

MESTO KOJE VOLIŠ DANAS SAČUVAJ ZA SUTRA

PRESS RELEASE

Banca Intesa presents the winners of The Place I Love contest

Citizens selected three places for reconstruction

Belgrade, December 2 – The winners of Banca Intesa's project of reconstruction of Serbia's cultural and historical heritage, entitled The Place I Love, are the following: the former National Library in Kosančićev venac in Belgrade, Belgrade's Gate in Petrovaradin and the Town Walls in Novi Pazar. In 2012, Banca Intesa is going to invest at least 30 million dinars in the reconstruction of these three localities, which stand out as places with special sentimental value for the citizens of Serbia.

Former National Library in Kosančićev venac in Belgrade

The National Library, founded in 1832, had a collection of around 300,000 books, 1,390 manuscripts, charters and other records, over 100 of them on parchment, which dated back to the 12th, 13th and 14th century and later periods. The Library had also collections of Turkish manuscripts, books printed between the 15th and 17th century, old maps, pictures, newspapers, collections of all books printed in Serbia since 1832, as well as books printed in neighbouring countries, fully libraries of Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, Đura Daničić and others. Before the bombing at the beginning of World War Two, on April 1,

1941, everything was ready for evacuation of the library, but the Ministry of Education prohibited the evacuation of educational and cultural institutions in Belgrade on April 3, ordering the relocation of all valuable things into the cellar, which was done. The building of the Library was hit by bombs on April 6, at 4 PM. Everything in it is considered burnt.

Belgrade's Gate in Petrovaradin

Petrovaradin was built between 1692 and 1780 on the hill by the Danube, as a fortification facility. It is composed of the Upper and Lower Town. The Upper Town is a fortress, surrounded by high walls with steep and serpentine parts, whereas the Lower Town is a small settlement with narrow streets and buildings with small yards. It is protected by ditches and walls. Belgrade's Gate is one of the most monumental preserved facilities in the suburbs. The arch gate is built in classical style, in the shape and proportions of two different facades – an outer one, which is 20 m long, and an inner one of 40 m, both 10 m high. The entrance facade has six profiled columns, two windows decorated with iron and the coat of arms of Novi Sad. The other facade has three oval and two rectangle passages, with eight columns. The gate is 20 m deep; it includes four built-in guardhouses and two entrances to side rooms. There are two vehicular and two pedestrian passages on both sides.

Town Walls in Novi Pazar

The Fortress of Novi Pazar is located in the heart of the town, on the right bank of the Raška River, within the town park. The Turkish fortification was built by one of the most famous Ottoman generals, İshakoğlu İsa Bey, in the 15th century, during the establishment of a new town on the crossroad of caravan routes connecting Bosnia, Dubrovnik and the Southern Adriatic Region with Constantinople and Thessaloniki – Novi Pazar.

The triangle-shaped foundation of the fortress was built based on the remnants of the walls, bastion and half-filled trenches, and it consists of three corner bastions, towers, polygonal foundation of various dimensions. After the Turkish defeat by Vienna (1683) and the Austrian breakthrough to Skopje (1689), the Turkish authorities started upgrading and embedding the former facility. Its reconstruction was continued until 1750. During the rule of Sultan Abdul Azis (1861-1876), two new towers, a weapon and ammunition storage, a smaller mosque and a new garrison were built. The relatively well-preserved tower known under the name Old Watchtower (Stara izvidnica or Kula motrilja) is located by the northern wall.

Banca Intesa launched the CSR project The Place I Love in May 2011, with the support of the Ministry of Culture, non-profit organisation Europa Nostra Serbia and the Republic Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments, in order to contribute to the protection of cultural and historical heritage of Serbia. Aiming to create a unique base of places dear to citizens, reconstruct three localities which win the most votes in the associated contest, as well as to raise the awareness of the general public about the importance of preservation of the country's cultural and historical heritage, The Place I Love project is being

implemented in three stages: stage of nomination, stage of voting and stage of reconstruction.

An expert commission, composed of Vera Pavlović Lončarski, Head of the Republic Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments and chairwomen of the commission, Irina Subotić, Head of Europe Nostra Serbia, Gorčin Stojanović, theatre, film and tv director, Vladimir Arsenijević, writer, translator and editor, and Maja Kolar, Head of Marketing and Communication at Banca Intesa, was tasked with selecting ten finalists out of the total of 1290 propositions sent to the address of Banca Intesa during the first stage of the project. In the period between October 10 and November 30, which was the stage of voting, citizens had an opportunity to increase the chances of their favourite for reconstruction by voting at the dedicated website www.mestokojevolim.rs, via the bank's call centre and by especially designed cards at Banca Intesa branches across the country.

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