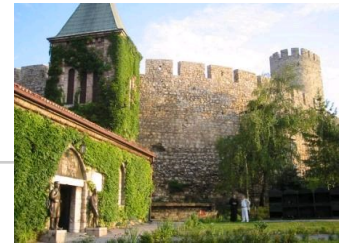




# Serbia



Republic of Serbia / Република Србија

## Country Overview:

*Location: Southeastern Europe, between Macedonia and Hungary*

*Size: 77,474 sq km*

*Population: 7,243,007 (July 2013 est.)*

*Capital: Belgrade*

*Exports-commodities: iron and steel, rubber, clothes, wheat, fruit and vegetables, non-ferrous metals, electric appliances, metal products, weapons and ammunition*

*Imports-commodities: petroleum, transportation equipment, coal*

*Currency: Serbian Dinar (RSD)*

*Ethnic groups: Serb 82.9%, Hungarian 3.9%, Romany (Gypsy) 1.4%, Yugoslavs 1.1%, Bosniaks 1.8%, Montenegrin 0.9%, other 8%*

*Religion: Serbian Orthodox 85%, Catholic 5.5%, Protestant 1.1%, Muslim 3.2%*

*Government type: republic*

*Chief of State: President Tomislav NIKOLIC (since 31 May 2012)*

*Head of Government: Prime Minister Ivica DACIC (since 28 July 2012)*

*Language: Serbian 88.3% (official), Hungarian 3.8%*



## Meetings and Negotiations

- Men shake hands when greeting one another and maintain direct eye contact. A relatively **firm handshake** is encouraged.
- Two women will generally meet with a light handshake, but a kiss on the cheek is very common if they know each other.

- Learning simple words in Serbian is very flattering and impressive. **“Dobar Dan”** is hello and is commonly used in formal situations.

- Business cards are very common and are handed out without formal ritual.

- Building a **relationship is very important**, and it is therefore usually done before negotiations take place.

### Business Attire

- After suffering from years of economic sanctions, it is common to see outfits and styles that are

somewhat outdated.

- Suits for both men and women are generally more conservative with dark or neutral colors.

- As in most Eastern European countries, having flashy clothing that flaunts wealth is **frowned upon** and considered tacky.

- Strong colognes and perfumes are quite common.

## Behavior

- Much cultural sensitivity and knowledge of history is needed as many Serbs have been taught to blame Western countries for their recent misfortune and poverty.

- Coffee (specifically Turkish) is taken very commonly during breaks at work and during the day, and it is usually the time for light chatter and bonding.

- It is not uncommon for Serbs to drink shots of strong liquor before lunch or throughout different periods of the day.

## Business Tips Continued

### Conversation

- It is very common and polite to ask about family and health.

- Avoiding eye contact is considered **disrespectful**.

- Drinking and smoking are common place in almost every social setting, regardless of age or gender.

- Usually, personal space isn't highly regarded. People often hug and tap each other on the shoulder or touch lightly while conversing.

- It is common to hear people speaking in **loud** voices. This usually does not signify anger, people just tend to be very expressive.

- Punctuality is a desirable trait, especially in business settings.

- When dealing with groups in most social situations, it is considered extremely **rude** to not meet or greet every individual in the group.

- It is considered **impolite** to point at someone with a finger.

## Gift Giving

- Gifts are generally opened when received.

- Serbs have a long tradition of warm hospitality, and gift giving is common when visiting someone for the first time.

### Appropriate Gifts:

- Various office supplies or gadgets with the company logo. It is common to give chocolates and high quality liquor. A local specialty would also be appreciated.

### Gifts to Avoid:

- Anything that flaunts an American flag or American patriotism, as Westernization is a taboo and sensitive topic in Serbia.

**Topics to Discuss:** Sports, especially the country's recent success is tennis and water polo. Serbs like asking about cultural differences in lifestyles and systems.

**Topics to Avoid:** Kosovo, the wars in the Balkans, or the Milosevic regime. It is also suggested to avoid discussing politics or US Foreign policy until a closer relationship is established.



