



Statement of Ireland
43rd session of the Human Rights Council

Item 3: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on minority issues

11 March 2020

Madam President,

Ireland aligns with the statement of the EU and thanks the Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues for his report with a focus on Education, language and the human rights of minorities.

We note with interest the update from the Forum on Minority Issues and welcome the recommendation from the Forum on the importance of implementing Sustainable Development Goal 4 to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Ireland is a country with a significant history of migration and we have a deep appreciation of the importance of the value of minority languages. Our National Migrant Integration Strategy commits to keeping under review the adequacy of language supports in schools to cater for the language needs of children from ethnic minorities.

To this end, we have introduced the Primary Language Curriculum in primary schools. This Curriculum seeks to broaden children's understanding of the world through a rich variety of language experiences and through fostering an awareness and appreciation of other languages and cultures.

In Second Level schools, we have expanded beyond the traditionally taught languages such as French, German, Italian and Spanish, and we now include languages such as Arabic, Japanese, Russian, Mandarin Chinese, Polish, Portuguese and Lithuanian as curricular subjects. This reflects the increasing diversity of the Irish classroom and is one way in which we try to ensure inclusivity and to assist those who come to Ireland without English or Irish as their first language.

Mr. de Vareennes, from your research, have you come across any best practice examples surrounding the teaching of languages to migrants, in particular those from ethnic minorities?

Thank you.