

Permanent Mission of Hungary

to the United Nations

New York

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**Statement by**

**H.E. Ambassador Katalin Annamária Bogyay,
Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations**

**On the occasion of the Interactive Dialogue with
Mr Fernand de Varennes, UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues**

**Third Committee of the General Assembly**

**22 October 2019**

Mr Chair,

Hungary aligns itself with the statement by the European Union. In addition, we also wish to highlight that compliance with the relevant international norms and standards is indispensable to ensure effective protection of minority rights.

We consider the mandate of the Special Rapporteur of utmost importance, strongly support him in his work.

Mr Rapporteur,

We congratulate you for the successful first European Regional Forum on Minority Issues, and welcome your engagement on the situation of Hungarian national minorities.

These days, we see an alarming trend of revisiting the existing acquis on the rights of national minorities. One of the most outstanding issues today is the use of minority languages, especially in Ukraine. As relevant international instruments established, promoting the use of a State language must not go to the detriment of the promotion and protection of regional or minority languages. On this basis, we invite you, Mr Special Rapporteur, to address challenges regarding the linguistic rights of minorities, especially regarding the use of the mother tongue both in education and all spheres of their lives*.*

Moreover, Hungarian national minorities continue to report discrimination, including the prohibition to use their mother tongue in courts and administrative proceedings; obstructions and bans against the use of national symbols, and restrictions concerning the freedom of assembly.

In the European context, it would be crucial to adopt a compulsory regulatory framework on the protection of the rights of national minorities, for which we propose the following basic principles:

1. **Respecting the difference between citizenship and national identity**: national minorities should not be forced to identify with the majority society solely on the basis of shared citizenship.
2. **Preserving minorities’ right to identity**, including their religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage, *as enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities.*
3. **This requires not only individual, but also collective rights**, such as in exercising their right to education and use of mother tongue, enjoying their own culture and practicing their own religion, which are all rights established in ICCPR.
4. **Recognising national minorities as autochthonous, constituent elements of the State** they live in, as active contributors to the development of their homeland and Europe’s common values and culture.
5. **Distinguishing between autochthonous national communities from economic immigrants**.

Thank you, Mr Chair.