



Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia to the OSCE and other International Organizations in Vienna

Statement made by the Delegation of the Republic of Serbia

Working session 8: Tolerance and non-discrimination I (continued), including rights of persons belonging to national minorities, and preventing aggressive nationalism, racism and chauvinism
2018 OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
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The Republic of Serbia is deeply committed to protecting and continuously improving the rights of national minorities. The Republic of Serbia fulfills the obligations in the field of human and minority rights that arise from the ratified international and regional agreements, and accepts the findings of the bodies responsible for monitoring the implementation of these agreements as a basis for undertaking further measures and activities. This is evidenced by the determination of the Republic of Serbia to prepare a special Action Plan for the Realization of the Rights of National Minorities, adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia in 2016.

The preparation of this important strategic document was made in cooperation with representatives of national councils of national minorities and civil society organizations. The objective of the Government of the Republic of Serbia during the preparation of the Action Plan was to establish concrete measures and activities, as well as funding that will ensure the full implementation of the applicable laws, and thus the promotion of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

The Action Plan consists of 11 chapters that covers all areas in which national minorities exercise their rights and these are:

- Personal Status Position
- Prohibition of Discrimination
- Culture and Media
- Freedom of Religion
- Use of Languages and Scripts
- Education
- Democratic Participation
- Appropriate representation of persons belonging to national minorities in the public sector and public enterprises
- National councils of national minorities
- Economic status of persons belonging to minority communities
- International cooperation.

The realization of the rights of national minorities is monitored through reporting on the activities envisaged in this action plan. The Office for Human and Minority Rights prepares quarterly reports based on documents received from more than 80 stakeholders, including ministries and other competent authorities, national councils of national minorities, local self-government institutions, higher education institutions, regulatory bodies, etc.

During 2017, 76 multiethnic local self-government units and 53 councils for inter-ethnic relations were included in the reporting.

So far, eight reports on the implementation of the Action Plan have been prepared, which indicate that more than 70% of the activities envisaged by the Action Plan are continuously implemented, more than 20% is partially realized, and less than 10% of the activities have not yet been realized. The reports are publicly presented and are available, with all accompanying documentation, on the website of the Office for Human and Minority Rights.

In order to achieve full inclusiveness of national minorities in the process of monitoring and full coordination of the work of state bodies, monitoring of the implementation of the Action Plan has been entrusted to the Council for National Minorities, the working body of the Government comprised of line ministers, competent state bodies and presidents of all national councils of national minorities, and headed by the Prime Minister. The fact that the Prime Minister is presiding over this body shows the readiness of our state to lead the dialogue on the minority policy at the highest level.

The Council for National Minorities meets regularly and the sessions include, *inter alia*, the presentation of reports on the implementation of the Action Plan for the Realization of the Rights of National Minorities and submission of comments of national minority councils on these reports.