

Activity Report 2012

**OF THE FEDERAL UNION
OF EUROPEAN NATIONALITIES**



With more than 90 member organisations in 32 European countries, FUEN is the largest umbrella organisation of the autochthonous, national minorities in Europe.

To the autochthonous, national minorities/ethnic groups belong the minorities that came into being as a result of developments in European history, as a result of the changes of state borders and other historical events. To the autochthonous, national minorities/ethnic groups also the peoples of Europe belong who have never established a state and who live as a minority in the territory of a state.

FUEN – which was founded more than 60 years ago in Paris –considers itself as the advocate of these European minorities.

As civil society representative actor, FUEN represents the various interests on regional, national and in particular on the European level. To this end, FUEN works closely together with the Council of Europe, the European Union, the European Parliament and the European regions and maintains good contacts with the United Nations and the OSCE.

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On the following pages we made an overview of our main activities of 2012. Please also have a look at our Internet site www.fuen.org or in the social media at Facebook, Twitter or YouTube.



FUEN: on the right track

FUEN is developing faster and faster, increasingly effective, into a pan-European representative organisation for the interests of the autochthonous, national minorities and ethnic groups, and every year again I am surprised when I think about what we have been able to achieve with a small, but effective staff.

100 million people are part of a European minority. Already in the EU alone 40 million people are speaking another language than the official language of the country they are living in.

That means that we minorities are a power that the politicians in the EU have to take into account. They can no longer ignore us, when we – and I already anticipate the future – start collecting one million signatures in the citizens' initiative for diversity in Europe that was initiated by us. The minorities are an important element of diversity.

On the other hand, there is eternal fight for funding. In regard to our financial situation we are facing major challenges. Some institutional sponsors left us during the year and we have been able to find some new sponsors. Year after year we have to work hard to keep FUEN afloat. We are not better of than you, our member organisations. It is a sad story and no one wants to hear it anymore. But it is true, and that does not make things better.

- FUEN is on the right track at the moment. It receives European recognition and appreciation, but little money and even less personnel to implement our ideas. There are important issues, such as the Roma-project, the House of the Minorities and the Language Project, which – when implemented – will establish FUEN as an actor in another, large and European context.
- At the same time the success is dependent on the success, or in other words: the condition for achieving the goal is to achieve the goal. Or written differently: we are going round in circles. So the question remains how long FUEN can make efforts beyond its means – personnel and financial. In short: the positive signals are no longer enough.

But on the other hand there are some very positive developments in terms of substance. For that we must thank many people, in the first place our members. With the reform of our membership fees and the conditions for membership we have increased our own revenue. We also gave membership

a more binding character, not in the last place because we believe that there is more that binds us together during the year.

I would like to thank our institutional sponsors, who make it possible for us to do our work by funding our organisation directly or with project grants. Without our sponsors, our eternal song of sorrow about our financial situation would be sadder still. If you have a look at the back cover of this annual report, you find the list of sponsors.

As the third pillar of our success I would like to thank the staff and all the volunteers who work for FUEN and my colleagues in the Presidium. Only with our joint effort we are able to adhere to our high ambitions. In the first place I think of our core-team in Flensburg. But also of many project workers, who support us in implementing our many activities.

- I think of the people active in the Youth of European Nationalities, YEN,
- of the volunteers in the working group for the House of the Minorities, the so-called FEM-project,
- of the Roma-project, which we pursue under the title “Minorities helping Minorities”,
- of the team of Language Diversity, and
- of the European Dialogue Forum.

Without the dedication of so many people, we would not be able to look ahead with such optimism.

With kind regards,



Hans Heinrich Hansen,
FUEN-President



On expedition

FUEN Congress in Moscow

Challenge met! This short conclusion could be given afterwards in regard to the FUEN Congress of 2012. For the first time the largest meeting of the European minorities was organised in the Russian metropolis of Moscow. Visa-troubles, logistical challenges and the unsettled political situation (before the FUEN Congress there was an increased number of protests against the “Putin-system” in Russia) had led to some concerns before the start of the congress. Without reason, as became clear once the congress went smoothly and successfully. Our member organisation in Russia, the International Association for German Culture IVDK assumed the responsibility to do the local organising. Thank you!

