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Minorities and Minority Languages in a Changing Europe

Conference on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Framework
Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European
Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France
Palais, room 1

18 – 19 June 2018

High-level session: Mr Ivan Bošnjak, Secretary of State, Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government of Serbia

For all of you I have good news:

It will take only five more minute before coffee break!

Dear Mr. Yagland, Snežana Samardžić Marković,

Distinguished vice Prime Minister Burić,

Ministers, Excellencies, colleagues, ladies and gentleman, dear friends...

Usually, I speak from my heart because I'm coming' from Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and from their third biggest city in the heart of Serbian Banat ...City with three names : Bečkerek, Petrovgrad and Zrenjanin , 4 official languages – Serbian and Hungarian, Slovak and Romanian; where majority of Serbs lives with other 28 different nationalities peacefully and traditionally without ethnical tensions and incidents... that cultural heritage recommended myself to be responsible for human and minority sector in our ministry trough three different ministers cabinets, continually in last 4 years.

Great inventor Nikola Tesla, is recognized by whole human kind and still, 7 and half decades after his past away, from time to time, he's making Serbs and Croats even closer: The present is theirs; the future, for which I really worked, is mine

With warm greetings from Serbia, Our minister Mr. Branko Ružić apologies because he and the team from ministry are much occupied, since, at the moment they are presenting 9 laws in our National Assembly!

Thanks to great help of Council of Europe, and successful project - promoting of protection of human and minority rights in south east Europe, two things were completed: Serbia adopted national plan for minority and because of that fact- EU – Serbia accession negotiation chapter 23 (Jurisdiction and fundamental rights) was opened. and second achievement is that the city of Subotica created e-trilinguality which is an e- governance - tool for communication with citizens, and easy access for minorities to public administration and other services.

Accountability in Governance and new IC technologies, leads to smart Governance.

This should be the right path towards modern development of the Framework convention mechanisms and European charter for minority and regional languages adoption in 21st century.

New sets of law in Serbia that are dealing with minority protection emphasize those principles throughout:

1. After many decades in Serbian regulation, the freely expressed data of minority belonging will be a part of public register protected by law. This would be a basic capstone for creating and managing affirmative measures in employing, education, social protection, democratic participation and many other public policies.

2. Modern technologies enable Interoperability and exchanging of data among public registers, which in its base represents the rule of law and increase democratic behavior and trust in institutions.
3. Law of official use of language enables usage of minority language from parliamentary level to the villages with minority population.
4. Role of local councils for interethnic relations in LSG is promoted and it gives the guidelines for new direction and solution for development of minority policies

The greatest outcome of this process, supported by Mission of OESCE in Serbia, was the dialog.

Michael Idvorsky Pupin • Nothing makes a man so happy as a fair belief that he has done his best

Representatives of minorities were equally present in working groups, working together with Government officials, through the working sessions, sometimes lasting more than 9 hour.

Listening and learning from each other was a crucial benefit, and inclusiveness was identified as a key element for adopting good legal framework. I would like to thank EU as well for the expert support provided by Prof. Hoffman.

Next phase is implementation of the regulatory framework; followed by organizing the elections for national Councils of National minorities this November.

I would kindly ask you for your partnership in this task as well.

Also, personally would like to express my gratitude to the organizers of conference, CoE and Croatian hosts that I was able to present all above stated.

Please, allow me to speak in my native language:

It is my great pleasure to take this opportunity to address to you, distinguished Minister and Vice – Prime Minister, and everyone in this hall, that human and minority rights can be preserved only by will of majority.

Minority people, no matter how politically presented, are, above all, humans like we are: they need a solid road to their home; to new, old or reconstructed house; it deserves both water and electricity; they also need a job, in order for the State in which they live to pay their bills and taxes... and in the European tradition of The Framework Convention and The European Charter in return, State Authorities allow them to learn to read and write in their mother tongue, not only at school, but also from the entrance to the City or Village in which they live, but also where the coat-of-arms of the State are first - starting with the name of the school, to all the others - we call the institution ... to learn with their neighbors singing the songs of their people, listening to them on the radio and television, and at the event, at the festival ...

Thank you for your patience and attention, And I will finished my speech with words of one of the greatest persons ever lived, woman which life connected people – Albanians with all of their neighbor – Christians , Muslims and all other, woman who made us proud that we were born at Balkans, mother Teresa:

Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin.