

Declaration on the foundation of the „European Dialogue Forum of Traditional National Minorities, Constitutional Regions and Regional Languages“

The Intergroup for Traditional National Minorities, Constitutional Regions and Regional Languages (henceforth: Intergroup), represented by Mr. Csaba Tabajdi, in his capacity as President of the Intergroup, Michl Ebner, in his capacity as Co-President of the Intergroup, and the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), represented by Mr. Hans Heinrich Hansen, in his capacity as President of the Federal Union of European Nationalities, and the Youth of European Nationalities, represented by Mr. Aleksander Studen-Kirchner, in his capacity as President of the Youth of European Nationalities have agreed on the following declaration on the foundation of a „European Dialogue Forum of Traditional National Minorities, Constitutional Regions and Regional Languages“ (henceforth: European Dialogue Forum).

Goal and objectives of the Forum:

In the 45 states of Europe live 337 autochthonous, national minorities with almost 105 million members. Every 7th European citizen belongs to an autochthonous, national minority or a so-called constitutional region, "co-nation" or "co-people". 90 languages are spoken in Europe, of which 37 are considered national languages and 53 are considered „stateless languages“. According to official records 40 million citizens of the enlarged European Union speak a regional- or minority language. This amounts to almost ten percent of the citizens of the Union. Despite the numeric and *de facto* relevance of the European minorities they are not considered according to their importance on a European level. The constitution of a European Dialogue Forum will pursue a consequential inclusion and participation of the minorities and co-peoples on the European level.

The European Dialogue Forum serves as an open and regular forum for representatives of the autochthonous, national minorities, co-peoples and regional or minority language speakers. Current challenges, problems and long term strategies in Europe will be discussed within the Forum and the contact between politics and the European minorities will thereby be brought into an institutional framework. Commentaries, recommendations and resolutions will be discussed and adopted in the Forum with the aim of calling attention to problems/challenges of the European minorities and co-peoples. The committee will call attention to the importance of the European minorities and co-peoples through common media- and informational activities.

Formation

Upon its establishment, the European minorities and co-peoples in the European Dialogue Forum are represented by delegates of the FUEN / YEN and the Intergroup. Further representatives from international organizations will be invited to participate as guests.

Meetings

The Committee will meet at the European Parliament twice every calendar year. The call to meetings will be administered by the chairman and before the meetings an agenda will be agreed upon and sent to the members.

Functions of the secretariat /infrastructure

The coordination and functions of the secretariat of the committee will be conducted by the Secretariat of the Intergroup in cooperation with the Secretariat of the FUEN. The results of the meetings and commentaries, statements, and positions of the European Dialogue Forum will be publicized.

Done in Strasbourg, the 24th of April, 2008

Csaba Tabajdi
Intergroup President

Michl Ebner
Intergroup Co-President

Hans Heinrich Hansen
President of FUEN

Aleksander Studen-Kirchner
President of YEN