



FUEN

Activity Report 2014

POLITICAL
PARTICIPATION

FUNDAMENTAL
RIGHTS

LINGUISTIC
DIVERSITY

SOLIDARITY
WITH
THE ROMA

EUROPEAN
CITIZENS'
INITIATIVE

EUROPEAN
NETWORK

FORUM OF THE
EUROPEAN
MINORITIES

“ANYONE WHO ADDRESSES SOMETHING, WILL CHANGE REALITY”

FUEN in 2014. Originating out of the turmoil of the two world wars, founded in Paris, with its seat in Flensburg and active throughout Europe, FUEN is a child of our continent.

The Federal Union of European Nationalities, which is the full name of FUEN, is a non-governmental organisation that represents the interests of the minorities. There are more than 400 minorities in Europe, and almost 100 of them are registered as a member of FUEN: taken together they are a very substantial number of people.

FUEN is both a family and community of solidarity and also a competent interest group for the minorities, all at the same time.



In recent years FUEN has developed into the prime address for minority issues in Europe, according to political decision makers, cooperation partners and friends, and that not only on the occasion of our 65th anniversary.

This profile has different aspects and obliges us to deliver.

We cannot help to realise that the geopolitical situation in 2014 has seriously changed, both expected and unexpected. The economic crisis was followed by a crisis in legitimacy of the European institutions and a tendency to retreat to the national level. Everywhere the question of how to live together in the future is asked. Issues related to minorities are again – as they were already often enough – like an explosive device from history and cause for conflicts and, unfortunately, also for wars.

FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen therefore opened the congress of 2014 before an audience of more than 150 delegates from all over Europe with a speech that mainly focused on the developments in Crimea and in Ukraine.

“The situation of the autochthonous minorities in Europe has become a topic for the political agenda once again. With the East-West conflict in Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea and the war in the Donbas-region again has been abused as an excuse for military action.

What we can see in the East of Europe at the moment is that time and again, power politics is negatively affecting the “normal population”.

In April 2014, during the riots in Kiev, I was there attending the Kiev Security Forum. I met several representatives of minorities, in order to have a better understanding of their situation. My impression was similar to what we are given by the press on a daily basis: there is fear and uncertainty. We also do not have an easy solution. But it is our common task to give the national minorities, individuals and groups, a voice. The current situation in Ukraine and in Crimea reminds us how quickly normality can be brought to an end.”

The subject of Ukraine – as a depiction of the current tensions – has followed FUEN over the course of the year. In the Office of the House of Minorities was the first visit, after the official opening in October 2014, that by the Ukrainian Minority Commissioner Druzenko, and the visit that followed was by a delegation of the Germans in Russia.

The House of Minorities will become not only a centre for information and advice, but at this moment already new formats for conflict and crisis prevention and civic dialogue are being developed.

The question on how we want to live together in Europe in the future will become a huge challenge, and all forces in society have to contribute. It is beyond question that many conflicts are directly or indirectly connected to the question of how minorities are treated. The geo-political challenges, and not only those at the borders of Europe, lead to a new view on the understanding of minorities – albeit one that we have seen before.

This all sharpens our consciousness for the objectives of our community of solidarity. We observe a non-policy in regard to minorities on the European level, foremost in the European Commission.

Two years ago we had a major goal with the organisation of the Minority SafePack Initiative. Our European citizens' initiative did not entail extreme demands. We wanted to use the instrument of the citizens' initiative to create public awareness for our justified demands. At the moment we are appealing before the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg in order to annul the decision of the European Commission to reject the Minority SafePack, because it allegedly “falls manifestly outside the framework of competence of the EU”.

What is more, we noticed that in the new European Commission, no minority portfolio was created, although FUEN and partners have advocated strongly to achieve this, with the support of respected politicians.

In November 2014 and in March 2015 FUEN had meetings with the First Vice President of the new European Commission Frans Timmermans and the European Commissioner for Education and Culture, the Hungarian Commissioner Tibor Navracsics. Both were open and showed their understanding for minority issues in Europe, but reiterated that the EU has limited competences in the area.

In this context, we refer to the initiatives that the European Commission undertook after the horrendous attacks on Charlie Hebdo and the Jewish supermarket in Paris. In this case, the European Commission made a very strong statement against anti-Semitism and islamophobia. The Commission will organise a first annual colloquium on fundamental rights, focusing on tolerance and respect. Furthermore inclusion, diversity and civic values will be at the centre of new priorities for EU education policy.

If these steps are possible within the competences of the EU, the question may be raised why it is so hard for the EU to do something for the European minorities. Why do we always hear that the European Commission, or the Union, is not responsible? What is preventing the EU to take those initiatives that are possible within its competences? We are convinced that the Commission can do much more in the field of minority protection than it is undertaking at the present moment.

We continue to have confidence in our cooperation with the Members of the European Parliament. But after the elections for the new European Parliament in June 2014, for which FUEN called upon the European minorities to vote, extra efforts were needed to establish an Intergroup for the minorities.

Thus far, there is not a systematic and sustainable structure to discuss minority issues within the institutions of the European Union.

That is why FUEN repeats its proposal, addressed to the President of the European Parliament, Martin Schultz: in accordance with experiences in national and regional parliaments, he should establish a “Contact Forum at the European Parliament” to concentrate the issues and interests of the minorities vis à vis the European Union.

FUEN takes the view that the European minority communities and regional and minority languages offer a potential for living peaceful together and for dialogue. We have several successful project to realise that potential, with our congresses, the working groups and their seminars, the Language Diversity campaign and its first MILAS-Language Prize 2014, the project Minorities helping Minorities, the project House of Minorities, the European Citizens' Initiative Minority SafePack and the EUROPEADA2016.



FUEN is happy that the German federal government recognises what a positive impact successful minority policies can have and that it wants to use the experiences of the minorities in the German-Danish border region and the expertise of FUEN for its foreign policy. The German Foreign Affairs Minister Frank Walter Steinmeier said the following in his speech on the occasion of the celebrations of 60 years Bonn-Copenhagen Declarations:

“There is a fundamental understanding that lies behind every successful minority policy: violence and pressure are never a solution; only understanding and a deep sense of being together wil move things ahead.

In the north you have proven over the course of the past 60 years, what positive effects a successful minority policy can have. That is what you show on both sides of the border. And you also develop concepts that reverberate far beyond Germany and Denmark. Flensburg has developed into a centre for international questions related to minorities. This is where the European Centre for Minority Issues, which has been researching the subject for almost 20 years already and that tries to deescalate conflicts such as in Georgia and in Kosovo. Flensburg is also the seat of the Federal Union of European Nationalities, which is dedicated to the promotion of the rights of about 300 national minorities in Europe.

We want to use your expertise for our foreign policy too! Our goal is not to simply recommend copying the German-Danish minority model. The conflicts in the world are much too complex to do so. But I think that your experiences in the north of Germany and the south of Denmark can help us to identify important factors that may lead to deescalate minority conflicts.”

