

## **ELECTION CHECKSTONES OF THE FEDERAL UNION OF EUROPEAN NATIONALITIES (FUEN) FOR THE 2025 GERMAN FEDERAL ELECTION**

### **RESPONSES FROM THE PARTY SOUTH SCHLESWIGIAN VOTER'S ASSOCIATION (SSW)**

#### **Topic Area 1: Autochthonous National Minorities and Ethnic Groups in Germany**

- 1. Do you support the inclusion of minority protection in the German Basic Law (GG) (for example, by adding an additional paragraph to Article 3 GG), and what steps do you plan to take in this regard?**

*We expect a new federal government to make a much stronger effort to improve the situation of minorities in Germany and Europe. We want to continue advocating in Berlin for the inclusion of the protection and promotion of minorities in the Basic Law. This is an especially important signal of tolerance and recognition of minorities in these times. During the ongoing election campaign and after the federal election, we will actively promote this and other concerns of national minorities.*

- 2. How do you intend to ensure that the concerns of autochthonous national minorities and ethnic groups in Germany are appropriately considered in the future government program or coalition agreement, and that their promotion is secured in the long term?**

*As the SSW, we will continue to push for the concerns of autochthonous national minorities and ethnic groups in Germany to be placed on the national political agenda. Our expectations for the future government and any coalition agreement are clear: minority protection must be enshrined in the Basic Law to ensure the long-term preservation and strengthening of their traditions and languages – also against undemocratic forces. At the same time, it is essential that all legislative proposals of the federal government are examined at an early stage to determine whether the concerns of national minorities have been considered in federal legislation, thereby strengthening and ensuring equality for minority members in everyday life.*

**3. What measures will you take to strengthen the political and social participation of autochthonous national minorities and ethnic groups in Germany, such as the establishment of additional advisory bodies or targeted funding programs?**

*For the SSW, it is clear: minorities are not short-term projects but require continuous and appropriate institutional funding by the federal government, instead of the current, often insecure project-based funding.*

*In addition to the advisory bodies for national minorities located within the Federal Ministry of the Interior, we want to continue the Parliamentary Minority Group in the Bundestag to enable cross-party exchange among members of parliament on issues concerning national minorities and to provide representatives of national minorities with a strengthened opportunity for parliamentary participation and networking.*

*Furthermore, we advocate that the federal government ensures societal participation on an equal footing. This includes, among other things, comprehensive financial and structural support for the Federal Government Commissioner for Combating Antiziganism and for the lives of Sinti and Roma. Only in this way can the commissioner fulfill their tasks in accordance with the cross-party resolution adopted by the Bundestag in 2023. We also call for the continuous involvement of the federal government in the Federal-State Commission on Antiziganism established in 2024 and for financial support for the Reporting and Information Center on Antiziganism (MIA).*

*Another key concern is the introduction of a right of association action for national minorities and ethnic groups at the federal level. This would allow them to represent collective public legal interests in court without having to be personally affected in their own rights. Additionally, we advocate for greater involvement of organisations and committees of national minorities in hearings on legislative proposals that affect their concerns. To further strengthen the parliamentary representation of national minorities, we consider it essential to expand the participation opportunities of members of national minority parties in the Bundestag.*

**4. What concrete steps do you plan to take to raise public awareness of the four recognized autochthonous national minorities and ethnic groups in Germany and to ensure the long-term preservation of their linguistic and cultural diversity?**

*As a party representing two national minorities, the SSW places particular emphasis on the preservation and promotion of the linguistic and cultural diversity of autochthonous national minorities in Germany. The federal and state governments must consistently implement the provisions of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and take measures to increase the presence of minority languages in the media – particularly in public broadcasting, which has so far failed to meet its special responsibility in this area adequately.*

*Specifically, we call for enhanced education on the Danish, Frisian, Sorbian, Sinti, and Roma communities in the regular school curriculum. The federal government must urge the Conference of Ministers of Education to implement existing proposals. Moreover, we advocate for the recognition of Danish and Frisian as court languages in their respective settlement areas through an amendment to Section 184 of the Court Constitution Act, which would, among other things, reduce translation costs in legal proceedings. It must also be possible to address federal authorities in recognized minority languages.*

*To strengthen the political work of national minorities, we demand equal funding of their political foundations and educational initiatives with federal funds. Additionally, minority languages must be considered in the upcoming revision of the Online Access Act. At the European level, it is essential that the federal government pushes for stricter trademark law to prevent the commercial exploitation of regional and minority languages. Furthermore, the demands of the Minority SafePack Initiative by European minority organisations must be consistently implemented, and measures that can already be realized at the federal level should be adopted as quickly as possible.*