FUEN had travelled to Moscow to learn and not to act as a schoolmaster:

- How is the issue of minorities, the nationalities in this multi-cultural country dealt with?
- What about the implementation of the Language Charter in Russia and could we, “from the west” learn something from the Russian experiences in language planning?

There were answers to many questions and new questions popped up. Next to intense debates during the congress and during free time, there was also an additional cultural programme to make us more familiar to our large host-country. The participations had the chance to participate in a traditional festive evening, there was a visit to the renovated Bolshoi Theatre, a guided city tour and much more.

Please read a more comprehensive report in our congress documentation, which you can receive in print from the FUEN Secretariat or in the Internet at www.fuen.org.





AGDM-Meeting in Berlin

Visit to the German Parliament (Bundestag)

For the first time, the Working Group of the German Minorities in FUEN (AGDM) had its meeting in Berlin in 2012. “A great success”, as the chairman of AGDM, Koloman Brenner, underlined. So successful that the German or German-speaking minorities from Poland, Hungary, Romania, Estonia, Latvia, Slovenia, Serbia, Croatia, Russia and Denmark that were present decided to organise their meeting again in the German capital in 2013.

“All the German minorities are at the moment worried about their own future. Therefore we are looking for dialogue with the German federal government, so that together we can discuss how to guarantee the future of the German minorities in Europe and how we can better present our skills and our importance for Germany”, said Brenner. The AGDM formulated some strategic observations.

The Parliamentary State Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and chairman of the Association for German Cultural Relations Abroad (VDA), Hartmut Koschyk, received the FUEN-guests for an exchange of opinions in the German Bundestag (parliament).

A parliamentary reception in the Bundeshaus building in Berlin was the highlight of the meeting and offered the participants the opportunity to speak directly to members of the Bundestag, with the Minority Commissioner of the Federal Government, Christoph Bergner, and with representatives of the diplomatic service.



EUROPEADA: South Tyrol wins in sunny “Sorbistan”

Lusatia was turned upside down. Last summer Domowina – the Federation of the Lusatian Sorbs in Germany – organised the EUROPEADA. The football tournament of the European minorities took place within the framework of the jubilee year of Domowina. Domowina celebrated its 100th anniversary.

19 teams battled in a fair competition in the bilingual region of Lusatia. In beautiful football weather and watched by an audience of around 2000 people the South Tyroleans were able to win the tournament for the second time in a row, after 2008. They defeated the Roma from Hungary.

The football matches took place across the region where the Sorbs are living, so that no one was left empty-handed. Around 17,000 spectators were just as involved as the players themselves. The popular “Language Diversity Team” created a special atmosphere with their indefatigable efforts to promote multilingualism in Europe during the EUROPEADA. With clapping cards, jelly babies and energy-drinks the right mood was set in the stadiums.

“A great tournament – a perfect highlight for our jubilee celebrations”, was the conclusion of the chairman of Domowina, David Statnik.

The tournament did not take place completely without political attention. In Greece several media were very critical about the participation of the Western Thrace Turks. The official authorities there do not recognise this minority.




16.–24.6.2012

EUROPSKE MIŠTERSTVA AWTOCHTONYCH,
NARODNYCH MJEŠINOW W KOPAŃCY

EUROPSKE MEJSTARSTWO AWTOCHTONYCH,
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FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT OF THE AUTOCHTHONOUS,
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100 lět DOMOWINA 100 Jahre Domowina

FUEN

Freistaat SACHSEN

westlausitzer Fußball- und Sportverband



House of the Minorities and Forum of the European Minorities

In Berlin a think-tank meeting took place that was funded and supported by the Danish government. The point of departure for the meeting was a joint initiative of FUEN and the Danish minority. Based on the Quo-Vadis workshops during the latest FUEN-Congresses, dealing with the future direction of FUEN, a meeting took place where representatives of several member organisations, MEPs, representatives of European institutions and other active people considered how the aims of the European minorities can be realised more effectively.

