



Connecting Lives, Sharing Cultures

# Welcome to Serbia

*a country of turbulent history, diverse  
heritage and warm and hospitable people*

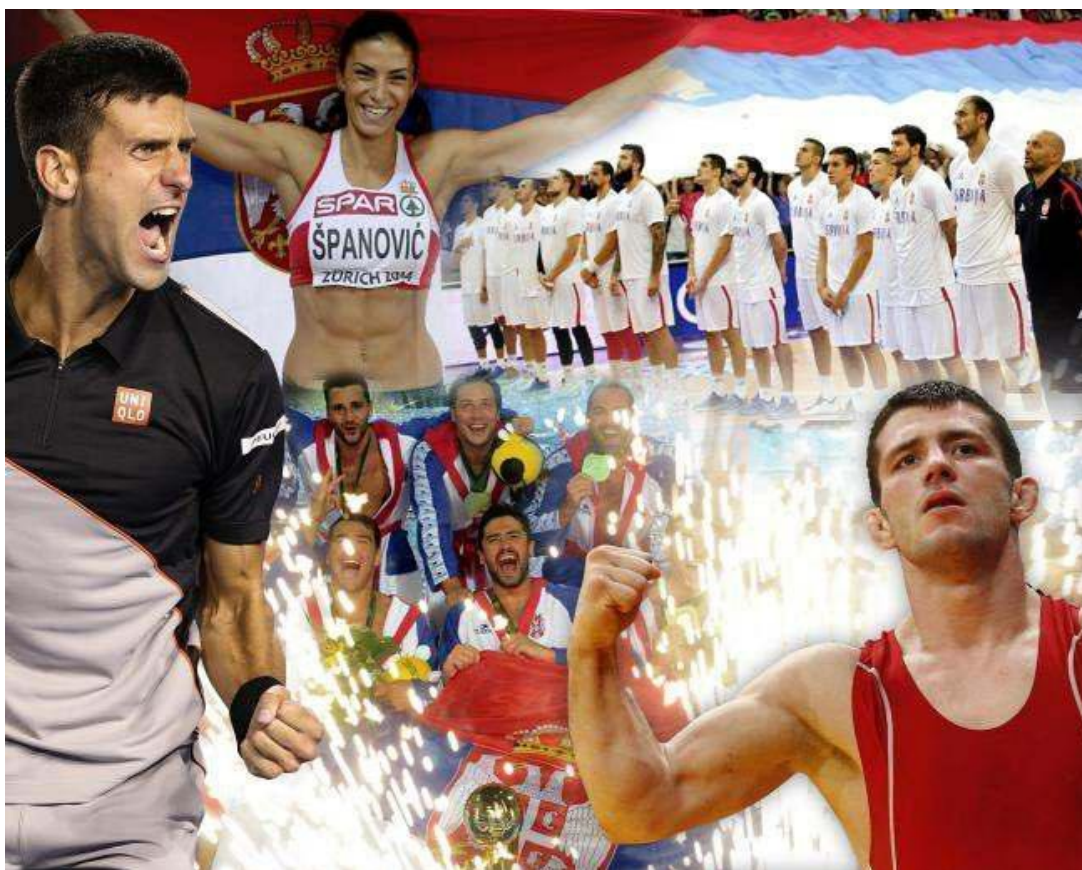
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## Did you know that...

- ✓ Two different New Years are celebrated in Serbia?
- ✓ No fewer than 16 Roman emperors were born in the land that is now Serbia. In 2013, the world celebrated 1700 years of the Edict of Milan – a document which granted religious freedom throughout the Roman Empire. Its co-author, Roman Emperor Constantine, was born in Naisus, today's Serbian city of Niš.
- ✓ In proportion to the population, Serbia has the highest number of top-sportsmen and sportswomen!
- ✓ Vojvodina, Serbia's northern province, is the region with the largest number of ethnic groups in Europe – as many as 26 – and six official languages.
- ✓ Serbia is the largest raspberry exporter, accounting for one-third of all the raspberries in the world. Close to 95 percent of the world's top quality raspberries come from Serbia.



## About Serbia

### General information

Serbia is a land-locked country located on the Balkan Peninsula in Europe. The north of the country is flat, while the central and southern parts are hilly or mountainous. The majority of the people are Serbs and the official language is Serbian. The country's capital is Belgrade.



