institutions, held on 11 and 12 September 2025 in Martin, as part of the international academic conference *The Second Wave of National Revival*. The event was dedicated to the legacy of prominent figures in the Slavic cultural sphere, notably Pavel Jozef Šafárik and Jan Kollár (Seman, 2025, pp. 5–7).

The conference was held on the occasion of the 230th anniversary of the birth of Pavel Jozef Šafárik and was organised under the patronage of Matica slovenská in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic. During these days, Martin became a centre of Slavic scholarly and cultural cooperation. Delegations from Matica institutions, research institutes, and universities from several countries participated in the congress and conference. In addition to Slovakia, representatives came from the Czech Republic, Serbia, Slovenia, Montenegro, Hungary, Bulgaria, Austria, and Germany. The

Serbian side was primarily represented by members of Matica srpska from Novi Sad, researchers from the Archive of Vojvodina, and representatives of Matica slovenská in Serbia, based in Bački Petrovac. The academic programme of the conference was devoted to reflecting on the figures of the second wave of national revival, including, alongside Pavel Jozef Šafárik and Jan Kollár, Samuel Tomášik, Martin Hamuľjak, Karol Kuzmány, and Adolf Dobriansky.

Particular attention was paid to Serbian figures who acted as a bridge to Slovak personalities and supported their work. In the nineteenth century, in the territory of present-day Vojvodina – which at the time was a Serbian region within Hungary – such figures included, above all: Stefan Stratimirović, the Serbian Metropolitan in Karlovci, who supported Slavic scholarly activities; Georgije Magarašević, a writer and editor of the *Letopis Matice srpske*, in whose work Pavel Jozef Šafárik also participated; and Lukijan Mušicki, an important poet and church dignitary, with whom Šafárik collaborated directly, including with representatives of Matica srpska in Novi Sad. In Serbia itself, Šafárik's key partner was Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, linguist, collector of folklore, and reformer of the Serbian language, with whom he developed an intensive scholarly collaboration (Parenička, 2025, pp. 26–28).

The discussions were consistently focused on the importance of developing Slavic reciprocity, national cultures, and Slavic studies in Central Europe. The outcomes of the most recent conference are to be published in a bilingual Slovak–Serbian scholarly volume, being prepared by Matica slovenská in collaboration with Matica srpska and the Archive of Vojvodina. This project represents yet

another tangible expression of the intensive scholarly cooperation between Slovak and Serbian cultural institutions.

Matica Slovenská's Support for Vojvodina Slovaks and Cooperation with Matica Slovenská in Serbia

The cooperation between Slovak and Serbian institutions holds profound significance for the Slovak national minority in Vojvodina, which represents one of the oldest Slovak communities in the diaspora. Matica Slovenská is committed to long-term support for the cultural life of Slovaks from the so-called "Lower Land" (Dolná zem), the preservation of the Slovak language, and the presentation of authentic historical heritage. Joint projects with archives, scientific institutions, and cultural organizations in Serbia facilitate thorough research into the history of the Slovak community, the protection of historical documents, and their presentation to the general public. A significant portion of these activities is carried out by Matica Slovenská in Serbia, headquartered in Bački Petrovac, which is one of the oldest and most prominent cultural organizations of Vojvodina Slovaks. This organization stems from the same cultural roots as Matica Slovenská and, as such, currently serves as a guardian of the cultural identity of Slovaks in Serbia. A delegation from Matica Slovenská participated in the Slovak National Festivities

(Slovenské národné slávnosti) in Bački Petrovac from August 8 to 10, 2025, where they were received by the President of Matica Slovenská in Serbia, Juraj Červenák. The meeting reaffirmed the traditionally excellent ties between the Slovaks of Vojvodina and the national headquarters in Martin.^[8]

Symbolically, the excellent relations and mutual respect toward Matica Slovenská in Serbia and the Slovak community in Serbia were reaffirmed by the ceremonial unveiling of a bust of Janko Bulík, the first president of Matica Slovenská in Yugoslavia. A bust was dedicated to this prominent Slovak – born in Kovačica, a dedicated Matica official, jurist, and anti-fascist executed by the German Nazis – within the Alley of National Figures at the Matica Slovenská complex in Martin. This act served as a poignant reminder of the historical ties between Slovaks in Slovakia and those residing in Serbia. The ceremony was attended by a Serbian delegation led by the President of Matica Srpska, Dragan Stanić; the President of Matica Slovenská in Serbia, Juraj Červenák; and the Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia to Slovakia, Aleksandar Nakić.

| 33

Two visits as part of cooperation with Archive of Vojvodina in 2025

The development of cooperation between the two Matica institutions was marked by two visits in 2025. A delegation from the Matica slovenská, led by its

[8] Matica slovenská Information Centre: The delegation of Matica slovenská participated in the Slovak National Festivities and visited Matica slovenská in Bački Petrovac. Published August 15, 2025. [online] Available at: <https://matica.sk/prve-oficialne-stretnutie-matice-slovenskej-s-novym-vedenim-matice-slovenskej-v-srpsku-bolo-vedene-v-konstruktivnom-a-pragmatickom-duch>

