

Coppieters Foundation

Thank you, Madame Chair, I am here today representing the Coppieters Foundation, a think-tank of European affairs. Our research focuses on how different levels of governments deal with national groups. We believe that many conflicts share common origins. The lack of recognition of national groups, whose autonomy, political representation, and control over their own resources are limited. The climate is becoming less favorable to civic rights, participation, cultural and linguistic diversity, collective freedoms, democratic institutions, and makes dialogue more difficult. Now, more than ever, it is essential for everyone working for peace and strong institutions to address these common causes. The earlier we act, the better we can prevent conflicts from escalation, in Europe and elsewhere. We encourage political leaders and administrations to invest in prevention strategies, supporting very strongly the centralization, recognizing of national groups, giving them a real place in decision-making processes, and allowing them real control over their own resources. Finally, we call for the creation of a permanent forum within the United Nations where the concrete application of the right to self-determination can be addressed. These goals are challenging us every single day; that is why we need to reinforce democracy and peace. Thank you very much.