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Thank you Chairperson for giving me the floor.

My name is Aleksandra Vujic and I come from Serbia. I represent the Voivodina Center for Human Rights, a NGO based in Novi Sad in Voivodina.

I would like to give some recommendations considering Opportunities for Persons Belonging to Minorities to learn their mother tongue or learn through the medium of mother tongue.

Recommendations will be based on the experiences of education provided *in* and *of* minority languages in the Autonomous Province of Voivodina, which is one of the most heterogeneous area in Europe, composed of 65.05% of Serbs and 34.95% of ethnic minorities. Instruction in schools is provided in 6 teaching languages: Serbian, Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian, Ruthenian and Croat, while learning of mother tongue with elements of national culture represents the only form of education for Roma, Ukrainian, Macedonian and Bulgarian national minority. Bunjevats national minority has an opportunity to learn Bunjevats' speech.

The distinctions should be made between: opportunities of education in mother tongue for persons belonging to «homogenous» minorities and «dispersed» minorities. Homogenous minorities have more opportunities to preserve their language and culture in education through the medium of mother tongue while dispersed minorities whose only opportunity is more than often, just to learn their language are strongly faced with assimilation process and lost of their language and culture. That is why, in creating educational minority policy, state should take into account these two distinctions.

For persons belonging to «homogenous» national minorities, education in mother tongue could be organised *in* their mother tongue, for more or less all subjects. Problem for this minority groups is usually lack of qualified teachers. This problem could be solved through more active state educational policy in training of minority teachers, for example, in organising courses in which they will learn professional terms for certain subjects they will teach.

For «dispersed » national minority groups, learning of mother tongue should be taught with elements of national culture. It should be an obligatory subject as the experiences showed that less pupils attend this kind of classes if it is an optional subject and if they should decide whether to learn mother tongue, or some other subject, for example, English or computer skills. In that case, they rather chose English and computer' classes as they give them more opportunities for further education.

The mentioned problems could be solved through more effective state educational policy and introduction of affirmative measure such as: organising of different forms of bilingual education, organising an education in mother tongue at least in lower classes, offering free transportation for children who wants to learn in their mother tongue but live in remote areas, redesigning of school network.

The special attention should be given to education of Roma and it should be given special place within the framework of affirmative measures. It includes not only the education of children but also education of parents and it is connected with poverty problems, high drop rates, lack of professional teacher and so on.

Opportunities for education *in* and *of* minority languages strongly depend of state policy and it is the state which decides if minority education will be taken as an integrative or disegrative factor. According to this, education *in* or *of* minority languages would be implemented and realised in higher degree if state is directed towards intercultural approach and culture of human rights.

Thank you Chairperson.