



# FUEEN

## Activity Report 2015



Federal Union of European Nationalities  
Föderalistische Union Europäischer Volksgruppen  
ФЕДЕРАЛИСТСКИЙ СОЮЗ ЕВРОПЕЙСКИХ НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫХ МЕНЬШИНСТВ  
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The year 2015 with FUEN –

# KNOW-HOW OF THE MINORITIES IS IN HIGH DEMAND – WHAT CAN WE CONTRIBUTE?

**Flensburg/Flensburg-Berlin-Brussel/Bruxelles – as of now FUEN is active from three locations Like a thunderbolt from the sky! : FUEN will receive 500,000 Euro in funding, and the House of Minorities gets supported with 600,000 Euro. Western Thrace Turks host the FUEN Congress of 2015**

The situation in Europe and in the world is thrown out of joint. We have experienced 2015 in many ways as a wave of pictures, news, stories – characterised by the refugee crisis and migrants moving to Europe.

In combination with new technologies and digitisation the world is getting smaller and this has a major influence on how we make up our opinions and our view of reality. Crises, wars and conflicts are a permanent and on-going feature of our public consciousness.

As European autochthonous, national minorities we possess a deeply rooted self-understanding of being committed to work towards a situation of peaceful harmony between the peoples, with respect for everyone's language, culture and identity.

The crises – in the world as a whole – regularly have a relation with conflicts over minorities. The situation in Ukraine and in Crimea seriously affects our member organisations. We must show our solidarity with them and with their families. Our activities also lead new members from Ukraine into the ranks of FUEN, our organisation based on solidarity.

With serious concern FUEN notices a tendency to re-nationalisation, to disintegration and to the reinstatement of borders. The new nationalism that has awakened in the nation states as a conceived protection from everything new, or alien – is very worrying in our opinion.

But we also know that peace in many regions of Europe is a joint achievement of both the majority and the minority population.

In view of the breakneck events of the past years it becomes clear how valuable and at the same time how short the periods of peace can be in the regions.

FUEN shows that in many regions of Europe the minorities have over decades been living and working in a peaceful, self-confident and sustainable way. Minority policy is peace policy. What is it that we can contribute?

We are called upon to make our contribution by sharing our expertise in how people are living together peacefully, to show our confidence-building measures and the positive developments in the regions, all based on our own experiences. This means that we must describe our experiences in such a way that they may be applied elsewhere.

At the same time we must acknowledge that the situation of many minorities, their recognition and the financial support they receive to do their work – is unsatisfactory and unacceptable for the Europe of today.

To represent their interests, to support them and to give them advice: that is why FUEN exists, why we have our network and our projects.

In 2015, FUEN has provided exceptional achievements. With a small team, a committed presidium and sustained by the active member organisations and long-time grant-givers we succeeded in positioning and equipping FUEN as the main political voice in questions related to minorities.

FUEN now has three locations, in Flensburg/Flensborg, Berlin and Bruxelles/Brussel.

FUEN continued its long list of successful congresses with for the first time a congress organised in Greece, and so it has highlighted the strong commitment of the Western Thrace in Europe and raised awareness for their situation.

FUEN complemented a stable basis of long-time grant-givers with a project grant from the Federal Republic of Germany for an amount of 500,000 Euro and a project grant for the House of Minorities of 600,000 Euro. FUEN attracted new grant-givers too.

With two years of positive results for the annual accounts, FUEN fulfilled the requirements of the continuation forecast.

FUEN is admitting further new member organisations.

We have set a new starting point for our upcoming activities.

FUEN now has to be judged based on concrete political contributions and on how its objectives are implemented on the international, European, national and regional level – and also on the level of each individual minority. There is no lack of concrete demands in the area of the minorities –representation at the European Parliament, adequate funding, the competences of the legislature and using our expertise. It is with great anticipation that FUEN expects the judgment on the European Citizens' Initiative Minority SafePack Initiative on the questions related to the EU competences in minority issues.

There are more than 400 minority communities in Europe, and more than 90 are united under the umbrella of FUEN. Every one of these minorities has the right to be represented in our community based on solidarity.

But above all FUEN is one thing – a family, in which the human component of meeting and exchange provides motivation and inspiration for many people who are committed to work for their minorities.

**We thank you all for cooperating with us in 2015!**

Susann Schenk and Hans Heinrich Hansen  
*Flensburg / Flensborg*

## FUEN PRESS RELEASES 2015

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### January 2015

HAPPY NEW YEAR! FROHES NEUES JAHR!

COOPERATION BETWEEN EUROPEAN MINORITIES AND LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES DISCUSSED IN LEEUWARDEN / LJOUWERT

FIRST MEETING OF THE FEDERAL UNION OF EUROPEAN NATIONALITIES (FUEN)

THIRD EUROPEADA IN 2016 WILL TAKE PLACE IN SOUTH TYROL

FIRST PRESIDUM MEETING OF THE YEAR IN SOUTH TYROL: AMBITIOUS PROGRAMME FOR FUEN IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

### February 2015

FUEN SUPPORTS THE EUROPEAN ROADMAP FOR LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY BY NPLD

CONSULTATIONS WITH THE GERMAN FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTRY IN FLENSBURG

FUEN MEETING WITH CARL HOLST

FUEN VISITS MACEDONIANS AND CHAM ALBANIANS IN TIRANA

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IS INVESTIGATING HOW THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE SHOULD BE REFORMED AND WANTS TO HEAR ABOUT THE EXPERIENCES OF THE MINORITY SAFEPACK INITIATIVE

MINORITY SAFEPACK AT HEARING IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT - MORE RIGHTS FOR CITIZENS' INITIATIVES

### March 2015

FUEN MEETING WITH EU COMMISSIONER TIBOR NAVRACSICS

FUEN MEETS EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER TIBOR NAVRACSICS IN BRUSSELS

FUEN CONGRESS 2016 IN THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE WROCLAW/BRESLAU

CELEBRATIONS BONN–COPENHAGEN DECLARATIONS IN BERLIN

THE TV NETWORK OF THE CRIMEAN TATARS ATR SHOULD NOT BE CLOSED!

#### April 2015

VISIT OF THE IFA-INSTITUTE TO THE HOUSE OF MINORITIES

PREPARATIONS FUEN CONGRESS 2015

THE TIME HAS COME NOW! YOU CAN REGISTER NOW FOR THE FUEN CONGRESS IN KOMOTINI!

TWO ATTACKS ON A MOSQUE AND A MASJID ON THE SAME DAY IN KOMOTINI

FUEN AT THE 12TH CONGRESS OF THE RMDSZ

EUROPEAN PEOPLE'S PARTY ORGANISES HEARING ON MINORITIES IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

THE CLIMATE IN THE GERMAN-DANISH BORDER REGION DOES NOT TOLERATE PLACE-NAME SIGNS

#### May 2015

NO MINORITY REPRESENTATIVES INVITED BY THE ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT TO CELEBRATE THE RATIFICATION OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES

FIRST EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE BEFORE THE COURT OF JUSTICE IN LUXEMBOURG

THE 60TH ANNUAL CONGRESS OF THE FEDERAL UNION OF EUROPEAN NATIONALITIES TAKES PLACE AT THE WESTERN THRACE TURKS IN GREECE FROM 13-17 MAY 2015

REGIONAL MINORITY THINK TANK MEETING IN FLENSBURG

MINET MINDERHEITENMAGAZIN BERICHTET ÜBER WESTTHRAKIEN – only in German

FUEN ON THE WAY TO WESTERN THRACE

FUEN CONGRESS 2015 HAS STARTED

FUEN ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES ANNOUNCES POSITIVE RESULTS

HUNGARY OFFERS TO SUPPORT FUEN

DISCUSSION IN BERLIN ON THE HOUSE OF MINORITIES IN FLENSBURG

#### June 2015

NEW OVERVIEW OF THE 2015 FUEN CONGRESS IN KOMOTINI PUBLISHED

THE HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE EU WILL REMAIN TRUNCATED IF THEY DO NOT EQUALLY INCLUDE MINORITY RIGHTS

FUEN PRESENTS ITSELF, THE OUTCOMES OF FUEN CONGRESS IN GREECE AND ITS PLANS FOR THE COMING YEAR AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



FUEN INITIATES NEW PROJECT

CONFERENCE “MINORITIES IN BORDER REGIONS” IN SØNDERBORG

FUEN AND ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN BORDER REGIONS AEBR TOGETHER IN SØNDERBORG

UKRAINE PROJECT OF FUEN STARTED

PREPARATION TOURNAMENT FOR THE NEXT EUROPEADA 2016 A GREAT SUCCESS

CELEBRATION OF 25 YEARS OF MINORITY PROTECTION IN THE CONSTITUTION OF SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN

#### July 2015

GERMAN FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER STEINMEIER PLEADS FOR DIALOGUE, TRUST AND STRONGER PARTICIPATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE OSCE

MEETING ABOUT THE WORKING GROUP OF GERMAN MINORITIES (AGDM) IN BERLIN

#### August 2015

THE SECRETARIAT OF FUEN WISHES YOU ALL A NICE AND RELAXING SUMMER TIME

AS OF NOW FUEN IS PRESENT IN BERLIN

OPEN DAYS OF THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT IN BERLIN: FUEN WILL BE THERE

#### September 2015

STATELESS FOR 22 YEARS

FUEN UNDERTOOK A FACT-FINDING MISSION TO RHODES AND KOS

FUEN IS PRESENTING THE EUROPEAN MINORITIES IN BERLIN

GREEK CONSUL-GENERAL VISITS FLENSBURG

INTENSIVE WEEK IN STRASBOURG: STATE OF THE UNION, REFUGEES, FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND STRATEGIC COOPERATION WITH THE MINORITY INTERGROUP IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

THE WAVE OF REFUGEES REQUIRES SERIOUS EFFORTS TOWARDS CREATING PEACE

DELEGATION OF THE SOCIETY OF SWEDISH LITERATURE IN FINLAND (SLS) VISITS FUEN

FUEN PARTICIPATED IN THE SÁMI SYMPOSIUM IN BERLIN

OSCE ANNUAL HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE IN WARSAW; GERMAN 2016 CHAIRMANSHIP ANNOUNCES THAT NATIONAL MINORITIES ARE ONE OF THE PRIORITIES NEXT YEAR

MINORITY COUNCIL AND MINORITY SECRETARIAT IN GERMANY TURN TEN YEARS OLD

FUEN PARTICIPATES IN THE EU CONFERENCE ON THE OCCASION OF THE EUROPEAN DAY OF LANGUAGES 2015

SEVERAL GUESTS ARE VISITING AND MEETING FUEN IN THE HOUSE OF MINORITIES

FUEN ON THE OCCASION OF THE EUROPEAN DAY OF LANGUAGES: IN YOUR OWN LANGUAGE YOU ARE AT HOME...

SEVEN THOUSAND GUESTS AT THE SUCCESSFUL CULTURE FESTIVAL OF THE GERMAN MINORITY IN POLAND

October 2015

FIRST JUDGMENT IN A EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE CASE

EUROPEAN COMMISSION ORGANISES ANNUAL COLLOQUIUM ON FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS 2015

EDUCATION POLICY IN SLOVAKIA IN REGARD TO THE TEACHING OF HUNGARIAN AND OTHER MINORITY LANGUAGES REQUIRES FURTHER EUROPEAN ATTENTION

SECOND WEEK OF THE OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING: FUEN WAS WELL REPRESENTED IN WARSAW

FUEN PRESENTS TWO WRITTEN STATEMENTS TO THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE: MIGRATION AND REFUGEES, WOMEN BELONGING TO MINORITIES, THE IMPLEMENTATION OF JUDGMENTS AND MONITORING OF STATES

INTERNAL NEWS: FUEN, A CHILD-FRIENDLY ORGANISATION

FUEN MEETS MESHKETIAN TURKS AND KARACHAY-BALKARS IN MOSCOW

FUEN SPEAKS AT THE KIEV DIALOGUE

18TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SLAVIC MINORITIES TAKES PLACE IN CROATIA

FUEN ATTENDED THE OPEN DAYS OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

FUEN ESTABLISHES A EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE IN BRUSSEL/BRUXELLES

DRAW FOR EUROPEADA2016 IN BOLZANO/BOZEN ON 14 DECEMBER 2015

SEMINAR FOR NON-KIN-STATE MINORITIES IN SWITZERLAND

FUEN PRESIDENT SPEAKS AT MEETING ON THE OSCE CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES IN VIENNA

November 2015

FUEN PRESIDENT HANS HEINRICH HANSEN IN VIENNA: “THE BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESSFUL MINORITY POLICY ARE EQUALITY AND GENUINE DIALOGUE AMONG EQUALS”

FUEN ATTENDS PREPARATION MEETING FOR THE GERMAN 2016 OSCE CHAIRMANSHIP IN BERLIN

SECOND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP OF TURKIC MINORITIES TAKES PLACE IN BAKU

POLITICAL TALKS IN BERLIN: 24TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP OF GERMAN MINORITIES

XVIII<sup>TH</sup> FUEN-ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SLAVIC MINORITIES FROM 15 UNTIL 18 OCTOBER 2015 IN DARUVAR, CROATIA - REPORT OF THE ANNUAL MEETING PUBLISHED NOW

PRESENTATION OF THE PROJECT TO DEVELOP A PROTOCOL ON LANGUAGE DIVERSITY AS PART OF THE 2016 EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE DONOSTIA/SAN SEBASTIAN IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

FULL AGENDA FOR THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE 24TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FUEN WORKING GROUP OF GERMAN MINORITIES: IMPORTANT MEETINGS IN BERLIN

SECOND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FUEN WORKING GROUP OF TURKIC MINORITIES (TAG) IN BAKU CONCLUDED SUCCESSFULLY

FROM 2016, FUEN FUNDING BY THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY WILL INCREASE TO 500 000 EUROS

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE BUND DEUTSCHER NORDSCHLESWIGER (BDN) WITH ITS 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

FUEN ATTENDS THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON MINORITY ISSUES IN GENEVA

December 2015

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT DISCUSSES DUTCH MINORITY LANGUAGE POLICY IN THE CARIBBEAN

UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON MINORITY ISSUES DISCUSSES THE ISSUE OF MINORITIES IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

EUROPEADA 2016: THE TEAMS HAVE BEEN ANNOUNCED!

