

## Minority Forum Intervention

Madam Chairperson!

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my statement with you. Me sinom o Raxhi katar I Albania. I am Raxhi Rakipi from Albania. I am an OHCHR minority fellow and I represent the Roma minority. The Albanian Roma Versitas program launched in 2014, founded in response to an increasing number of Albanian Roma students in need of a centralised site from which to launch joint initiatives and to engage in both individual and collective development. It was designed to respond to the particular challenges of Albanian Roma people, and was established with the support and at the request of the Roma Education Fund. On April 8th, 2016, Roma students themselves submitted a formal registration request to form RVA. Roma Versitas Albania is a civil society organisation registered under the court decision No. 5347, dated May 30th, 2016.

The topics that I think the Roma minority is facing in Albania are:

1- Roma language

2- Investing in the infrastructure of neighborhoods and villages where members of the Roma minority live.

Regarding the Roma minority in Albania, they were recognized as a national minority in 2017 under Law No. 96/2017 for the protection of minorities in the Republic of Albania. The municipality of Prizren in Kosovo on October 31, 2022, at the municipal council meeting, decided that the Romani language would be used in an official manner. In Albania, in the 2023-2024 school year, it has been officially decided that the Roma language will be taught in two 9-year schools where there is a significant percentage of the Roma minority. I have achieved this after meeting with the Prime Minister on the co-governance portal. Regarding the

investment for Roma neighborhoods or villages to improve them, no funds have ever been allocated for this type of thing or even if they were allocated, they were for small things.

Regarding the Roma language, let me tell you that young people are completely forgetting it because they only speak it and do not know how to write it. I think that if we want a language to remain alive, it must be written. Regarding the demolition of Roma neighborhoods, even though different organizations advocate or different activists advocate, the situation remains unresolved and there are only promises.

Madam chairperson, my points are related to article 2, which is socio-economic empowerment. Do you know that in the European Convention on Human Rights in section 1 of rights and freedoms, article 14-Prohibition of discrimination, The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, color, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status. Also Also in the convention on the rights of the child in article 8 it is stated that 1. States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognized by law without unlawful interference. 2. Where a child is illegally deprived of some or all of the elements of his or her identity, States Parties shall provide appropriate assistance and protection, with a view to quickly re-establishing his or her identity. Also to article 30 it says that In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess

and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.

My recommendations are:

1- The Romani language is of great importance for all Romani who are all over the world. A language if it is not written then one day it will disappear. What the Albanian state and the United Nations Organization can do is to support young Roma to continue higher education for the Roma language and to have more schools where the Roma language is taught in primary school.

2- To cooperate with the Albanian state in the neighborhoods and villages where members of the Roma national minority live, to invest in infrastructure such as road paving, sewage drainage and greening of the area where the minority lives.

Me som rrom hem siman miri e drejta kaj te jashav sar o vavera,

I am Roma but I have equal rights like all other people.