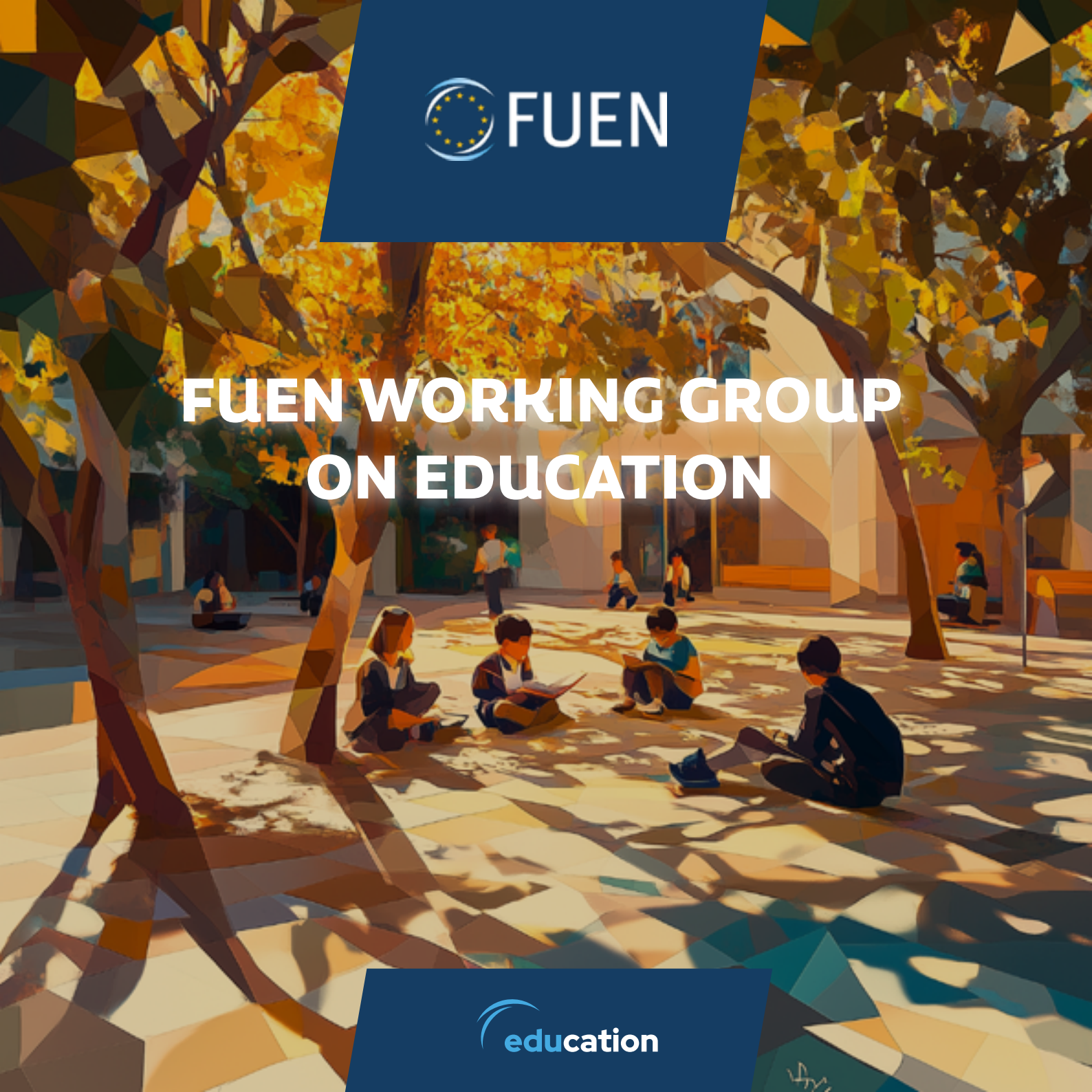
FUEN

FUEN WORKING GROUP ON EDUCATION



education

INTRODUCTION

Together with families and communities, schools form the foundation for the teaching and preservation of minority languages and cultures. This conviction led to the founding of the Education Working Group in 2017 during the FUEN Congress in Cluj-Napoca (Romania). The aim of the working group is to create a supportive and solidary framework in which FUEN member organisations can exchange ideas on educational issues. Within a continuously growing network, our members and partners come together to share best practices, further their knowledge, and support one another. In this way, they gain the tools and motivation to advance the concerns of their respective minority communities.

