



**INTERNATIONAL LEGAL GUARANTEES FOR THE PROTECTION OF  
NATIONAL MINORITIES AND PROBLEMS IN THEIR IMPLEMENTATION**

**WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON MINORITY EDUCATION**

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*Unofficial translation*

One method for promoting the protection of ethnic minorities - providing children with proper education.

The state can and should support the development of ethnic minorities. Education is one of the most effective ways of ensuring such support.

Here are some examples:

After the disintegration of the USSR there was a surge of migrants arriving in Moscow in search of work. To this day many of these migrants have not obtained official permission to live and work in Russia. Under Russian law they are considered illegal immigrants. However the children of these immigrants have the opportunity to attend school in Moscow. Moreover, the Moscow authorities decided to open more than one hundred ethnic schools where children can study part of the curriculum in their native language. The Moscow authorities completely cover the cost of these schools. As a result children do not hang about on the streets of the city and also receive a decent education.

This summer I took part in two conferences in Hanover, Germany, and in Senigallia, Italy. Both of these conferences were designed to familiarize high school students with a variety of other cultures and peoples. At the conference in Hanover we found out that schools in Saxony have special lessons, in which children learn about their contemporaries living in Africa and South America. Further more, some of the children get the opportunity to visit these countries and stay there for a few weeks. The German schools, in turn, invite children from these countries to visit Germany. In Saxony we saw school children dancing to music performed by groups from Brazil and Southern Africa. We saw with what delight German children met these young artists. I would like to mention that this project is supported by the authorities of Saxony.

School children and students from 24 countries took part in the conference in Senigallia, including Israel, Iraq, the USA, Palestine, Greece, Ukraine, Russia, etc. In the morning, Italian and German experts gave talks about the modern multiethnic world and about the necessity of respect for all peoples and cultures. Then the children and teachers took part in various activities designed to get the children better acquainted with one another. This project was supported by the Italian Ministry of Education. I want to note that in both Germany and Italy we saw a special relationship among the children with children from Israel. In these countries school children are educated about the genocide of Jews. By contrast, in Turkey children are taught that in 1914 the Armenians themselves abandoned their historical native land, Western Armenia, and that the actions of the Turkish army were dictated by 'conditions of wartime'. Whereas in Germany denying the genocide of Jews is a crime, in Turkey the mention of the Armenian genocide is a crime.

In some former socialist countries, children are currently taught that during the Second World War the Nazi army was the saviour of the people. And then we are surprised that there are people denying the Holocaust and that in Europe the number of neo-Nazis is constantly increasing.

It is surprising that European politicians, who are often very critical of Russian infringements on human rights and discrimination of national minorities, do not pay more attention to these facts.

In the next decade, today's children will come to play an active role in society. And consequently, educating these children in tolerance towards other peoples, cultures and religions is a necessary condition for the future well-being of Europe.