### Population

Serbia has a population of approximately 8 million, 1.2 million of whom live in Belgrade. The eastern part of the country is the least densely populated region. The majority of the population is Serbian, and other ethnic groups represented in the country are Hungarian, Albanian, Romanian, Slovak, Croatian, Roma and others.

### Language



The official language is Serbian, which is a Slavic language. Though the traditional Serbian alphabet is the Cyrillic, the Latin is also in use. The alphabet has 30 letters and is phonetic, which means that each letter represents one sound. A dictionary will be essential for you during the year. Excellent English-Serbian, French-Serbian, German-Serbian, or Russian-Serbian dictionaries can be bought at reasonable prices, as well as a number of others.

### Religion

Most Serbs are Orthodox Christians and the religion has always played an important role in maintaining the Serbian identity, especially during the five centuries of Ottoman occupation (between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries). There is also a significant Muslim community, mainly in the southwestern part of Serbia called Sandžak, as well as small Catholic, Protestant and Jewish communities.

## Geography and climate



Serbia takes up the northern part of the Balkan Peninsula and the southern part of the Panonian Plain. It is bordered by Hungary to the north, Romania and Bulgaria to the east, Macedonia to the south, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro to the West and Albania to the southwest. Serbia's capital is Belgrade, which is also the largest city with a population of approximately 1.7 million. Other major cities and towns are Novi Sad, Niš,

Kragujevac, and Subotica. The north of Serbia is very flat, the central part of the country called Šumadija is hilly, while there are some high mountains in the south, the most popular being Kopaonik known for its ski resorts. The country abounds in rivers, and the longest European river Danube flows through Serbia, linking it to both Central Europe and the Black Sea. Over a quarter of the territory is covered by forests, while national parks take up 10%.

The climate is continental with cold winters and hot humid summers, though it has been affected by the global climate change. Average summer temperatures in July and August are around 32°C, though they may exceed 40°C, while the usual winter temperatures range between 5°C and -5°C, or colder in the mountains. It rains in spring and autumn and summer showers are quite common.

## Government

Serbia is a democracy with three branches of government: the executive - the president and the cabinet of ministers headed by the prime minister, usually referred to as the 'Government', the legislative – the unicameral parliament called the National Assembly and the judiciary – the Supreme Court.

## Economy

Serbia's economy is based on agriculture, metal processing and mining. A developing branch of economy is tourism, especially eco tourism.

## History

The first human settlements on the territory of the present-day Serbia date back from Neolithic times, around 6<sup>th</sup> millennium BC. Celts inhabited Serbia prior to the Roman conquest in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. Today's Serbs are the descendants of the South Slavs who settled the Western Balkans between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries AD.

The Medieval Serbian state of Raška, founded in the 7th century, evolved into the Serbian Kingdom and later the Serbian Empire under the House of Nemanjić, reaching its peak in the 14th century. Serbia was defeated by the Ottoman Empire in the Battle of Kosovo in 1389



and did not regain its full independence until 1878. From 1815 to 1903 the country was ruled by the House of Obrenović and from 1903 until the end of World War II by the House of Karadjordjević.

After the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria in Sarajevo (Bosnia-Herzegovina) in 1914, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, leading to the outbreak of World War I. Serbia was a major Balkan Entente Power which contributed significantly to the Allied victory in the Balkans in 1918. After the liberation, Serbia was united with lands that used to be part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, later to be re-named the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia was occupied by Nazi Germany after devastating bombing of Belgrade and other cities in April 1941. During and after World War II, communists supported by the Soviet Union and headed by Josip Broz Tito,

took over the power and ruled until 1991, when a war broke out starting the disintegration of Yugoslavia, which ended with the NATO bombing in 1999. The regime of Slobodan Milošević was overthrown in 2000 and Serbia got its democratic government.



In February 2008, the Parliament of Kosovo, Serbia's southern province with an ethnic Albanian majority, declared independence. The response from the international community has been mixed. Serbia regards Kosovo as its autonomous province governed by the United Nations.

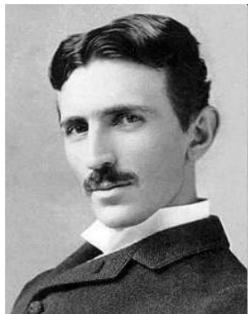
## Culture

Thanks to its eventful history, Serbia has a variety of cultural and architectural monuments – medieval monasteries with their fresco paintings and icons, beautiful mosques, medieval and Austro-Hungarian fortresses, baroque churches. Serbia has a very rich folklore, which consists of national traditions and customs, traditional costumes which differ from one region to another, folk dances and songs. The traditional folk dance is called kolo.

Serbia also has a thriving modern art scene. In addition to internationally renowned theatre festival BITEF music festival BEMUS and film festival FEST, Serbia now hosts EXIT, voted best music festival in the world in 2006. Many foreigners agree that Europe's best nightlife can be found in buzzing Belgrade. Literature has played an important role in Serbian culture and Serbian writer Ivo Andrić won the Nobel Prize in literature.

Though an average Serb is not very athletic and would rather watch sports on TV than take part in them, Serbian athletes are among the best in the world. Group sports such as basketball, football, volleyball, handball and water polo play an important part in sporting life and tennis has become increasingly popular over the past few years.

These are some of the famous Serbs:



*Nikola Tesla,  
engineer and inventor*



*Stevan Stojanovic Mokranjac  
composer*



*Ivo Andric,  
writer and Nobel Prize winner*



*Emir Kusturica,  
film director*



*Novak Djokovic,  
world's no. 1  
tennis player*

## Everyday life in Serbia

The family is very important, and by 'family' Serbs often mean also the grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins. An average family usually consists of the parents and two children, though there are



many single-parent families, but the patriarchal tradition has left its traces so it is also common to see three generations living under one roof in perfect harmony. Many children remain living with their parents until marriage, but it is also the custom to take care of the parents when they get old. For many people it is unthinkable to put parents

in the old people's home.

Usually both parents work and their working hours may be from 8a.m.–4p.m., or 9a.m.–5p.m. or even longer. Even though men and women are equal, most housework is done by women, while

men are in charge of house repairs, car maintenance and other 'rough' tasks. Children are expected to keep their room tidy and help with the house chores. They may be expected to vacuum the home or part of it, take out the rubbish, lay the table or do grocery shopping.

## Be part of your family

AFS students to Serbia must be prepared to live under conditions different from those at home. Some host families may not have all modern facilities such as air-conditioning or microwave ovens and the level of material comfort may be lower than in the more developed countries. Your Serbian family will be like any other family. They will have times of joy, times of conflict and times of just being together. Use your eyes and ears to see how things are done in your Serbian family. Be open and honest and ask your family to be honest with you. They may hesitate because they are afraid to hurt your feelings, but it is important that you cross the barrier and talk honestly together.



## Family rules

Serbian families usually have 'unwritten' or 'unspoken' rules and regulations. They have lived together all their lives and everyone knows what is expected. This may be difficult for an exchange student. It may be understood that children take turns in vacuuming their room once a week or going to buy bread and milk in the morning. They will not be aware that you are not familiar with these internal rules that they take for granted, so keep asking or you will never know what you are expected to do. Offer to do something even when you are not asked, your host family will appreciate it.



## Responsible planning

Always tell your family in advance of your plans and don't say 'yes' to a friend before checking with the parents. Your host family will want to know what you are doing and where you are. This will make them feel you are part of their life and they are part of yours. Whenever you make plans, it is advisable to tell your family what you will do if the plan falls through. This means you need to make alternative plans before you leave the house.

## Brothers and sisters

Most Serbian teenagers are extremely friendly and outgoing. They may have one or two very good friends, but generally hang out in large groups and new people are welcome to join, so it should not be difficult for you to meet people and make friends. Your host brothers and sisters will probably be very proud of having you and introducing you to all their friends, but they may also be a bit jealous because you are taking away a bit of the attention they have been used to. The best way to overcome



this is to show interest in what they do and to include them in your activities. Many students expect their host brother or sister to be their best friend, but this does not always happen. After all, many natural brothers and sisters do not share the same interests or friends, so be prepared to make your friends and pursue your interests without depending on

your host brother or sister.

## Clothes

Teenagers dress casually and most people wear jeans, T-shirts, sweat shirts and trainers. There are no school uniforms, so you can wear the same things to school, as long as they are decent – no strap/strapless top or bare stomachs. It is enough to bring one or two nice outfits for special occasions. Cotton clothing is suggested for the summer, but you will also need jumpers, warm socks water-proof boots, gloves, hats and a warm coat or jacket for the winter.

## Hygiene

Hot water is expensive and Serbs usually shower once a day, so ask what is an appropriate time to take a bath or a shower. After bathing, you are expected to clean the bath and mop the water on the floor. In most homes mother takes care of the laundry and other family members may be expected to do their own ironing. Don't forget to ask what is expected of you.

## Food

Typical diet includes meat (chicken, pork, beef, veal or lamb), all kinds of vegetables (which Serbian teenagers often do not appreciate) and fruit. Dairy products are also important, especially natural yoghurt, farm cheese and kajmak – the cream skimmed from boiled milk. Serbs eat a lot of bread.



Breakfast includes bread, butter, jam or honey, cheese, kajmak and ham, but at weekends it may also include cheese

pies, corn cakes or goodies from the bakery. Grown-ups drink strong black Turkish coffee, while teenagers usually have milk, cocoa or coffee with milk.

Lunch has traditionally been the main hot meal. This is changing however, due to the fact that both parents work and the family gets to eat together at midday only on week-ends. Many traditional dishes combine meat and vegetables cooked together, while a typical Sunday lunch, often taken with grandparents or other relatives, will consist of a soup, meat, vegetables, salads and a dessert. Serbs don't eat much fish and if they do it is more likely to be fresh-water fish than sea fish.

Supper is often eaten rather late, 8 p.m. or later. It may be a cold meal – sandwiches, salads, cold cuts, or a simple hot meal such as a pie, pizza or pasta.

Eating Serbian food is part of your experience, so make an effort to taste everything. Don't put more food on your plate than you can eat – Serbs don't like to throw food away. It is better to take less the first time and ask for a second helping. Most mothers and grandmothers feel it is their duty to make sure everyone eats enough, so don't be surprised if they keep offering and stacking food on your plate even after you have had enough. They don't take 'no' for an answer so easily!

## Family holidays

Most Serbs are Orthodox Christians but do not go to church regularly. Most families celebrate Christmas, New Year, Easter and Slava – the family's patron saint's day. The Serbian Orthodox Church uses the traditional Julian calendar, instead of the Gregorian calendar used by the state (and the rest of the world). Christmas is on 25<sup>th</sup> December, but 25<sup>th</sup> December in Julian calendar is 7<sup>th</sup> January in Gregorian calendar. As they have two calendars, the official state calendar and the church calendar, Serbs celebrate two New Years – one on 1<sup>st</sup> January and the other on 14<sup>th</sup> January!

## School

Most Serbian schools are state schools. Primary education lasts 8 years and is divided into two stages. High schools may last three or four years. There are three types of high school: vocational – where students learn how to do simple jobs, professional – the students who complete it can either get a job in their respective fields (nursing, accounting, technical etc.) or go on to university or college, and academic – which prepare students for university and offer general subjects such



as languages, mathematics, sciences, social studies. Most exchange students will be placed in the academic schools, and some may be placed in professional high schools, depending on their interests and the availabilities in the host town.

Average class size in high schools is 28–32 students. There are no compulsory and elective subjects, so all the students in one class have all their lessons together. The only choice they can make is between religion and civic education. Each class has their ‘class teacher’ who is in charge of the class. Many schools work in two shifts – from 8 am to 2 pm and from 2 pm to 8 pm – and students change shifts weekly or monthly. Serbian schools are a bit old fashioned – the teachers lecture, the students listen and take notes. In many classes there is



very little interaction between the teacher and the students. Students are tested both orally and by written tests.

There are not many foreigners in Serbian schools, so your classmates will want to get to know you and to help you. You may find the first days confusing but with the help of your classmates you will soon find your way around.

## Phone, mobile phone and the internet

It is not recommended that you talk to your family at home more frequently than once a month, in order not to interfere with your cultural adaptation process in Serbia. When you communicate with your home country, you should use tools such as Skype, Viber, Facebook and other online applications instead of the host family’s landline.

All Serbian teenagers have mobile phones and they communicate a lot with text messages and apps. It is a good idea to get a Serbian SIM card. Ask your family to help you buy it. Be aware of the costs of calling from your mobile phone or receiving calls on it from abroad.

One of the key problems with chatting on the internet is the false feeling of company, when in fact you are sitting alone in front of the computer. Our advice is to limit your online communication with your home country and to interact with people around you instead.

## Money

Currency used in Serbia is Dinar (RSD). Money is exchanged in exchange offices and banks which can be found everywhere, and which accept Euro and US Dollar. You can also get Dinars from an ATM from your account with a bank card. We recommend that you bring some money in cash when you arrive, but that most of it you keep on your bank account (so your parents can top it up), and you withdraw smaller amounts when you need it. Serbia is not an expensive country compared to other countries in Europe, but we believe that a reasonable amount a teenager may spend in a month is up to 100 EUR, which would cover costs such as snacks, cinema tickets, cell phone bills, membership fees for sports clubs, or basic clothes purchases. Most shops accept cards, but some do not. This is why you always need to have at least 500 RSD in cash with you (which is around 5 EUR), so you can pay for a bus/taxi fare or buy a meal.

## Transportation

Public transportation in Serbia is easily accessible and people mostly use busses to go work and school, or sometimes trams or trolley busses in cities. Each town has its ticket system and there are usually monthly tickets for students. AFS covers the cost of transportation to school for students, by either reimbursing the students when they send AFS the used tickets or by paying the money to the account of the bus company each month.



When travelling between towns, people use busses and trains. Train tickets are cheaper, but trains are much

slower and often late, so people generally prefer busses. Tickets can be bought either at stations or on busses, but please note that in most cases it is not possible to pay by card and that you need to pay in cash.

Students will also travel to AFS events by public busses, and their costs will be reimbursed when they send AFS office the used tickets.

## Punctuality

You must be punctual for school and other formal occasions and events that start at a certain time, such as theatre or cinema. Serbs are rather laid back and punctuality does not mean a whole lot to them so when meeting or visiting friends it is okay to be reasonably late. Likewise, don't be surprised if your friends are fifteen minutes late.

## Attitudes

**Appreciation** – AFS host families in Serbia, like host families worldwide, are not paid. They open their homes to AFSers to share their culture and to enrich their family life. It will mean a



lot to them if you show your appreciation. Show them that you are grateful – not by buying them expensive gifts – smile, say a lot of thank you's, lend a helping hand, show enthusiasm and interest. Appreciation is necessary to build lasting bonds.

Accepting differences – Many things are different without being better or worse. You need to see things from another viewpoint if you want to understand a different culture. Your exchange year is all about differences.

**Openness** – You are in Serbia to learn. Open your eyes and your ears and keep asking questions. Do not hesitate to ask advice from your host family and friends and don't be afraid of being corrected. Encourage them to correct you when you make mistakes. If you feel uneasy about something, talk to your host family and friends. They won't realise it unless you tell them.

**Humour** – Laughter is international means of communication. This includes laughing at yourself. Being able to laugh at your own shortcomings or mistakes is a characteristic of a balanced person. A good laugh will give you the strength to overcome a difficulty, to correct a mistake and it is a lot more fun than getting upset.

Of course, these attitudes do not apply only to Serbia or only to AFSers, they are important everywhere. They will help you connect to other people, no matter what country you are in.

## AFS in Serbia

AFS has existed in Serbia for almost 10 years now, and during that time over a hundred students have participated in our programmes. Our office is in Belgrade, and there are 14 other chapters where students can be placed. Our staff and volunteers are looking forward to meeting you and helping you have an unforgettable intercultural experience during your time in Serbia.



## AFS rules

Before going on an exchange, all AFS students sign a participation agreement in which they promise to follow certain rules of behaviour. In order for you to have a successful and enjoyable AFS experience, it is very important that you follow the AFS rules. It is strictly forbidden to:

1. be in contact with illegal drugs
2. drive (a car or any other vehicle requiring a license)
3. hitchhike
4. get drunk
5. get pregnant
6. skip school
7. travel without permission

## 8. break the law of the country.

If you break these rules, AFS can no longer take responsibility for you. Your programme will be terminated and you will be sent back to your home country.

