



**HUNGARIAN PRESIDENCY**  
Council of Europe  
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**PRÉSIDENCE HONGROISE**  
Conseil de l'Europe  
Mai – Novembre 2021



## **CONCEPT PAPER**

### ***for the Conference on “The role of NGOs and research institutes in promoting Council of Europe norms and standards on national minority rights” organised by the Hungarian Presidency and the Council of Europe, Budapest, 7 September 2021***

The promotion and protection of national minority rights are pivotal in ensuring balance and stability in European societies. Hungary is a strong advocate of all endeavours of the Council of Europe aimed at supervising the existing high-level standards on the protection of national minorities. The Organisation already provides a widely recognised normative regulation through the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages with their respective monitoring mechanisms as well as soft law instruments of the Council of Europe’s organs and institutions. The first priority of the Hungarian Presidency therefore focuses on promoting the effective protection of national minorities, and the conferences of the Hungarian Presidency aim both to highlight the role of the Council of Europe and to present the activity of civil society and its co-operation with international organisations.

The second event under this priority is scheduled for 7 September 2021 in the European Youth Centre in Budapest. The objective of the event is to discuss the contribution of civil and non-governmental organisations, as well as research institutes, in promoting international standards for the protection of national minorities and the norms and standards of the Council of Europe in particular. During the three panel discussions of the conference, representatives from non-governmental organisations and civil society, as well as experts from various research institutes with a broad range of experience in various fields, will express their views on the role of international organisations in protecting national minorities, especially in view of current challenges, and share their experience on the involvement of civil society in the activities of multilateral fora.

This conference will also provide a forum to present a new and particularly relevant sector shaping public life – the active political participation of national minority youth, on which the Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion has drafted a study. Representatives of the Council of Europe, youth organisations and the Steering Committee will underline the importance of giving national minority youth the right, the opportunity, the space, the means, and, where necessary, the support to participate in and influence decisions affecting their lives taken at all levels. In this way, states can ensure their active political participation. In addition, the discussion will provide the opportunity to present the Committee’s intergovernmental work to promote equality for all and build more inclusive societies by offering effective protection from discrimination and hate and where diversity is respected.