We, FUEN, are convinced that all our minorities have this expertise and that you can find it in the European regions. Policy does not end at the borders of the nation states, or at the borders of the European Union.

Conflict and crisis prevention, confidence-building measures and promoting dialogue in all possible manners as well as raising awareness for new (or forgotten) solutions for minority issues on the European continent, will induce us to create new formats and forms.

The credo remains, to paraphrase the philosopher Habermas: “Anyone who addresses something, will change reality.” That is why we continue to address the concerns of the minorities time and again – in the regions where we live, with our neighbours, through our projects, in the virtual world, and in our hearts.

The documentation Living Diversity 2014 gives you an impression of the activities of FUEN and its member organisations.

Susann Schenk and Hans Heinrich Hansen
Flensburg, Flensburg, May 2015

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1. PRESIDIUM MEETINGS

10.01.2014 – FUEN Vice President Martha Stocker accompanied the delegation for a farewell visit to former Prime Minister Luis Durnwalder

The Presidium of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), held by President Hans Heinrich Hansen, currently holds their meeting in Bozen/Bolzano.

One of the main topics of the Presidium meeting was the strategy in relation to obtaining the approval of the European Citizens' Initiative "Minority SafePack" by the European Commission. The Presidium paid a farewell visit to one of the members of the citizens' committee responsible, former Prime Minister Luis Durnwalder.

The European Citizens' Initiative "Minority SafePack", with the motto: "You are not alone: one million signatures for diversity in Europe", has the aim of bringing the issues of minorities and ethnic groups into the spotlight. A group of initiators was established, a citizens' committee consisting not only of former Prime Minister Luis Durnwalder as representative for the German and Ladin minorities in Italy, but also with President Hans Heinrich Hansen of FUEN and five other high-ranking minority representatives from all over Europe. In June last year the initiative was presented at the international FUEN Congress in Brixen for the first time.



Vice President Martha Stocker (3rd from the left), President Hans Heinrich Hansen (4th from the left) and other members of the FUEN Presidium at their farewell visit to former Prime Minister Luis Durnwalder

Self-administration and autonomy of minorities/ethnic groups/nationalities in Europe, their current political challenges and future perspective, form the main subjects of FUEN's work. The South Tyrolean People's Party SVP is one of the first member organisations of FUEN. Deputy chairwoman Martha Stocker of SVP is currently Vice President of FUEN. Also former Prime Minister Luis Durnwalder is among their most active supporters, and for that reason he was sincerely thanked at the farewell visit of the FUEN Presidium.

More information at:

www.fuen.org/news/single/article/presidium-of-the-federal-union-of-european-nationalities-fuen-holds-meeting-in-bozen-bolzano/

The presidium met in the year 2014 on the following dates:

04 February 2014 in Flensburg
18 – 19 March 2014 in Brussels
06 – 10 Mai 2014 in Flensburg (FUEN Congress)
04 – 06 June 2014 in Berlin
10 – 11 September 2014 in Flensburg
27 – 29 November 2014 in Berlin

2. MINORITY SAFEPACK INITIATIVE



**MINORITY
SAFEPACK
INITIATIVE**

YOU ARE NOT ALONE. ONE MILLION
SIGNATURES FOR DIVERSITY IN EUROPE

2.1 FUEN President and Minority Commissioner together at the European affairs committee

25.02.2014 – At the 22nd meeting of the European Affairs Committee of the Landtag (regional parliament) in Kiel FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen gave a report. After a debate in parliament already in September 2013 the Schleswig-Holstein Landtag decided unanimously to support the European citizens' initiative "Minority SafePack", after it was rejected by the European Commission.

In the Committee the FUEN President had the opportunity to present the latest developments and to speak about the general situation of FUEN. A very important topic was the financial position of the largest umbrella organisation of the European minorities. Furthermore Hans Heinrich Hansen pointed to the idea to begin working on an initiative report within the framework of the Committee of the Regions.



**Minority Commissioner Renate Schnack and
FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen**

The FUEN President was accompanied by the Commissioner of the Prime Minister for Minority Issues, Renate Schnack. In many aspects the Minority Commissioner supports the activity of FUEN and in particular as regards the "House of Minorities", which is under development in Flensburg, she is one of the most important supporters of this ambitious project.

Following the resolution of the Landtag from September, the Committee supported the efforts of the minorities in Europe to engage in a citizens' initiative. Furthermore the Committee stated that it will look for contact with the Minority Commissioner of the German Federal Government, Hartmut Koschyk, in order to plead for improvement of the financial situation of FUEN.

More information at:

www.fuen.org/news/single/article/fuen-president-and-minority-commissioner-together-at-the-european-affairs-committee/

2.2 FUEN President: “We do not throw in the towel!”

The FUEN-Member Organisations decided in Flensburg to engage in an action before the European Court of Justice.

It was a severe setback for FUEN, and for the minorities in Europe, that the European Commission rejected the citizens’ initiative of FUEN, the “Minority SafePack Initiative – with the very short reason that it did not fall within the “framework of competences” of the EU.

But the minorities will not easily accept defeat, said the President of the Federal Union of European Nationalities last weekend at the Assembly of Delegates in Flensburg: FUEN is lodging an appeal at the European Court of Justice in Luxemburg against the decision of the European Commission: “We are convinced that the minorities are well within the framework of competence of the EU – and therefore we are ready to go to court “, explained Hans Heinrich Hansen.

FUEN makes legal history. The chances that this step may lead to success are not so bad, according to the FUEN Delegates. With this step FUEN will make legal history, according to some: currently there are hardly any academic articles that deal with this issue. FUEN Members called the opinion of the EU on its minorities “shocking”.

Hans Heinrich Hansen also emphasised that FUEN wants to use the European elections and the installation of the new European Commission to exercise political pressure. Until now, the large group of minorities in Europe hardly played a role politically in Europe: with the citizens’ initiative this will have to change. But this will cost money, and as an NGO, FUEN only has limited resources, President Hansen pointed out: “It is therefore our main challenge to manage the balancing act of between high expectations and financial realities.”

The President called on the Member Organisations of FUEN to stay on top of things, so that the minorities can use the common strengths in order to achieve this goal.

More information at:

<http://www.nordschleswiger.dk/news.4460.aspx?newscatid=36&newsid=66749&h=FUEN-Präsident:>

2.3 Statement of FUEN regarding the governmental level dispute on the Minority SafePack in Romania

07.07.2014 – The Federal Union of European Nationalities - FUEN expresses our full solidarity with the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) and their President Hunor KELEMEN, Deputy Prime Minister of the Government of Romania, in the governmental level dispute about the European citizens’ initiative Minority SafePack. This initiative, which was started on the proposal of the RMDSZ, encourages cooperation, dialogue and solutions on EU level through the adoption of good legislation protecting and securing the values represented by national minorities.

