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EP backs Minimum standards for minorities in the EU

Press release from EFA MEP Miroslavs Mitrofanovs

MEPs have strongly supported a report calling for minimum standards for minorities in the EU (rapporteur József NAGY).

The report represents a complete overview of the European Parliament's position on the rights of national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities in the EU.

The text was overwhelmingly adopted on November 13, 2018 by 6/7 of the Parliament.

EFA MEP **Miroslavs Mitrofanovs** welcomed the report and the overwhelming backing of MEPs:

"This report is a big step forward after decades of stagnation in the field of minority rights.

"After joining the EU, some member states' attitudes towards national minorities has worsened, partly due to a lack of control and oversight on the part of EU institutions.

"By adopting this report, the European Parliament makes it absolutely clear that member states and the European Union must do more in order to protect the rights of persons belonging to minorities".

The report concentrates on combating discrimination, hate crime and hate speech, and defines national and ethnic minorities. There are also chapters related to cultural rights, the right to education and language rights.

Most of Parliament's recommendations are based on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.

The report calls on the Commission to draw up a common framework of EU minimum standards for the protection of minorities. This framework could consist of at least three instruments: the guidelines reflecting good practices within the Member States, a Commission recommendation, taking into consideration existing national measures, subsidiarity and proportionality and a legislative proposal for a directive on minimum standards for minorities in the EU, including clear benchmarks and sanctions.

With regard to migrant minorities, political groups have achieved a compromise stipulating that all national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities should be protected, but in certain situations (for example, language rights) the scope for protection of national minorities is wider.

The Parliament supported the Greens/EFA amendment calling upon the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights to monitor cases of hate crime and hate speech in EU states and to report regularly on cases and trends.

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Miroslavs Mitrofanovs

Member

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