

International Organization for the Right to Education and Freedom of Education (OIDE)

Thank you Madame Chair, Excellencies, and Distinguished Participants.

OIDE is honored to contribute to this dialogue. Cohesion grows when diversity is recognized as a strength, not a challenge. Minorities are not outside contributors, they are part of the social fabric itself. What does this mean for education? It means respecting minorities' right to freedom of education. It means granting parents in minority communities the right to choose education that reflects their culture, language, and belief. This is what freedom of education means. Real access to quality education that also respects the convictions and identity of families. A common concern is that allowing such diversity might fragment societies. Yet research does not support this assumption. A study of OIDE with (inaudible) found no correlation between educational freedom and social fragmentation. For example, some of the countries with the greatest diversification in schooling options, such as Belgium and the Netherlands, are not fragmented societies. Of course, minority-led schools, like all schools, must be aligned with the minimum educational standards set by the state. However, states must not set those standards in a way to undermine parental and cultural rights. Standards must remain compatible with an education that is both acceptable and adaptable for minority communities. This is where social cohesion grows through education. By respecting this balance and trusting parents and communities as partners, states allow minorities to become co-creators of the education system. Thank you.