

Permanent Mission of Switzerland on Item IV

Thank you Madam President.

Switzerland would like to share some of its good practices and positive measures regarding the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities.

Regarding draft recommendation 21, Switzerland automatically incorporates in its federal laws all legally binding human rights including minority rights instruments at the international and regional levels, such as the ICCPR, the ICRC, the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter on National and Minority Languages.

Most of these instruments are self-executing, which means that any citizens can evoke them in front of the Administration and the Judge, and request the application of these standards in its own individual case.

With reference to Draft Recommendation 26, the Swiss Federal Constitution enshrines that the Confederation shall support the plural lingual Cantons in the fulfilment of the special duties meaning also to support them financially. Switzerland is composed of four languages. German, spoken by 63,7%. French, spoken by 20,4%. Italian, spoken by 6,5%, and Romansh, spoken by 0,5%. The status of the Romansh has been enhanced to that of a partially official language. That means that when the authorities are dealing with the Romans people, Romans is also regarded as an official language of the Confederation. Therefore, the Federal Authorities have a duty to support measures to maintain and promote the minority languages such as Romansh and Italian. For example, the Swiss Confederation and the Swiss Canton of Grisons offers annual grants to the Lega Romansha which is an umbrella organization for all association dealing with protection and promotion of the Romansh language and culture.

In 2004, the EMARC payment totalled 4,5 million euros. In addition to the annual lump sum allocation the Federal authorities can make additional payments for projects in support of the Romansh language and culture. Furthermore, Switzerland offers annual grant to two foundations for the Swiss Roma which call themselves Yenish in Switzerland.

With reference to Draft Recommendation 26 according to the Swiss Federal Constitution and the Swiss Federal Radio and Television Law, it's part of the mission of the electronic media to give due consideration to the diversity of the country and its people. The Swiss Radio and Television company as a presenter of national programs and programs for the language regions has a duty to broadcast its own radio and television programs in all of the national languages which expressly includes Romansh.

Furthermore, the Federal and Cantonal authorities have contributed funding towards a setting up of a Romansh News Agency whose role is to guarantee the expansion of top quality, up-to-date offerings in the Romansh language media. There also exists a web page in the Romansh language.

Thank you Madam President.

