



# Statement of the Youth of European Nationalities on the European Commission's decision on the Minority Safe Pack Initiative

After a decade of intensive calls for promotion and improvement of minority rights in the European Union, on 14 January 2021, the European Commission took a stance that clearly goes against the EU values. By rejecting yet another European Citizens Initiative (ECI) the European Commission showed its disregard for one of few instruments of participatory democracy.

In times when human rights are globally being violated, the European Commission sent a disappointing signal to more than 50 million of its citizens who belong to national and linguistic minorities, that they do not matter.

For those in the ivory tower "diversity" and "inclusion" remain empty promises. This is a decision that not only goes against the call of the European Parliament but completely discredits the will of more than a million EU citizens that supported the MSPI.

While minority rights are a part of the human rights framework, the system as a whole is not sufficiently responsive to the needs of minority members. Without the explicit legal recognition of minorities as well as cultural and linguistic diversity, there is a greater chance of inequity, injustice and discrimination. There would be no need for minority rights, if human rights were upheld by all. Rather than an act of privilege, minority rights should be understood as specific measures for the protection of all, so even the most disadvantaged, marginalised and vulnerable can benefit from the same standards of human dignity as the rest of the society.

**Minority rights are human rights.** In other words, in order to uphold and fulfil human rights (of all), minority rights need to be respected, protected and guaranteed.

Yet, in 2021 the EU still has not recognized the diversity of needs of its citizens. Until the EU officially recognizes the rights of people belonging to minorities, "united in diversity" will remain what it is – an empty slogan serving only the most privileged ones.

This decision yet again affects the lives of young people the most. Minority youth does not need empty promises. We need change. We need actions.



The decision of the European Commission has not only left many young members of minorities disappointed and concerned about their future but it has deepened the growing alienation of minority youth from the European institutions.

We are here to remind you that **YOU ARE NOT ALONE.**

At the Youth of European Nationalities (YEN) we will keep renewing our call for the promotion of diversity and equity through increasing awareness, encouraging collaboration, sharing best practices and concrete actions on the rights of minority youth.

Our advocacy will not be finished until the situation of all young people belonging to minorities is changed.

