



Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia to the United Nations Office in Geneva

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The Mission of Serbia welcomes today's topic at the Forum as, in the context of the minorities' human rights, the question of education in and teaching of minority languages is one of the key issues. It is an important tool for the protection of national identity, which is the core right to be protected when it comes to the national minority.

Serbia is a particular country, inter alia, having in mind the numerous national minorities that do the part of its society. The constitutional, legislative as well as the institutional framework for protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities make the Republic of Serbia over the average world standards in this area, which has been confirmed by the findings of numerous international monitoring bodies. Allow me to briefly inform you on some legal provisions and relevant data in Serbia on the education in and teaching of minority languages.

For ethnic and linguistic minorities, the right to education is of great importance in safeguarding and enhancing their cultural identity. The Law on Preschool education in Serbia stipulates that for members of a national minority educational work is carried out in the language of a national minority, and may be bilingual, if at least 50% of parents or another legal representative of children opt for it. It is by a statute of a preschool institution determined the language in which the educational work should be carried out. In order to improve the quality of educational work, expand the diversity of programs, and to comprise more children, preschools also carry out various forms and programs in order to providing care, education for children and support to the family, and by protecting the language and culture of the national minority.

The educational laws stipulate that for members of a national minority, educational work in primary and secondary education shall be carried out in the language, or speech and script of the national minority, with the possibility of educational work in bilingual in the language and script of the national minority and in Serbian language. Educational work is carried out in the language and script of a national minority, or bilingually, if at least 15 students opt for it when enrolling in first grade. It could be also realized for less than 15 students enrolled in first grade, with the consent of the ministry responsible for education, in accordance with the law. The Ministry gives the consent for the completion of the school curriculum in the languages of national minorities for less than 15 students based on the recommendation of the relevant national council of the national minority. When the educational work is carried out in the language and script of a national minority, school is obliged to organize Serbian language classes for these students. When the

educational work is carried out in the Serbian language, the language of the national minority with elements of the national culture is organized for the pupil belonging to a national minority.

On the territory of the Republic of Serbia, classes are provided in 1,302 elementary schools, 61 elementary and secondary music and ballet schools, 48 adult education schools, 44 elementary special schools, 23 secondary special schools and 573 secondary schools. In their native language, the entire education is attended by members of 8 national minorities: Albanian, Bosniak, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Romanian, Ruthenian, Slovak and Croatian national minorities.