

## **INTERVENTION-General Debate**

*“Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance”*

### **146 IPU ASSEMBLY –Manama. Bahrein**

Mr Ivan Čelić, Member of the Croatian Parliament

Dear Colleagues, dear Parliamentarians

We are witnessing an increasing level of intolerance in the world of today. It is a wide ranging and comprehensive problem that our states, nations and communities are facing today.

Many of these problems have their source in the non-recognition of the rights of national minorities, other languages and minority cultures.

Non-recognition of minority rights can very easily lead to extremism and conflict. It can also be used by other outside factors that pretend to defend minorities and create chaos in other states.

The Croatian Parliament established long ago a special Committee on Human and Minority Rights that monitors the implementation of policies regarding the national minorities.

These policies have to be in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic that gives our national minorities wide spectrum of political, cultural, linguistic and educational rights.

National minorities have eight (8) member seats in our Parliament, reserved for them in each parliamentary term.

In protecting and monitoring of the implementation of the minority rights, parliament and its members regularly consult with domestic and international bodies, experts and act upon signed and international documents. They co-operate with scholarly and professional, governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Minorities have often, as we all know, been used as a pretext for starting conflicts in human history. Examples are all around us now and throughout history.

Since the non-inclusion and non-respecting these rights can have serious consequences, our duty, as parliamentarians, is to ensure their protection in our societies and take away the potential pretext for intervention of any kind through foreign powers.

One of the pressing issues, especially in Europe, I would say, is the mistrust in democracy and democratic institutions. Herein lies the probably the biggest challenge for parliaments and its members.

The problem is the same when it comes to media.

We should call upon the already existing documents, such as the United Nations *Universal Declaration on Human Rights*.

Even the IPU has adopted numerous significant documents, *Quebec Declaration on Citizenship, Identity and linguistic and cultural diversity in a globalized world* in 2012 being one of them.

Here I would also like to use the opportunity to commend the efforts of the Inter-Parliamentary Union who has always promoted values of dialogue between States and encouraged social dialogue from within the States. That is the only way to overcome the difficulties and challenges we are faced with today.

Thank you