FUEN WISHES YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS



January 2015

## HAPPY NEW YEAR! FROHES NEUES JAHR!

BONNE ANNÉE! С НОВЫМ ГОДОМ!

2/1/2015

Godt Nytår! Srečno novo leto! Hyvää Uutta Vuotta!  
Blwyddyn Newydd Dda! Gott Nytt År! Felic Any  
Nou! Sretna Nova godina! Šťastný Nový  
Rok! Gelukkig Nieuwjaar! Head uut  
aastet! Ευτυχισμένο το Νέο Έτος! Boldog Új Év!  
Shona Bhliain Nua! Buon Anno! Среќна Нова  
Година! Szczęśliwego Nowego Roku! Срећна  
Нова година! З Новим Роком!



## COOPERATION BETWEEN EUROPEAN MINORITIES AND LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES DISCUSSED IN LEEUWARDEN / LJOUWERT

2/1/2015

Last Friday, a delegation consisting of FUEN Vice President Loránt Vincze and FUEN advisor Frank de Boer were in Fryslân/Friesland, the Netherlands, to talk about cooperation with the Frisian vice-governor Jannewietske de Vries, who is also the president of the [Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity \(NPLD\)](#), and her advisor Alex Riemersma.



“There is a need to unite our forces in Brussels. In FUEN, we work for the creation of a sustainable system of minority protection in Europe, which includes the protection of linguistic and cultural identity. NPLD is an important partner for us that also advocates the promotion of linguistic diversity and the use and education of regional and minority languages. A new European Commission was recently established and we are at the beginning of a new cycle of European funding programmes. There are chances to exert influence now, and our first experiences show that we can establish a constructive dialogue and working relation with the new Commission”, Loránt Vincze said at the meeting. Vice-governor Jannewietske de Vries too was very much in favour of joining forces in Brussels. Several areas of cooperation and a time schedule were agreed between FUEN and NPLD.

FUEN also used the opportunity to speak with its Frisian member organisation [Ried fan de Fryske Beweging](#). Chairman Geart Benedictus and board member Pier Bergsma told about the challenges to the Frisian language, such as the creeping centralisation and scaling up of many administrative services. Another topic of discussion was the FUEN Congress of 2018, which will take place when Leeuwarden / Ljouwert will be the European Capital of Culture.

The visit took place following a meeting with Cor van der Meer and Marit Bijlsma of the [Mercator Research Centre](#) on Multilingualism and Language Learning, the leading partner of the Mercator Network of research centres in Europe. Van der Meer told about their current projects, such as e.g. the Open Educational Resources (OER) project and the series of regional dossiers with information about education in minority languages in Europe. Together we discussed about ways of cooperation that would enable the minorities active in FUEN to access and participate in the research and projects of Mercator.

The day was concluded at the New Year reception of the Province of Fryslân, hosted by governor John Jorritsma.

*Photo: FUEN and Ried fan de Fryske Beweging*

## FIRST MEETING OF THE FEDERAL UNION OF EUROPEAN NATIONALITIES (FUEN)

22 -24 JANUARY 2015 BOZEN/BOLZANO, SOUTH TYROL

22/1/2016



Traditionally, the first meeting of the new year for the Presidium of the Federal Union of European Nationalities takes place in South Tyrol. Regional Minister and FUEN Vice President Martha Stocker has invited her colleagues to come to Bozen/Bolzano from 22-24 January. The main topics for discussion are

the 2015 planning of the largest umbrella organisation of the European minorities, the cooperation between regions, the developments in regard to the European citizens' initiative Minority SafePack Initiative and the preparations for the 3rd EUROPEADA, the European Football Championship of the minorities.

The situation in Europe and the role of minorities are the main topics for discussion.

FUEN Presidium members meet today (Thursday, 22 January 2015) under the direction of Hans Heinrich Hansen the Governor of South Tyrol Arno Kompatscher and Member of the European Parliament Herbert Dorfmann.

The Chairman of the South Tyrolean People's Party (SVP) Philipp Achammer and the Secretary Manuel Massl will welcome the Presidium in the SVP office on Friday (23 January 2015) in Bolzano.

Prior to the press conference announcing the EUROPEADA2016 in South Tyrol a meeting with the organising committee is also on the agenda.

After the championships in 2008 at the Rhaeto Romansh in Graubünden, Switzerland and in 2012 at the Lusatian Sorbs in Germany, the European Football Championship of the minorities will take place in South Tyrol in 2016. The winner of both 2008 and 2012 was also successful in its bid to organise the 3rd European championship in 2016. The EUROPEADA takes place in the same period as the official European championship of UEFA. In total, 24 male teams and up till 8 female teams are expected. The EUROPEADA is foremost a great football festival of languages and cultures which attracts attention from the media from all over Europe.

The autonomous region Trentino-South Tyrol and the autonomous province Bozen have been supporting the work of FUEN and thus the minorities in Europe for a very long time. SVP is a FUEN member since 1988.

Press conference on Friday, 23 January at 10 am in the SVP office in Bozen

Programme:

Thursday, 22 January

18:00 hr Greeting SVP office and Presidium meeting

20:00 hr Dinner with Governor Arno Kompatscher and MEP Dorfmann

Friday, 23 January

08:45 hr Meeting in the SVP office with Chairman Philipp Achammer and Secretary Manuel Massl

09:00 hr Meeting with the EUROPEADA organising committee in the SVP office

10:00 hr Press conference

12:00 hr Meeting with the Provincial Assessor Dr Florian Mussner

13:30 -17:30 hr Presidium meeting

18:00 hr Meeting with the chief editor of Dolomiten Toni Ebner

*Photo: FUEN Presidium at dinner with Governor Arno Kompatscher and MEP Dorfmann*

## THIRD EUROPEADA IN 2016 WILL TAKE PLACE IN SOUTH TYROL

23/1/2015

At a press conference in the building of SVP in Bozen/Bolzano on Friday morning the Presidium of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) has presented the first practical details about the European Football Championship of the autochthonous national minorities in 2016. This so-called EUROPEADA will take place from 18 until 26 June in the Pustertal and Gadertal Valleys and is intended to not only bring the minorities of Europe closer together in a sportive manner, but also culturally.



The previous EUROPEADA 2012 at the Lusatian Sorbs in Germany has proven that a sportive event of this size can create a strong feeling of togetherness in the region. “Football can convey the message that the minorities have an added value”, said FUEN Vice President Martha Stocker at today’s press conference. The organiser of the 2012 EUROPEADA, FUEN Vice President Bernhard Ziesch, confirmed this impression. “The EUROPEADA was a crowd-puller for our own minority, but also for the region as a whole. We look forward to come to this cultural and multilingual event as participants and as excited fans”, said Ziesch.

Siegfried Stocker, the chairman of the South Tyrolean organisation committee underlined that his team consists of voluntary workers, and that they count on the help and infrastructure of the local associations. “It is our goal to organise a football tournament of high quality, where people can meet and experience the sport”, said Stocker. The venues are in the Pustertal Valley, where we have the opportunity to also involve the Gadertal Valley and therefore to actively involve the two minorities in South Tyrol, both the German and the Ladin minority.

FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen told that the first EUROPEADA in 2008 was organised as an experiment. By organising it, however, FUEN succeeded in creating more publicity for minority issues. “Still today, we have the major challenge of gaining recognition and respect for the autochthonous,



national minorities in Europe”, said Hansen. This is also what the citizens’ initiative “Minority SafePack”, which was launched in Brixen in 2013, is all about. The European Commission rejected the initiative and the case is currently challenged at court. The struggle to create awareness in Europe for the minorities and their concerns continues. “A sportive, and cultural event like the EUROPEADA creates an opportunity to show that the minorities are part of the society”, noted FUEN Vice President Loránt Vincze.

“We look forward to the tournament in South Tyrol and the first call for both male and female teams. We can’t wait to see how many teams will compete with each other in 2016; after all the South Tyroleans are challenged, not just for their football skills as they are the defending champions, but also in realising a great programme around the tournament”, said FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen.

*Source: SVP*

*Photo (left to right): FUEN Vice President Bernhard Ziesch, FUEN Vice President Martha Stocker, Chairman of the Organisation Team of the South Tyrolean EUROPEADA Siegfried Stocker and FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen*

## FIRST PRESIDIUM MEETING OF THE YEAR IN SOUTH TYROL: AMBITIOUS PROGRAMME FOR FUEN IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

27/1/2016

Traditionally, the first Presidium Meeting of the year takes place in Bozen/Bolzano. This year was no different, and from 22-24 January, the members of the presidium travelled from all directions of Europe to South Tyrol to discuss about FUEN’s activities and strategy for the coming 12 months.

Hans Heinrich Hansen, the President of FUEN, underlined that the relations with South Tyrol are excellent: “It’s not by accident that FUEN starts the year in South Tyrol. The South Tyrolean autonomy-model is a successful example for a peaceful solution in regard to how minority and majority are able to live harmoniously side-by-side in one region. For the solidarity among the minority community in Europe it has always been important that we can rely on the support from South Tyrol. We have many allies and thinkers in this region.”



On behalf of FUEN, Hans Heinrich Hansen expressed his deep sorrow for the attacks in Paris and is appalled by the fact that the multi-faceted crisis in Europe again does not shy away from the use of violent means.

“We are living in a world in change and a society that is transforming. It is an issue of human dignity how we deal with questions about the future and the fear of people. There is a deep desire among the people for peace. We, the minorities, have always said that with our intercultural experience and our values we can and we want to contribute to reduce tensions and to build on creating transnational relations.”

FUEN itself and each of our member organisations has many concrete things to offer to the politicians and to the society as a whole.

**First of all there is** the European citizens' initiative [Minority SafePack](#). This initiative, with concrete proposals to improve minority protection on the level of the European Union, was rejected by the European Commission. The rejection is challenged by the organisers and FUEN expects to receive an answer from the Court by the end of this year. In the meantime, FUEN is engaging in an active dialogue about minority protection with representatives of the European institutions, including with the European Commission. It is clear that as an instrument, the citizens' initiative is not functioning as it should and that adaptations to it are necessary: the instrument has to become much less strictly legal and much more political in character. FUEN will follow the upcoming evaluations in 2015 closely.

**A second important priority in 2015** for FUEN will be to bring regions with minorities closer to one another and to promote the cooperation of these regions on the European level. With the help of influential politicians throughout Europe FUEN wants to bring the issues of the European minorities higher on the European agenda. In South Tyrol a meeting of the regions in Brussels in 2015 and at the EUROPEADA in 2016 were announced.

**Third - A highlight for the European minorities** will be the FUEN Congress 2015, which will be taking place at the Western Thrace Turks in Greece, from 13-17 May 2015. During the Presidium Meeting the programme was discussed. The FUEN Congress in Komotini will give due attention to the precarious situation of the Turks in Greece. They are not recognised as a Turkish minority and their autonomy in religious and educational issues is not respected, although international treaties have guaranteed this autonomy. At the Congress also the annual Assembly of Delegates of FUEN will take place.