## Communication with the AFS office and volunteers

As an exchange student you will have an assigned contact of an AFS volunteer whom you will meet during the year and whom you can talk to about any issues. Very often this contact person is a teacher from school, and sometimes it is a former participant of the programme. You will also have the contact of the AFS office which is at your disposal if you have questions, need advice or permission for some activities.

Please contact AFS staff by email or by phone in case of an emergency:

- ✓ Dunja Zivanovic at [dunja.zivanovic@afs.org](mailto:dunja.zivanovic@afs.org), or +381659844702,
- ✓ Ivana Pavlovic at [ivana.pavlovic@afs.org](mailto:ivana.pavlovic@afs.org), or +381659844700
- ✓ Aleksandra Radic at [aleksandra.radic@afs.org](mailto:aleksandra.radic@afs.org), or +381659844701.

During the year you and your host family will receive all information and timetables of AFS activities by email, so please check your email regularly and reply to all messages you receive from AFS office.

## AFS orientations and trips

During the year AFS Serbia organizes a lot of activities for exchange students, which will give you an opportunity to travel around Serbia and get to know the country better, learn more, have fun, make new friends, and spend some time with other exchange students and AFS volunteers talking about your experience.

There are three mandatory AFS orientations that each student attends: the first one immediately when you arrive and before you go to the host family, the second one in winter after the first semester, and the third one in June, before you go back home. These are always 3-day events, taking place in a hostel. They consist of a lot of educational and social activities for AFS students. In addition to orientations, during the year, there will be a lot of AFS weekends and trips, so you will travel to



other towns where you will stay with a host family, visit another school where some AFS activities will be organized for you, and go sightseeing. Finally, during spring there will be a mini-exchange organized for you. You will travel to another town and another host family and school and stay there for a week. While AFS orientations are mandatory, this is an optional activity. Information about all these activities will be sent to you via email by AFS office and volunteers.

## Independent travel

Exchange students in Serbia are allowed to travel within Serbia with their host family and to AFS-organized trips. You are not allowed to travel alone or with friends without special permission. AFS Serbia does not allow independent trips in the first four months of the programme. If you want to go on an independent trip later during the year, you need to inform the host family and contact AFS Serbia office two weeks before the date of the planned trip. AFS Serbia office will contact AFS office in the your home country, who will obtain a signed written consent from the your parents. You are not allowed to travel without this authorization.



## Safety tips

A primary objective of experiential learning programs such as those offered by AFS is to help the participant learn through observation, question, dialogue, discussion and experience. From experience, AFS staff and volunteers understand that the opportunity to learn is great, but it is not necessarily easy. You may encounter complex situations along the way and there is potential for confusion, fear and misunderstanding. If students are left to their own devices, the consequences could be very distressing. For these reasons, with the help of host families, local community AFS contacts and school personnel, AFS has devised the system of program support for all participants providing a wide range of supportive activities and services. The purpose is to provide a safety net – a consistently supportive environment, in which you can ask the questions, obtain advice and help. AFS cannot supply all the possible answers, but through our support systems, we can help to guide participants towards asking appropriate questions.

Serbia is generally a very safe country. There is no big difference between boys and girls when it comes to safety. But like any other country, you should of course be cautious and there might be areas you should avoid.

In general, you should try to avoid being alone in train and bus stations late at night. If walking alone at night you should try to walk in streets which are well lit and have other people walking in them.

When walking in crowded areas you should take care of your valuables. Public transportation in Serbia is perfectly safe to use. You should make sure you know that regular bus lines stop running from midnight to 4 AM if you are planning to return late at night. It is illegal in Serbia for civilians to carry weapons.

It is not possible to try to anticipate all possible situations pertaining to individual safety concerns. AFS recommends talking with the host family, AFS locally and staff from the host school soon after the student arrives into the host family home about any questions you may have about specific personal issues. You should ask your host family about specific situations about which you are concerned or worried. For example: *Do they lock doors and windows? All the time? Will you receive a house key? Who can you call if you arrive home without a key or there is no one in the house? Your neighbours? Which ones? What should you do in the event of a fire? What does your family advise about answering the door when you are home alone?* Most families in Serbia lock their doors before leaving home and at nights (although many leave the bedroom window open during the night).

