

Inclusive education to empower minority youth

We as Youth of European Nationalities, umbrella organisation of 37 national ethnic autochthonous minorities in Europe have observed increasing obstacles to social inclusion, particularly for minorities, marginalised and vulnerable groups in Europe.

Education is both a human and an individual right and an essential tool in the realization of other human rights. As a law aimed at empowerment, education is the main instrument which economically and socially marginalized adults and children can use to overcome poverty and gain the means to participate fully in their communities.

For minorities, their own language is important part of their identity. Mother tongue education and parallel acquisition of both minority and majority language through the education system is vital for the preservation of identity and personal growth for a member of a minority group. It fosters the preservation of Europe's linguistic diversity and creates equal educational opportunities.

In order to empower minority youth through a more inclusive education, YEN would like to emphasize the following:

- To achieve equality between minority and majority populations through the implementation of the right to education and the protection of language, the state institutions and legal bodies should take all necessary measures to make education for minorities equally accessible, attainable, and reasonable, and give every minority the right to use, care for, and pass on their own language.
- According to the needs of each minority, minority language should:
 - ❖ be the language of instruction in preschool and elementary school while the majority language would be taught as its own subject.
 - ❖ be represented in a substantial part of the secondary school curriculum.
- Including minority studies as subject in the education system and improvement of teacher education regarding minorities would have a direct impact on having more inclusive societies. Having the teachers educated in minority issues and teaching young people from early age about minorities would create mutual understanding and respect towards the other.
- The holistic organization of the formal and non-formal education systems would better reflect changes in society and promote active participation, which are not sufficiently considered in various formal education systems. Non-formal education and the expertise of NGOs should be better recognised and supported as an important tool for learning.

Therefore YEN:

- **Highlights** the importance of active citizenship and participation of minority youth within society through education system.
- **Urges** for equal access to education for marginalised and vulnerable groups and minorities, as well as desegregation of schools, where the practice persists. This will also require the increase of research and improvement of teacher education regarding minorities and vulnerable and marginalised groups.
- **Urges** for official recognition and adequate representation of minority languages and history within society, particularly in all levels of the education system, the public sphere, in state institutions and the media, with the provision of platforms to promote and preserve minority languages and culture.
- **Calls** for the promotion of societal-oriented education and empowerment within the education system with the implementation of subjects regarding decision-making processes and active citizenship in the education system.