#### **EUROPEADA 2016 – First Press Conference for South Tyrol**

On Friday morning the FUEN Presidium had a meeting with the organisation team of the EUROPEADA in South Tyrol, presided over by Siegfried Stocker. The third edition of the European championship for the minorities will take place in the Pustertal Valley in South Tyrol from 18-26 June 2016. A total of 24 male teams and 8 female teams will compete for the title of European champion of the minorities. "Football can convey the message that the minorities bring an added value to the society", said FUEN Vice President Martha Stocker, who is a Minister of South Tyrol. FUEN Vice President Bernhard Ziesch, who organised the 2012 edition, said that the tournament in his region created a strong sense of togetherness in the region and that its effect can still be felt today.

During the stay in Bozen/Bolzano the FUEN presidium had several meetings with regional politicians and representatives of the media. Among them were the Prime Minister of South Tyrol Arno Kompatscher, the Ladin Minister Florian Mussner, Member of the European Parliament from South Tyrol Herbert Dorfmann, the Party Secretary of SVP Manuel Massl, editor in chief Toni Ebner of the Dolomiten-newspaper and others.

#### **FUEN is having dinner with Prime Minister Arno Kompatscher**

At their first meeting of the year the FUEN presidium was invited for dinner with the South Tyrolean Prime Minister Arno Kompatscher and with Herbert Dorfmann, the Tyrolean Member of the European Parliament (MEP).

FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen told the prime minister about the projects of FUEN: the developments in regard to the European citizens' initiative Minority SafePack and the political developments in Europe, the House of Minorities in Flensburg and the EUROPEADA football championship in South Tyrol in June 2016.



The Prime Minister told about the recent financial agreement he made with the government of Italy. Unlike before, where Italy received the money first and then sent a large percentage of it to South Tyrol, soon South Tyrol will be able to receive the money first and then sent a contribution to Rome. Kompatscher, who is a football player himself, was very interested in the idea to use the EUROPEADA championship of the European minorities to invite political heavyweights from the regions with minorities to speak about further cooperation on the European level. He also wants to continue with high level conferences in South Tyrol, like the one in 2014 with the Italian and Austrian Prime Ministers Renzi and Faymann.

With MEP Dorfmann the FUEN representatives talked the Intergroup for National Minorities, in the European Parliament, which after a difficult negotiation process was re-establishment at the end of last year. FUEN is one of the main partners of this Intergroup.

### **Meeting with the Ladin Minister Florian Mussner**

The Ladin Minister Florian Mussner, responsible in the South Tyrolean government for the Ladin schools and culture met with the FUEN presidium to speak about the situation of the Ladins, the projects of FUEN and what FUEN can do for this small minority.

In general the Ladins in South Tyrol and to a somewhat lesser extend Trentino are doing well: they have a strong identity and are economically prosperous; they live in mountain valleys where there is much tourism and many jobs. In the province of Belluno, however, where also Ladins are living, things are much worse. The Ladin minority there is ignored and not supported by the regional government. The province of South Tyrol can speak up, but cannot interfere in the policies of the neighbouring region. In South Tyrol the Ladins are lucky that the majority of Germans understand what it means to be a minority. FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen presented Mussner with the latest brochure of FUEN and with FUEN's Map of Minorities and Regional and Minority Languages. Hansen invited the Ladins to bring up their topics and eventually their problems, so that FUEN can work on these issues on the European level.

### **Former Prime Minister Luis Durnwalder comes to FUEN presidium meeting**

The former Prime Minister of South Tyrol Luis Durnwalder (1988-2014) joined the FUEN Presidium meeting for an hour. Durnwalder, who is one of the seven members of the citizens' committee that proposed the European citizens' initiative Minority SafePack, was given the latest information about the legal case that is challenging the decision of the Commission that rejected the proposals made by the European minorities.

FUEN spoke also with Durnwalder about the FUEN Advisory Council and about cooperation between regions with minorities in Europe. FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen told about the idea to invite important politicians to South Tyrol during the European football championship EUROPEADA that takes place in June 2016.



### **FUEN visits the editor in chief of the Dolomiten-newspaper**

FUEN visited the premises of Athesia Press, where Dolomiten is published, the largest newspaper in South Tyrol. The presidium met with editor in chief Toni Ebner, who is also member of the governing board of MIDAS (European association of dailies in minority and regional languages) and with his colleague Marc Röggl. Ebner was very interested in the projects of FUEN, such as the FUEN Congress 2015 in Komotini, where MIDAS held a study visit last year, and the Minority SafePack-citizens' initiative. The FUEN representatives also told about the EUROPEADA football championship in June 2016. Ebner welcomed the idea to cooperate with other European newspaper and media in the coverage of this event.

February 2015

## FUEN SUPPORTS THE EUROPEAN ROADMAP FOR LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY BY NPLD

6/2/2015

The [Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity \(NPLD\)](#) launched its European Roadmap for Linguistic Diversity in the European Parliament in Brussels yesterday. NPLD is an important partner of FUEN and the two organisations work together in Brussels to advocate for the regional and minority languages in Europe. Both FUEN and NPLD want the EU to respect its own motto: “United in Diversity” and that the EU increases its support to those languages in Europe that are endangered.

At the launch, FUEN Vice President Loránt Vincze expressed FUEN’s support for the Roadmap: “We will be a strategic partner along the adoption and implementation period of this project.” At the meeting in the European Parliament, Vincze also emphasised the proposed measures in the Minority SafePack Initiative that aim at creating favourable conditions for linguistic and cultural diversity. “The Roadmap contains the same thread, the same elements.” The FUEN Vice President suggested that mother tongue education and the right to use the mother tongue should be more emphasized in the document. He also offered to include the Map of Minorities & Regional and Minority Languages as an annex to the Roadmap. “I am certain that the aspiration of the Roadmap to realise the inclusion of language rights within the Charter for Fundamental Rights, and the long-term objective of the FUEN to include also the autochthonous minority rights within the fundamental rights catalogue would certainly change the course of history for our languages and for our communities.”



The European Roadmap for Linguistic Diversity aims to reaffirm the European Union’s commitment to linguistic diversity and to ensure that all languages spoken in Europe are seen as common assets, which need to be supported and promoted. The Roadmap is set within the framework of the present context of the European Union, where the economy is at the forefront of the political agenda. Well thought-out policies and initiatives are called for if strengthening the vitality of languages is to be linked to the creation of prosperous economies, building cohesive societies and working towards a common destiny together in Europe.

In the upcoming months, the Roadmap will be open for consultation. After that a final version will be launched at a conference in Brussels in October 2015.



*Photo 1: FUEN Vice President Loránt Vincze*

*Photo 2: NPLD representatives Jannewietske de Vries, Meirion Prys Jones and Vicent Climent*

## CONSULTATIONS WITH THE GERMAN FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTRY IN FLENSBURG

24/2./2015

In what way can the experiences and achievements in the German-Danish border region, the Land of Schleswig-Holstein and the two European organisations there be better used? That was the question that Ralf Beste, deputy leader of policy planning at the German Foreign Affairs Ministry wanted to answer at his visit to Flensburg.

In the presence of the Schleswig-Holstein Minority Commissioner Renate Schnack, FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen, FUEN Secretary General Susann Schenk and ECMI Chairman Dr Jørgen Kühl talked about proposals for German foreign policy. The main topic of interest was how civil society can contribute with models of dialogue and conflict resolution. This becomes particularly relevant once Germany will take over the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 2016.

At the end of the meeting the mayor of Flensburg Simon Faber welcomed the guest from Berlin in the Office of the House of Minorities.

There was consensus that what Flensburg and the German-Danish border region have to offer as a European minority centre, may from an all-German perspective also be used with a good chance of success.



*Photo (from left to right): the mayor of Flensburg Simon Faber, FUEN Secretary General Susann Schenk, FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen, Schleswig-Holstein Minority Commissioner Renate Schnack, deputy leader of policy planning at the German Foreign Affairs Ministry Ralf Beste and ECMI Chairman Dr Jørgen Kühl in the House of Minorities in Flensburg*

## FUEN MEETING WITH CARL HOLST

### FUEN FOCUS ON EUROPEAN REGIONS

25/2/2015

The main points of discussion at the meeting with Chairman Carl Holst in Vejle were the Region of Syddanmark and its cooperation with other European regions in the area of minority policy.

FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen and FUEN Vice President Dieter Paul Küssner used the opportunity to present the European activities of FUEN and to advocate for a stronger involvement of the Region of Syddanmark.

In this regard the positioning of the German-Danish border region and the House of Minorities in Flensburg plays a major role.

The meeting at the Region of Syddanmark comes after a meeting of FUEN in South Tyrol and the recent meeting with representatives of Schleswig-Holstein.

Next week (3 March) Hans Heinrich Hansen will meet the recently elected Prime Minister Oliver Paasch of the German-speaking Community in Belgium.





## FUEN VISITS MACEDONIANS AND CHAM ALBANIANS IN TIRANA

25/2/2016

The Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) visited the Macedonian Association „Ilinden“ and the Institute of Cham Studies in Tirana, Albania regarding the applications of these two organisations for a membership to FUEN.

During the Fact Finding Mission in Tirana on 20 February 2015, FUEN Vice President Halit Habip Oglu and FUEN Legal Advisor Frank de Boer had meetings with the representatives of the Macedonian minority in Albania and the Cham Albanians of Greece living in Albania.

Three national minorities, Greeks, Macedonians and Montenegrins/Serbs, and two cultural minorities, Aromanians and Romani people are recognized in Albania. Other minorities in Albania include the Balkan Egyptians, Bosniaks and Jews.



*Photo 1: FUEN with the Chairman of the Macedonian Association "Ilinden" Nikolla Gjurgjaj and other representatives*



*Photo2: FUEN with the Chairman of the Institute of Cham Studies Gjergj Xhafa*

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IS INVESTIGATING HOW THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE SHOULD BE REFORMED AND WANTS TO HEAR ABOUT THE EXPERIENCES OF THE MINORITY SAFEPAK INITIATIVE

26/2/2015



## Hearing

Today will be an important day for the future of direct democracy in the European Union. On 26 February 2015, two committees of the Parliament, the Petitions Committee and the Constitutional Affairs Committee will organise a hearing on the European Citizens' Initiative.

After almost three years, it is obvious that the first international instrument of direct democracy did not fulfil its expectations. A total number of 47 initiatives were proposed. Of these, 20 were rejected already at the registration phase, 24 finished collecting signatures, of which only 3 managed to collect the required 1 million signatures and today you can sign only 3 initiatives. At the same time there are 7 citizens' initiatives pending at court, including our initiative, the Minority SafePack.

Representatives of civil society, the Commission, the Parliament and the Ombudsman have already announced that the current setup of the European Citizens' Initiative is not functioning and that changes have to be made. The aim of the hearing is for the Parliament to find out about the problems and to investigate possible solutions, with the help of the organisers of citizens' initiatives, legal professors, political scholars and campaigning experts.

The first hour of the hearing will see First Vice President Frans Timmermans of the European Commission respond to the experiences of three different European Citizens' Initiatives: the "Right to Water", a well-resourced initiative that managed to collect 1.88 million signatures and was able to influence policy in the field of water privatisation; the "End Ecocide" initiative, a volunteer-driven initiative that collected almost 120,000 signatures and failed; and our own Minority SafePack Initiative, that was rejected in the registration phase, and is now fighting the rejection by the European Commission before the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg.

## The Minority SafePack Initiative

The Minority SafePack Initiative is based on an initiative of the members of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN). The project was born out of solidarity between the many different minorities and language communities in Europe. With strong support from communities all over Europe, the minorities wanted to collect more than one million signatures for a package of different legal acts (laws) for the promotion and protection of the European minorities and for the regional and minority languages.

This Minority SafePack package was drawn up by a team of legal experts, and includes several policy actions in regard to It shall include policy actions in the areas of regional and minority languages, education and culture, regional policy, participation, equality, audiovisual and other media content, and also regional (or state) support.



The Minority SafePack was officially launched at the FUEN Congress of 2013 in Brixen, South Tyrol, Italy. A little later, in July 2013, a high-level citizens' committee submitted the proposal to the European Commission. The citizens' committee is chaired by FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen and consists further of the former Romanian Minister of Culture Hunor Kelemen, President of RMDSZ, the organisation of the Hungarian Community in Romania, (then) Prime Minister Luis Durnwalder of South Tyrol, (then) Prime Minister of the German-speaking Community in Belgium Karl-Heinz Lambertz, the Schleswig-Holstein Minister Anke Spoorendonk, the Chair of the Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity and Frisian Minister Jannewietske de Vries and the Chair of the Carinthian Slovenes in Austria Valentin Inzko, who is the UN High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

FUEN was very surprised, when in September 2013 the European Commission rejected the initiative; according to the European Commission the proposed initiative fell “manifestly outside the framework of the Commission’s powers”.

