



**Statement by the Delegation of Hungary at the  
OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting  
Warsaw, 29 September 2014**

*Working Session 10: Rights of persons belonging to national minorities, including address by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities*

Hungary fully aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. In addition to that, we wish to underline the followings:

All national minorities strive to pass their language and culture on to future generations. However, due to their situation they have limited possibilities to pass on their culture and language in its entirety. Education is the most important for cultural reproduction and identity formation and thus an invaluable means for the maintenance and respect of one's identity.

While legally binding instruments at universal and regional level, i.e. the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities confirm the basic minimum for the protection of national minorities, other documents of the OSCE and the Council of Europe may present higher standards of protection. As indicated in the explanatory memorandum to the recently adopted Resolution on the situation and rights of national minorities in Europe integration policies may lead to forced assimilation and to giving up one's own specific identity. Therefore it is vital to distinguish between integration, which is a solution, and forced assimilation, which could mean breaching human rights and triggering a security threat. National minorities need to preserve their culture and language by maintaining (or re-establishing) and running the institutions developed during centuries.

Mother tongue education is considered a best practice in language maintenance. However, protecting and promoting the right to and right in education in a minority language is often a difficulty encountered by national minorities. We share the view expressed in The Hague Recommendations that the first years of education are of pivotal importance in a child's development. When a child is capable of expressing him/herself in his/her mother tongue as a native speaker, it is the right time to acquire the language of the majority properly, which is indispensable to be competitive. If integration policies are pushed too far in education, the



result is assimilation and the disappearance of the minority language as a distinct culture. Teaching of the minority language to persons who are not members of the minority can also be a useful tool in improving understanding between the majority and the minorities.

We do agree that the education should provide for opportunities to learn official language(s), however, education policies should be formulated in line with the needs of national minorities to preserve their language and states should promote the official use of languages spoken by national minorities.

In the lights of these consideration we invite the High Commissioner to take into account in her work the resolutions and recommendations of the Council of Europe as well. We invite the High Commissioner to follow closely the future developments of educational rights of national minorities and we also deem particularly important to encourage national authorities to guarantee mother-tongue instruction at all levels (pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary level).