Two topics will be further developed within two different working groups.

I) House of the Minorities in Flensburg – Permanent Representation in Brussels

In the old town of Flensburg, in the direct vicinity of the current FUEN-office, a historical merchant's shop and a warehouse have been acquired.

- After a complete renovation of the building the House of the Minorities will be developed here – a centre of information, documentation and action, which will also become the new seat for FUEN.
- Furthermore it is a long-time wish of FUEN to establish a “Permanent Representation” in the capital of the European Union Brussels, the place where European policies are being made.
- The House of the Minorities will be closely linked to a “Permanent Representation” of the minorities in Brussels.





II) Forum of the European Minorities

We also work on the idea of a Forum of the European Minorities, which shall function as the roof under which the activities of the House of the Minorities and the Permanent Representation will fall. The Forum will offer the chance to begin decentralised activities also in other regions and with other minorities.

- Another aim is to offer a platform for the different actors (regions, European institutions, politicians, experts, institutes, et cetera) where they together can work for the interests of the minorities. We are examining if we can establish a grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC) – a legal form that among other things will enable us to submit prioritised applications for European funding.

Citizens' initiative moving towards one million signatures

The European Citizens' Initiative is a new instrument of the European Union, which was created to involve civil society in the decision-making process. Together with a number of member organisations FUEN decided to make use of this instrument of citizens' participation and in the past 12 months it has been working hard on its implementation.

Besides FUEN, the founding partners of the citizens' initiative are:

Democratic Alliance of the Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ).
South Tyrolean People's Party (SVP)
Youth of European Nationalities (YEN)

- The partners are resolved to collect one million signatures within one-year time. By doing so, FUEN and the participating partners want to bind the European Union in assisting the minorities in realising our goals.
- At the same time the minorities / ethnic groups demand from the European Union that it will take its motto "United in diversity" seriously and that it protects and supports the linguistic and cultural diversity of the minorities in Europe.





With a team of experts we developed a “Minority SafePack”, a security package for the European minorities. The partners of the citizens’ initiative strive for concrete improvements in the situation of the minorities.

The founding partners want to collect the one million signatures within the framework of a campaign – with the motto:

“You are not alone: one million people in Europe for diversity.”

In our Minority SafePack, the security package for minorities, FUEN calls for a set of measures and concrete legal acts (laws) to promote and to protect the autochthonous, national minorities and the regional or minority languages.

- If the citizens’ initiative is successful, then the organisers of the citizens’ initiative have the opportunity to present their issue in the European Parliament.
- Furthermore the chances are better that the European Commission will consider an initiative - which then is supported by one million citizens of the EU.
- The official launch of the citizens’ initiative will take place in June 2013 during the FUEN Congress in Brixen, South Tyrol.
- The campaign will run for an entire year until 2014, the year of the elections of the European Parliament.
- The hearing in the European Parliament and the response from the European Commission are expected in autumn 2014.



Political participation – European commitment

As an organisation representing the interests of the European minorities we are travelling regularly to Brussels, Strasbourg and to the minority regions.

- The European Dialogue Forum has organised together with the MEP from South Tyrol, Herbert Dorfmann, one of our successful “Parliamentary Lunch Debates” in the European Parliament. In a comfortable atmosphere in the restaurant of the parliament, a discussion took place on topical issues together with our guests - among them several Members of Parliament, members of the Dialogue Forum and experts.

The main topics were the Roma-project and FUEN's approach to language policy. FUEN-Vice-President Martha Stocker and FUEN-advisor Dr Jürgen Schöning presented the different topics.

Several Members of Parliament were present, among them the chairman of the Intergroup, Carl Haglund (who a few month later has become the Defence Minister of Finland).

Next to the events of the European Dialogue Forum, we are regularly in Strasbourg and Brussels during the sessions of the European Parliament.