Soon after, the organisers decided that they had no other option than to challenge the decision of the European Commission. First of all, the reasoning by the Commission is incomprehensible: the Commission denied the initiative, although it wrote that some of the acts requested in the Annex to the Minority SafePack Initiative might be acceptable. The Commission failed to mention in its rejection decision, what acts it considered impossible. On the other hand, it wrote that the Regulation on the citizens' initiative does not provide for the registration of part or parts of a proposed initiative.

### **Legal proceedings**

For the Minority SafePack Initiative the reasoning was insufficient. From the text it is not clear which of these measures are not possible, why these are unacceptable, and why it (eventually) would be impossible to register part of an initiative, as the initiators had asked the Commission to do, in case the Commission would deem one or more sub-proposals legally unacceptable. The Regulation is silent about registering parts of an initiative: it does not state that it is impossible. The second argument was that in the opinion of FUEN all the proposals are valid and therefore the complete Minority SafePack should have been registered and allowed to start collecting signatures.

In the course of the legal proceedings the Commission and the Minority SafePack have exchanged arguments about the proposed citizens' initiative. The first bone of contention is the comprehensibility of the rejection decision: for the Commission it is enough that they give a reason. It obviously does not matter for the Commission that the citizens will not be able to understand this reasoning and that therefore they are not able to resubmit a better version. FUEN is of the opinion that the rejection of a citizens' initiative should be understandable for citizens, and not require top class experts of EU law. This also follows from Recital 2 of the Regulation, which calls for clear, simple, user-friendly procedures and conditions so as to encourage participation by citizens and to make the Union more accessible.

The Commission also argues that only the 500 characters (the “corpus” as they call it) that can be entered at the description of the objectives determine the content of the initiative. The Annex (for us: the 14 pages with detailed proposals) can only have an indicative and informative character, writes the Commission. In the opinion of FUEN, nothing in the Regulation suggests that the Annex does not form an integral part of the citizens' initiative, and should therefore be assessed on its merits, together with the description of the objectives.

The arguments made by the Commission on the content of the initiative are limited to three sub-proposals (Regional Policy, Political Participation and Equality) and deal with very delicate legal distinctions of when the Commission has the competence to make a proposal for a legal act and when not. By lack of precedents, neither the Commission nor the Minority SafePack can be sure about what the European

Court of Justice will eventually decide, although the Minority SafePack Initiative is of the opinion that it has the stronger arguments.

The legal case against the rejection of the citizens' initiative has been going on since the end of 2013 and will probably continue till the end of 2015. Since Spring 2014, two Member States (Slovakia and Romania) have sided with the Commission and one Member State (Hungary) with the Minority SafePack Initiative. In the beginning of 2015 the written proceedings were concluded and now the initiators are waiting for the Court to set a date for the oral hearing.

Legal procedures like this one are costly and take much time. FUEN is hopeful that the outcome of the legal case will clarify the scope of minority protection in the European Union. On the other hand, FUEN thinks that it is unfair that seven private persons have to foot the bill to clarify fundamental issues of EU law and even run the risk of having to pay the costs of the Commission as well. Especially with these delicate legal issues, and unresolved issues in the Regulation on the citizens' initiative, it is unacceptable that private citizens are put in such a disadvantaged situation in comparison with the Commission or the Member States, which are paid by the money of taxpayers. A solution must be introduced to clarify and solve justified complaints or unresolved legal issues in relation to the European Citizens' Initiative itself. The investments made by the Minority SafePack Initiative are of great importance for both the European Citizens' Initiative as for some of the substantial issues in this legal case.

### **Conclusion**

In the opinion of FUEN the European Citizens' Initiative has become too much a strictly legal instrument and not the instrument for European debate that it should have been. The approach as taken by the Commission is far too formalistic and legalistic.

FUEN is pleased to notice that most actors and institutions have recognised that something has to change in relation to the European Citizens' Initiative. FUEN is offering its expertise and experience. It hopes that the Regulation will be amended so that it will become easier to use the citizens' initiative for a genuine European debate on important issues. Europe needs these debates, and one of these is the debate on minority protection and on cultural and linguistic diversity in the European Union.

Link to the live-stream: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/committees/video?event=20150226-0900-COMMITTEE-AFCO-PETI>

Minority SafePack Initiative:

[https://www.fuen.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/downloads/MSPI\\_ENGL\\_Official\\_Document.pdf](https://www.fuen.org/fileadmin/user_upload/downloads/MSPI_ENGL_Official_Document.pdf)

For more information about the Minority SafePack and the procedure before the European Court of Justice, please contact: [info@fuen.org](mailto:info@fuen.org)

# MINORITY SAFEPAK AT HEARING IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT - MORE RIGHTS FOR CITIZENS' INITIATIVES

FUEN-REPRESENTATIVE SPEAKS BEFORE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

27/2/2015

In the presence of the First Vice President of the European Commission Frans Timmermans, the European Ombudsman, many Members of the European Parliament and several experts, also Lawyer Ernst Johansson from Kiel was heard in Brussels on Thursday 26 February 2015 by the Committee for Petitions and the Committee for Constitutional Affairs. One of the co-organisers of the Public Hearing on the citizens' initiative was Pál Csáky, vice-chair of the Petitions Committee who had suggested inviting FUEN's representatives in order to speak about their experience with the new instrument of European direct democracy. Csáky belongs to the Hungarian minority in Slovakia, and this event was again a good example of how European minorities can cooperate in the EU framework.



FUEN hopes that the hearing before the Committees for Constitutional Affairs and Petitions will lead to a new impetus for realising more direct democracy in the European Union. The main issue is whether and how citizens' initiatives get a greater say. In July 2013, FUEN launched a citizens' initiative and applied for registration by the European Commission. The Minority SafePack Initiative, as it is called, wants to strengthen the rights of the minorities in Europe, but unfortunately it was not accepted by the Commission. The initiative of FUEN for the rights of the minorities in Europe is one of the three citizens' initiatives that were invited to the hearing in the European Parliament. The hearing by the Constitutional Affairs and Petitions Committees will have a profound influence on the future of this European instrument of direct democracy.

The hearing showed that the main point is about the fundamental political and legitimacy-related discussion within the European Union and that questions of organisation, legal and technical issues are secondary. "Citizens' initiatives were made for ordinary citizens – not for lawyers. The normal citizen must be able to understand the reason for an eventual rejection, and not receive a formal notice that 'the initiative lies manifestly outside the competence'", said lawyer Ernst Johansson from Kiel, who represents the Minority SafePack Initiative on behalf of FUEN.

"This reasoning for us is not a reasoning at all", said FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen, who is the chairman of the citizens' committee of the Minority SafePack Initiative. "The European minorities immediately started to use this crucial instrument of direct democracy. We, minorities in Europe are with 100 million people. We cannot accept the succinct answer that we were rejected because of a lack of competence. Therefore we consider it a clear sign of recognition that we stand today as one of the examples at this high-level hearing next to the most famous initiative "Right to Water".

The Minority SafePack Initiative calls on the European Commission to improve the protection of persons belonging to national minorities and linguistic minorities and to adopt a number of legal acts to improve

the protection of persons belonging to national minorities and to strengthen cultural and linguistic diversity in Europe.

“FUEN is offering its experience and expertise in regard to the European Citizens’ Initiative”, says the FUEN President. FUEN also calls for a simplification of the instrument in order to increase its effectiveness.

### **Minority SafePack Initiative**

The members of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) started preparations for a European Citizens’ Initiative. The project is the most important initiative of the minorities in Europe in recent decades and is based on solidarity throughout Europe. A team of experts elaborated our Minority SafePack, which contains a set of measures and concrete legal acts (laws) for the promotion and protection of the European minorities and the regional and minority languages.

In September 2013 the European Commission rejected the initiative, which was submitted by a high-profile citizens’ committee. According to the European Commission, the proposed initiative fell “manifestly outside the framework of the Commission’s powers”.

Currently the Minority SafePack Initiative is waiting for the judgment by the European Court of Justice.

[Minority SafePack Initiative Basic Information](#)

[Minority SafePack Initiative Document](#)

[Minority SafePack Initiative Flyer](#)



March 2015

## FUEN MEETING WITH EU COMMISSIONER TIBOR NAVRACSICS

2/3/2015

Tomorrow in Brussels, FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen will meet European Commissioner Tibor Navracsics, announced Secretary General Susann Schenk in Flensburg today.

The Hungarian Commissioner is responsible for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport and also for multilingualism.

The FUEN delegation consists of President Hans Heinrich Hansen (German from Denmark), Vice President Loránt Vincze (Hungarian from Romania), legal/policy advisor Frank de Boer (Frisian), language diversity project manager Judith Walde (Lusatian Sorb), project manager Eva Penzes (German from Hungary) and YEN president Matic Germovsek (Carinthian Slovene).



Topics for discussion will be funding for minority projects by the European Commission 2014-2020 and a selection of concrete plans in the field of sport, culture, multilingualism and youth.

It will be the second meeting with a member of the Juncker Commission, after FUEN talked with First Vice President Timmermans of the European Commission who is responsible for fundamental rights in the EU in November 2014.

Photo: [ec.europa.eu](http://ec.europa.eu)

## FUEN MEETS EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER TIBOR NAVRACSICS IN BRUSSELS

4/3/2015

Yesterday, a delegation of FUEN – Federal Union of European Nationalities – led by President Hans Heinrich Hansen met the European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport Tibor Navracsics at the [European Commission](http://ec.europa.eu) in Brussels. His remit also includes the area of minority languages.

Topics for discussion were a presentation of FUEN and its activities promoting the interests of the minorities in Europe, as well as a selection of concrete projects and how these could be politically and financially supported. Among these were first of all the citizens' initiative Minority SafePack Initiative, the European language diversity campaign and also the EUROPEADA – the football championship of the autochthonous minorities that will take place in South Tyrol next year.



The interests of minorities are underrepresented in the European Commission. There are some possibilities for funding of concrete minority projects and their languages, but these are hard to implement. By giving a number of specific examples, the Commissioner got an overview of the wide variety and diversity of European projects of FUEN, which were convincing for him. He and his cabinet member Szabolcs Horvath responsible for multilingualism were very pleased with the new European Map of Minorities and Regional and Minority Languages. The necessity of such projects was not questioned. The implementation of these projects and the simplification of procedures would, however, bring great potential.

FUEN and the Commissioner committed to continue with some further actions. After the meeting FUEN will provide the Commissioner with a list of projects that are worth funding in the field of minorities, allowing these projects better access to support. Among these are the EUROPEADA, language projects such as the language diversity campaign, theatre/film festivals and also projects in the field of youth and new media. The Commissioner promised that as part of his job he would support minority issues and their European projects.



During the meetings in Brussels, President Hans Heinrich Hansen was accompanied by FUEN Vice President Loránt Vincze (Hungarian from Romania), legal/policy advisor Frank de Boer (Frisian), project manager of the language project language diversity Judith Walde (Lusatian Sorb) and project manager Eva Penzes (German from Hungary). The President of the Youth of European Nationalities (YEN) Matic Germovšek (Carinthian Slovene) told about YEN and came with three specific demands and recommendations to the European Commission in the field of youth.

This meeting was the second time that FUEN spoke with a member of the Juncker European Commission, after FUEN talked with First Vice President Timmermans already in November 2014.



## FUEN CONGRESS 2016 IN THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE WROCLAW/BRESLAU

FUEN VICE PRESIDENT ZIESCH SPEAKS WITH CITY PRESIDENT DUTKIEWICZ AND SECRETARY OF STATE HUSKOWKI

18/3/2015

In 2016, the Polish City of Wroclaw/Breslau and the Basque City of Donostia/San Sebastian are the two European Capitals of Culture.

Organised together with VDG – the organisation of the German minority in Poland, the FUEN Congress of 2016 will take place in Wroclaw/Breslau from 18-22 May 2016. The meeting on 16 March had the aim to discuss how the largest congress of the European minorities could best be integrated into the programme of the European Capital of Culture.



Rafał Dutkiewicz, the President of the City of Wroclaw/Breslau, did not only receive FUEN Vice President Bernhard Ziesch and VDG Chairman Bernard Gaida, but also the Secretary of State at the Ministry of Administration und Digitization, Stanisław Huskowski, and Ryszard Galla, Member of Parliament for the German minority in the Polish Sejm. The meeting was also joined by the Director of the City administration, Jan Wais.

Bernhard Ziesch told the politicians about FUEN, its activities on the European level and the projects that are currently being prepared. He thanked the others for having this conversation in preparation of the FUEN Congress 2016 and underlined how important it is that the congress can take place in Wroclaw/Breslau in the year of the European Capital of Culture. “We should succeed in creating an

cultural minority event of European significance and integrate it as an highlight in the programme of the European Capital of Culture, while we organise our FUEN Congress here.“

Bernard Gaida emphasised the importance for the German minority in Poland of organising the FUEN Congress in the European Capital of Culture and also requested for financial support for this undertaking and for the work of FUEN in general.

