



EUROPEAN UNION

Permanent Delegation to the United Nations Office
and other international organisations in Geneva

FORUM ON MINORITY ISSUES

Minority Youth: towards diverse and inclusive societies

10th session, 30 November – 1 December 2017

Minority youth as agents of change for peace and stability

EU Intervention

Mr Chairperson,

Speaking for the European Union, I welcome the focus on youth at this Forum on Minority Issues. Young people belonging to minority groups are in a particularly vulnerable situation, as they may face multiple forms of discrimination on the ground of their young age on the one hand, and, for instance, on the basis of their race, colour, ethnic origin, language, religion or belief on the other. Young people belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities face difficulties from the earliest age; this continues through school and university into employment, both in terms of finding work and of work conditions. Exclusion and marginalization of minority youth can fuel social and political discontent as well as conflicts. Young people who feel discriminated and marginalized may be prone to radicalization and to accept ideologies promoting violence. To prevent this radicalization, we need comprehensive and integrated policies aimed at changing attitudes, promoting cultural diversity, inclusion, and tolerance, and fighting discrimination and intolerance.

Our approach to promote the rights of minority youth stems from the EU's fundamental values, enshrined in the **Treaty on the European Union** and the **Charter of Fundamental Rights**, as well as from the entire body of EU and international human rights law on prohibition of discrimination. Secondly, it is also based on the **EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018)** aiming to create equal opportunities for all young people in education and on the labour market, and to promote active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity. Under the **Europe 2020 Strategy**, we have established targets and monitoring to create conditions for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, addressing the needs of minority youth through initiatives

aiming at developing wider learning and mobility opportunities for young people as well as measures addressing the specific circumstances of groups at particular risk, such as minorities.

In our external action we also have a strong emphasis on youth, including in the EU Global Strategy. EU financial instruments, particularly in the area of development cooperation, have a strong focus on youth and on the promotion of inclusive societies. In relation to the role of minority youth in promoting peace and stability, we see inter-cultural dialogue as a particularly important tool in the prevention of conflicts and the promotion of reconciliation and mutual understanding in post-conflict societies. To this end, the EU supports inter-cultural dialogue amongst youth organizations in Europe and elsewhere, through programmes such as the Neighbourhood Civil Society Fellowships and the Young Arab voices programme as well as reconciliation processes involving minority groups...

Mr Chairperson,

History has shown that the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities contributes to the political and social stability of States. As recognized by **UN Security Council Resolution 2250** on Youth, Peace and Security, young women and men can play a positive role in maintaining and promoting international peace and security. They therefore can and should be drivers and agents of positive change in their societies. This is particularly true for minority youth. Societies are diverse, and decision-makers should respect, promote and protect this diversity as well as the rights of youth belonging to minorities when striving to build democratic societies and to implement the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

Thank you.