

Forum on Minority Issues 2022

1 December 2022

„Rethink: minority rights defenders and their role in promoting the principles of the Declaration “

Statement by H.E. Mr. Gordan Markotić, Ambassador

The Republic of Croatia

Mr. Chair,

Croatia aligns with the EU statement.

As a country with the largest number of constitutionally recognized national minorities in Europe, Croatia is pleased to participate at this forum.

Discrimination against minorities poisons institutions and social structures. The answer lies in national policies and effective measures.

Promoting and protecting minority rights is our longstanding priority, which in turn can act as a bridge towards a better understanding among neighbouring countries. We believe that ethnic and multicultural diversity contributes to the development of a society.

National minorities are a part of political life in Croatia, both in the Government and on regional and local levels. The Government regularly maintains a dialogue with representatives of national minorities' associations and institutions.

Our Constitution, the Constitutional Law on National Minorities and numerous laws offer a wide range of rights, including a guarantee of equality, political participation and freedom to express national affiliation, freedom to use their own language and script as well as cultural autonomy. Their cultural and other activities are financed from the State budget.

Mr. Chair,

It is up to all of us - national governments, minority representatives, civil society and others - to ensure that envisaged measures are indeed implemented at all levels, while continuing to develop multilateral responses to the challenges ahead.

We are committed to the protection of minority rights defenders who play a vital role in promoting the rights of the communities they serve.

Croatia believes that a safe and an enabling environment in which all minority rights defenders carry out their work must be free from threats, violence or any form of harassment.

Promoting minority rights leads to stability and peace while reaffirming the principles of the UN Declaration on Minority Rights.

Croatia remains committed to the protection of minority rights; nationally, within the European Union as well as in the world.

Thank you.