

Statement by the Republic of Hungary
Third Session of the Forum on Minority Issues
Minorities and effective participation in economic life
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Statement by
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Madam Chair, Madam Independent Expert, Distinguished Delegates,

Under this agenda item we would like to inform the Forum about a few practical steps taken by the Hungarian Government in line with a few paragraphs of the draft recommendations:

In relation to Paragraph 12. In Hungary, according to the Act on Equal Opportunities, budgetary and state institutions must adopt an equal opportunity plan for their disadvantaged workers if there are more than 50 employees. This Act also introduced the shift of the burden of proof, so if someone claims to suffer discrimination, the person needs to prove two facts: that discrimination happened and she/he belongs to a protected group under the Act. If these two facts are established, it is the responsibility of the respondent to prove that no discrimination occurred.

In relation to Paragraph 15. We also believe that affirmative action can be necessary to abolish structural shortcomings of labor market operations. The Government of Hungary is currently working on a set of criteria that would give preference to companies in procurement procedures which commit themselves to employ people in disadvantaged situation. This provision, refers mainly, but not exclusively, to the roma population.

In relation to Par. 16. Certain communities face disadvantages not because of their ethnicity but rather because of their socio-economic circumstances such as poverty or residence in under-developed regions. Therefore, Government policies for minorities are rather inclusive than targeted, and programs in most cases target beneficiaries based on their socio-economic attributes and focus on disadvantaged and multiple disadvantaged groups.

In relation to par. 50. Hungary has developed the so-called Equal Opportunity-based Funding Policy in which applicants (such as municipalities) must commit themselves to adopt a strategy for the inclusion of disadvantaged groups as a condition of their fund application. This aims to ensure that each fund is provided for the benefits of the entire population of a town or village and not only for people with the best self-interest representation skills.

Finally, Madam Chair, let me draw the attention of this august body to the not always recognized costs of social exclusion. Several recent studies showed that smart economies recognize that it is more profitable to integrate minorities than to maintain their deprivation. The costs of exclusion includes for example: the costs of lost GDP since marginalized people do not produce national products; the costs of paid social benefits and other welfare contributions; increased health care costs because of inappropriate living standards; the wasted costs of the maintenance of segregated and poor quality schools because their students will end up being unemployed; the increased costs of security and policing operations because of the higher criminality tendency in deprived communities; administration costs of registration and support of unemployed people.

