

HDIM WS 8: National minorities

Mr, Moderator,

While fully aligning with the EU statement, I would like to share, on my national capacity, best practice in the implementation of the OSCE commitments in connection to National minorities' education.

The Law on Education in Lithuania provides that 'schools of general and non-formal education shall provide learners belonging to national minorities with opportunities to foster their national, ethnical and linguistic identity, to learn their native language, history and culture.'

Additionally, the Law on Education stipulates, that each municipality must have an optimal network of providers of primary, basic, secondary and non-formal education programmes for children and adults in the state language, and in areas traditionally inhabited by substantial numbers of persons belonging to a national minority, the **municipality shall guarantee the teaching in the national minority language** or of the national minority language, if the community so requests.

Last week you had the possibility to hear on-sided interpretation on the partial bilingual education applied by Lithuania. Therefore let me briefly present the actual situation in this regard based on facts. Partial bilingual education applied by Lithuania **corresponds to Recommendation 1740 of the Council of the European Union** (The place of the mother tongue in school education), which emphasises both the significance of learning a national language and the state language of a country as well as the significance of bilingual education stating that bilingual education based on mother tongue is the basis for long-term

success.

The consolidation of the Lithuanian language provides everyone learning in a national minority secondary school with an opportunity to learn their native language and the Lithuanian language equally. **The consolidation of the Lithuanian language is not carried out at the expense of native language lessons;** the number of lessons for learning the native Polish, Russian, Belarussian language has remained unchanged. In total, the contents of the **curriculum should be taught in the state language are less than 20 per cent.** The rest of the lessons may be taught in a national minority language.

Currently, 7.6 percent of students study in schools in their native languages. Children learning in national minority languages receive **20 per cent more funds** for learning than those who learn in Lithuanian. The preparation for introducing **one common Lithuanian language Matura examination** for all Lithuanian secondary school graduates irrespective of the language of instruction/schooling of a school was carried out over ten years. Unified Lithuanian language and literature Matura examination will be applied throughout the **eight-year transition period.**

And last but not least, for your information just plain statistics- Matura exam results in 2014: 88.09 per cent of the total number of the graduates who took the examination, passed it. Of these, 88.4 per cent had studied at schools where the language of instruction/schooling was Lithuanian and 83.7 per cent were graduates from schools where the language of instruction/schooling was that of a national minority.

I thank you, Mr. Moderator.