

Abstract

The paper "External influences on Bulgarian Muslims" describes what affects the belief of Pomaks (Bulgarian-speaking Muslims) and Bulgarian Turks; first, the assimilation campaigns during the 20th century, second, the new foreign policy of Turkey and third, the work of charity organizations connected with Saudi Arabia. The objective of this paper is to explain, why the Pomaks lean towards a fundamentalist form of Islam – Wahhabism – in some towns and villages. In order to do that the text describes bulgarization campaigns aimed at the Pomaks and Turks and introduces both of these ethnic groups that together form 13 % of the Bulgarian population. The paper then describes the Turkish influence in the Balkans, especially the work of the Turkish Presidency of Religious Affairs (the so called *Diyanet*). The second foreign influence that is described in this text are the activities of Saudi Arabian organizations which are explained at large, including the connection of some of these organizations with terrorists and the ways in which they try to spread the fundamentalist Islam. These three influences are shortly compared. Based on this comparison the text concludes that the Pomaks accept Wahhabism, because they face long term questioning of their ethnic identity and because the political situation in Bulgaria after the fall of the Iron curtain has exposed them to the Saudi influence much more than the Bulgarian Turks, who, on the contrary, could cling to Turkey.