THE EDUCATION WORKING GROUP IN A NUTSHELL

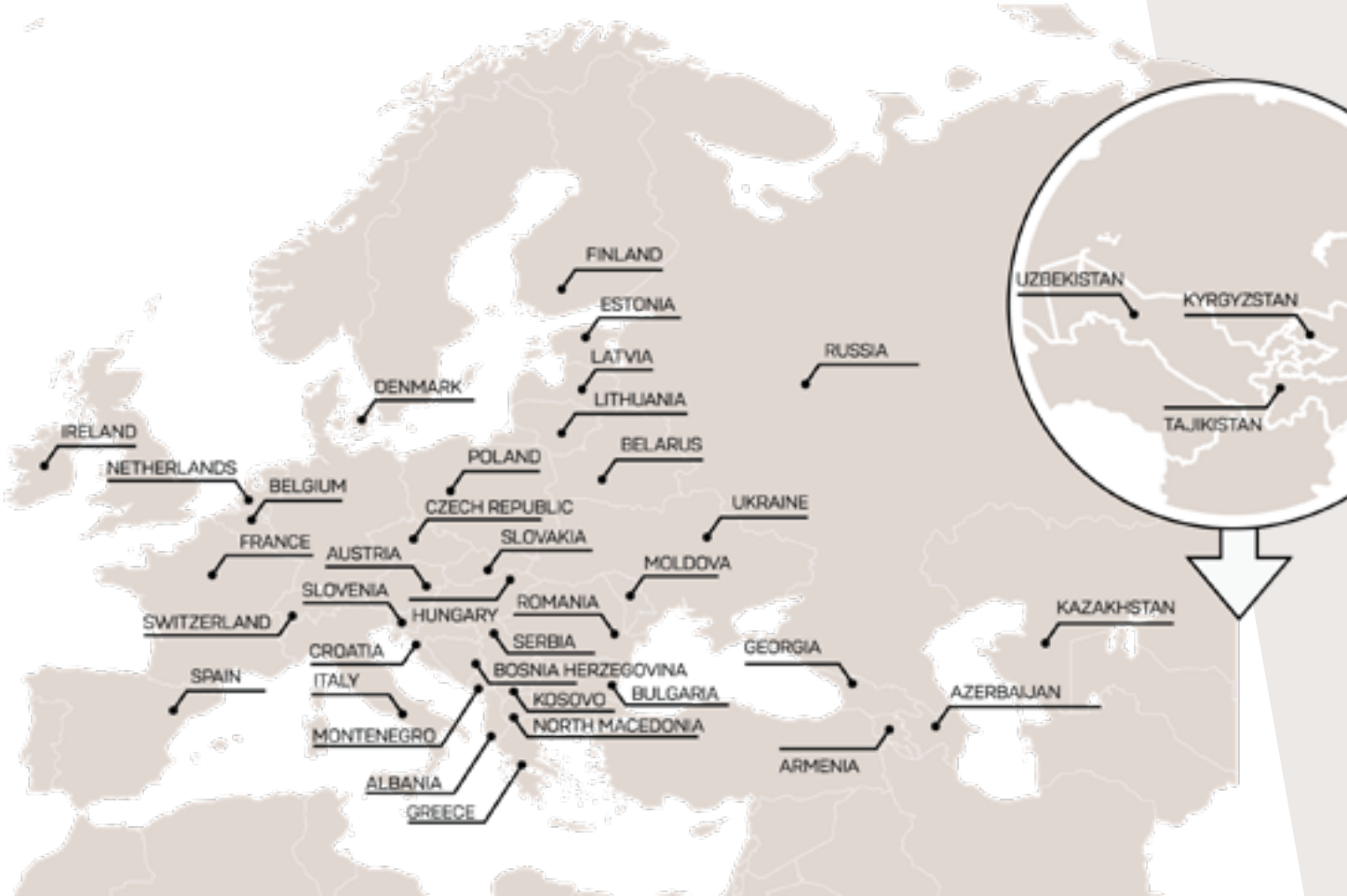
First meeting: May 2018 in Flensburg (Germany)

