

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

### RESPONSES FROM THE PARTY DIE LINKE (*THE LEFT*)

#### 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?**

*Yes, DIE LINKE has supported this demand for many years. In Brandenburg, DIE LINKE, together with its then coalition partner and the Free State of Saxony, supported a corresponding proposal from the state of Schleswig-Holstein in the summer of 2019, which was submitted to the Bundesrat. Unfortunately, after committee discussions, it has remained “on ice” and has not been conclusively decided upon. In our election program for the 2025 federal election, we have once again raised the demand for an amendment to the Basic Law, which should include not only the minorities recognized in Germany but also the recognized regional language Low German. For this initiative to succeed, it is essential that minority associations in Germany continuously place the demand for a constitutional amendment on their political agenda. Our party would fully support this demand at both the federal and state levels.*

- 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?**

*DIE LINKE is fighting with full force to re-enter the German Bundestag as a parliamentary group. However, we assume that we will not be a partner in a federal government. Even if we are unlikely to participate in drafting the future government program or coalition agreement, we will exert pressure with our partners from civil society to ensure that the concerns of minorities are appropriately considered.*

**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?**

*At the federal level, an entire system of committees and measures has been established over the past decades—largely through the involvement of recognized minorities—to specifically promote and ensure their participation: the advisory committees for the various national minorities and Low German speakers, the establishment of the Minority Council, and the associated funding of the Minority Secretariat, as well as the annual financial support from the federal government for the Frisian Foundation.*

*Nevertheless, there have been repeated attempts by the federal government in the past to withdraw from minority funding or to drastically cut financial resources. DIE LINKE will continue to advocate for the federal government to take responsibility for financing minority policies, as this involves the implementation of European agreements that the Federal Republic has signed. We believe that federal and state funding for minority support must be adjusted to meet growing needs. The effects of inflation and higher costs due to collective wage agreements must be considered when determining funding levels.*

*Of particular importance to us is the support of the Sinti and Roma, who, more than any other recognized minority, continue to face discrimination and exclusion. Racism against Sinti and Roma must be effectively combated, and the recommendations of the Independent Expert Commission on Antiziganism must continue to be implemented.*

*Regarding the specific forms of participation of recognized minorities, it would be desirable to significantly expand their involvement in the German Bundestag. A model could be the Council for Sorbian/Wendish Affairs in the Brandenburg State Parliament, which has actively shaped minority policies for over 30 years.*

**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?**

*DIE LINKE believes that the recognized national minorities in Germany should play a greater role in public relations work of the Bundestag and the federal government, as well as in education at all levels—including schools. It is unacceptable that many people in Germany are unaware that national minorities live here, whose language and culture are protected by Council of Europe agreements. Due to the widespread antiziganism, the Sinti and Roma in Germany require special consideration. Educational programs in various formats, adequately funded and developed in close consultation with the minorities, are necessary.*

## 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?**

*Yes, DIE LINKE will advocate for securing financial support for German minorities abroad in the upcoming legislative period. The corresponding subsidies should be adjusted for inflation and any new needs.*

- 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?**

*See the response to Question 2 in Topic Area 1.*

- 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?**

*The experiences of German-Danish cooperation have demonstrated for decades the practical benefits of promoting the respective minority languages in neighboring countries. A similar approach could also be applied to German-Polish relations, as not only the German minority in Poland but also the (thus far unrecognized by the Federal Republic) Polish minority in Germany are part of the 21st-century European reality. In this regard, as well as in cooperation with other countries in Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe, there is great potential. The promotion of German minorities in these countries could make a significant contribution to a "Europe of diversity". We are open to concrete proposals from associations and will review them accordingly.*

- 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?**

*DIE LINKE fundamentally supports efforts to appoint commissioners for specific affected groups. In relation to national minorities, this applies in particular to the Commissioner for Resettlers and National Minorities, as well as the Commissioner for Combating Antiziganism and for the Lives of Sinti and Roma in Germany. We oppose calls from certain parties to abolish such contact persons for minorities. Instead, we advocate*

*that these commissioners receive adequate financial resources to support projects in the interest of national minorities.*

*We will review the proposal to establish a 'Dialogue Circle for German Minorities' in the Bundestag once concrete suggestions are presented. We remain open to previous dialogue formats, such as the parliamentary breakfast with representatives of the Working Group of German Minorities and members of the Bundestag.*

### **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?**

*DIE LINKE has supported the Minority SafePack Initiative (MSPI) from the very beginning. This included party members and supporters collecting numerous signatures for the initiative in Germany. After the European Commission rejected the initiative, we called on government leaders in various federal states to take action in Brussels. DIE LINKE considers the FUEN's demands for the development of a European legal framework for the protection and promotion of minorities, as adopted at the FUEN Congress in Husum 2024, to be appropriate and will support them, particularly in the Bundestag.*

**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?**

*The coalition agreement of the SPD, Alliance 90/The Greens, and FDP stated: "We support the Minority SafePack Initiative proactively and implement it in Germany." While minority policy standards in the Federal Republic are significantly better compared to other European countries, the focus of proactive German government action should shift from domestic implementation to the European level, particularly targeting the Council and the European Commission. Since there have been no visible changes at the European level, the Minority SafePack Initiative remains highly relevant in discussions with EU bodies. As an opposition party in the Bundestag, we can bring this topic to parliamentary debate. However, substantial changes will only be achieved with sustained pressure from European minorities and their organizations on all EU member states. We explicitly encourage FUEN in this effort and remain open to discussions with our Bundestag members.*

**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?**

*The question of how EU member states, as well as accession candidates, implement policies for and with the minorities living within their borders must receive greater priority at the EU level. Conflicts in Europe and worldwide are often linked to the violation of minority rights. In this context, protecting minorities is a responsibility that national parliaments, governments, and civil societies must take seriously.*

*The Intergroup for Traditional Minorities, National Communities, and Languages in the European Parliament has now been established. Members of the Left Group in the European Parliament will support its work.*

**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?**

*We support the proposal by the Federal Union of European Nationalities to establish an advisory body within the European Commission that provides expert guidance on policy development and the implementation of EU legislation concerning traditional national and linguistic minorities in the EU and its neighboring regions. We find this proposal sensible and will support it. Additionally, we remain open to reviewing further proposals from FUEN.*