



ÁLLANDÓ MAGYAR EBESZ KÉPVISELET
PERMANENT MISSION OF HUNGARY TO THE OSCE

Statement by Ambassador György Molnár,
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“20 years of the OSCE Copenhagen Document: Status and future perspectives”

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Mr. Moderator,

At the outset let me express our gratitude to the Kazakh Chairmanship and Denmark for organising and hosting this Conference. This anniversary gives us an opportunity not only to celebrate, but to review our achievements and to take a good look at our responsibilities for the future.

Mr. Moderator,

In 1990, right after the democratic changes in Hungary, the newly appointed Foreign Minister Géza Jeszenszky made a statement at the Copenhagen Conference. He emphasized the new Government's commitment to the respect for and the implementation of the CSCE principles and obligations and assured that the new institutions will be based on democratic values and the rule of law. Twenty years later I am pleased to say that Hungary has stable, well functioning democratic institutions, a fact that has been most recently acknowledged by ODIHR on the occasion of our parliamentary elections.

Turning to the Copenhagen Document in which the CSCE – uniquely among international organisations – compiled a comprehensive list of minority standards. The participating States recognized that “the questions relating to national minorities can only be satisfactorily resolved in a democratic political framework based on the rule of law, with a functioning independent judiciary.” They also acknowledged the important role of political parties, trade unions, human rights organizations, religious groups and other NGO's in the resolution of questions relating to national minorities.

These principles have not lost their importance. Quite the contrary. We agree that effective participation of national minorities in public and political life is an essential component of a fully democratic, peaceful and prosperous society as stated in the Lund Recommendations of the OSCE High Commissioner of National Minorities. Participating States should pursue two equally important objectives: facilitate the inclusion of minorities within the State, and at the same time enable minorities to maintain their own identity and characteristics, for example through the use of the minority language.

Hungary fully shares the view of High Commissioner Vollebaek expressed at the 2nd session of the UN Forum on Minority Issues last November that „the more inclusive a system is, the more representative it is. The closer we bring the decision-making to those affected by involving them, the better the policies and laws we make and the more likely they are to be accepted. This is not only a question of implementing international standards, but also of good governance.”

These international guiding principles are also reflected in the Hungarian Constitution which provides that "laws [...] shall ensure representation of the national and ethnic minorities living within the country". I would like to inform you that the newly elected Hungarian Parliament at its first session adopted with a great majority an amendment to the Hungarian Constitution, concerning the parliamentary representation of minorities, that provides 13 parliamentary seats for the representatives of national and ethnic minorities in the next, then 213 seat parliament. We consider this as a major development in the protection and promotion of minority rights in Hungary.

However, the Constitution is not the only legislative guarantee. The Hungarian Minority Act as well as institutions that provide for an effective participation of national minorities in public and political life also serve the same purpose. Hungary remains committed to these values and goals.