President, Marián Gešper, visited Serbia from 10 to 14 February 2025. They were received by the Director of the Archive of Vojvodina, Nebojša Kuzmanović, PhD. The visit aimed to deepen collaboration in the fields of historical research, the preservation of archival materials, and the study of the cultural heritage of the Slovak community in Vojvodina. The Archive of Vojvodina is one of the most significant archival institutions in Serbia, managing extensive collections of documents concerning the history of Vojvodina and the Slovak minority in the region. As a result of the discussions, a cooperation protocol was signed, providing a framework for joint historical and archival research, the publication of scholarly works, the organisation of conferences and professional seminars, the digitisation of archival materials, and the exchange of specialists and researchers. During their working visit, the delegation from the Matica slovenská held a number of important meetings with representatives of Slovak and Serbian cultural scene. The delegation visited the Archive of Yugoslavia in Belgrade, as well as the Pavol Jozef Šafárik Slovak Cultural Centre in Novi Sad. Members of the Matica slovenská also visited the town of Kisač, where they were welcomed by photographer, publicist, and member of the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, Pavel Surovi. The programme continued with a visit to the Karlovci Theological Seminary of Saint Arsenije in Sremski Karlovci, where the delegation was received by the Rector, Jovan Milanović. An important component of the programme was a working meeting at the headquarters of the Matica srpska in Novi Sad, where

discussions were held with its President, Dragan Stanić. Simultaneously, the delegation engaged in negotiations with representatives of the Slovak community in Vojvodina, including the then-President of the Matica slovenská in Serbia, Branislav Kulik^[9].

A significant event in the development of Slovak–Serbian relations was also the participation of a Slovak delegation in the Tesla Global Forum 2025, held from 28 to 31 August 2025 in Novi Sad and other cities in Vojvodina. The event brought together 28 members of Matica slovenská from Slovakia, led by its President, Marián Gešper. The delegation included members of the Young Matica from Lučenec, Sečovce, Košice, and the municipality of Humenné, as well as members of the folklore ensemble Hemlon, headed by Miroslav Kerekanič, a member of the Board of Matica slovenská. The programme encompassed a visit to the headquarters of Matica srpska in Novi Sad, a professional programme at Radio Television of Vojvodina, meetings with the Slovak and Rusyn editorial offices of this institution, expert lectures dedicated to the legacy of Nikola Tesla, and a visit to the Archive of Vojvodina. The delegation was accompanied by the Slovak writer from Vojvodina, Martin Prebužila (Seman, 2025, p. 19).

Participation of Matica slovenská in Matica srpska anniversary event

A significant moment in mutual relations was the recent participation of a delegation of Matica slovenská in the ceremonial celebration marking the

[9] Matica slovenská Information Centre: Deepening the unique international cooperation of Matica slovenská with the Archives of Vojvodina and Slovak compatriots. In: *Slavic Horizon*, vol. 5, no. 1–2/2025, pp. 15–16.

200th anniversary of the founding of Matica srpska in Novi Sad, held on 16 and 17 February 2026. This anniversary served as a reminder of the importance of the oldest Slavic Matica, while simultaneously affirming the deep cultural ties between the Slovak and Serbian peoples. The meeting of representatives of the two Matica institutions created opportunities for further professional dialogue, joint projects, and the development of cooperation in the fields of publishing, history, and linguistics. A particularly important outcome of the negotiations was the handover of the responsibility for organising the Congress of Slavic Matica institutions to Matica srpska. Matica slovenská will support this initiative through contacts and other forms of cooperation, with the aim of holding the congress in Novi Sad in the autumn of this year. The event will be organised to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the founding of the first Slavic Matica – Matica srpska in 1826.

Past and future of Serb-Slovak brotherhood

The mutual cooperation between Matica slovenská, Matica srpska, and the Archive of Vojvodina represents a unique example of Slavic cultural solidarity and scholarly collaboration. Its aim is not only the preservation of historical heritage, but also the creation of new research projects that contribute to a better understanding of shared history, as well as cultural and political ties. At the same time, it constitutes an important cornerstone of joint efforts and historical partnership between the sister states – the Slovak Republic and the Republic of

Serbia. As in the past, so too today, Slovaks and Serbs must actively cooperate and seek pathways for their development in these highly turbulent and seemingly challenging times, not only in Europe but also on a global scale.

Developments have shown that we must not abandon the importance of such a heritage; on the contrary, we must strengthen Slovak–Serbian fraternity in the fields of culture, science, and politics, particularly in these complex times. This also constitutes the foundation of our cultural development and the preservation of our numerically small, yet proud, Slavic and European nations. We are obliged to follow the shining example of our forebears – from the earliest Slavic periods, through the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, and up to the present day.

Matica institutions, as historical national establishments, continue in the twenty-first century to fulfil their fundamental mission in a distinctive manner – the preservation of collective historical memory and cultural heritage, the strengthening of national consciousness, and the formation of future, new, and progressive generations of national elites essential for our European survival. It may therefore be confidently asserted that, even in an era of globalisation processes and civilisational upheavals, the Matica institutions remain one of the pillars of national culture and Slavic reciprocity.

The cooperation between Slovak and Serbian cultural institutions thus represents not only a continuation of historical tradition but also a significant contribution to European cultural heritage and the wider Slavic world, which is founded upon respect for national identity and cultural diversity.

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