

## Language and Religion of Serbs in Arad County (Romania) in the 21st century Summary

According to data from the 2011 Romanian census, the relationship between Serbian ethnicity and linguistic identity is not the same in all regions of Romania. Specifically, in the southern and central parts of the Banat region, the number of declared ethnic Serbs and speakers of Serbian language is approximately the same (in some villages the number of speakers is even larger). According to the results of some contemporary anthropological field research among Serbs in the central and southern parts of the Romanian Banat (Pavlović 2012, Djuric Milovanovic 2012), Serbian language is most highly valued in the construction of Serbian identity (in some neighborhoods there is a significant number of neoprotestant Serbs, as well). In Arad county, however, the data from the 2011 census show a different picture: the number of declared Serbs is significantly higher than the number of speakers of Serbian language (in Arad, the ratio is 425/328; in the villages, the situation is as follows: Pecica 43/27, Felnac 162/88, Secusigiu/Satu Mare 153/133). Team field research carried out by the Institute for Balkan Studies of SASA in December 2013 and June 2014 indicate that among the Serbs in the Arad County the Serbian language is practically no longer transmitted to younger generations, but the Serbian identity is further kept with the help of the Serbian Orthodox Church and youth folklore associations. In Arad Gai (part of the city of Arad) the year 2014 witnessed the start of privately organized and run additional classes of Serbian language, in the form of heritage language, for children and young people (official teaching in Serbian language in Arad Gai ceased in 1962).

The paper analyzes the beliefs and attitudes of Serb interlocutors as regards the causes of the reduction of the number of Serbs and the Serbian language in the Arad county, which can partly be applied to the current condition of the Serbian and other minorities in Romania in general (i.e., migration from rural to urban areas, birth rate decrease, mixed marriages, etc.).