



## Universala Esperanto-Asocio

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2nd Forum on Minority Issues  
Geneva, 13 November 2009

Madam Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Universal Esperanto Association is committed to the defence of linguistic rights.

As regards the question of rights of minorities, we would like to stress the following points.

In order to achieve effective and adequate participation in the political field, it is important that minority languages be recognized and respected. Minority groups should have a real possibility to use their language freely and to teach it to their children.

To achieve this, it is necessary to establish linguistic policies which aim to protect regional and minority languages.

As Professor Grin pointed out in his report entitled "Ten years of Support of Regional and Minority Languages in the European Union"\*, the funding agreed by the European Union for its programmes to stimulate regional and minority languages is clearly less than the funding for other linguistic programmes in the European Union. Consequently, States could achieve significant results at a lower cost in the protection of minority languages.

We wish to stress that a meeting like this one permits an exchange of experiences which is very valuable for all its participants. This exchange is taking place at State and NGO level. It is worthy of note that a similar exchange takes place at civil society level through the use of Esperanto, a neutral and democratic language used on a global scale.

The Universal Esperanto Association offers to linguistic minority groups the possibility of denouncing violations of linguistic rights by means of an Internet site specific to this subject and to the interventions of its representatives during the sessions of the Human Rights Council. Moreover, it serves as a voice-bearer for minorities, as happened yesterday, 12 November 2009, for the Swiss Federation of the Deaf.

Dankon pro via atento.

Thank you for your attention.

\* "Ten Years of EU Support for Regional and Minority Languages: a Financial Assessment", Professor François Grin, University of Geneva, Observatoire "Economie, Langues et Formation" (ELF)

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