

Dear Mr. Chairman,

My name is Tibor Toro and I represent the Bálványos Institute, a minority organization which provides research-based solutions to issues impacting the Hungarian community in Romania. In this intervention I focus on minority language education.

In Romania, the Law on Education grants minorities the right to receive education in their mother tongue at all levels of education. Hungarian students can attend Hungarian language schools, or mixed language schools with separate Romanian and Hungarian classes.

While this seems to guarantee the educational rights of Hungarians, our research shows that Hungarians continue to face discrimination in terms of their human rights to and in education.

Hungarian students lack equal access to higher education due to indirect discrimination in the official examination process. Those receiving their education in Hungarian are assessed in Romanian Language and Literature with the same tests designed for Romanian native speakers, resulting in many failing the test, which significantly limits their access to higher education.

They also face discrimination in mixed language schools. School equipment and infrastructure are unequally distributed; there is lack of Hungarian speaking auxiliary personnel, such as school psychologists and medical personnel; and school inscriptions are usually written in Romanian only.

Human rights law does not require states to establish a quasi-separate institutional system of minority education, if states decide to do so, they must ensure equal quality minority education.

Minority education is instrumental for minorities to maintain their identity, but it also needs to promote their full and effective equality, an aspect often overlooked in Romania.

Therefore, I would like to make the following recommendation:

- States should ensure both aims of minority education – identity reproduction and promoting substantive equality – while the UN should strengthen both of these dimensions through its monitoring process.