

Hungary's Statement on Slovakia, UPR 18th Session, 3 February 2014
Mr President,

Hungary welcomes the delegation of Slovakia to this UPR session and would like to thank it for the comprehensive summary of the human rights situation in the country. We commend the Government for involving the civil society and the academia in the preparatory process of the national UPR report.

Hungary acknowledges the establishment of the Government Plenipotentiary for National Minorities in 2012, although in June 2013 the Plenipotentiary resigned and his first activity report was altered by the Government, deleting all the critical comments and proposals aiming the enhancement of the Slovak legal framework on minority rights in vigour. In light of this development we would welcome an update about the work and the main challenges of this advisory body in promoting minority rights.

Hungary welcomes the ongoing work aimed at adopting of a "national strategy for the protection and promotion of human rights" which will also "reflect recommendations of international monitoring bodies together with human rights developments at the national, European and international level". As my delegation remains seriously concerned about the shortcomings with regard to the use of minority languages in Slovakia, we express our confidence that due priority will be given to the full implementation of all recommendations issued by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages by Slovakia.

Hungary is particularly concerned about the restrictive character of the Slovak State Language Law, which despite its amendment in 2011 still contains restrictive provisions, as highlighted by the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The deficiencies of the language legislation constitute obstacles to the use of minority languages, therefore Hungary considers it important that a more comprehensive legislation on minority languages be adopted in order to ensure an appropriate balance between the promotion of the state language and the right and real possibilities to use minority languages.

Hungary would also like to recommend, in line with the suggestions of the Council of Europe, that the efforts to provide adequate opportunities for children belonging to minorities to learn their mother tongue and in their mother tongue in schools be improved.

Hungary welcomes the ratification by Slovakia of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In this regard, my delegation would recommend the ratification of OPCAT.

Finally, let me express our gratitude to Slovakia for playing a leading role during the drafting of the Optional Protocol to CRC on a communications procedure.
Thank you Mr President.