



REPUBLIKA E SHQIPËRIË

MINISTRIA PËR EVROPËN DHE PUNËT E JASHTME

ALBANIAN MINISTRY FOR EUROPE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
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Working session 10: Tolerance and non-discrimination I, including rights of persons belonging to national minorities, Roma and Sinti issues, including implementation of the OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti, preventing aggressive nationalism, racism and chauvinism

Madam Moderator,

Albania aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

Albania is committed to fulfill the international obligations for the respect and protection of human rights and minorities, in accordance with international obligations. Albania has ratified several conventions on human rights, as well the Framework Convention of Council of Europe "for the Protection of National Minorities".

Albania has a positive balance related the protection of minorities and a climate of respect and tolerance prevails in Albania. Albanian institutions are committed to fulfill the international obligations for the respect and protection of minorities, and to enhance the implementation of the recommendations of monitoring bodies.

The Constitution and domestic legal framework guarantee the rights of persons belonging to minorities, the right to declare their ethnicity, to maintain and develop their national identity, the right of education in mother tongue, their culture, religion, their fundamental freedoms and rights.

In the framework of EU integration process, one of the main objective is the adoption of a comprehensive legal framework on minorities, taking into account the recommendations of international organizations. Road Map on 5 priorities of the European Commission, foresees as objective "the improvement of the legislation and policies for the protection of minorities, following a broad consultation process and taking into account the recommendations of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe".

In this context, Albanian institutions during 2016-2017 worked on the preparation of a specific law on minorities, based on European standards, best European practices, international expertise, and taking into account the specific conditions and needs of Albania. The process of preparation of the draft law on minorities was supported by the international expertise of the Council of Europe.

A broad consultation process took place, by involving central institutions, local self-government units, independent institutions, minorities' associations, civil society and international organizations. Albanian authorities consider the broad consultation on the improvement of the legislation and implementation of institutional measures of a great importance, through the involvement of relevant and independent institutions, minorities' associations, civil society and international organizations.

With regard to the consultation process in relation to the draft law, were organized during 2016 round-tables consultations, with experts, academics, and representatives of minorities associations. A Final National Conference is took place in October 2016, with participation

of all stakeholders, and representatives of the international organizations.

This law aims at ensuring the exercising of specific human rights of persons belonging to a national minority which are necessary to protect the distinct identity of national minorities as an essential component of an integrated society and which guarantee nondiscrimination and full equality before the law.

This comprehensive law on minorities will improve the current domestic legislation, in order to guarantee and ensure the implementation of their rights in practice. In addition to the improvement of the legal framework, Albanian institutions envisage to draft and adopt secondary legislation, in order to ensure the implementation in practice.

On 12 April 2017 Albanian government adopted the draft law on minorities, and according to domestic legislation in order to enter into force, it will be adopted by the Albanian Parliament.

Thank you for your attention.