Long-term goals:

- Pool the educational expertise of minorities
- Develop strategies to promote the educational efforts of minorities
- Build a stable network between minorities, educational institutions, institutes, and competence centres
- Foster ongoing exchange between stakeholders
- Spokesperson of the Working Group: FUEN Vice President Harald Stauder

ABOUT FUEN

With over 100 member organisations in 38 countries, the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) is the largest umbrella organisation for autochthonous national minorities, nationalities, and language communities in Europe. It represents the interests of these minorities at regional, national, and European levels, actively advocating for the protection and promotion of their identities, languages, cultures, and rights. As the voice of minorities, FUEN collaborates closely with international institutions such as the European Union, the Council of Europe, the United Nations (UN), and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).



CURRENTLY, SIX WORKING GROUPS ARE ACTIVE UNDER THE FUEN UMBRELLA:

1. Working Group of German Minorities (AGDM) – founded in 1991
2. Working Group of Slavic Minorities (AGSM) – founded in 1996
3. Working Group of Turkic Minorities/Communities (TAG) – founded in 2013
4. Non-Kin-State Working Group (NKS) – founded in 2017
5. Education Working Group – founded in 2018
6. Working Group of Hungarian Communities (MKM) – founded in 2023

These working groups serve as communities of solidarity, enabling FUEN member organisations to address specific topics and challenges with the support of the umbrella organisation. Their aim is to strengthen minority networks, promote exchange among members, pool expertise, and develop joint strategies to address shared challenges. In doing so, they make a significant contribution to enhancing and advancing minority work across Europe.

agdm

agsm

tag

non-kin-state

education

mkm

DIVERSITY OF TARGET GROUPS

The Education Working Group targets not only FUEN member organisations but also a broader audience – including individuals from majority populations and representatives of educational institutions, politics, and academia. The goal is to consolidate the network that has developed over the years and to further deepen dialogue among stakeholders. Equally important is the inclusion of a diverse range of participating minorities and institutions, along with the active involvement of youth representatives.

ORIGIN AND ACTIVITIES OF THE EDUCATION WORKING GROUP

The idea to establish the Education Working Group emerged during the 2017 FUEN Congress in Cluj-Napoca/Klausenburg (Romania). The first official meeting took place in Flensburg (Germany) in May 2018 and brought together 17 representatives from ten minorities. The purpose of this meeting was to exchange experiences in minority education and to define the goals and content of the newly founded working group.

At the 2019 meeting in Brussels (Belgium), the group agreed to combine future annual meetings with educational events held during major minority gatherings. These events focus on the educational landscape of the host minority and are presented to a broader audience. Since then, members of the Education Working Group have typically met twice a year: once during the FUEN Congress and once at a different location each year, hosted by a member organisation.

Over the years, the activities of the Education Working Group have expanded to include new projects, such as the commissioning of a report on the educational situation of minorities, the creation of a knowledge-sharing platform, and the production of video clips showcasing educational practices among various minorities.

SPOKESPERSONS

Since the end of 2025, FUEN Vice President Harald Stauder has been Spokesperson of the Working Group on Education. He is Secretary General of the South Tyrolean People's Party (SVP) in South Tyrol, Italy.