The intervention of the Government of Romania that was filed at the European Court of Justice and the public statements regarding its motivation reflect a rigid approach that is typical for the early twentieth century, and an outdated nation-state reflex not compatible with the efforts, interest and global perspective of a modern European state of the twenty first century. We hope that the Government of Romania led by Prime Minister Victor PONTA will have the wisdom to address this matter by withdrawing its intervention.

Acknowledging the very difficult situation of our member organization RMDSZ and our partner, President Hunor KELEMEN, Deputy Prime Minister of the Government of Romania, we are confident that in the next period they will find the most suitable solution for the benefit of the Hungarian community in Romania.

More information at:

www.fuen.org/news/single/article/statement-of-the-federal-union-of-european-nationalities-regarding-the-governmental-level-dispute-on-the-minority-safepack-in-romania/

2.4 Workshop about the Minority SafePack Citizens' Initiative in Budapest

13.11.2014 – On Thursday 13 November a workshop was organised at the Andrassy University in Budapest about the Minority SafePack Citizens' Initiative, which was rejected by the European Commission in 2013, and which is currently under appeal at the European Court of Justice. The workshop was open for everyone who is interested in and for all researchers in the field of minority protection.

Because of the highly topical character of the procedure at the European Court of Justice, FUEN Vice President Loránt Vincze first gave an introduction about the Minority SafePack, which was then followed by presentations by PhD-students of the Andrassy University about the specific proposals of the initiative. Afterwards, FUEN Legal Advisor Frank de Boer presented the legal arguments brought to the attention of the Court by the organisers of the citizens' initiative. The workshop was concluded with an open discussion with all the participants.

More information at:

www.fuen.org/news/single/article/workshop-about-the-minority-safepack-citizens-initiative-in-budapest/



FUEN KONGRESS

NORDSCHLESWIG & SYDSLESVIG 7.–11. MAI 2014

3. FUEN CONGRESS 2014

Together with Bund Deutscher Nordschleswiger (German minority in Denmark) and Sydslesvigsk Forening (Danish minority in Germany), FUEN organised the largest minority congress in Europe, with about 200 guests from 30 countries. It was a jubilee congress; FUEN was founded in 1949 and can look back at 65 years of activities this year.



FUEN President
Hans Heinrich Hansen

3.1 Official Opening

The Congress was officially opened by FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen. In his speech he spoke about the developments in Crimea and in Ukraine. He also addressed the “non-existing minority policy” of the European Commission and regretted the Commission’s decision to reject the European citizens’ initiative “Minority SafePack Initiative”. FUEN will not accept this decision, but challenge it both with political and legal instruments. In recent years FUEN developed into the first port of call for minority issues in Europe, said the FUEN President.

3.2 Ukraine – Crimea

There was a lot of discussion in Flensburg and Sønderborg. Highly controversial debates took place about Ukraine, Crimea and the future of the minorities in the European Union. Many of our thoughts went to our members in Crimea – the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People – who are facing forced dissolution by the new Russian rulers. The speeches that we listened to were sometimes gloomy. Again and again the words: “that is like in the nineties in the Balkans” wandered through the halls.

The emotional contribution by the Flensburg City Council President Swetlana Krätzschmar was impressive. She comes from a neighbouring town of Odessa, where two days before our Congress several people were killed in street riots. Those who had come to the FUEN Congress for clear answers may have been disappointed. In the current crisis there are no simple answers. There is only the fact that minorities are always among the first people that have to suffer from these sort of geopolitical conflicts. Not “the Russians”, or “the Fascists in Kiev”, or “the Americans”, or “the EU”, are to blame for the conflict. It is a convoluted history, with many who are guilty, with agitators and profiteers and with many, many victims.

3.3 Symposium on the occasion of Europe Day

In the concert hall of the Alsion-building in Sønderborg a symposium on the subject “Minorities’ added value” took place on 9 May 2014. The symposium was supported by the INTERREG-programme of the German-Danish region. Minister Martha Stocker from South Tyrol and Minister Oliver Paasch from Belgium discussed together with the Director of the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI), Tove Malloy, about the opportunities of cross-border cooperation and the advantages of new forms of cooperation, such as the “European Groupings for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)”. The main message was that Europe will have to develop in a continent with strong regions, in order for the citizens to accept it. FUEN used the chance given with the symposium to provide information about its project to establish a “House of Minorities”, together with the Danish and German minorities.



In a second debate Eva Kjer Hansen, Jens Peter Bonde, Reimer Böge and Jens A. Christiansen discussed about the future of the minorities in the European Union. The discussion round was particularly relevant because only a few days earlier the European Commission had reacted to the appeal that we submitted to the European Court of Justice (ECJ) to request the legal annulment of the decision rejecting our citizens’ initiative “Minority SafePack Initiative” (MSPI). The European Commission reiterates its view that European minorities are not within their framework of competence, but that they are only an issue for the different Member States of the EU. The minorities and the initiators of the citizens’ initiative continue to challenge this view and the procedure against the European Commission at the ECJ in Luxemburg will continue.

MiLaS

3.4 MILAS



On Europe Day, 9 May 2014, the finals of the MiLaS language competition took place in the impressive concert hall of the Alsion-building in Sønderborg / Sonderburg, Denmark. In the past weeks the language competition led to the creation of more than 30, for a part very diverse videos, from 10 countries and in 25 languages, in the world-wide-web.

To decide who would be the winner was not easy at all. The top-notch international jury had a hard time and also the audience of more than 200 people clearly would have been satisfied if every single one of the finalists would have received a prize. But there can only be only one winner, or in the case of MiLaS, only two: the Ludwig Andresen School from the German minority in Denmark with their act “synnejysk kaffeboe” and Lisiana Demiraj from Albania with “Ai – He” shared the first place. Closely behind them was the second place for “SAEK serbski widejokružk” in cooperation with “Ignac Fecich & dance company” (DE) with the song “Ček dom (Get home)”. The third place went to Manuel Trapp (DE) with his act “Stolz ein Jenischer zu sein”, which he had to share with the Seventh Grade Class of Deutsche Schule Pattburg (DK), with the act “Lasse und Maria”.

3.5 FUEN – Assembly of Delegates

The supreme decision making body of FUEN is the annual Assembly of Delegates. Despite the fact that there were no elections this year, there was intense discussion, new Member Organisations were admitted, several resolutions were adopted and the Delegates were informed about the FUEN Congresses of 2015 (Kotini, Greece), 2016 (Wrocław / Breslau, Poland) and 2018 (Leeuwarden / Ljouwert, Friesland).

The Presidium proposed a FUEN Manifesto and a resolution on the situation in Ukraine, which was unanimously adopted by the Delegates after an intense discussion.

Additionally, the following resolutions were adopted:

- On the Rehabilitation of the Germans in Russia
- The Recognition of the Yenish as a minority of their own
- Resolution on the situation of the Rusyns / Ruthenes in Ukraine
- Resolution on the situation of the Western Thrace Turks
- Resolution on the situation of the Greeks in Turkey
- Resolution on Territorial Reform in Brittany

The Lezghins, the Party of the German-speaking Belgians (ProDG) and the Turks from Rhodes, Kos and the Dodecanese Islands were admitted as new Member Organisations, as well as the Hungarian Civic Party as a supporting member.