City President Dutkiewicz was open for all forms of cooperation and endorsed the use of the logo of the European Capital of Culture for advertising and preparing the FUEN Congress.

Secretary of State Huskowski pledged his support on the part of the national government and said that he will do his best to arrange financial support for FUEN.

The participants agreed to invite Donald Tusk, the President of the European Council, for the opening of the Congress.

The idea behind the European Capital of Culture is one of mutual understanding, getting to know one another and intercultural dialogue among Europeans. The European Capital of Culture forms an important element in finding a new identity in a united Europe.



## CELEBRATIONS BONN–COPENHAGEN DECLARATIONS IN BERLIN

27/3/2016

The official celebration of 60 years Bonn-Copenhagen Declarations took place in the Representation of the Land of Schleswig-Holstein in Berlin. In the presence of the Foreign Affairs Ministers of Denmark and Germany, Mr Lidegaard and Mr Steinmeier, the Prime Minister of the Land of Schleswig-Holstein Torsten Albig told 150 guests that according to him, "60 Years of Bonn-Copenhagen Declarations are no reason for Schleswig-Holstein to relax our efforts. They should inspire us to make things much better even, for example with our own language policy. We want to make the languages of our minorities more visible in the public space".



Steinmeier underlined the importance of the minorities and the preservation of diversity, which contributes to the success of a nation: "The centre for international minority issues, with ECMI and FUEN is in Flensburg. We want to use their expertise in our foreign policy." Also Danish Foreign Minister Martin Lidegaard praised the work of FUEN: "We think that it is a really good idea to strengthen this work. For example by establishing the House of Minorities in Flensburg which will function as a point of contact for minority related issues.

With FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen and other representatives of FUEN in the audience, Albig told that Schleswig-Holstein is proud that it has in the town of Flensburg two institution of international importance, which make the ideas behind the Bonn-Copenhagen Declarations into reality: the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) and the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI); "both institutions and their actions are needed, far beyond the German-Danish border region", according to the Prime Minister.

[Press release by Prime Minister Albig](#) (in German)



## THE TV NETWORK OF THE CRIMEAN TATARS ATR SHOULD NOT BE CLOSED!

JOINT DECLARATION OF THE SOCIETY FOR THREATENED PEOPLES (STP), THE FEDERAL UNION OF EUROPEAN NATIONALITIES (FUEN), THE YOUTH OF EUROPEAN NATIONALITIES (YEN), AND ICATAT, INSTITUTE FOR CAUCASICA-, TATARICA- AND TURKESTAN-STUDIES

30/3/2015

The Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), The Society of Threatened Peoples (STP), the Youth of European Nationalities (YEN) and the Institute for Caucasica-, Tatarica- and Turkestan-Studies (ICATAT) are firmly against the imminent shutdown of ATR, the only TV Network of the Crimean Tatars. “As an international human rights organisation working for ethnic and religious communities we know that the media are an essential and very important voice for minorities worldwide”, says STP-Secretary General Tilman Zülch. “The media make that minorities are heard and seen. This is an invaluable contribution to the preservation and promotion of their languages. To outlaw their media, which also convey the culture and history of the minorities and which stand for diversity and openness in society, that is a chicanery!”

The ATR Network broadcasts in Russian, Crimean Tatar and in Ukrainian. Especially in the last few years it has become the most important media outlet of the Crimean Tatars. Now it is on the verge of shutdown. Already four times the Russian Media Supervisor denied re-registration of ATR. Unless a miracle occurs, the network will have to close down on 1 April. According to the Society of Threatened Peoples this would be another step in a long series of oppression and discrimination of the Crimean Tatars since the Crimea peninsula was annexed by Russia in March 2014.



FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen supports the protest against the immanent closure of the ATR Network: “as the largest European umbrella organisation of the minorities, we know that only words are not enough, where it comes to minority protection. The authorities of Crimea and in Russia may have pledged that they respect the rights of minorities in Crimea and that they support the minorities, but they also have refused the leadership of our member organisation Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People entry into their home country for a period of five years. Now they try to make it impossible for the ATR Network to do its job. That is unacceptable.” Matic Germovšek, President of YEN, adds that minority media have a role in integration: “they reflect tradition and contemporariness, they show the past, present and future and make this exchange come alive for the minority.”

Together with FUEN, YEN and ICATAT, the Society of Threatened Peoples demands that ATR should not be shut down! After collective deportation under Stalin in 1944, in the process of which 44 percent of the Crimean Tatars lost their life, and after many decades in exile the Crimean Tatars should finally have the chance to preserve and foster their language and culture.

This declaration will be published during the on-going “TV Marathon”, with which ATR is raising awareness for its imminent shutdown. The action is aimed at winning over as many people to support the network.



April 2015

## VISIT OF THE IFA-INSTITUTE TO THE HOUSE OF MINORITIES

### “COMMON OBJECTIVES”

1/4/2015

Tuesday 31 March Secretary General Robert Grätz and Mr Urban Beckmann, the leader of the “Dialogue”-department of ifa, the German Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations came to Flensburg to visit FUEN and the House of Minorities. The meeting between the leading staff members and a delegation of FUEN started with a presentation of the two organisations and afterwards a discussion developed on which objectives ifa and FUEN have in common and how both organisation might create sustainable added value in the life of the European minorities.

The Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations ifa works closely together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, and the participants in the discussion were glad that that a new kind of thinking has emerged in relation to crisis management and crisis prevention. Consequently this means also a new, more open and targeted approach to the issue of European minority policy. Within this context the two organisation quickly found common ground and decided that they will meet again later to discuss more concrete about common project ideas. Cooperation of the two institutions may yield promising opportunities to support the minorities united under the umbrella of FUEN in a sustainable way.



## PREPARATIONS FUEN CONGRESS 2015

### MEETING ORGANISING TEAM IN KOMOTINI

10/4/2015

On 9 April representatives of the organisers of the 2015 FUEN Congress (13 - 17 May 2015) had a meeting in Komotini (Western Thrace) with the hotel management of the Greek congress hotel Chris & Eve Mansion. The guests at our congress can look forward to a pleasant atmosphere and very welcoming hosts! You will find further information about the Congress at [www.fuen.org/congresses/congress-2015/](http://www.fuen.org/congresses/congress-2015/).



*Photo: Roxana Nelamischkis (FUEN), Evi Papanastasiou (Hotelmanager Chris & Eve Mansion), Pervin Hayrullah (DEB-Party and Western Thrace Graduates Association), Onur Mustafa Ahmet (Democritus University of Thrace), Engin Soyylmaz (ABTTF)*

## THE TIME HAS COME NOW!

### YOU CAN REGISTER NOW FOR THE FUEN CONGRESS IN KOMOTINI!!

14/4/2015

You will find more information about the Congress and the registration form at this page.

<https://www.fuen.org/congresses/congress-2015/introduction/>

We look forward to welcome you at our Congress!





## TWO ATTACKS ON A MOSQUE AND A MASJID ON THE SAME DAY IN KOMOTINI

20/4/2015

FUEN Vice President and ABTTF President Halit Habip Oğlu: "Since both of the attacks were carried out on the same day and at the same hours, it reinforces the suspicion that these attacks were a threat and provocation"

A mosque and a masjid belonging to the Turkish Minority of Western Thrace in Komotini, Greece were attacked. According to the daily Birlik, the Mahmutağa mosque in Komotini's district of Yenice was set on fire by an unidentified person or persons in the early morning on Friday, April 17, 2015. As a result of the arson attack, a fire broke out at the mosque's entrance, but thanks to the fire brigade it did not spread to the other parts of the mosque and to the minority primary school of the minority next to it. At the same hour, there was another attack on a masjid (small mosque) in the Alankuyu district of Komotini. An unidentified person or persons fell ten cypress trees around the masjid and destroyed a grave stone.

"We strongly condemn the attacks on a mosque and a masjid in different districts of Komotini. Such attacks directed against our religion are in no manner acceptable. Since both of the attacks were carried out on the same day and at the same hours, it reinforces the suspicion that these were a threat and provocation. We wish that these hate motivated attacks will not lead to bitterness within our community, and call upon our minority to stay away from such provocations and keep their calm." stated Halit Habip Oğlu, Vice President of FUEN and President of the Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe (ABTTF).



\*Photo: [www.birlikgazetesi.info](http://www.birlikgazetesi.info)

## FUEN AT THE 12TH CONGRESS OF THE RMDSZ

FUEN PRESIDENT HANS HEINRICH HANSEN PARTICIPATED AT THE 12TH CONGRESS OF THE RMDSZ IN CLUJ-NAPOCA/ KOLOZSVÁR/ KLAUSENBURG LAST WEEKEND

20/4/2015

On 17-18 April, 778 delegates, 150 guests and 120 journalists were present at the election congress of the Hungarian political organisation in Romania, which celebrated 25 years since its establishment.

In his address the FUEN President referred to recent developments in Romania: the authorities have questioned the right to use community symbols, an investigation on the restitution process to the historical Church properties started and the proposed national safety and public security strategy of the Romanian Internal Affairs Ministry qualifies all claims for ethnic autonomy national as a security threat.



Expressing the conviction of the European minority communities, Hans Heinrich Hansen declared: “These are not acceptable developments in a European democracy. The majority should understand that having minority rights or granting autonomy does not mean that the majority will lose anything, rather it will mean a more balanced society, where every community can develop itself by its own institutions.”

He praised the political wisdom of the leaders of the Hungarian community who have chosen the use of democratic tools and parliamentary democracy to achieve rights for the Hungarians. FUEN appreciates RMDSZ’s active membership, its continuous support and personal involvement of President Hunor Kelemen and FUEN Vice President Loránt Vincze.



The FUEN president also spoke about the role of the European umbrella organisation in the upcoming years to promote the protection of autochthonous national minorities in the EU and to contribute to solving regional or local tensions between minority and majority. Expressing the main goal of the European minority organisation, Hans Heinrich Hansen stated: “we want inclusion of the minority rights among the fundamental rights of the European citizens.”

The RMDSZ Congress re-elected Hunor Kelemen for a new 4 years term as president and adopted several congress resolutions, which will as policy paper form the basis for the activity of the Hungarian community representatives in Romania.

[The speech by President Hans Heinrich Hansen](#)

## EUROPEAN PEOPLE'S PARTY ORGANISES HEARING ON MINORITIES IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

FUEN PRESIDENT HANS HEINRICH HANSEN PROPOSES TO ENHANCE THE COOPERATION WITH THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND TO ESTABLISH A STRUCTURED DIALOGUE FORUM OF MINORITIES AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

24/4/2015

On 22 April the largest political group of Europe, the European People's Party EPP, organised a hearing on the "Protection of Traditional Minorities" in the European Union. The hearing was a result of the relentless effort of – among others – our FUEN member organisations. It was a follow up of what was written in the EPP Party Platform about safeguarding national minorities that was adopted at the 2012 EPP Congress in Romania.

Not surprisingly, the meeting was hosted by two Members of Parliament from FUEN member organisations, namely Pál Csáky of the Party of the Hungarian Community in Slovakia MKP and Csaba Sógor from the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania RMDSZ, together with József Nagy from the Most-Híd-party from Slovakia. Also Herbert Dorfmann of the South Tyrolean People's Party chaired one of the sessions.



The hearings consisted of a number of interesting presentations about on the one side the situation in some countries and on the other hand the existing framework of minority protection in Europe and how it can be enhanced. Dr Gabriel Toggenburg of the Fundamental Rights Agency suggested that although there are limits to what the EU can do at the moment, there are still several chances to improve minority rights within the EU framework as it is now. A number of obligations from the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities can be addressed through EU law, which, because of the way how EU law is working in the states, would make them much more powerful.

Dr Elisabeth Sándor-Szalay, the Ombudsman in Hungary responsible for national minorities suggested thinking about establishing an early warning system for systematic infringements of minority rights. Professor Josef Marko talked about the latest jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights and how it may affect EU law, especially in the context of structural and group discrimination. Professor Marko suggested not to aim at a universal standard of minority rights, but to work towards a minimum standard.

FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen told about the main mission of FUEN: “it is our main task to transform the perception that minorities should not be there or should not be treated equally into a profound understand of their situation. We really think that war and violent conflict can be prevented by the recognition of minority interests, because the interests of minorities are in truth mostly also the interests of the majority. Because of our special situation, however, we feel them a bit earlier.”

