



ELECTION CHECKSTONES OF FUEN

Preliminary remark

Preceding the European Parliament Elections on 6-9th June 2024, FUEN invites political parties and their candidates to find solutions to our concerns at the European level and draw attention to the situation of autochthonous national minorities and language communities.

For the minorities to know the position of their different candidates regarding minority-related issues, we asked them to answer the questions below.

The responses will be shared with our member organisations in the EU Member States and the national minorities in the respective countries, who certainly will support the candidates that best represent their concerns in the European Parliament.

PROPOSALS AND SUGGESTIONS BY THE FUEN

On behalf of all members of national minorities in Europe

FUEN asked the candidates for the EU elections to answer the following questions:

EFFECTIVE LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES IN THE EU

Despite the fundamental rights guarantees, the EU still lacks a comprehensive minority policy. FUEN stands for the adoption by the EU, in particular by the European Commission, a *long-term legal and policy framework* for the strengthened protection of national minorities' and language groups' rights in its Member States and the EU Neighbourhood. FUEN calls the European Commission to re-assess its decision on the rejection of the [Minority SafePack Initiative \(MSPI\)](#), the initiative of more than one million European citizens calling for developed minority protection standards in the EU. We urge the EU institutions, in particular the European Commission, to adopt a more systematic approach to preserving and protecting minorities under its rule of law instruments.

1. Will you advocate for the stronger engagement by the EU institutions, particularly the European Commission, to protect autochthonous national minorities and language groups? Will you support the development of a comprehensive set of legal and policy standards for a more advanced protection and equal treatment of minority rights in the EU? Will you support the full implementation of the Copenhagen criteria, particularly the provisions on minority rights protection, in the EU candidate countries? If yes, how?

STRONG POLITICAL REPRESENTATION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES AND LANGUAGE GROUPS IN THE EU

FUEN calls to ensure the long-term political participation of national minorities in the complex governance system in the EU. Until now, European minorities have reported difficulties to participate in the EU-level decision-making process. EU Member States with only a few hundred thousand inhabitants have their own EU Commissioner and seats in the European Parliament, while many numerically large minorities and ethnic groups with more than one million people are not represented. FUEN strongly promotes minorities' political participation at all levels of governance and political representation in the EU. We strongly encourage voting for candidates from minority communities to ensure minorities' voices are timely heard in European politics and policymaking.

2. Do you agree the EU needs a stronger political representation of national minorities and language groups? How could the political representation of minorities in the European institutions be guaranteed? Will you support the re-establishment of the Intergroup on Traditional Minorities, National Communities and Languages in the European Parliament? Are you committed to working for a more minority-friendly electoral system in your Member State for the next European elections?

MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE BETWEEN NATIONAL MINORITIES, LANGUAGE GROUPS AND EUROPEAN POLICYMAKERS

In the times of the ongoing Russian war of aggression in Ukraine and a challenged rules-based international order, FUEN strongly urges European policymakers to have more meaningful engagement with representatives of minorities' civil society and expert circles. FUEN calls for the establishment of the Advisory Group for the European Commission focusing on traditional national and linguistic minorities. This consultative body of independent experts on minority rights should assist the Commission to consider minorities' perspective in policymaking across all sectoral policy areas. We advocate for the European Forum of national and linguistic minorities to serve as an affiliated consultative advisory body of both the European Union and the Council of Europe. Such mechanisms should consist of representatives of the organizations of autochthonous national minorities from all over the EU. The necessary conditions and resources should be created for this consultative body to function effectively.

3. Do you agree more meaningful dialogue and exchange between policymakers and minorities' experts and civil society is needed? Will you support the establishment of the Advisory Group on minority issues under the auspices of the European Commission and the European Forum of national and linguistic minorities to consult both the EU and the Council of Europe? Through which other channels or mechanisms can such sustainable exchange and consultations be ensured?