- Together with MEP Iuliu Winkler (RMDSZ) FUEN organised a discussion round in the European Parliament. With MEPs and members of FUEN we were discussing the chances and potential pitfalls of the European Citizens' Initiative.
- FUEN is a regular participant in meetings for Multilingualism, the so-called “Civil Society Platform” in Brussels. In this consultative body, FUEN is an official partner of the European Commission, and as such FUEN was also invited at the conference that took place on the occasion of the EU Council Presidency in Cyprus, on issues related to multilingualism.
- With press releases, talks, and policy briefs we try to increase our influence and to let our voice be heard in the European arena. We work together with many MEPs. But we have to thank “our own MEPs” Iuliu Winkler, Csaba Sogor and Herbert Dorfmann in particular, who always are open to the concerns of the minorities. But we are also in close contact with other interest groups, such as NPLD or MIDAS.



Solidarity with the Roma: Minorities helping Minorities

Our project team, led by Dr Jürgen Schöning and Dieter Lubeseder continues to work on the issue of the Roma. Under the title “Minorities helping Minorities” practical support shall be given and awareness shall be raised for the interests of the Roma.

Besides several talks in Budapest, Brussels, Berlin et cetera, also two fact-finding missions in the target country Hungary were undertaken. Furthermore there were several meetings with the Hungarian ambassador in Berlin, Dr Czukor.

- It is very gratifying that for the first time, the Robert Bosch Foundation is supporting a project of FUEN, with 25,000 Euro. The fact that we comply with the conditions of this prestigious foundation from Stuttgart is in the words of FUEN-President Hans Heinrich Hansen “an accolade for our project concept and also for the commitment of FUEN to improve the situation of the Sinti and Roma in Europe.”
- The grant will be used to launch a pilot project, with which FUEN wants to make a sustainable contribution to the situation of the Sinti and Roma.



- Under the guiding principle of “Solidarity with the Roma – Minorities helping Minorities”, decades of intercultural experience and the expertise of minorities as mediators and bridge-builders will be used in more than 15 sub-projects.
- The projects range from sports competitions and artistic activities that help integration, school and education projects, but also measures to produce energy with bio-waste, compost making for organic farming and the self-marketing by the Roma of agricultural produce using cooperatives.
- The initiative is carried out with the minorities in Schleswig-Holstein and Denmark together with the Community of the Hungarian Germans and the Roma-self-government in Hungary and the Hungarian Ministry for Human Resources, which is the Hungarian ministry responsible for Roma issues, is our project partner.
- The Hungarian Ministry for Human Resources supports a first pilot of the FUEN-project in Hungary with a complementary financial contribution.
- By including a specific budget line in the operational programme for the EU-structural funds from 2014 onwards the conditions will be created that will make sustainable EU funding for the FUEN activities possible.



Language diversity in Europe

The issue of linguistic diversity in Europe and the specific challenges of the smaller and smallest languages and the regional or minority languages have been a main topic in FUEN since several years.

In 2012 the network RML2future, which was funded by the EU, received high grades from the European Commission. The idea behind the network to work for the smaller and smallest languages in Europe will be continued.

- Each year FUEN elaborates a statement on one Fundamental Right of the Minorities / Ethnic Groups. In a discussion led by FUEN-Vice President Hauke Bartels the FUEN Fundamental Right to Language was introduced in Moscow.
- Also at the discussion with Members of the European Parliament, at the Parliamentary Lunch Debate in 2012 in the European Parliament the topic of language was focused on.
- An essential element in the establishment of the House of the Minorities and the Forum of the European Minorities (see page 9-10) will be exactly the issue of linguistic diversity in Europe.
- As the only European organisation in the field of regional and minority languages, FUEN succeeded in receiving a grant from the European Commission based on a follow-up application



- As lead partner FUEN works on increasing the visibility of multilingualism in Europe, together with YEN and with the Witaj-language centre. The project had a very successful start under the slogan “Language Diversity”.
- This became apparent at the EUROPEADA tournament in Lusatia. Without the Language Diversity Team and their creative and media-friendly actions, the EUROPEADA would have been quite a bit duller.