3.6 “Minority Market” / Minority evening in Flensborghus / Excursion in North Friesland / Gala-evening

Next to the discussions there was also a rich social programme. The FUEN Congress started with a Minority Market. Also this year the minorities brought specialties from their home country. It developed into a very enjoyable evening.

During the Minority Evening in the Flensborghus-building and during the excursion to North Friesland the visitors were introduced to the “minority life” in the German-Danish region.

The 65th anniversary of FUEN was celebrated with a gala evening in a beautiful atmosphere. The Chairman of Danfoss, Jørgen Mads Clausen, and his wife, amongst others, attended the gala. Until the early hours everybody partied and danced.

More information at:

www.fuen.org/news/single/article/overview-of-the-congress/





4. LANGUAGE DIVERSITY

4.1 Our language diversity campaign

Rooted in the region, active throughout Europe, diverse in our languages! Language diversity is our European campaign dedicated to raise awareness for multilingualism and linguistic diversity in Europe. Following the European objective of multilingualism – each European citizen should at least speak two foreign languages additionally to his or her mother tongue – we want to motivate people to learn more languages and inform them about the advantages of multilingualism. We focus especially on enhancing the reputation of regional and minority languages and thus contribute to the preservation of linguistic diversity in Europe.

The core of the project is to develop and to provide tools and products for specific contexts and specific groups in order to raise awareness and to give information. We rely on the latest scientific results about the positive effects of multilingualism.

Overview of the activities:

- EUROPEADA 2012
- European Citizens Initiative “Minority SafePack”
- MiLaS-Language Competition 2014
- European Day of Languages
- Open Days
- International folklore festival “Łužica/Lausitz/Lusatia”
- The language diversity team visiting schools and universities for consultation and information events
- Participation in European events, presentations at conferences and seminars
- Youth and family events in multilingual regions in Europe
- Academic conferences and cooperation with our scientific focus group
- Presentations at political events and policy meetings

More information at:

www.language-diversity.eu

4.2 Map of Minorities & Regional and Minority Languages of Europe

Europe is a continent of linguistic and cultural diversity, a continent of regions and of variety. We are more than 820 million people and every seventh of us belongs to a minority. There are more than 400 minorities, ethnic groups and nationalities in Europe ... We speak more than 125 languages ...

The critical threshold for the survival of a language is estimated at 300,000 speakers. That means that approximately 80% of the European regional or minority languages are endangered. It is therefore necessary to protect and support the European minorities, and to enhance the visibility of this rich diversity!

That is the reason why the Map of Minorities & Regional and Minority Languages in Europe has been developed. In a clear and illustrative way it shows both the cultural and linguistic diversity of Europe.

The map tries to show the complex situation of European languages and minorities at a glance – with accompanying information about the languages and the minorities, e.g. about the language family, number of speakers, the areas of settlement, photos and videos. The European map resembles an exciting journey through our continent, during which you can learn and discover a lot!



The map is available in different versions:

- As a folding map
- As a poster
- As a presentation wall
- In the form of an interactive map

More information at:

www.map.language-diversity.eu

4.3 Our language diversity toolkit – with creative and specific products

For our European language diversity campaign we made a number of tools and products specifically for different contexts and different target groups in order to raise awareness and provide information on multilingualism and linguistic diversity.

We promote regional and minority languages in particular, using provocative and funny slogans in many different languages. These are examples that can be further developed and adapted for specific regions.

Our products support us with our different campaigns depending on which region we visit, which language we use to communicate and what type of event we participate in – for example in the field of culture, sports, politics, education or leisure.

More information at:

www.language-diversity.eu



VOTE FOR MINORITY COOPERATION IN EUROPE

5. EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2014 – FUEN-MEMBERS ARE ENTERING THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

According to estimations by the European Commission there are forty million people - out of around 505 million – who are part of a national minority or who are speaking a regional or minority language; that is approximately 8 percent of the population.

Accordingly there “should be” about 60 MEPs out of the total number of 751 representatives who speak a regional or minority language or who belong to a national minority / ethnic group.

Some years ago the members of FUEN founded a “European Dialogue Forum” in order to work together with the European Parliament. In terms of substance the European citizens’ initiative – Minority SafePack Initiative – plays a determining role. The political demands of the FUEN members have also been laid down in programmatic declaration and were summarised into its key points with the “Minority Manifesto” that was adopted at the 2014 Congress.

Apart from being a strong civil society movement, FUEN is also becoming more and more a political alliance, with members who run for the European elections.

The Presidium of FUEN together with President Hans Heinrich Hansen would like to congratulate all the elected MEPs and is looking forward to the cooperation in the upcoming years in the European Parliament.

More information at:

www.fuen.org/news/single/article/european-elections-2014/

6. FUEN IN STRASBOURG



FUEN Vice President Halit Habip Oğlu, FUEN legal advisor Frank de Boer, FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen, FUEN Vice President Loránt Vincze and SSF Secretary General Jens A. Christiansen

In the period from 14-16 July 2014 a delegation of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) consisting of President Hans Heinrich Hansen, Vice Presidents Halit Habip Oğlu and Loránt Vincze, Speaker of the European Dialogue Forum of FUEN Jens A. Christiansen and FUEN advisor Frank de Boer visited Strasbourg and had meetings with several MEPs. On Wednesday the delegation also visited the first informal meeting of the Intergroup on Traditional Minorities that will have to be re-established in this new parliamentary term.

The delegation of FUEN went to Strasbourg shortly after the European Elections of May to speak with MEPs from many different parties and countries about the election benchmarks that FUEN asked them to support before the elections and to discuss about how to realise the goals of FUEN in Europe and to engage in a genuine dialogue with the politicians. The delegation noticed once again that the knowledge about the minorities in Europe is rather limited. Therefore, one of the tasks for the coming period will be to inform the politicians about the national and linguistic minority communities in Europe and their added value for the European society and convince as many MEPs as possible to join forces.

“We had many constructive discussions with different MEPs. It is important that we also spoke with several MEPs who do not belong to a minority themselves, but who are very supportive towards FUEN and our objectives: to create a portfolio dealing with minority issues at the European Commission. This is what we advocated during these days” said President Hans Heinrich Hansen. “We are very pleased with the statement of President Juncker in his political programme that he wants to entrust a Commissioner with the responsibility for Fundamental Rights and the Rule of Law. The portfolio of this Commissioner should include the national minorities.”

In regard to the Minority SafePack Initiative, the delegation informed the MEPs about FUEN’s experience, that it is very difficult and costly for citizens to use this instrument.

It will be necessary to start a debate in Europe on the conditions for engaging in a European citizens’ initiative. The citizens do not receive support from the European Commission for these initiatives, but have had the experience that the apparatus of the Commission is used against the initiative of the citizens. In the upcoming months FUEN will continue with its actions at the European Parliament, meet again with MEPs and try to influence the policy agenda of the European Union.