From 2022 to 2025, Daniel Alfreider, then FUEN Vice President, was Spokesperson of the Working Group on Education. He is Deputy Governor and Provincial Councillor for Ladin Education and Culture, Infrastructure, and Mobility in the Autonomous Province of Bolzano – South Tyrol (Italy), as well as Chairman of SVP-Ladina, the political representation of the Ladin minority within the South Tyrolean People's Party.

From 2018 to 2022, the Education Working Group was led by Olga Martens, former FUEN Vice President and then Vice Chair of the International Association of German Culture (IVDK). She is a member of the German minority in Russia.

ANNUAL MEETINGS OF THE EDUCATION WORKING GROUP

Since 2018, around 20 representatives of FUEN member organisations have convened annually for several days to discuss educational topics. These meetings are held at different locations, typically hosted by FUEN member organisations.

The meetings feature a varied programme, including presentations and panel discussions. A special emphasis is placed on contributions from education experts and political actors, who provide insights into the strengths and challenges faced by the host minority. Additionally, working sessions allow participants to present their communities and specific challenges. Participants also engage in discussions about current research, reflect on conditions in their home regions, and exchange best practices.

A highlight of each meeting is the visit to schools serving the host minority. These visits offer participants the chance to observe the local school system, attend classes, and engage in discussions with teachers and students.

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FLENSBURG, GERMANY, 2018

- **Focal points:** Charter of the autochthonous national minorities and fundamental right to education

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, 2019

- **Focal points:** Minority SafePack Initiative (MSPI) and Erasmus+ project: Teach-D - Teaching in Diversity
- Focus on the German minority in Hungary

BOZEN/BOLZANO, ITALY, 2021

- **Focus**: Early education (1)
- School visits: Goethe elementary school in Bozen • Salieta, Ladin kindergarten in Sankt Ulrich

KLAGENFURT/CELOVEC, AUSTRIA, 2022

- **Focus:** Early education (2)
- School visits: Sonce bilingual kindergarten of the Slovenian School Association • Bilingual elementary school of the Hermagoras Association

HERMANNSTADT/SIBIU, ROMANIA, 2023

- **Focus:** Transition from kindergarten to elementary school
- School visits: Kindergarten of the Democratic Forum of Germans in Romania in Sibiu • German and Hungarian primary school department of Octavian Goga Lyceum • German primary school department of General School No. 2

HELSINKI/HELSINGFORS, FINLAND, 2024

- **Focus:** Primary school
- School visit: Mattlidens skola, school of the Swedish minority in Espoo

KOMOTINI, GREECE, 2025

- **Focus:** Secondary and upper secondary education

SUCCESS STORIES OF NETWORKING

The Education Working Group's annual meetings provide valuable opportunities for networking among minorities. Some participants who connected during these meetings have already established bilateral partnerships between their organisations.

For example, in 2022 a collaboration began between the Carinthian Slovenes and the German minority in Denmark. This was followed in 2023 by a partnership between the German minority in Poland and the Ladin community in South Tyrol (Italy).

OTHER MEETINGS OF THE EDUCATION WG SINCE ITS FOUNDATION

2017

On 19.05.2017 in Cluj-Napoca/Klausenburg (Romania) as part of the 62nd FUEN Congress

The creation of the Education WG was decided here.

2018

On 21.06.2018 in Leeuwarden/Ljouwert (Netherlands) as part of the 63rd FUEN Congress

During this meeting, the activities, the long-term goals of the Education WG, the projects for 2019 and the suggestions and wishes of the members were discussed.

2020

In 2020, the annual meeting of the Education Working Group took place online due to Corona.

