

Permanent Mission of Slovenia

Thank you very much madam President.

It is a pleasure to address this Forum on Minority Issues. Let me start by saying that my government welcomes the establishment of the Forum on Minority Issues as a new platform for promoting dialogue among all stakeholders on the issues pertaining to minorities. We especially congratulate you for taking a very important job, madam Victoria Mohanci.

The thematic focus of the first forum is with the title 'Minorities and the right to Education' very well chosen indeed. We would also like to comment on Professor Patrick Thornberry for preparing an excellent draft recommendation on minorities and the right to education. We fully support them as the minimum requirement for effective education strategy.

However, we have to say madam President, when national minorities are in question with state on the other side of the border, divided from its nation on the basis of peace treaties hardly negotiated for several years and containing special provisions for minority.

It is not enough that states provide adequate opportunities for persons belong to minorities to learn their mother tongue or learn through the medium of mother tongue. The persons belong to such minorities have to be taught in their mother tongue especially when such a right is clearly fixed in the treaty.

On this occasion we must stress the importance of the article 8 of the UNDM, which calls on states to fulfil in good faith the obligations and commitments they have assumed and the international treaties and agreements to be parties.

In these times of financial crisis it can happen that states can cut some of the financial support for the education of minority using this as a pre-text for cutting the funds. It is unacceptable for my government.

Minorities are more vulnerable than the majority and they have to be treated on the basis of positive discrimination.

Let me add because of the time constraints that Slovenia has just launched a campaign to go beyond prejudices discover the Roma. It is an awareness raising campaign in the framework of the wider Council of Europe and European Commission joint program

aimed at overcoming prejudices and stereotypes about Roma, and promoting tolerance and intercultural relations and co-existence.

Thank you madam Chair.