More information at:

www.fuen.org/news/single/article/fuen-in-strasbourg/

7. FUEN AND MIDAS ON FACT FINDING MISSION TO THE WESTERN THRACE TURKS

24.06.2014 – For the first time the Federal Union of European Nationalities FUEN and MIDAS, the association of daily newspapers of the European minorities, went together on a fact finding mission. The representatives of FUEN, Vice President Dieter Paul Küssner, Secretary-General Jens A. Christiansen of Sydslesvigsk Forening SSF and FUEN Presidium Member Halit Habip Oglu, who is also Chairman of ABTTF, the organisation representing the Western Thrace Turks abroad, talked with representatives of many different groups of the Western Thrace Turks about the current situation.

The Western Thrace Turks have been living in this area for around 300 years. In the past they came from the poorer mountain regions to the cities. Approximately 20,000 Western Thrace Turks have emigrated to Germany, approximately 30,000 are living in Turkey and around 100,000 in Greece.

The Western Thrace Turks want to be recognised by Greece as a Turkish minority. Greece, however, does not recognise any national minority, but only religious minorities. Important demands of the Turkish minority in Greece are about the right to better education and for bilingualism in kindergartens and schools. So far, especially the situation in education, is in a sorry state. Children do receive instruction in Turkish, but the Turkish teachers, who are appointed by Greece, often do not have adequate skills. The Turkish minority in Greece demands that the children receive lessons in the native language in both Greek and Turkish.

More information at:

www.fuen.org/news/single/article/high-expectations-towards-fuen/

8. MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR MEETS WITH THE MINORITIES IN GERMANY AT THE OPEN HOUSE 2014 OF THE GERMAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

At the 16th Open House of the Federal Government in Berlin on Sunday 31st August 2014, the affable Minister of the Interior, Dr Thomas de Maizière, engaged in a discussion with the four autochthonous national minorities in Germany. He spoke with them and with the Federal Commissioner for Matters Related to Ethnic German Resettlers and National Minorities, Mr Hartmut Koschyk MP at the information stall of the Frisians, the Danes in South Schleswig, the German Sinti and Roma and the Lusatian Sorbs. Next to the German Minority Council and Secretariat also the umbrella organisation of the minorities in Europe – FUEN – and its President Hans Heinrich Hansen were present.

During the discussion the minorities explained in an open and lively way how much the minorities are an added value for Germany and for Europe. Whether it was because of the rich diversity in terms of regional and minority languages in Europe, as the minister was able to learn from the Map of the Minorities in Europe; whether it was the appeal from the minorities to the European Union to engage in an active dialogue on improving the participation of the European minorities, or rather the delicious pickles from the Sorbian Spreevald-region in Lower Saxony, which can be either spicy or sour depending on the situation: Interior Minister De Maizière has personally become convinced that the minorities are added value for Germany and for Europe!

“We asked the Interior Minister for a follow-up meeting with the minorities later this year, in which we want to talk about our current priorities. He has agreed and we are very glad he did!”, said the Chairman of the Minority Council, David Statnik.

With a varied information and entertainment programme the Open House 2014 at the Federal Ministry of the Interior lived up to expectations. For example on Saturday the young Frisian singer Norma Schultz performed on stage and captivated old and young people with her Frisian songs.

“We are very pleased that for the first time the Federal Commissioner for Matters Related to Ethnic German Resettlers and National Minorities gave information about his work in a stall directly adjacent to ours. As a result, thousands of visitors were able to get a deep understanding about the minorities in Germany – from different perspectives. We are very satisfied with the event and are already excited to

participate next year in the new building of the Federal Ministry of the Interior close to Berlin Central Station and hope that we will have the same conditions as this year”, said Judith Walde, Leader of the German Minority Secretariat.



The German Federal Minister of the Interior, Dr Thomas de Maizière, and the Federal Commissioner for Matters Related to Ethnic German Resettlers and National Minorities, Mr Hartmut Koschyk, in discussion with representatives of the national minorities in German and the President of FUEN, Hans Heinrich Hansen

9. GEORGIA AND THE MESHKETIAN TURKS

9.1 FUEN expresses strong discontent and bewilderment with the statement of Georgian Minister

23.01.2014 – FUEN expresses strong discontent and bewilderment in regard to the statement of David Darakvelidze, Minister of Refugees on the subject of Georgia’s implementation undertaken upon the accession to the Council of Europe to repatriate the population forcibly deported by Stalin’s Decree in 1944 from the Akhaltsih region of Georgia.

FUEN has closely monitored the situation of the Meskhetian Turks since 1996 and during Special Missions to Georgia the FUEN Presidium has conducted negotiations with the Georgian authorities and the President of Georgia on the repatriation of the Meskhetian Turks that were deported from their homeland.

Obligations taken by Georgia presupposed a constructive solution of the repatriation process including civic rehabilitation and granting an absolute right to return to all from the deported group wishing to reunite with the homeland.

FUEN considers the adoption of Law of Georgia “On Repatriation of Persons forcefully sent into exile from the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia by the Former USSR in the 40’s of the 20th Century” in 2007 as not delivering its obligation due to the absence of any sign of the repatriation of the deported population.

More information at:

www.fuen.org/news/single/article/repatriation-of-meskhetian-ahiska-turks/

9.2 Visit to the Winter Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

30.01.2014 - FUEN has undertaken an official visit to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) for the Winter 2014 Session which took place in the week of 27 and 31 January 2014 in Strasbourg. FUEN Vice-President Halit Habip Oglu and President of FUEN’s member organization International Society of Meskhetian Turks VATAN Zhavid Aliyev and its Vice-President Fuad Pepinov held meetings and conducted consultations with PACE members and bureaucrats on the question of repatriation of the Meskhetian Turks to their homeland, Georgia.

During talks held with PACE’s officials and members, FUEN Vice-President Halit Habip Oglu stressed the importance of dialogue between the Georgian governmental authorities and the Meskhetian Turks in the repatriation process. VATAN President Zhavid Aliyev and Vice-President Fuad Pepinov underlined that the Law on Repatriation of Persons forcefully sent into exile from the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia by the Former USSR in the 40’s of the 20th Century in 2007 did not deliver Georgia’s obligation to the repatriation of the Meskhetian Turks to their homeland and Law. VATAN asked Georgian authorities to provide an open-ended and simplified procedure for the repatriation of the Meskhetian Turks to their homeland.

More information at:

www.fuen.org/news/single/article/fuen-in-strasbourg-1/

9.3 About the Autumn Session

www.fuen.org/news/single/article/pace-autumn-session-2014/

10. OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE OFFICE OF THE HOUSE OF MINORITIES

In the presence of the Schleswig-Holstein Minority Commissioner, Ms Renate Schnack, and the Danish Consul General in Flensburg, Mr Henrik Becker-Christensen, the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), Sydslesvigsk Forening (SSF) and Bund Deutscher Nordschleswiger (BDN) officially opened the office of the House of Minorities at Norderstrasse 78 in Flensburg on 30 October.