Hansen thanked for the opportunity to speak at this hearing and hoped that it will create a strong impetus within the EPP Group to advance the issue of national minorities in the European Union. Hansen made an offer to intensify cooperation with the European Parliament: “As the representative organisation of the European minorities we already work closely together with the Intergroup for National Minorities in the European Parliament. Till now, however, a systematic or structured involvement of the minorities in the institutions of the European Union is lacking. In my opinion the European Parliament would be the right partner. Therefore I propose on behalf of FUEN, based on very positive experiences from the German-Danish border region, to establish a ‘Contact Committee at the European Parliament’ where the questions and interests of the European minorities could be brought together and expressed towards the European Union.”

At the end of the hearing Kinga Gál, the Co-Chair of the Intergroup on National Minorities and Vice Chair of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs summed up the conclusions. On the basis of the hearing a document will be drafted with recommendations on how the EPP Group will further proceed with the topic of minority rights.





## THE CLIMATE IN THE GERMAN-DANISH BORDER REGION DOES NOT TOLERATE PLACE-NAME SIGNS

28/4/2015

The President of the Federal Union of European Nationalities Hans Heinrich Hansen, who was born in Haderslev / Hadersleben, Denmark, regrets the removal of the place-name sign in Haderslev / Hadersleben.

“I was delighted that the mayor of Haderslev /Hadersleben, by taking the brave step to install the sign, expressed recognition for the German minority, the German language and for diversity. We have to notice that the climate in the German-Danish border region still is not mature enough to tolerate bilingual place-name signs.

I call on all the actors and on the municipalities that are concerned to give themselves a period for reflection in this heated debate, in order to solve this question as soon as possible.

It cannot be in the interest of the region to conclude the celebrations for the 60th anniversary of the Bonn-Copenhagen Declarations with such a scandal. A legitimate wish for bilingual signage was expressed. How that can be a provocation is something that I cannot understand. That wish is not new, but already almost 20 years old. Time should be ripe for this.

As President of FUEN, I and my team who come from several minorities in Europe, support the position of the German-Danish border region as a model region for minorities in Europe. With the potential of the region and the experiences it had during its history, we want to realise here our House of Minorities – as a European centre. A centre functioning as a point of contact and that is focusing on conflict resolution and on maintaining peace between peoples living together.

We don't have to simplify the topic of topographical signs – they exist in many regions of Europe, but there are also other regions where they led to discussion. In the end they are a symbol for mutual recognition and respect. I think that they would fit in the landscape of Nordschleswig very well.”



*Photo: Flensburg Avis*

May 2015



## NO MINORITY REPRESENTATIVES INVITED BY THE ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT TO CELEBRATE THE RATIFICATION OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES

THE RMDSZ, REPRESENTING THE HUNGARIAN MINORITY IN ROMANIA, HAS OFFICIALLY PROTESTED

4/5/2015

The RMDSZ, representing the Hungarian minority in Romania, has officially protested in a letter sent to the President of the Venice Commission against a conference organised for the 20th anniversary of Romania's ratification of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, which took place on the 30th April in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. The event, organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Romanian Government, was a showcase conference and the representatives of the national minorities in Romania were not invited to the event. RMDSZ President Kelemen Hunor considers this decision an offense against the national minority organisations; a profoundly antidemocratic act, which seriously questions the real commitment of the Romanian Government towards dialogue and cooperation with the national minorities.



Loránt Vincze, FUEN Vice President stated: “while the government uses the Framework Convention only for celebration, minorities know from their everyday experience of all the problems of applying the existing legislation and exercising the right to use their mother tongue. It is unacceptable that the minorities were not invited to a debate, which had as topic minority protection. The President of the Venice Commission assisted at this showcase event.

The letter sent to Gianni Buquicchio points out that it is not the state, which should declare if Romania is a role model for minority protection, but the minority organisations themselves should appreciate their

own situation, and the attitude and actions of the Government. As the conference itself shows, there is an important lack of substance when it comes to dialogue and evaluation of the current situation. The RMDSZ calls for attention of the Venice Commission for the most important cases of noncompliance in Romania. There are serious deficiencies in enforcing the existing legislation in education and the use of the community symbol. The right to use the mother tongue in court proceedings and in the public administrations is only partially applied. Furthermore, the Romanian state is constantly disregarding the recommendation of the Council of Europe and the EU to take into account the regions' historical and linguistically characteristics. The claim for ethnic autonomy is considered a national security threat in the national safety strategy proposal of the Ministry of Interior Affairs. Romania fails to submit the report on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages' application since 2012. The restitution process of community and Church properties nationalised during the communist regime is halted.

The RMDSZ informed the Venice Commission that it only claims minority rights, which already exist in different EU Member States, These are European best practices that should be promoted in Romania. Reminding of its common project under the umbrella of the FUEN, the RMDSZ asks the EU to include in its treaties the protection of minorities and thus create an unambiguous competence for the EU. The Hungarian political representatives call for the creation of a set of legal acts aiming at the creation of a comprehensive and legally binding protection system and legislative framework for national minorities, which is to be complemented by a functioning monitoring mechanism.

## FIRST EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE BEFORE THE COURT OF JUSTICE IN LUXEMBOURG

WHAT CAN THE MINORITY SAFEPAK INITIATIVE EXPECT FROM THE EUROPEAN JUDGES?

6/5/2015

Yesterday, 5 May 2015 was an important day for democracy in the European Union. Three years after the first European Citizens' Initiative was registered, another milestone was reached: the first rejected citizens' initiative made its appearance before the Court of Justice in Luxembourg. FUEN legal advisor Frank de Boer was in the courtroom and attended the first hearing ever on an EU citizens' initiative

The initiative "One million signatures for a Europe of solidarity" was rejected registration one year before our Minority SafePack Initiative. It calls for introducing European rules in relation to so-called "odious debt", i.e. illegitimate national debt incurred by a regime for purposes that do not serve the best interests of the nation and that, in their opinion, should not be enforceable by lenders who willingly entered into relations with regimes that were bribed or that bought e.g. excessive amounts of



military equipment. The initiators want that this debt is put aside when countries are in “a state of necessity”, i.e. when their health and education systems, as well as their wages and pensions are collapsing..

The European Commission held that it did not have the competence from the Treaties to be able to propose a legal act. This was contested by the initiators: in their opinion the explanation in the letter from the Commission was short and inconclusive and did only state what articles did not apply, but not the reason why these articles did not apply.

Judge-rapporteur Buttigieg, who prepared the case, asked some specific questions in relation to the legal competences and provisions from the Treaties and how both parties thought these apply to the objective of this specific citizens’ initiative. Chamber President Kanninen wanted to know from the European Commission how many citizens were submitted, and how many rejected. With that last question the court concluded the hearing. The judgment will follow in a few months.

What can the Minority SafePack Initiative learn from this case? It is too early to tell, since we don’t know the judgment yet, but it will be interesting to see how the court will deal with the reasoning required in the rejection letter. Is it enough for the Commission to state that one or two articles cannot be applied? For the Minority SafePack Initiative this is even stronger since we made very concrete proposals in our annex, and the European Commission failed to address these. In terms of content the case of today is less relevant, since the Minority SafePack entails proposals in other fields of EU law, although also here it will be interesting to see in the final judgment which approach the court will take in the European Citizens’ Initiative cases.

The instrument of the European Citizens’ Initiative was introduced in April 2012. Before collecting signatures for its cause, an initiative first has to be registered by the European Commission. It soon turned out that many of the initiatives were considered by the European Commission to be outside the competences of the EU, and were rejected. Now, three years later, the statistics show that 40% of the initiatives have been rejected at the registration phase.

There have been many complaints that the Commission is taking a much too restrictive reading of its competences and that it has taken legally questionable decisions, including by FUEN, but also by law firms specialised in EU law such as Freshfields. Already seven citizens’ initiatives filed an action for annulment and challenge the decision of the European Commission about their initiative at the European Court of Justice, including our own Minority SafePack Initiative.

## THE 60TH ANNUAL CONGRESS OF THE FEDERAL UNION OF EUROPEAN NATIONALITIES TAKES PLACE AT THE WESTERN THRACE TURKS IN GREECE FROM 13-17 MAY 2015

7/5/2015



The FUEN Congress is organised in cooperation with the three organisations of the Western Thrace Turks, the Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe (ABTTF), Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association (BTAYTD) and DEB Partisi.

We expect more than 150 guests from 20 countries, representing more than 30 minorities.

“We look forward with great anticipation to the congress in Greece. The cradle of classic democracy is at the moment country that may tip the scales in regard to the construct of the European Union and at the same time Greece finds it very hard to deal with its own autochthonous minorities. We are glad that the Western Thrace Turks have worked very determined to become the host of a European congress of the minorities. We know that the situation here is not easy.

We will go there and speak about the things that are going on in Europe and in Greece. The purpose of a congress is always to engage in a direct dialogue and exchange of opinions. We minorities have many committed people and thinkers in organisations from all over Europe. We are a community of solidarity; a very good-natured one: a community that works towards living together peacefully. I think that we can convey that message in Western Thrace. Because the developments of 2014 and our own personal histories learn us that minorities are used time and again as cause for disputes and conflicts. The quest for the future perspective of the European community gives us the chance to become actively involved in the debate now”, said FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen.

In Greece, an EU member state, the minorities are struggling to achieve equality and recognition, foremost the Turkish minority in Western Thrace.

In 1923 the minority rights of 150,000 Turks were guaranteed in the Peace Treaty of Lausanne between Greece and Turkey and the region was conferred to Greece. However, the Greek state does not officially recognise the Western Thrace Turks as “Turkish minority”, but only as “Muslim minority”.

Until the present day associations of the Western Thrace Turks are not allowed to use the word “Turkish” in their name. This political harassment was taken before the European Court of Human Rights, but despite three judgments of the Court in 2008 against Greece, the problem still has not been solved. Also the autonomy in education and in religious affairs that is defined in the Treaty was abolished by the military dictatorship and the transition to democracy in 1974 and still has not been re-established.



The main topics of the congress will be the situation in Europe, the minority situation in Greece, and especially in relation to the Western Thrace Turks, the situation in Ukraine and the cooperation between minority organisations on the European level.



## REGIONAL MINORITY THINK TANK MEETING IN FLENSBURG

FUEN, SSF AND BDN HAD KICK-OFF MEETING TO ESTABLISH A REGIONAL MINORITY THINK TANK IN THE OFFICE OF THE HOUSE OF MINORITIES IN FLENSBURG

8/5/2015

Today, Friday 8 May, the Federal Union of European Nationalities, Sydslesvigsk Forening and Bund Deutscher Nordschleswiger had a kick-off meeting to establish a regional minority think tank in the Office of the House of Minorities in Flensburg. Representatives of the minorities, politicians, people from the education field and other multipliers from the region talked this morning about the subjects related to the project and about chances to strengthen the profile of the region,



Schleswig-Holstein's Minority Commissioner Renate Schnack moderated the event. Among the guests was the chair of the German-Danish committee at the Region of South Denmark Philip Tietje and the President of the city council of Flensburg Swetlana Krätzschmar.





## MINET MINDERHEITENMAGAZIN BERICHTET ÜBER WESTTHRAKIEN

MINET - DAS MINDERHEITENMAGAZIN AUS SÜDTIROL - HAT IN SEINER 3. AUSGABE VON 2015 VOM 06.05.2015 EIN AUSFÜHRLICHES BERICHT ZU DER LAGE DER WESTTHRAKIER TÜRKEN IN GRIECHENLAND

12/5/2015

Schwerpunkt Griechenland: In Griechenland wächst die Mutlosigkeit. Der drohende Staatsbankrott hängt seit Monaten wie ein Damoklesschwert über dem Land. Minet berichtet über die Minderheitenrolle Griechenlands in Europa und zeigt auf, wie fremd- und zum Teil selbstverschuldete Fehlentwicklungen den Mutterstaat des demokratischen Gedankens an den Rand des Abgrunds und in eine Außenseiterrolle in Europa drängen.

Im Norden Griechenlands, in Westthrakien, einem wirtschaftlich sehr schwachem Gebiet, lebt eine türkischstämmige Minderheit, die Diskriminierungen ausgesetzt sind - ein Lokalaugenschein. Weiter gibt es u.a eine Reportage zu dem Theyyam-Festival in der nördlichsten Region des indischen Staates Kerala und es findet ein Gespräch mit Hans Griesmair, dem ehemaliger Direktor des Volkskundemuseums Dietersheim, über die Tradition von Masken in Südtirol statt.



Zu der Sendung: <http://www.minet-tv.com/videos/minet-das-minderheitenmagazin-ausgabe-03-2015-vom-06-05-15-m19-141-1.html>



## FUEN ON THE WAY TO WESTERN THRACE

### PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

12/5/2015

Dear Congress Participants

We are happy that so many people have made their registration. Please find attached some useful information including:

[General information](#)

[Programme](#)

[List of participants](#)

[Transfer information Thessaloniki Airport](#)

[Shuttle - Arrivals](#)



We wish you a safe journey and look forward to seeing you in Komotini.

