

**Statement of the UNIVERSAL ESPERANTO ASSOCIATION**

**Madam President, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Universal Esperanto Association is involved with defending linguistic rights.

On the issue of minority rights, we would like to highlight the following points:

In order to enable effective and meaningful participation in the political arena, it is important for minority languages to be recognised and respected. Minorities should have a real opportunity to freely use their languages and to teach it to their children.

For this purpose, language policies must be established with the aim of protecting local and minority languages.

As Professor Grin revealed in his report titled "Ten Years of EU Support for Regional and Minority Languages: a Financial Assessment", The University of Geneva, Observatories ELF (Economy, Languages and Training Observatory), expenses incurred by the European Union for programmes aimed at encouraging local and minority languages are clearly lower than those for other European Union language programs. Accordingly, states could achieve significant results in protecting minority languages at a lower cost.

We would like to point out that an event such as this one enables all participants to exchange valuable experiences. This exchange takes place at state and NGO level. We should be aware that a similar exchange takes place at the civil society level by using Esperanto, employed worldwide as a neutral and democratic language.

The Universal Esperanto Association offers linguistic minorities the opportunity to report violations of linguistic rights, thanks to a website dedicated to this issue and to the statements by representatives during the Human Rights Council sessions. In addition, the association acts as a spokesperson for minorities, as we did yesterday the 12<sup>th</sup> November for the Swiss Federation of the Deaf.

Thank you for your attention