The premises in the old merchant's shop of the C.C. Petersen family, directly adjacent to the Flensborghus, were refurbished with financial support from the Land of Schleswig-Holstein and the South Schleswig Committee of the Kingdom of Denmark. It is here that in the coming months (and years) the project House of Minorities will be further developed, within the framework of the EU Interreg 4A-programme Syddanmark-Schleswig-K.E.R.N. with co-funding from the European Regional Development Fund.

In his opening speech FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen spoke about the long-standing plan, which could not have been realised without the partners, and which will give the minorities of Europe a second home. "The basic condition for better understanding is essentially the acceptance of differences and respect for being different. Once we manage to create the feeling that – despite our differences – we are not so different after all, then we will have accomplished an important part of our aim. That aim is to live peacefully together", said Hansen.

In her speech Renate Schnack called the town of Flensburg, in the heart of the German-Danish region, the "minority capital of Europe" and underlined that Schleswig-Holstein is glad to support both financially and immaterially "this instrument for prevention and de-escalation offered to the peoples and language groups of Europe".

Referring to the particular minority makeup in the region of Schleswig, where 4 minorities have been living happily together with the majorities next door for decades, the chairman of BDN, Mr Hinrich Jürgensen, told that although not really a lot was written in the Bonn-Copenhagen Declarations of 1955, these declarations nevertheless were honoured in real life and on a daily basis.





Minority Commissioner Renate Schnack

The Flensburg Town Council President Swetlana Krätzschmar was very pleased that the House of Minorities now has a first place to go in Flensburg. Referring to Ukraine, the country where she was born, she expressed her hope that the House of Minorities would bolster the position of the minorities and that it could contribute to a lasting situation of living peacefully together, throughout the whole of Europe.

More information at:

www.fuen.org/news/single/article/official-opening-of-the-office-of-the-house-of-minorities/



SSF Secretary General Jens A. Christiansen, project coordinator Fabian Tellmann, BDN Chairman Hinrich Jürgensen, Minister of Minority Issues Renate Schnack, SSF Chairman Jon Hardon Hansen, FUEN Secretary General Susann Schenk, FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen and BMI head of division Ulrike Adamsky-Metz

11. EUROPEADA IN SOUTH TYROL

EUROPEADA in South Tyrol –Date and Venue Are Set

On behalf of the organisers, FUEN Secretary General Susann Schenk officially announced today that the EUROPEADA 2016 will take place from Saturday 18 June until Sunday 26 June 2016 in South Tyrol.

The European football championship of the autochthonous, national minorities will take place for the third time already. After it was held at the Rhaetians in Graubünden (Switzerland) in 2008 and at the Lusatian Sorbs in Germany in 2012, the championship will go to South Tyrol in 2016.

There will be a men's tournament with up to 24 teams and – if there are sufficient applications – there will also be a women's tournament with up to 8 teams.

The championship will take place in the Pustertal Valley, which has excellent sport accommodations. Because the Gadertal/Val Badia Valley is very nearby, also the Ladin team will be involved. The Pustertal sports associations have already been called upon to qualify as venues for the different games.

“We look forward to the tournament in South Tyrol and to the increased number of participating teams, both for men and women. We are excited to see how many teams will apply in order to participate in 2016”, said Susann Schenk.

Teams that want to participate can submit their applications from January 2015 onwards.



EUROPEADA
2016 • SÜDTIROL • ITALY

18. – 26.06.2016

FUSSBALLEUROPEAMEISTERSCHAFT DER
AUTOCHTHONEN NATIONALEN MINDERHEITEN

CAMPIONAT EUROPEICH DE PALÈ DLES
MENDRANZES NAZIONALES AUTOCTONES

CAMPIONATO EUROPEO DI CALCIO DELLE
MINORANZE NAZIONALI AUTOCTONE

FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP OF THE
AUTOCHTHONOUS NATIONAL MINORITIES IN EUROPE

The EUROPEADA is the football championship of the autochthonous, national minorities of Europe, organised by the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) during the same period as the European football championship of UEFA.

Up to now the EUROPEADA has been organised twice. In 2008 the hosts were the Rhaetians in Graubünden (Switzerland) and in 2012 the Sorbs in Lusatia (Germany) hosted the tournament. During the EUROPEADA 2008, 17 selected teams from the minorities took part; in 2012 there were 19 teams, among them were the German-speaking South Tyroleans and the Ladins.

Both times the team of the South Tyroleans were the winners of the tournament and subsequently, they successfully applied to become the organisers of the 2016 championship.

The UEFA European football championship will take place in France from 10 June until 10 July 2016.

More information at:

www.fuen.org/news/single/article/europeada-in-south-tyrol/



FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen, FUEN Vice President Martha Stocker, FUEN Vice President Bernhard Ziesch and FUEN Secretary General Susann Schenk

12. CRISIS IN UKRAINE

12.1 FUEN expresses its deep concern about the escalating situation in Ukraine and in the autonomous republic of Crimea

25.09.2014 – FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen: We urge all relevant parties to engage in a meaningful dialogue for a peaceful and constructive solution in accommodating the interests and providing a safe environment for the Crimean Tatars.

The Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) expresses its deep concern about escalating situation in Ukraine and in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.

We express our solidarity with our member organization Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People which currently faces a turbulent period in its history. We deeply regret that a long-standing leader of the Crimean Tatars, Ukrainian MP, Mustafa Dzhemiliev, is perceived as persona non grata by the Russian authorities and banned from entering his homeland, Crimea, for five years. The same fate followed the chairman of Mejlis, Refat Chubarov, who also cannot return to Crimea and may face a criminal prosecution under Russia's anti-extremism legislation.

We urge all relevant parties to engage in a meaningful dialogue for a peaceful and constructive solution in accommodating the interests and providing a safe environment for the Crimean Tatars, a historic minority of Crimea and the most vulnerable player involved in the geopolitical conflict between Russian Federation and Ukraine.

More information at:

www.fuen.org/news/single/article/fuen-expresses-its-deep-concern-about-escalating-situation-in-ukraine-and-in-the-autonomous-republic-of-crimea/

12.2 Ukrainian Minority Commissioner visits Flensburg

6 November - the Commissioner for Minority Issues of the Ukrainian government, Mr Gennadiy Druzenko, had a meeting in Flensburg with representatives of the minorities in the German-Danish border region. Representatives of the German minority in Nordschleswig, Denmark, and the Danish minority in South Schleswig, Germany, told him about the successful minority model of the region and proposed to use the experiences from the border region as a contribution to solve the conflict in Ukraine.

President Hans Heinrich Hansen of the Federal Union of European Nationalities – which has its seat in Flensburg – invited Mr Gennadiy Druzenko to speak about the situation of the minorities in Ukraine at the next congress of FUEN in May 2015.

Gennadiy Druzenko used the opportunity to give information about the current state of affairs in regard to the minorities in Ukraine.

