

## Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations

(Male, English language)

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, the Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations thanks the OHCHR for the opportunity to participate in this forum and to present our comments to the draft recommendations secretariat prior to this meeting. In conformity with the 1992 UN Declaration on Minorities and Article 27 of the ICCPR, as well as it is stipulated in the Article 26 of the ICCPR, it is the responsibility of the State to ensure that no provision existing in the law have a directly or indirectly discrimination impact on any person on any grounds such as race, colour, sex, language, religion or [other statuses]. Therefore, with regards to the draft recommendation number 21, we agree to the [tenner] of the draft recommendation. However we propose, that the recommendation should be extended to include official procedures in the revision as well. As we know, the law may be very good, but the actual implementation might not support the actual protection of the rights of minorities. Madam Chair, we very much appreciate the declaration and the laud efforts made by this forum. However, we are extremely concerned with the lack of attention in the recommendation paid to issues related to the Internet. Indeed, we live in an age of tremendous change. And with change comes redefinition of certain norms and of means of communication. The Internet is changing the world before our eyes; increasing availability of Internet access and expansion of Internet services systematically transforming the way we interact with each other. Moreover, recent studies show that the Internet makes youth more engaged with society and interest driven internet communities serve as a gateway to the online and offline civic and political engagement including voluntarism and community problem solving. Unfortunately, however, the internet is also being used as a tool of hate, to spread hate-speech, harassment, intimidation of minorities and that has significantly impacted on the well-being, integration, self-image of young people of minority, as well as it actually limits their rights, their freedoms and opportunities to contribute to the wider society. We thus command the [enacting] campaign against hate-speech and online cyber-bullying currently run by the Council of Europe in 32 of its member states. We now have four recommendations: the first is "we therefore urge this forum to adopt draft recommendation number 21 as having modified existing legislation and official procedures should reviewed to ensure that no provision exist in law that are discriminatory or have a directly or indirectly discrimination impact on persons belong to minorities; second, with regards to the draft recommendation number 37 to 41 [FEMYSO] would like to recommend this forum to include the reference to the use of social media and internet based initiatives to inform and encourage knowledge about religious minorities, combat hate-speech in the virtual sphere and its impact on the real world. With regards to the draft recommendation number 50-52 we would like to recommend to include the reference to the internet as a means of combating discrimination and promoting good practices. And lastly, we moreover, urge this forum to command the Council of Europe initiative as an important best practice, and to call on it to include as an urgent priority on international action against Islamophobia and more generally to launch an international action against the discrimination of religious minorities within the framework of no-hate-speech movement. Thank you for your attention.