> Presentation of the film project "Insights: Minority schools in the German-Danish border region"

> Presentation of the online survey "Educational situation of autochthonous national minorities in Europe"

2022

Online expert meeting on 31.05.2022

> Creation of a digital platform with methods, activities and ideas relating to teaching minority languages

> The platform was finally launched in 2023 under the name "edu".
edu.fuen.org

2023

On 08.06.2023 in Pécs/ Fünfkirchen (Hungary) as part of the 67th FUEN Congress

The working session enabled the group to gain an insight into the premises and tasks of the Hungarian-German Methodological Center (UMZ), a central educational institution of the German minority in Hungary.

2024

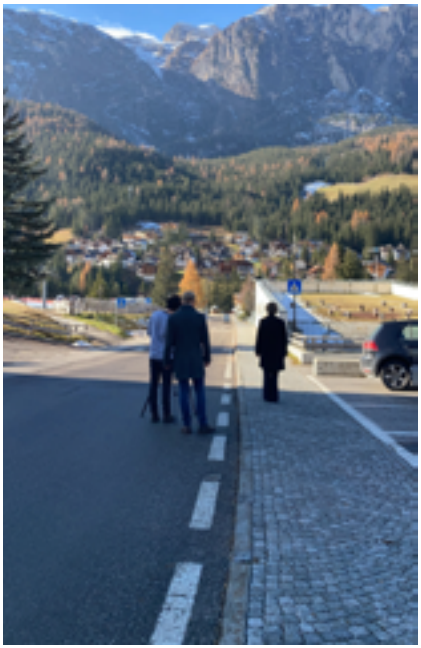
On 20.09.2024 in Risum-Lindholm/Risem-Lunham (Germany) as part of the 68th FUEN Congress

As part of the discussions on the future projects of the Education Working Group, the idea of an interactive map emerged, which would serve as an educational tool to sensitise school classes to the topic of minorities.

OTHER PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES OF THE EDUCATION WORKING GROUP

FILM SERIES "INSIGHTS" (2020–2021)

The idea to produce documentary films about minority schools emerged in response to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The necessary shift from in-person events to online formats prompted the Education Working Group to offer its members an alternative to traditional school visits.



"AM GRENZLAND" SERIES (2020)

Three films were produced as part of the "Insights – Minority Educational Institutions in the German-Danish Borderland" project. They portray daily life at the Frisian-Danish primary and community school in Risum-Lindholm (Germany), the secondary school for North Schleswig in Apenrade (Denmark), and the A. P. Møller School, the Danish secondary school in Schleswig (Germany).

Each of the three 12-minute videos features interviews with principals, teachers, and students, offering insights into school life and the surrounding community. They premiered during the annual online meeting of the Education Working Group in December 2020 and were very well received.

SOUTH TYROL SERIES (2021)

Following the success of the first series, a new film project was launched focusing on school systems, funding, teacher training, teaching materials, challenges, and best practices.

In November 2021, two new short films were recorded in South Tyrol (Italy): one at the Ladin primary school in Abtei/Badia and another at the social science high school in Meran/Merano. Together, they provide a comprehensive look at the educational landscape of the Ladin minority and the German-speaking community in South Tyrol.

REPORT ON THE EDUCATIONAL SITUATION OF MINORITIES (2021)

To gain a comprehensive overview of the educational situation of autochthonous national minorities in Europe, FUEN conducted a survey among its member organisations and partners in spring 2020. After a year of data collection and analysis, the final report was published, offering a detailed and nuanced overview of minority education in Europe.

