



Hungary

**Statement by the Delegation of Hungary at the  
OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting  
Warsaw, 01 October 2015**

*Working Session 17: Tolerance and non-discrimination II – Rights of persons belonging to  
national minorities*

In addition to the statement made earlier on behalf of the European Union, with which we fully align ourselves, let me make the following points:

International standards agreed by the OSCE participating States encompass a commitment to create a pluralistic society in which minority groups do not just exist, but form a full part of the identity of the State. The identities, cultures, languages and religions of minority groups are frequently reduced to being second class when compared to majority. In the 1990 Copenhagen Document States have committed themselves not only to protect the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of national minorities on their territory but also to create conditions for the promotion of that identity. According to the Hungarian Fundamental Law minorities living in Hungary shall be constituent parts of the State. Every Hungarian citizen belonging to a minority shall have the right to freely express and preserve his or her identity. Minorities living in Hungary shall have the right to use their mother tongue, to use names in their own languages individually and collectively, to nurture their own cultures, and to receive education in their mother tongues.

Hungary would like to emphasize that the concept of tolerance, dialogue and mutual respect is predicated on equality and non-discrimination. It is therefore essential to guarantee to national minorities the right of equality before the law and of equal protection of the law. In this respect, any discrimination based on belonging to a national minority shall be strictly prohibited. Hungarian national minorities living abroad continue to report discrimination: they are not permitted to use their mother tongue in the courts and in administrative proceedings, many municipalities do not use bilingual signs, there were obstructions and bans against the use of their national symbols and restrictions concerning the freedom of assembly. The mere legal possibility of imposing fines in relation to the use of minority languages is not compatible with international obligations undertaken by the States. As regards the use of a state language, a policy of incentives should be given preference over the punitive approach, as pointed out by the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. It is of great importance to introduce activities on raising awareness and increasing tolerance in terms of minority languages and cultures minorities represent.

Another recurring issue in recent years is hate crime and hate speech. Many States have adopted provisions that explicitly provide that the racist motivation of an offence constitutes

an aggravating factor. However, the inadequacy of the authorities' reaction to these events was widely reported. It is highly important that the criminal justice system adequately addresses hate crimes by preventing, exhaustively investigating and prosecuting acts of violence targeting persons belonging to national minorities.

Finally, we would like to point out that tolerance should not only mean not suppressing or persecuting minorities: it should entail also the full acceptance and promoting their ambitions aimed at preserving their identity. Diversity becomes an issue when minorities claim recognition for their position in society, demand a more equal say in affairs of the State or in managing their own affairs. In this regard we would like to recall the Lund Recommendations of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, according to which drawing on the principle of subsidiarity, States should favourably consider territorial devolution of powers, including specific functions of self-government, particularly where it would improve the opportunities of minorities to exercise authority over matters affecting them.

Thank you for your attention.