



Statement by
the Republic of Slovenia

at the
40th Session of the UN Human Rights Council

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues

Geneva, 13 March 2019

Mr President,

Slovenia would like to thank the Special Rapporteur Dr Fernand de Varennes for his report on the visit to Slovenia. We highly appreciate his scrutiny of the Slovenian normative framework for the protection of minorities and his inquiry of the situation on the ground.

Slovenia made its comments to the report in a document (A/HRC/40/64/Add.3), which can be found under documentation issued for this session.

Slovenia has a strong constitutional, legislative and normative protection framework when it comes to rights of persons belonging to minorities. This framework responds both to the historical trajectory as well as to more recent developments. The Special Rapporteur found in Slovenia many good practices and positive developments. Let me comment on some of his findings, and inform you about further steps we have taken since the visit.

Persons belonging to minorities enjoy a wide range of rights. Pursuant to Articles 14, 61 and 62 of the Constitution, Slovenia guarantees to all persons non-discrimination, the free expression of their national affiliation, the fostering and expression of their culture and the right to use their language and script.

As the Special Rapporteur noted, we have long-standing good practices with regard to rights enjoyed by Hungarian and Italian national communities, including a significant degree of autonomy and political representation.

We also developed a high degree of recognition and implementation of the rights of Roma. In recent years, we made great efforts to improve the situation of Roma, especially in the fields of education, employment, housing, health care, social security and social integration.

Furthermore, Slovenia offers other positive measures to national communities, such as financial support for their cultural activities and to learn their mother tongue.

Based on the Protection from Discrimination Act (2016) the Advocate of the Principle of Equality became an independent State body with the mandate of research, publication of reports and making of recommendations and proposals on the adoption of special measures to prevent discrimination. In this year, additional resources have been allocated to the institution.

In response to your report, we would also like to inform you that amendments to the Human Rights Ombudsman Act in 2017 set out a legal basis for the Office of the Ombudsman to apply for A status under the Paris Principles, foreseeing the establishment of a pluralistic consultative body to the Ombudsman and a centre for human rights, dealing with educational, training and promotional activities.

Regarding deaf linguistic minority, Slovenia adopted law on the use of sign language in 2002 and in 2014 recognized 14 November as National Sign Language Day. In December, the Government of Slovenia decided to send the proposal for inscription of the sign language in the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia to the Parliament.

Concerning hate speech the Government is planning further measures to sanction milder forms of hostile activities and the spreading of intolerance, in particular, hostile acts and intolerance in media

Slovenia, due to protection of personal data, does not officially collect disaggregated data on ethnicity, language or religion. We are aware that disaggregated data are indispensable for the effectiveness of measures, addressing minority issues; therefore we are trying to find ways for collecting them while still protecting personal data. We are grateful to the OHCHR for the first exchange on this, and we would appreciate further cooperation both with them as well as hearing the opinion of special rapporteurs.

In conclusion, we would like to thank the Special Rapporteur for his visit and advice. We would also like to take this opportunity to commend Mr. de Varennnes the impressive number of speeches, presentations and lectures he had given at different events around the world, thereby raising awareness and the visibility of the human rights of persons belonging to minorities.

We look forward to further working with the mandate holder, in line with our longstanding commitment to the protection of right of persons belonging to minorities on the national, regional and international level.

Thank you