[FUEN Congress 2015 on FUEN website](#)

## FUEN CONGRESS 2015 HAS STARTED

14/5/2016

The 60th FUEN Congress 2015 in Komotini, Greece started on Wednesday 13 May with an unofficial opening.

After registration and a meal, the participants were welcomed at the Minority Market, where they enjoyed delicacies and drinks from other minorities and had the chance to talk with each other.

During the upcoming congress days, sessions on the political representation of national minorities in Europe, on the current situation of the Turkish minority of Western Thrace and on the situation in Ukraine as well as panel discussion on the minority and language protection will be part of the congress programme. The annual FUEN Assembly of Delegates will take place on 16 May.

More than 150 participants from 20 countries arrived in Komotini, Greece.



The FUEN Congress is organised in cooperation with the three organisations of the Western Thrace Turks: the Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe (ABTTF), Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association (BTAYTD) and DEB Partisi.

[More photos at Flickr](#)

[Information on Congress 2015](#)

[Congress Programme](#)

## FUEN ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES ANNOUNCES POSITIVE RESULTS

16/5/2015

The official programme of the 60th FUEN Congress ended today (16.05.2015) in Komotini with the Assembly of Delegates.



This session of the highest FUEN body, moderated by vice-president Bernhard Ziesch, was attended by 30 organisations with voting rights and their delegations.

President Hans Heinrich Hansen and his fellow executive board members gave a summing up of what FUEN has been involved in, and Hansen was satisfied to conclude that these activities had yielded positive results.

With the continuation of our Minority SafePack Initiative, the opening of the office of the House of Minorities, the lobbying at European level and a series of top-level meetings with politicians, we are outing FUEN and the European minorities in the right position. And though we cannot be satisfied with how minority policy is handled at present, this will only motivate us to push our main political aims, such as a contact committee at EU level, all the more forcibly.

FUEN has already created the necessary framework conditions for this. In the last few months, under the leadership of our 39 year old secretary general, Susann Schenk, it has been possible to get FUEN out of the red and into a positive situation for the coming years. Several prestigious events have already been confirmed for 2015/2016.

In September 2015, the German-speaking Community will be hosting the new FUEN Advisory Council, and the FUEN Congress in May 2016 will be held in Breslau/Wrocław during its period as European Capital of Culture, and the governor of South Tyrol has invited the political policy makers of the European regions to the EUROPEADA in June 2016.

These are the ways in which we will be able step by step to establish a forum for the European minorities, said a confident Hansen. Another building block was added at the congress with the dialogue with other non-governmental organisations and the Intergroup for traditional minorities. We expect the court decision on the European citizens' initiative Minority SafePack in the course of the year.

The assembly of delegates passed the congress resolution with the main demand for a contact committee at the EU. The delegates were pleased to note that the management of FUEN has been able to create the necessary prerequisites for opening their representative office in Brussels.

A result of the congress was the passing of a resolution on the situation in Greece and the situation of the Western Thrace Turks. FUEN thanked the three Western Thrace Turk organisations for their commitment.

The Macedonian association "Illinden" from Albania was welcomed into the FUEN family, along with the Assembly of nationalities of Ukraine, an umbrella organisation for over 50 minorities and ethnic groups, and the Moldavians from Ukraine.

Three other resolutions were also passed: from the Hungarians in Romania and Slovakia, from the Ecumenical Federation of Constantinopolitans, and the Aromanian Community in Romania.

Hans Heinrich Hansen thanked his very committed colleagues on the board, Martha Stocker, Olga Martens, Lorant Vinzce, Bernhard Ziesch, Halit Habip Oglou, Dieter Paul Küssner and Matic Germovšek, the member organisations, the FUEN Team and all sponsors for their support over the last year.

[FUEN Activity Report](#)

[Greeting from Martha Stocker](#)





## HUNGARY OFFERS TO SUPPORT FUEN

20/5/2015

In a meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister Dr Zsolt Semjén, FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen and the Hungarian FUEN Vice President from Romania Lórant Vincze, the Hungarian government offered to support the umbrella organisation of the European minorities as a partner.

This FUEN this is a pleasant result, said Hans Heinrich Hansen.



According to the Deputy Prime Minister of Hungary Zsolt Semjén FUEN is important for three reasons: first of all FUEN shows that successful minority policy does exist in Europe; secondly the existence of FUEN proves that minorities are no extremists.

FUEN has a clearly defined profile. Its members are the national, autochthonous minorities and there is every reason for the traditional minorities, who have been living in their home countries for centuries, to maintain their vested rights. The rights of minorities, said Zsolt Semjén, must be universally accepted in Europe and not just be Hungarian demands.

That is the reason why the Hungarian government is willing to actively support FUEN.



Hans Heinrich Hansen underlined that FUEN is a democratic organisation and that this democratic structure has been the guarantee for the survival of FUEN. He thanked Hungary for the commitment to support FUEN as a partner and stressed that the Hungarian government also supports FUEN in the case of the European Citizens Initiative Minority SafePack Initiative (MSPI) and claims the legitimate rights of the minorities in the EU. With the Minority SafePack Initiative MSPI the rights of minorities in Europe shall be guaranteed and the competences of Europe in relation to minorities shall be laid down.

Lórant Vincze stressed the importance of the lobby for the minorities in the European capital of Brussels. This is indispensable for being heard on the European level, he said.

Furthermore Hansen and Vincze had a meeting in Budapest with Zsolt Nemeth, the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Hungarian Parliament. Here too, the commitment of FUEN to be the voice of the minorities in Europe was very much appreciated. Also the senior representatives of the Hungarian Parliament are willing to support FUEN and its objectives.

In the next time further meetings will take place about the proposed support by Hungary.





## DISCUSSION IN BERLIN ON THE HOUSE OF MINORITIES IN FLENSBURG

26/5/2015

On the invitation of the German Federal Government Commissioner for Matters Related to Ethnic German Resettlers and National Minorities, Hartmut Koschyk MP, the two MPs Bettina Hagedorn and Dr Sabine Sütterlin-Waack, Mayor of Flensburg Simon Faber and his staff member Eico Wenzel, the President of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) Hans Heinrich Hansen and Vice President Paul Dieter Küssner, Jon Hardon Hansen and Jens A. Christiansen from Sydslesvigsk Forening (SSF) as representatives of the Danish minority in Germany and also representatives of the German Federal Government and the government of the Land of Schleswig-Holstein had a meeting in the premises of the German Federal Ministry of the Interior in Berlin to speak about the swift realisation of a European “House of Minorities” in Flensburg.

A crucial precondition for the realisation is the renovation of the historical warehouse in Flensburg, which is the property of the organisation of the Danish minority, Sydslesvigsk Forening (SSF), and under whose roof also the European “House of Minorities” shall find its place.



*Source, photo: BMI/Beauftragter der Bundesregierung für Aussiedlerfragen und nationale Minderheiten, Hartmut Koschyk MdB*

June 2015

## **NEW OVERVIEW OF THE 2015 FUEN CONGRESS IN KOMOTINI PUBLISHED**

WITH THIS PAGE WE WOULD LIKE TO GIVE YOU AN OVERVIEW OF THE MAIN SUBJECTS OF THE CONGRESS AND SHOW YOU THE MANY BEAUTIFUL PHOTOS FROM THE CONGRESS

5/6/2015

The FUEN Congress in Komotini/Gümülcine/Κομοτηνή, Greece was organised in cooperation with and hosted by the three organisations of the Western Thrace Turks: the Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe (ABTTF), Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association (BTAYTD) and the Friendship, Equality, Peace (FEP) Party. More than 150 guests attended the Congress coming from 20 countries, and representing more than 30 minorities.

The main topics of the congress were the situation in Europe, the minority situation in Greece, especially in relation to the Western Thrace Turks, the situation in Ukraine and the cooperation between minority organisations on the European level.

On this page we would like to give you an overview of the main subjects of the congress and show you the many beautiful photos from the congress. If you have found media articles, photos or maybe self-written memories – please send them to us!

We thank all the participants and guests; it has been great fun together with you.

Link to the congress overview 2015

<https://www.fuen.org/congresses/congress-2015/introduction/>



## THE HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE EU WILL REMAIN TRUNCATED IF THEY DO NOT EQUALLY INCLUDE MINORITY RIGHTS

FUEN ATTENDED THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE NETWORK TO PROMOTE LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN HELSINKI

12/6/2015

“We need to strengthen our minority solidarity, we have to point out together that having double standards in human rights and minority rights is not acceptable in the European Union. We consider that minority rights, language rights, language diversity is part of the basic human rights. There is no strong European Union and there are no strong European democracies without the protection of human rights, and human rights are truncated if they do not equally include minority rights.” – stated Loránt Vincze, FUEN Vice President and International Secretary of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania, at the General Assembly of the Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity held in Helsinki on the 10-11 June.



He praised the support of the NPLD and its former president, Jannewietske de Vries for her personal commitment and valuable contribution as member of the Citizens Committee for the Minority SafePack Initiative (MSPI). The FUEN Vice President expressed his hope that the new leadership of the NPLD will continue to support the MSPI in the future. On behalf of the FUEN Loránt Vincze officially invited the NPLD to join the Advisory Council which will act as a think tank that will widen the perspectives of FUEN and other organisations and provide support for political implementation. “I am certain that as minority and language diversity organizations we need to combine our efforts to successfully represent the interests of our minorities in Brussels.” – stated the FUEN Vice President.

In his speech given at the NPLD Assembly Loránt Vincze made a comparison between the situation of the Swedish-speaking population in Finland and the Hungarian community in Romania, both representing the same proportion of the countries' total population. The Swedish-speaking population has important legislative provisions enshrined in the Finnish Constitution, the country is bilingual, while in Romania the Hungarian language has no official status, not even in Transylvania, in the province where the Hungarians represent almost 20 percent of the population. The existing minority provisions are not fully implemented in Romania, the bilingual names are not always used, there are not enough public servants who know the Hungarian language, and the education law is not fully enforced. “Many minorities have disagreements with their government, but it is certainly a rare example to have an EU member state which does not apply its own legislation. And Romania is such an example.” – pointed out the FUEN Vice President at the General Assembly of the NPLD.



## FUEN PRESENTS ITSELF, THE OUTCOMES OF FUEN CONGRESS IN GREECE AND ITS PLANS FOR THE COMING YEAR AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF COOPERATION WITH FUEN

15/6/2015

At a well-attended meeting in Strasbourg on 11 June, President Hans Heinrich Hansen presented FUEN to the Members of the European Parliament in the Intergroup for Traditional Minorities, National Communities and Languages. He spoke about the outcomes of its latest congress in Komotini, Greece in May and FUEN plans for the coming year.



The FUEN Congress in Greece showed that the minorities there are struggling to achieve equality and recognition, foremost the Turkish minority in Western Thrace. The Greek state does not officially recognise the Western Thrace Turks as what they are, namely a Turkish minority, but only as “Muslim minority”. According to FUEN the minority should be recognised in all its complexity, which means the Greek state has to accept the community as more than just a religious minority.

According to Hansen, Ukraine has brought the situation of the autochthonous minorities back on the political agenda in Europe. The war has changed things and a situation of fear and insecurity prevails. Although FUEN does not have a solution to the crisis either, it can give a voice to the national minorities and do what it possible to make a contribution to improve the situation. A first meeting in this sense will take place on 16-17 June in the German-Danish border region, in connection with the Forum “Minorities in border regions”, that FUEN organises in connection with the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR).



Hansen: “Many minorities and regions are still for waiting for their capabilities to be used. I could mention several examples of minorities in Europe, that are not recognised, that are not respected, discriminated or whose infrastructures are cut away for financial reasons. Where regions or administrative offices are merged, where calls for autonomy are seen as a national security risk.” Within its network FUEN has several good examples too, that can be an inspiration for others. The German Foreign Minister Frank Walter Steinmeier has recognised this when he said: “we want to use your expertise for our foreign policy.”

FUEN had several meetings in Brussels over the past year, called on the new President Jean Claude Juncker to create a minority portfolio inside the Commission and advocated to give more attention to linguistic diversity. FUEN spoke with the First Vice President of the European Commission Timmermans, who is responsible for fundamental rights, and also with Education & Culture Commissioner Navracsics. Both Commissioners expressed their sympathy to the cause of the European minorities, but could offer us nothing concrete and in a letter of 8 June Timmermans even seems to deny that the European Commission has a responsibility of its own in regard to minorities, which is hugely disappointing.

