

Legal Adviser to the OSCE HCNM

Thank you Madame Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen, my name is Elzbieta Kuzborska-Pacha. I am a senior legal adviser and I represent the office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. I would like to refer to thoughts expressed by Professor Jennifer Jackson-Preece and highlight the crucial role of our recent recommendations on the socio-economic participation of minorities as a key tool in preventing conflict. It is not just a policy document, it is a blueprint for building inclusive societies, where national or ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities are more than participants, they are active contributors, stakeholders and beneficiaries. The socio-economic inclusion of minorities in areas of education, employment, healthcare, housing, and access to public goods and services, is fundamental to democracy, and is essential for three main reasons, security, legal compliance, and economic prosperity. For instance, economically, harnessing minorities' potential leads to overall economic growth. Moreover, these recommendations also mainstream gender perspective and emphasize youth empowerment, recognizing their role as bridge builders between communities. Empowering women socio-economically is essential, and not only promotes gender equality but also strengthens communities and economies, creating more resilient societies capable of effectively preventing and addressing conflicts. And not only this. For women, socio-economic empowerment signifies liberation and freedom. First of all, a freedom from violence, and their ability to choose a brighter future for themselves and their children. So, in brief, the effective participation of minorities in social and economic life is vital for our peace and stability.