## Laws, narcotics, alcohol abuse:

All participants are forbidden to use illegal drugs and substances. Explicit violations of this rule are cause for dismissal from the program and immediate return to the home country.

Similarly, abuse of alcoholic beverages can be a cause for dismissal from the program.

In general, knowing the culture is usually the best preparation for knowing how to handle uncomfortable social situations. It is also a good idea that your host parents meet your

friends and know with whom you spend your spare time. If you are invited to go to a party or other events such as a rock concert or football game and are not sure if it is safe to go, you should find out in advance where it is being held, who will be there, etc. Usually your host siblings, parents, friends or teachers at school can give information about such events and the people expected to attend. Some host parents may also forbid students to attend certain kinds of events. Students must respect the parents' advice, even if others are going.

In Serbia the legal drinking age is 18. This doesn't disallow drinking under this age, it just prohibits selling alcohol to people under 18 in restaurants or stores. So, though it's quite common that you find people under 18 drinking, remember to ask your host family about their attitude towards drinking.

Secondly, alcohol is not sold after 22:00 and its purchase after this time is illegal.

You must also pay attention to the fact that drinking habits vary from one family to another.

Participants and their natural parents are fully responsible for damages caused by the participants to third parties and any cost involved in connection with such claims. AFS does not assume any legal liability for the participants, e.g. if a student hits a car when riding a bicycle.

AFS students are subject to the law of their hosting country. Neither AFS nor the national government of the student's home country has the ability to protect the student from punishment with respect to narcotics, thefts or other legal offences.

## Driving

As an AFS student you are not permitted to drive. In Serbia a person must be 18 years old to get a driver's license. An AFS student must not be a passenger in any motor vehicle with a younger driver or someone without a license or with someone who has consumed alcohol. If you find yourself in such a situation, you should contact the police, your host family or someone from AFS. They will tell you what to do. Remember that hitch-hiking is forbidden!

## Sexual harassment

Cultures differ in their views of appropriate sexual behavior and practices by young people. Often clarification of attitudes may be necessary and here, again the advice of people you have come to know and trust is very valuable. Knowledge about the people you socialize with is important, and this is best acquired through increased knowledge of the culture. Equally important are your own values and beliefs regarding your behavior. You should of course not compromise your own personal values and beliefs regarding sexual behavior.

You may be unsure in some situations if you are being sexually harassed or if a particular person's behavior would be considered normally friendly. An important source is your own instinct. Also often your host siblings/parents and friends will be able to advise you about normal behavior of people you do not know. Other resources to which you can turn for advice or help are teachers at school, and the AFS contacts within your community or at the national office.

Sexual harassment can happen in any country and Serbia is no different. Females especially can be subject to harassment. If a car with strangers pulls up beside you, do not talk to them or get in. Also, do not wear provocative clothing.

In the event of an actual assault, the student should first notify the host parent. Then the family can take over and notify the police, AFS and arrange for a medical check-up.

## Emergencies

The role of the military or police authorities varies from country to country. Each country is different. In most countries adolescent boys are more likely than girls to find themselves being questioned by the police or other civil authority officer. AFS advises that you show respect and co-operation with authorities, even though you may be innocent of any crime and think that you are being treated unfairly.

In such a situation, it is unlikely that you understand what is said by the authority figure. In general, the best advice would be to say that you do not understand what is happening and identify yourself as an exchange student.

In the case of an emergency you should try to call your host family, the local contact person or the AFS national office.

Emergency numbers:

- ✓ 192 Police
- ✓ 194 Ambulance

The best general advice AFS can give regarding issues of personal safety are:

- ✓ Get to know the host culture well through questions, dialogue and discussion with your host family, peers and the AFS local contacts.
- ✓ Take seriously any concerns that your host family and school express and follow their advice.
- ✓ As stated in the participation agreement document you signed prior to leaving your home country, the national AFS office will make recommendations and give guidelines for physical welfare and security. Take this advice seriously and comply with these guidelines.

**We wish you a wonderful experience with AFS in Serbia!**