

# European tree with history

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*In the “European Tree of the Year 2020” competition there is once again a participant from Bulgaria this year. The centuries-old oak in Novo Selo, Veliko Tarnovo Municipality, is Bulgaria’s nomination for the “European Tree of the Year 2020” competition, which has been held for 10 years. Voting will take place from 1 February to 29 February 2020. The results will be announced at the award ceremony for the winners of the competition, which will be held in Brussels on 17 March 2020.*

### **The centuries-old oak – memory and symbol in the village of Novo Selo near Veliko Tarnovo – Bulgaria’s nomination in the “European Tree of the Year 2020” competition**

The centuries-old tree, a storyteller, is one of the oldest participants in the European competition. At the end of 2019 the oak from Novo Selo won the national competition “Tree with Roots 2019”, organized by the “EcoCommunity” Foundation.

The five-hundred-year-old oak in the centre of the village is the silent witness to the building of the new settlement on the slopes of the Balkan Range, where there once was a dense oak forest and marshes. The history of Novo Selo is preserved under its bark; the last of the settlements was established in 1750. On the occasion of the celebration of the 260th anniversary of its founding, in 2010 the residents planted a small oak next to the old tree, with the idea that, while the old one is still alive and remembers, it will pass on the history of Novo Selo to the young sapling. Ah, if only the oak could speak...

The earliest written documents in which the name of the village – Novasel – is mentioned are the list of the voynugans from the Tarnovo villages from 1548 and the register of those liable for capitation tax from 1618, preserved in the Oriental Department of the “Cyril and Methodius” National Library. Around 1840, the first school was opened in a private house, where Father Matey Preobrazhenski (Mitkaloto) – one of the closest associates of the Apostle Vasil Levski – taught for a time, and in 1870, on his initiative, the “Nauka” (“Science”) community cultural centre (chitalishte) was founded.

### **“European Tree of the Year” competition**

The aim of the competition is to draw attention to interesting old trees as a significant natural and cultural asset that we must value and protect. Unlike other competitions, for the “European Tree of the Year” beauty, size, or age are not important, but rather the story and the connection with people. The search is for trees that have become part of the community. The organizers believe that the issue of protecting trees as bearers of the local spirit needs to become the subject of an international debate. Each year, voting for the European Tree of the

Year prompts 200,000 people to reflect on their attitude towards nature, and 16 trees with a history become the focus of public attention and care.

The “European Tree of the Year” competition was first organized in 2011 as a continuation of the popular “Tree of the Year” competition, which has been held in the Czech Republic by the “Partnership” Foundation for many years. The European competition is the final round of the contest, in which the winners of the national competitions participate.

## **Voting**

Electronic voting continues until midnight on 29 February, and the winner will be announced at an official ceremony in Brussels on 17 March 2020. The competition involves 15 trees from 16 different countries. During the last week (from 23 to 29 February) the voting will be hidden and the results will not be visible on the web pages. ***To avoid a national bias, participants in the vote must choose two entries – in addition to their native tree, they may also cast their vote for another tree of their choice.***

Bulgaria is participating for the fifth time with the centuries-old oak in Novo Selo in the “European Tree of the Year 2020”. In 2014 the Old Elm in Sliven became the winner in the competition.

You can vote for the “European Tree of the Year 2020” **HERE**