

PM of Ukraine

Distinguished panellists. Ukraine continues comprehensive reforms with active engagement of state stakeholders and civil society, including minorities. The reform of Ukraine's education system is an important part of this process. Most recently, the Department of Education adopted a law, one particular article of which raised concerns of some states. While elaborating the new law, the authorities and lawmakers have taken into account all Ukraine's international obligations and commitments under respective international instruments in the framework of the UN, UNESCO, and the Council of Europe. These instruments underline that the right to maintain the collective identity through the minority language must be balanced by the responsibility to integrate and participate in the wider national society that requires the acquisition of the sound knowledge of both the society and the state language. Article 7 of the law stipulates that the language of the educational process in Ukraine is the official language of the state. The very same article guarantees the right of education in municipal educational institutions of preschool and primary education in the language of the national minority they belong to and the official language of the state. At the secondary level of education, persons belonging to national minorities, in accordance with the paragraph 4 of Article 7 of the law, will have the opportunity to study in their native language. It should be emphasized that the transitional period of the application of the Article 7 is envisaged. All those representatives of minorities who started their education before September 2018 will continue studying under the currently existing conditions, and the new requirements will only be applicable starting from 2020. Ukraine has submitted the law on education to the Venice Commission for its expert opinion on the language of education. The opinion is expected this December. Thank you.