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In this age of populism, xenophobic statements on 'the national language' frequently become an issue of political discourse encouraging intolerance towards minorities and their languages. Consequently State institutions feel justified in cutting back administrative and financial support for minority languages. In this atmosphere minorities feel discouraged to pursue their cultures and their distinctive languages.

This is common in a few European countries, especially United Kingdom and France. It is being emulated around the world. In UK, when nearing elections, the Prime Minister or another minister usually rakes up the issue of the necessity for migrants to learn the English language. This is a vote grabber. Notwithstanding a simple truth and irony that the British rarely bother to learn the local language of the many countries they become expatriates.

These political statements precipitate public controversy. Government can easily put more resources in national language learning without politicising the issue.

Secondly we feel a minority that often suffers silently are people with autism. It is a minority whose context of communication and linguistic skills are sometimes slightly different than the majority. There is evidence that mutual appreciation by those in authority and the individuals themselves of this complex difference tends to help make people with autism to integrate well.

We hope the Forum will take note and give some attention to this issue.

We also take this opportunity to thank the Governments of Pakistan and India in cooperating and working together, despite regional tensions, to open the Kartarpur corridor, a [passage between the two countries, to celebrate the 550<sup>th</sup> anniversary of birth of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh worldview. Both countries now promote Gurmukhi, the language of Sikhs. It is a positive message for the Forum.