The Minority Commissioner is visiting Germany within the framework of a programme of visits organised by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



SSF Chairman Jon Hardon Hanson, BDN Chairman Hinrich Jürgensen, FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen, Commissioner for Minority Issues of the Ukrainian Government Gennadiy Druzenko, City Council President of Flensburg Swetlana Krätzschmar and the Assistant of Mr Druzenko Viktoriia Luganska – standing before the House of Minorities at Norderstrasse in Flensburg

12.3 Minorities in Ukraine

There are more than 20 national minorities in Ukraine. With the ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of the Council of Europe, Ukraine recognised the languages of the Belarusians, Bulgarians, Gagauz, Greeks, Jews, Crimean Tatars, Moldovans, Germans, Poles, Russians, Romanians, Slovaks and Hungarians. Furthermore there are minorities such as the Karaites, Rusyns/Ruthenes, Roma, Lithuanians, Czechs, Chuvash and Urums. Ukraine also ratified the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

According to the census of 2001, Ukraine had a total population of 48,416,000 people at that time. 37,542,000 of them were Ukrainians, and the rest belonged to different minorities. Of course, these numbers can only give a general idea of the size of the minorities.

Minority	Number	Minority	Number
Russians	8,334,000 ¹	Urums	95,000 ³
Rusyns/Ruthenes	560,000 ³	Greeks	92,000 ¹
Moldovans	325,000 ²	Roma	47,600 ¹
Belarusians	276,000 ¹	Germans	33,300 ¹
Crimean Tatars	248,000 ¹	Gagauz	31,900 ¹
Bulgarians	205,000 ¹	Chuvash	20,400 ²
Hungarians	157,000 ¹	Lithuanians	11,300 ²
Poles	144,000 ¹	Czechs	9,100 ²
Romanians	135,000 ²	Slovaks	7,900 ²
Jews	104,000 ¹	Karaites	1,200 ¹

Source: ¹. Census 2001, <http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/>, not all minorities were mentioned; ². Handbook National Minorities in Europe, Christoph Pan & Beate Sibylle Pfeil, 2003. ³. Ethnologue: <http://www.ethnologue.com>

12.4 Members of FUEN in Ukraine

Germans: Council of the Germans of Ukraine
Rat der Deutschen der Ukraine
Wul. Olesja Gontschara 44, Office 3
UA-01054 Kiew

Ungarn: Cultural Alliance of the Hungarians in Lower Carpathia
Kárpátaljai Magyar Kulturális Szövetség KMKSZ
Pravoslav emb. 5, Transcarpatia, Ukraine
UA-88000 Uzhgorod

Crimean Tatars: Mejlis (Parliament) of the Crimean Tatars
Qırımtatar Milliy Meclisi
Schmidta str 2
UA-95017 Simferopol

Crimean Karaites: Association of the Crimean Karaites
Ul. Cehowa 13
UA-95011 Simferopol

Rusyns: Association of the Carpatho-Rusyns
per. Universitetsky 6/20
UA-88 000 Uzhgorod

13. NPLD, FUEN AND MERCATOR CELEBRATE THE EUROPEAN DAY OF LANGUAGES TOGETHER

26.09.2014 – NPLD, FUEN and Mercator celebrate the European Day of Languages together

The representatives of the Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity (NPLD), the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) and the Mercator Network have gathered at the conference *Why Languages Matter* in Florence, organised by the European Union on the occasion of the European Day of Languages.

Today, our three European networks working in the field of linguistic diversity underline the imperative need to establish an equitable European language policy which includes the 24 official EU languages, but also the regional and minority languages of Europe. While recognising the importance of languages for stimulating Europe's economy, we wish to note that languages serve for much more than economic purposes alone. Languages are one of the traits that define a community. They express, reflect and reinforce cultural identity and a sense of belonging.

As *United in Diversity* is the EU's official motto, we believe that guaranteeing linguistic diversity must be our common goal. All levels of government, from local, regional and national authorities to the European institutions, must assume their responsibilities in relation to Europe's linguistic diversity.

More information at:

www.fuen.org/news/single/article/npld-fuen-and-mercator-celebrate-the-european-day-of-languages-together-1/

14. VICE PRESIDENT TIMMERMANS OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION HAS MEETING WITH FUEN

25.11.2014 – FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen and FUEN legal advisor Frank de Boer had the opportunity, thanks to the efforts of Ulrike Rodust MEP, to have a personal meeting with the First Vice President of the European Commission, Mr Frans Timmermans. This made it possible to explain to the Commissioner responsible for fundamental rights in Europe what FUEN is and towards which aims it is working.

Mr Timmermans showed his understanding for our demand to enshrine minority protection in the structure of the Commission and he promised to explore if and in which way this might be implemented. “I have the impression that we found a partner for dialogue who is willing to solve the minority problems in Europe with profound knowledge and with empathy”, said Hans Heinrich Hansen. “We hope that further dialogue will follow, once an approach to solving these issues will have been elaborated.”

More information at:

www.fuen.org/news/single/article/vice-president-timmermans-of-the-european-commission-has-meeting-with-fuen/





Prof. Dr. Norbert Lammert, President of the German Federal Parliament, Anke Spoorendonk, Minister of Justice, Culture and Europe of Schleswig-Holstein and Dr. Eva-Maria Stange, Minister of State for Science and Art in the Free State of Saxony, together with Hartmut Koschyk, the German Federal Commissioner for Matters Related to Ethnic German Resettlers and National Minorities and representatives of four autochthonous national minorities and the speakers of Low German

15. CONFERENCE “THE LANGUAGES OF THE CHARTER IN GERMANY – A SUBJECT FOR ALL”

The Conference “The Languages of the Charter in Germany – a Subject for All” took place in the building of the Parlamentarische Gesellschaft (German Parliamentary Society) in Berlin on 26 November 2014 at 14:30 hr.

Participants to the conference were invited by the Commissioner for Matters Related to Ethnic German Resettlers and National Minorities, Mr Hartmut Koschyk (MP), and by the Minority Secretariat of the four autochthonous national minorities in Germany.

The conference took place under the auspices of the President of the German Federal Parliament, Prof Dr Norbert Lammert (MP).

The protection of minority languages in Germany and the regional language of Low German is an obligation for the society as a whole. It is the responsibility of everyone who is involved in the process of political implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

The conference marked the beginning of a new direction for language policy in regard to the languages of the Charter in Germany, which has to be developed jointly by the Federal Government, the states, the minorities and the speakers of Low German in Germany, and which has to reflect the common responsibility of all these parties.

To that end the Minority Council in Germany prepared a draft in preparation of the conference “The Languages of the Charter in Germany – a Joint Responsibility”, which they agreed on with the Commissioner for Matters Related to Ethnic German Resettlers and National Minorities, Mr Hartmut Koschyk (MP).

Members of the FUEN Presidium and members of the Working Group of the German Minorities in FUEN (AGDM) also participated in the conference.



