

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting  
WORKING SESSION 17

Tolerance and non-discrimination II, including address by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, rights of persons belonging to national minorities and preventing aggressive, nationalism, racism and chauvinism.

As delivered by

Mr. Davit Knyazyan, Deputy Head of the Permanent Delegation of Armenia to the OSCE

Mr. Moderator,

We would like to welcome Mrs. Astrid Thors, High Commissioner on National Minorities and thank her for the comprehensive and thought provoking report.

We fully share the view of Mrs Thors that the institution of High Commissioner on National Minorities plays an important role in promoting dialogue, confidence and cooperation.

National minorities are values not only for themselves, but also for the participating States. Ensuring full protection of rights of national minorities through implementation of relevant international commitments is key to prevention of their stigmatization and exclusion from political, economic, social and cultural life, which may lead to rise of aggressive nationalism.

We would like to highlight some of the measures undertaken by the Government of Armenia in the field of promotion of rights of national minorities.

In recent years extensive measures have been undertaken within the framework of preservation and development of education and culture of national minorities, in particular, considerable financial assistance has been provided for development of media in native languages of national minorities. Currently 12 such newspapers and magazines are published.

Program for development of education of the national minorities and its time-frame were elaborated, pursuant to which every year textbooks are published to ensure the study of the language, literature and culture of the national minorities of Armenia, including Assyrian, Kurdish and Yezidi people. These activities are coordinated by the Ministry of Science and Education for the purpose of assisting the educational needs of the Yezidis, Kurds and Assyrians, as well as conducting expert examination of curricula, textbooks and manuals in the relevant languages.

The National Institute of Education of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia regularly conducts trainings for Yezidi teachers, as well as Armenian language courses for the representatives of the national minorities.

In 2013 legislative reforms were conducted with the aim to enhance the role and capacities of local self-government bodies and development of participatory community institutions through closer cooperation with representatives of national minorities.

Since 2012, the budget allocated to the national minorities by the Government of the Republic of Armenia has doubled. The additional finances are distributed as grants for the best educational and cultural programmes of national minorities.

Thank You.