Project manager Judith Walde explains:

“We want to realise the idea of our RML2future-network, i.e. to establish a centre of expertise for language diversity. There is a huge demand all over Europe, especially among the smaller and smallest languages. For that we need more visibility and awareness raising for multilingualism as a valuable asset – that is what we focus on with our current campaign.”



Communication and visibility: **www.fuen.org and social media**

FUEN presents itself with a new visual identity. After the new logo and corporate design with a uniform font and graphic layout we now have given our homepage a complete overhaul. Now our web-presence is up-to-date again.

Thanks to all the member organisations who are translating our texts in their languages. It is our goal that at least the introduction texts shall be available in as many minority languages as possible. Also in this context we should show the diversity that is represented in FUEN.

- The internet-site www.fuen.org is our business card to the outside world. The external communication and the visibility of our topics and messages, however, are only partially communicated through this homepage.
- Social media become more and more important. This is the place for opinion making, exchange of arguments and the debate for the future and for today.
- For civil society organisations such as ours, there are huge opportunities to reach millions of people with only modest means. That is why we intensified our activities in the social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube). Especially our Language Diversity Team is a forerunner and inspires us. We are working on building up our campaigning abilities, which are required to reach many people with good content and in an attractive form, in particular also young people.

Visit us on Facebook, Twitter or YouTube.





Finances – our headache

It is always the same: the insufficient level of financing for our work is our biggest headache. We share this with many non-governmental organisations.

Unfortunately a new application for an institutional grant from the European Union was not successful. That means that the institutional budget and the number of staff of FUEN remains below the financial means necessary to maintain the level of activity that we strive at.

There is a ray of hope however: the reform of the membership contributions and the increased interest in our work have led to a significant increase in income from the member organisations.

It is positive to mention that FUEN never had such a high amount of project funding as in this year.

- We thank the European Commission (EU programme for Lifelong Learning),
- the German Federal Ministry of the Interior,
- the Robert Bosch Foundation,
- the Danish Sydslesvigudvalget of the Danish Parliament, the Folketing,
- the Prime Minister of the Federal Land of Brandenburg and
- the Hungarian Ministry for Human Resources.

We would like to thank our institutional sponsors, who make it possible for us to do our work and continue to do so:

- Land of Schleswig-Holstein
- Free State of Saxony
- Autonomous Province Bozen/Bolzano-South Tyrol
- Autonomous Region Trentino-South Tyrol
- Danish Ministry of Education / Parliamentary Committee “Sydslesvigudvalget”
- Land of Carinthia
- German-speaking Community in Belgium

Sponsors

We thank all sponsors and member organisations, which have supported FUEN materially, immaterially and financially over the years.



Government of the Land Schleswig-Holstein, Germany



Government of the German-speaking Community in Belgium



Ministry for Education, Denmark



Autonomous Province Bozen/Bolzano-South Tyrol, Italy



Free State of Saxony, Germany



Federal Ministry of the Interior, Germany



Office of the Government of Carinthia, Austria



Autonomous Region Trentino-South Tyrol, Italy



European Commission



Prime Minister of the Land Brandenburg



Hermann Niermann Foundation, Germany

Appeal for donations

In order to continue its job for the protection of the autochthonous, national minorities effectively, FUEN is dependent on support, especially on financial support.

Bank account

Account holder: FUEV

Bank: Sydbank Flensburg

Bank code: 215 10 600

Account number: 1000 351 600

IBAN: DE 55 215 106 001 000 351 600

SWIFT: SYBKDE22

If you have any questions, please contact the Secretariat in Flensburg.

Thank you very much for your support!

FUEV e.V. (a registered society) has a notice of exemption from the German tax office in Flensburg, tax number: 15290 7420 0 from 30 June 2008 as a recognised charity and is allowed to issue certificates of donation, according to the template of the tax office.

On receipt of the donation (100,- Euro minimum) you will receive a donation certificate by return of mail, which will mention that we will use the allocated amount only for our statutory aims.



FEDERAL UNION OF EUROPEAN NATIONALITIES
FÖDERALISTISCHE UNION EUROPÄISCHER VOLKSGRUPPEN
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