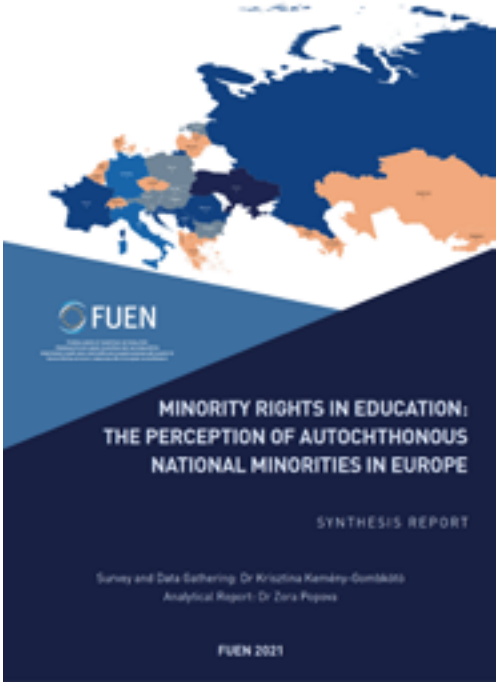
You can find the report here:

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT'S FINDINGS:

Diverse educational landscapes: Educational conditions for minorities in Europe vary widely from country to country. These differences stem primarily from varying education systems, the official recognition of minorities, political will, and the commitment of relevant stakeholders.

Shared challenges: Common difficulties include limited access to minority-language education, insufficient public funding for schools and programmes, and a generally lower quality of education.

Impact of the report: The publication of this report helped make the challenges faced by minorities in education more visible, highlighted their specific needs, and lent legitimacy to their public demands.



MINORITY MEMO (2022)

How can learning about the traditional costumes of Europe's minorities be fun? With "Minority Memo"! The Education Working Group developed this card game to introduce children from both minority and majority populations – along with their families, teachers, and others – to the rich cultural diversity of Europe's minority communities.

A copy of the game can be requested at **info@fuen.org**

STRATEGY OF THE EDUCATION WORKING GROUP AND FUTURE PLANS

The Education Working Group is a dynamic and steadily growing initiative. It continues to evolve through various projects and regular meetings, keeps its members informed via newsletters and the edu platform, and fosters dialogue through its mediation efforts. It remains open to new ideas and developments. A key future project is the exchange and training of educators.

EDU PLATFORM (2023)

Launched in 2023, the Education Working Group's edu platform aims to gather and share useful information on all aspects of education. It serves as a resource for working group members, partners, and anyone interested.

The platform offers comprehensive information on various minorities, organised by educational level – from early childhood to secondary education. Registered users can access legal frameworks relevant to each minority, explore focus areas, current strategies, and specific challenges. The "Best Practice Examples" section provides inspiration for innovative educational projects within minority communities.

Further information can be found here:
edu.fuen.org

EXCHANGE AND FURTHER TRAINING OF EDUCATORS

This project aims to foster intercultural exchange among educators working in minority educational institutions. The focus is on sharing best practices and developing innovative approaches to minority education in Europe, helping to establish a sustainable network that supports long-term cooperation and knowledge transfer.

The project's core measures include:

- Creating opportunities for intercultural exchange and dialogue among educators and other stakeholders
- Disseminating and promoting innovative educational practices and projects developed by minority communities
- Building a sustainable network for long-term collaboration and exchange among educators
- Training teachers to address the specific challenges and needs of minorities

- Training teachers in modern foreign language teaching methodologies
- Motivating current and future teachers to work in minority schools
- Developing adaptable and versatile teaching materials
- Enhancing knowledge and recognition of minority languages and cultures through targeted training programmes

CONTINUATION OF ACTIVITIES FROM PREVIOUS YEARS

The Education Working Group will continue its proven initiatives, particularly:

- Planning, coordinating, and following up on the annual meetings and working sessions as part of the FUEN Congresses
- Maintaining continuous public relations to raise awareness and enhance the visibility of education-related issues
- Maintaining and further developing the edu platform as a key resource for members and partners
- Representing the Education Working Group at relevant events and general meetings
- Conducting ongoing research on education and language topics to respond to current developments and challenges
- Expanding and nurturing the Education Working Group's network to encourage vibrant exchange and cooperation

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Das Projekt wird vom Bundesministerium des Innern aufgrund eines Beschlusses des Deutschen Bundestags gefördert

Bundesministerium des Innern