



## 12th Session of the UN Forum on Minority Issues

Joint statement on behalf of current and former OHCHR Minority Fellows representing following organisations

1. Youth Platform of Interethnic Solidarity of Moldova
2. Latvian Human Rights Committee
3. Tamount association for Amazighe rights (Tunisia)
4. Tsakhur National Cultural Autonomy (Russia)
5. NGO "Nomus va Insof" (Dignity and Integrity), Tajikistan
6. Alexander Bekmurzin, Former UN Minority Fellow, Russian ethnic minority from Kyrgyzstan
7. Sarvar Salimov, Former UN Minority Fellow, Uzbek national minority from Kyrgyzstan
8. Farkat Ibrahimov, Former UN Minority Fellow, Uyghur ethnic minority from Kyrgyzstan
9. Jairo Rodriguez Davis, Former UN Minority Fellow, Raizal ethnic minority -under Colombia
10. Jack Jendo, Assyrian Ethnic, Linguistic and Religious Minority in Lebanon
11. Elizabete Krivcova, Former UN Minority Fellow, Russian linguistic minority from Latvia
12. Marian Luca, Senior Fellow, Roma Minority Romania/Germany
13. Makarios Lahzy, Senior Fellow, Coptic Minority, Egypt

### **Item 4: Effective practices for education in, and the teaching of, minority languages.**

We welcome organization of the Forum under the topic of "Education, Language and the Human Rights of Minorities". But as minorities youth many of us have been growing in the societies where we have been told that "minorities issues" are not Human Rights, therefore our claims to get access to education in our mother tongues have no ground.

So how can we discuss effective practices for education in minority languages when in many parts of the world authorities do not recognize such right and minorities are not aware that they have this right and can even claim it?

It is worth noting that, in the countries represented by us, the areas of the use of minority languages have been drastically shrinking for years.

Recognizing and experiencing the interlinkages between the topic of the Forum and access to Human Rights education for minority youth we recommend to the UN member states, intergovernmental and donor organizations the following :

1. To increase financial support to the OHCHR Minorities Fellowship Programme which empowered many of us to effectively stand up for the right to education for minorities;
2. To support Human Rights Education initiatives of minorities youth at the local level and engage in the dialogue and consultations with the minorities youth. As, for instance, Moldovan parliament did this year by supporting the 3rd edition of the National Minorities Youth Forum in Moldova;
3. To support cross-regional Human Rights education initiatives of minorities youth which can enhance exchange of good practices. E.x. by organizing Summer Schools for and with minorities youth in the accessible regional languages. This is something Former Fellows are striving to organize in MENA region and post-Soviet area;

4. To mainstream the minorities youth issues in the UN System, e.x. in the Social Forum and OHCHR strategic work on Youth and Human Rights;
5. To make Human Rights education resources accessible in different regional languages and for people with disabilities;
6. To organize training sessions for the staff of the Ministries of education on the right to education for minorities with involvement of minority youth as co-facilitators;
7. To establish UN Fund for Minorities;
8. To make a particular focus on development and minority youth residing in rural areas and ensure the proper infrastructure to enable them the attendance of the educational institutions.
9. Creation of a multimedia platform for minorities to network and share their stories related to human rights violations.
10. In the parts of States where ethnic and linguistic minority communities make up a significant proportion of the population, it is essential to officially recognize the languages spoken by minority communities by granting those languages a regional or official status with a view to enabling minority youth to receive a quality education in their mother tongues
11. The creation of joint projects between local Offices/Authorities for Education and Offices for Social Services for socially disadvantaged young people (or who dropped the school) in order to re-access the educational system and get a professional qualification; similarly, to provide education on intersectional issues, on LGBTI and ensure a safe space for young LGBTI people and other underrepresented groups in the schools and ensure psycho-social counselling.
12. In the parts of States where ethnic, linguistic and/or religious a, then, consider to establish or maintain separate educational systems or institutions for them (Article 2b of UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education), with their own system of education, culturally-suitable, of high quality and in their mother tongue.

Madam Chair,

My name is Vyacheslav Likhachev, and I'm OHCHR minority fellow from Ukraine, and I'm grateful for opportunity to be here and to share our experience in promotion languages and literature of the national minorities. I will tell only one success story; we have more.

In our system of formal school education in Ukraine we have a format of national competitions for teenagers, we call it Olympiads. Olympiads devoted to different subjects of school curriculum like mathematics, biology, Ukrainian language and literature, or history. It is one of the best institutional practice to promote interest on studying and to motivate the best students. These competitions have a serious official status. Even participation in Olympiad is prestigious. ~~Winners on the national level have a bonus during University entrance.~~

In 2014, after the Revolution of Dignity, my organization, the Congress of Ethnic Communities of Ukraine, has initiated communication with the Ministry of education about including national minorities' languages and literature in this format. The Government has agreed with our suggestion.

As a result, in addition to 26 subjects of official Olympiads have appeared Olympiads on Russian, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian, Greek, Bulgarian, Moldovian and Hebrew languages and literature also. In 2015 those competitions were held on official level with government recognition and financial support for the first time and become Annual.

Establishing of the Olympiads for schoolchildren on national minorities' languages and literature means not only possibility for selfrealisation for children and motivation to learn those subjects. It means an official recognition national minorities' languages in the state's formal educational system. Also, the need to develop programs and tasks for Olympiads stimulated pedagogical and methodological work in the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine. It creates context when it is prestigious to learn national minorities' languages in schools.

As far as I know, this practice is unique in Eastern Europe.