



Our compatriots living abroad are one of the great potentials that the state has not recognized in the right way so far, which is why a different approach is needed to the issue of how to strengthen our diaspora and use the good will of people who are potential lobbyists for the interests of Serbia and the Serbian people, Foreign Minister Nikola Selakovic said.

"When it comes to Serbs in the diaspora, and especially in the region, this issue has been a kind of an unattended crop which requires a lot of work, and even when a lot is done at once this is not apparent immediately ", Minister Selakovic stated in an interview with Tanjug.

He emphasized that the appointment of the Director of the Office for Cooperation with the Diaspora and Serbs in the Region for the first time after almost seven years since this body was formed within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, shows that it is one of the priorities of the Ministry he is at the helm of.

Selaković notes that intensive efforts have been long underway on forming a plan to make the diaspora more visible both outside the borders of Serbia and in the mother country itself.

"Every person in the diaspora is a potential lobbyist for the interests of our country and people, and we need to find the right way to use that", he said.

That much can be done in that regard Selakovic illustrates with the fact that only in Switzerland, in 24 cities, there are Serbian cultural and artistic associations which amounts to more than 3,000 young people who get together in order to preserve our tradition, culture, the Serbian language and history.

"If they were able to set up such associations in 24 cities, it speaks volumes about the enthusiasm of these people. There is so much enthusiasm, energy and love in these people. We need to explore ways to help them and use their good will and potential", the Minister points out.

He also cites the example of an emigrant family in Canada, the Varaklic family from

southwestern Serbia, who sends Christmas packages for children in the Raska region every year. He adds that they have so far donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to non-governmental organizations for those needs alone, but he says that we do not see that here.

"The state does not recognize this, and these are people who gained success as entrepreneurs working in a distant country, who can be serious lobbyists for Serbia, for Serbian interests, someone who represents us in the best possible way", Minister Selakovic said.

Minister Selakovic also pointed out that Arnaud Gouillon has been appointed as head of the Office for Cooperation with the Diaspora and Serbs in the Region and described him as a man of extraordinary energy, great love for the Serbian people, which he showed in his engagement towards Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija, where they were seriously endangered.

"By doing so, he showed and set an example to many of our compatriots of what an individual can do. And when one such individual focuses energy, enthusiasm and love for people, on work done within the state administration system, I think that the preconditions have been created for such activities to yield good results", Minister Selakovic said.

Source: Tanjug