*With all these measures, we aim not only to promote public awareness of autochthonous minorities in Germany but also to ensure the long-term preservation of their linguistic and cultural diversity.*

## **Topic Area 2: German Minorities Abroad**

- 1. Will you advocate for maintaining or increasing the financial support for German minorities abroad (currently provided via the BMI and AA, as well as under Section 96 of the BVFG by the BKM), which is still based on mitigating the consequences of war-related displacement?**
- 2. How does your party intend to ensure that the support for German minorities is firmly anchored in the future government program or coalition agreement?**
- 3. How do you plan to strengthen the role of German minorities as mediators between their respective home countries and Germany through bilateral programs or institutional cooperation?**
- 4. Do you support maintaining the office of the Federal Government Commissioner for Matters Related to Ethnic German Resettlers and National Minorities with strengthened competencies? Furthermore, do you support the establishment of a 'Dialogue Circle for German Minorities' in the German Bundestag?**

*As the SSW, we are part of the international community of national minorities and therefore maintain contact with German minorities, especially the German minority in North Schleswig, to support each other. We will continue this commitment in the future to the best of our ability. The office of the Federal*

*Government Commissioner for Resettlers and National Minorities is also, in our view, an indispensable part of the federal government, serving as a key contact point, and we will advocate for its continuation with strengthened competencies. In this context, German minorities abroad should be granted the same opportunities for dialogue with the Bundestag. Analogous to the Dialogue Circle for National Minorities and the Low German Speaker Group within the Interior Committee of the German Bundestag, a Dialogue Circle for German Minorities should also be established.*

### **Topic Area 3: European Union**

- 1. What is your stance on the Minority SafePack Initiative, and what specific approaches does your party pursue to further advance minority protection at the EU level despite political hurdles?**

*The SSW actively supported the Minority SafePack Initiative (MSPI) of European minority organisations. We continue to advocate for the implementation of the MSPI objectives and call on the federal government to actively and assertively push for the adoption of the individual measures by the European Commission.*

- 2. The implementation of the proposals of the Minority SafePack Initiative was part of the government program and coalition agreement in Germany. How do you intend to ensure that work on realizing these provisions continues in the next legislative period, positioning Germany as a role model for implementing the Minority SafePack Initiative at the national level?**

*We want to advocate for an EU minority policy that ensures the recognition, protection, and promotion of all national minorities and ethnic groups in the long term. The European Union must acknowledge its responsibility toward national minorities within the EU. Member states that discriminate against their national minorities and ethnic groups and violate their rights must be sanctioned. The German federal government should play an active role in enforcing shared humanistic core values and minority rights across all EU member states. It should also actively promote social equality and inclusion of stateless minorities, such as the Roma, in Germany and the EU. For the SSW, it is clear: national minorities must be represented in the German Bundestag to advocate independently for their interests.*

- 3. What measures will you take to strengthen the political representation of national minorities in the EU, for example, by supporting the effectiveness of the Intergroup for Traditional Minorities, National Communities, and Languages in the European Parliament?**

- 4. Are you willing to promote a systematic dialogue between national minorities, political decision-makers, and civil society at the EU level? What concrete mechanisms do you propose for this?**

*Especially in light of the composition of the European Commission following the last European Parliament election, the SSW firmly believes that a Commissioner for Minorities has been overlooked. We are convinced that national minorities need a direct contact point in the European Commission.*

*Moreover, dialogue between parliamentary bodies engaged in minority policy at national and EU levels would contribute to a better understanding and more targeted action in minority policy. The SSW explicitly supports efforts to foster exchange between parliamentary committees at the national and EU levels and encourages dialogue between national minorities and political decision-makers to enhance understanding and cooperation.*

*From our experience in the German-Danish border region, we know how important constant dialogue and cooperation are. The Minority Competence Network, FUEN, the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI), and the organisations of the Danish minority and the Frisian ethnic group already form a unique network on minority issues. Therefore, we want to set an example for other EU border regions and advocate for the European Union to establish a European Language Center for Regional and Minority Languages. The Schleswig region, with its historical background and linguistic diversity, is particularly well suited for this.*

*To ensure the long-term political representation of national minorities in the European Parliament, we demand that minority parties not be subject to electoral thresholds in European Parliament elections. Only in this way can we prevent member states from using electoral thresholds to deliberately exclude national minority parties from political representation.*