

Statement by Romania – The 14th session of the Forum on Minority Issues

Madam Chair,

Cultural diversity is both a source and a factor, aimed at enriching, not dividing societies. When the cohesion is weak and good integration policies are lacking, the same factors that enrich a society could lead to divisions or creation of parallel societies.

Therefore, at the core of its policies developed with the involvement of the 20 national minorities living on its territory, Romania placed interethnic and intercultural dialogue as a key tool for the benefit of the society as a whole.

The interests of each of the 20 national minorities recognized by Romania are represented by specific organizations, each of them being entitled to a seat in the Romanian Parliament.

The involvement of representatives of national minorities in the local decision making process is also of high relevance, given the principles of local self-government and of subsidiary. The representative organizations for persons belonging to national minorities have participated in local elections over the last three decades. Once elected, they have acted in the interests of the whole community, irrespective of the ethnicity of the inhabitants.

Another important tool for dialogue between State and national minorities is the Council of National Minorities consisting of all representatives of the organizations of national minorities. The Council is a consultative body of the Romanian Government under the coordination of the Department for Interethnic Relations, the latter having a key role in the interaction and dialogue between the central authorities and national minorities.

Various artistic events, a real interethnic „cultural phenomena”, are taking place in Romania. Together with the system of education specifically elaborated for persons belonging to national minorities, promoting teaching and learning in the mother tongue, as well as various media programs in minority languages, they contribute to interaction in between members of different ethnic minorities, to the promotion of mutual understanding, respect and, ultimately, to peaceful co-existence.

I thank you.