

PM of the European Union

The European Union welcomes the focus of the 18th Forum on Minority Issues. The EU is home to many persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities. We believe that the full protection of their human rights is essential for promoting social cohesion, preventing conflicts, and contributing to sustainable peace. The treaty of the European Union reflects its commitment to the rights of persons belonging to minorities, and its respect for cultural and linguistic diversity. It provides a solid foundation for national-level policies throughout the EU. Cohesion policy supports minorities in the EU by recognizing the transformative power of culture and its role in fostering social inclusion and protecting the diversity of European regions, including regional languages. Through infrastructure development and cross-border cooperation, the European Regional Development Fund reinforces efforts of member states in promoting the socio-economic inclusion of persons belonging to minorities. It does so by ensuring, amongst others, equal access to employment, education, housing, healthcare, and culture. Interreg(?) programs allow regional authorities across EU external and internal borders to support exchanges promoting local heritage and to foster a more inclusive and united Europe. Further, the European Social Fund+ supports and complements policies of member states to provide support to marginalized communities. It does so in areas of employment, access to education, equal access to healthcare, and integration of people at risk. The EU remains committed to ensuring the protection, fulfillment, and respect of human rights for all, including persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities. We will continue to raise minority issues, including at the Human Rights Council and other fora. I thank you.