16. WORKING GROUPS IN FUEN

Under the umbrella of FUEN three working groups have been established: the Working Group of German Minorities (AGDM), the Working Group of Slavic Minorities and since 2014 the Working Group of Turkic Minorities. More than 20 German minorities, more than 20 Slavic minorities and 9 Turkic minorities are actively involved in FUEN.

The three Working Groups meet once a year at a seminar, which is organised each time by a different FUEN-member organisation.

16.1 Meeting of the Working Group of German Minorities (AGDM) in Berlin

The 23rd meeting of the FUEN Working Group of German Minorities (AGDM) took place from 26-28 November 2014 in Berlin.

15 German minorities and their organisations from Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland, Ukraine, Russia, Kazakhstan, Serbia, Croatia, Moldavia, Georgia, Denmark, the Czech Republic and the Kyrgyz Republic took part in the meeting.



More information at:

www.fuen.org/news/single/article/meeting-of-the-working-group-of-german-minorities-agdm-in-berlin/

16.2 Seminar of the Slavic Minorities started in Bautzen

The XVIIth FUEN Seminar of the Slavic Minorities took place in Bautzen/Budyšin at the Sorbs in Germany from 6 until 9 November 2014.

The theme of the seminar this year was “Instruments for Funding Minorities in Europe“.

Several representatives of the Slavic minorities in Europe participated, such as the Carpatho-Ruthenes from Ukraine, the Czech minority from Slovakia and the Burgenland Croats from Austria.

The seminar was organised by Domowina, the Federation of Lusatian Sorbs, under the aegis of FUEN Vice President Bernhard Ziesch.



Participants of this year's XVIIth. FUEN seminar of Slavic minorities in Bautzen/Budyšin, including PhDr. Jiří Holub, Consul General of the Czech Republic



More information (in German) at:

www.fuen.sorben.com

16.3 FUEN working Group of the Turkic Minorities met for the first time during the founding event in Ankara

The first annual meeting of the Working Group of the Turkic Minorities under the umbrella of FUEN took place from 20 until 23 November in Ankara, Turkey. FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen and FUEN Vice-President Halit Habip Oğlu honoured the meeting with their presence.

The event, which brought together ten presidents or other high-level representatives from the FUEN member organisations that represent the Turkic minority groups in Europe, began with visits to historical and cultural places in Ankara and was followed by a visit to Ambassador Ali Naci Koru, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey. This first annual meeting is seen as a milestone for the Turkic minorities in Europe as they, for the first time, had the chance to come together and become aware of their problems/demands in the same platform.

The participating Turkic minority organisations were the Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe (ABTTF) from Germany; the Friendship, Equality and Peace Party (DEB) and the Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association (BTAYTD) from Greece; the Rhodes, Kos and the Dodecanese Turks Culture and Solidarity Association from Turkey; the International Society of Meshketian Turks “VATAN” and the Social Organisation for Fostering and Development of the Karachay-Balkar Traditions “Bars El” from Russia; the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People and the Association of Crimean Karaites from Ukraine and the Association of Meskhetian Turks “VATAN” from Azerbaijan.

The Working Group of the Turkic Minorities forms the third subgroup under the umbrella of FUEN after the Working Groups of the German and Slavic Minorities that were established much earlier already. For the time being, the Working Group of the Turkic Minorities is planning to meet once a year and the venue for the next event in 2015 will be decided later.

More information at:

tag.fuen.org/annual-meetings/

17. FUEN CONCERNED ABOUT THE POSITION OF THE FRISIAN LANGUAGE IN THE MEDIA IN THE NETHERLANDS

02.12.2014 - FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen sent a letter to the Dutch Parliament and to State Secretary Sander Dekker expressing his worries about the new media policy of the Dutch government. In the policy letter announcing the new policy, no mention was made about the special position in regard to regional broadcasting in the province of Friesland/Fryslân.

FUEN calls upon the Members of Parliament to consider the role of Frisian language public media in the Netherlands, to take into account the international obligations that the Netherlands has undertaken, and to convince the State Secretary to amend his plans so that the protection and promotion of the Frisian language in the media will be guaranteed.

More information at:

www.fuen.org/news/single/article/fuen-concerned-about-the-position-of-the-frisian-language-in-the-media-in-the-netherlands/

18. INTERGROUP FOR NATIONAL MINORITIES RE-ESTABLISHED

— EFFECTIVE LOBBY BY FUEN AND PARTNERS

11.12.2014 – Intergroup for National Minorities re-established – effective lobby by FUEN and partners – thank you, Members of the European Parliament

The European Parliament decided to re-establish the Intergroup for Traditional Minorities, National Communities and Languages, in the 2014-2019 parliamentary term.

Although its formation has been uncertain for a long time, the Members of the European Parliament (MEP) again have a place where they can work for the minorities and for promoting linguistic and cultural diversity. The Intergroup enables cooperation in the field of minority protection and fosters the dialogue between MEPs and representatives of minorities.

“We campaigned for this Intergroup, because as the largest European umbrella organisation of the minorities, we value the cooperation with the MEPs very much. It is a good sign for the EU, that with much political effort at the end the Intergroup was established again”, said Hans Heinrich Hansen, President of FUEN.

Intergroup are non-official bodies of the European Parliament where Members of Parliament (MEP) of different political groups cooperate. They meet once a month and are important platforms for the MEPs to form their opinion and to discuss their priorities.

FUEN is the largest umbrella organisation of the autochthonous, national minorities in Europe. It maintains its European Dialogue Forum and works towards a formalised cooperation of the minorities with the European Parliament.

More information at:

www.fuen.org/news/single/article/intergroup-for-national-minorities-re-established-effective-lobby-by-fuen-and-partners/

19. OUTLOOK TO THE YEAR 2015

19.1 January

22 – 24 January 2015 - First meeting of the year of the FUEN in Bozen/South Tyrol

More information at:

www.fuen.org/news/single/article/first-meeting-of-the-year-of-the-federal-union-of-european-nationalities-fuen/



19.2 February

26 February 2015 – Minority SafePack at hearing in the European Parliament - more rights for citizens' initiatives

More information at:

www.fuen.org/news/single/article/minority-safepack-at-hearing-in-the-european-parliament-more-rights-for-citizens-initiatives/

19.3 March

03 March 2015 – FUEN meets European Commissioner Tibor Navracsics in Brussels

More information at:

www.fuen.org/news/single/article/fuen-meets-european-commissioner-tibor-navracsics-in-brussels/

26. March 2015 Celebrations Bonn-Copenhagen Declarations in Berlin

More information at:

www.fuen.org/news/single/article/celebrations-bonn-copenhagen-declarations-in-berlin/



19.4 April

22 April 2015 – European People’s Party organises hearing on Minorities in the European Parliament

More information at:

www.fuen.org/news/single/article/european-peoples-party-organises-hearing-on-minorities-in-the-european-parliament/



19.5 May

13 – 17 May 2015 FUEN Congress in Komotini (Greece)



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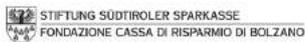
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