Hansen told about the Minority SafePack, the European Citizens’ Initiative (ECI) for the minorities in Europe, which was rejected by the European Commission and is under appeal now at the court in Luxembourg, and that the instrument has not become the agenda-setting instrument as envisaged. FUEN also said this at the hearing on the ECI in February this year. Mr Schöpflin MEP, the rapporteur on the ECI in the European Parliament, added that almost everyone agrees that serious changes are necessary. The FUEN President announced that in autumn a conference will take place in Belgium where a new advisory council will come together, consisting of the members of the citizens’ committee of the Minority SafePack, who are all respected high-ranking politicians, as well as further representatives from European regions. Their second meeting will be organised in conjunction with the EUROPEADA, the European Football Championship of the European minorities, in South Tyrol in June 2016.

Hansen ended his speech by calling the help from the Members gathered in the Intergroup. FUEN promotes dialogue and active participation in society, but often the financial means are lacking to operate effectively. Hansen therefore asked for the support of the Parliament in order to achieve that also the EU make a contribution so that the minorities will be able to become actively involved on the European level. He also suggested to set up a “Contact Forum at the European Parliament”, focusing on the issues and interests of the minorities with respect to the European Union. In order to facilitate the cooperation with the Intergroup, other MEPs and other institutions in Brussels, FUEN is planning to open an office in Brussels after the summer break.

Kinga Gál, co-chair of the Intergroup, highlighted the importance of cooperation with the minority organisations. “It is important that the Intergroup works with the minority organisations, because their efforts to achieve more effective minority protection are thereby acknowledged and because it enables them to raise attention in the European Parliament for the current problems that minorities face.”



“I am thankful for the positive reactions to our presentation at the Intergroup. The call for establishing a contact forum at the European Parliament was received positively, but it will be a major challenge to implement. But we will work hard to realise this forum”, said FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen. Other topics that were discussed at the Intergroup were the territorial reform in France, where the region of Alsace will be merged into one new huge region that stretches from the border with Belgium to Switzerland, and the situation of the Polish schools in Lithuania.

[Speech Hans Heinrich Hansen](#)



## FUEN INITIATES NEW PROJECT

16/6/2015



Starting from today, representatives of minorities from Ukraine and Russia will arrive in the German-Danish border region for a new project format. A kickoff meeting will take place for the project "The role of the national minorities in Ukraine".

The meeting will gather representatives of the Crimean Tatars, Greeks and Germans from Ukraine and Kumyks, Karelians and Germans from Russia, and the former Commissioner for Minority Issues of the Ukrainian Government, Gennadiy Druzenko.

The project was prepared by FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen, FUEN Vice President Olga Martens and FUEN Secretary General Susann Schenk.



Tomorrow the participants will join a panel discussion during the conference "Minorities in border regions", which is taking place in Sønderborg.

## CONFERENCE “MINORITIES IN BORDER REGIONS” IN SØNDERBORG

17/6/2015

ON 17 JUNE FUEN AND THE ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN BORDER REGIONS (AEBR) ARE ORGANISING A CONFERENCE IN THE GERMAN-DANISH BORDER, HOSTED BY THE REGION OF SØNDERJYLLAND-SCHLESWIG

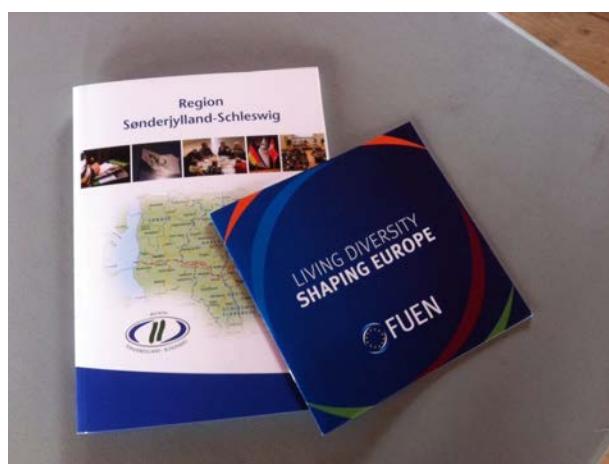
FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen: “The roots of FUEN go back to a congress in 1949 that was aimed at bringing both the regions in Europe and the European minorities together after the Second World War. Although the minorities and the regions afterwards established organisations of their own, the relations between the European minorities and the regions have remained close. We are glad that today, in my home region, we are able to organise a forum together with the Association of European Border Regions.” Both Hansen and President Karl-Heinz Lambertz of AEBR are also members of the citizens’ committee of the Minority SafePack, the European Citizens’ Initiative for the minorities.

The conference coincides with the kickoff meeting of the project “The role of the national minorities in the conflict in Ukraine”. This meeting will gather representatives of the Crimean Tatars, Greeks and Germans from Ukraine and Kumyks, Karelians and Germans from Russia, and the Commissioner for Minority Issues of the Ukrainian Government, Gennadiy Druzenko.

During a panel discussion the representatives of the minorities will explain their view on the conflict in Ukraine and its consequences for the national minorities. Furthermore concrete actions will be discussed, and how concrete support might be offered to alleviate their situation.

The programme of the forum furthermore will show examples of successful border regions with minorities will be presented, such as the host region Sønderjylland-Schleswig and the province of South Tyrol. Another session is dedicated to the question whether language is a connector or barrier for cooperation. FUEN will shine its light on the European language policy and will present its European campaign Language Diversity.

[Programme of the conference](#)





# FUEN AND ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN BORDER REGIONS AEBR TOGETHER IN SØNDERBORG

CONFERENCE ABOUT MINORITIES AND BORDER REGIONS

18/6/2015



Yesterday, 17 June, a conference took place on the subject of “Minorities and border regions”, which was co-organised by FUEN and [AEBR](#). The conference showed examples from Europe and from the German-Danish border region and was hosted by the region of [Sønderjylland-Schleswig](#). FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen highlighted the common roots of the two organisations and the close connection between border regions and minorities in Europe: many European minorities are living in border regions.

An important part of the programme was dedicated to the conflict in Ukraine. Representatives of minorities from both Ukraine as well as from Russia together told about their situation and their view on what Europe should do. According to AEBR President Karl-Heinz Lambertz, the panel discussion on Ukraine was the highlight of the programme of the conference, because it was so real, so authentic.

During the conference also the Language Diversity campaign was presented, which aims at raising awareness for multilingualism and linguistic diversity and promotes the use of languages. Based on the Map of Minorities and Regional and Minority Languages, facts and figures about the European minorities and languages were shown, and an overview was given about the latest developments in regard to the language policy of the EU.





## UKRAINE PROJECT OF FUEN STARTED

### SUCCESSFUL FIRST MEETING IN THE GERMAN-DANISH BORDER REGION

18/6/2015



From 15-17 June, representatives of minorities in Ukraine and Russia were visiting FUEN in Flensburg to discuss the situation in Ukraine. They stayed together in the European Academy Sankelmark and had discussions in the House of Minorities of FUEN.

The highlight of the programme was the panel discussion that took place in Sønderborg, in Denmark, at the conference “Minorities in border regions” of the Association of European Border Regions AEBR, an association bringing together almost 100 cross-border regions in Europe.

The participants in the programme, among them representatives of the Crimean Tatars, Greeks and Germans from Ukraine and Kумыks, Karelians and Germans from Russia, and the former Commissioner for Minority Issues of the Ukrainian Government, Gennadiy Druzenko, tried to find solutions and concrete actions that alleviate their situation, also with the help of the regions attending the conference.



## Participants:

- Olga MARTENS, Vice President of FUEN, moderator
- Gennadiy DRUZENKO, former Commissioner of the Ukrainian Government for Minority Issues
- Alexandra PROTSENKO-PICHAJI, Federation of Greek Societies in Ukraine
- Wladimir LEYSLE, Council of the Germans in Ukraine
- Elvin KADYROV, Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People
- Ramazan ALPAUT, Moscow Kumuk Organisation "QUMUQLAR", Russia
- Akhmed BAYGEREEV, Moscow Kumuk Organisation "QUMUQLAR", Russia
- Alexej TSYKARYOV, Representative of Karelia at Barents Regional Youth Council, Russia
- Prof Dr Tatyana SMIRNOVA, Professor and Chair for Ethnography at Omsk F.M. Dostoevsky State University
- Uliana ILYINA, IVDK – International Union of German Culture, Russia
- Konstantin MATIS, IVDK - International Union of German Culture, Russia
- Irina Pinchuk, IVDK - International Union of German Culture, Russia





## PREPARATION TOURNAMENT FOR THE NEXT EUROPEADA 2016 A GREAT SUCCESS

30/6/2015



On 27 June a preparation tournament for the next EUROPEADA 2016 took place in St Martin in Thurn (Ladinia – South Tyrol). Four football teams participated: the Ladins (IT), the South Tyroleans (IT), the Romansh (CH) and the Carinthian Slovenes (AT).

With this tournament St Martin in Thurn tried out what it is to be the venue for the football matches between the European minorities.

“It was a great preparation tournament for the next EUROPEADA. All the teams did their best. Before every match the national anthems were played. Afterwards we could celebrate together, with songs and dance. Sport and football can unite all of us. We look forward to 2016”, said Giorgio Costabiei, the leader of the Ladin team and member of the organisation team for 2016ladinischen Mannschaft und Mitglied des OK-Teams für 2016.





The Ladins, who had a home advantage, were able to win. The results:

- Ladins – Carinthian Slovenes: 1 - 0
- Romansh – South Tyroleans: 0 - 0 (4 -1 after penalties)
- Match for the 3rd place: Carinthian Slovenes – South Tyroleans: 4 - 2

Final: Ladins - Romansh: 1 – 0

The EUROPEADA 2016 will take place from Saturday 18 June until Sunday 22 June 2015 in South Tyrol, Italy. The organisers work hard to prepare the football matches and the logistical framework for the women's and men's tournament, including the facilities for the supporting staff and for all the fans and guests that are expected from all over Europe.



## CELEBRATION OF 25 YEARS OF MINORITY PROTECTION IN THE CONSTITUTION OF SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN

ON THE OCCASION OF THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY THE PRIME MINISTER OF SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN, GERMANY, HELD A RECEPTIO

30/6./2015

For Prime Minister Torsten Albig minority policy is more contemporary than ever. “Schleswig-Holstein is the first German land with its own language policy for its regional and minority languages”, he said in Kiel on 29 June.

An amendment to the constitution cleared the way for a minority policy that many in Europe today consider as a model. “In 1990 the Danish and Frisian minorities were included in our constitution. From then on, our land recognises not just the right of the national minorities to choose freely to be treated or not to be treated as such. The former Article 5 – now Article 6 – also guarantees protection and support”, said Albig. In 2012 Schleswig-Holstein extended the protection of the constitution to the minority of the German Sinti and Roma, the first land to do this in Germany.

Today the Action Plan for Language Policy of the land of Schleswig-Holstein provides for stronger protection of the minority languages Danish, Frisian and Romanes and also for the regional language of Low German. “These languages are part of our cultural identity”, said the Prime Minister. It is important that these new policies are not pursued with the minorities only. The government of Schleswig-Holstein expects wide support in the regional parliament. Albig: “Good minority policy is only possible where majority and minority work together and consider one another as partners.”

Source: [www.schleswig-holstein.de](http://www.schleswig-holstein.de)



*Photo: Prime Minister Torsten Albig and Minority Commissioner Renate Schnack with FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen at the FUEN Congress 2014 in Sønderborg, Denmark.*

July 2015

## GERMAN FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER STEINMEIER PLEADS FOR DIALOGUE, TRUST AND STRONGER PARTICIPATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE OSCE

IN THE BEGINNING OF JULY THE GERMAN FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER FRANK-WALTER STEINMEIER WAS IN VIENNA, TO PRESENT THE PROGRAMME OF THE GERMAN PRESIDENCY OF 2016 TO THE PERMANENT COUNCIL OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE)

3/7/2015

“Let us strengthen existing elements of confidence-building, rather than dismantling them further”, said Steinmeier in his speech at the Permanent Council. He argued that common threats should be tackled by working together. “The OSCE is and remains a key instrument of conflict prevention and resolution in Europe.” Germany is willing to assume responsibility.



Foreign Affairs Minister Steinmeier underlined that when he speaks of dialogue, he does not only mean the dialogue among governments, but rather a dialogue among people. “Right now, when political alienation has increased so much in the OSCE area, civil society connections have become all the more important. This human dimension is laid out in the Helsinki Final Act. We want to strengthen it.”

In February this year Ralf Beste, deputy leader of policy planning at the German Foreign Affairs Ministry visited Flensburg, to examine in what way the experiences and achievements of the two European organisations FUEN and ECMI (European Centre for Minority Issues) and the experiences in the German-Danish border region and the land of Schleswig-Holstein could be better used? The main topic of interest was how civil society can contribute with models of dialogue and conflict resolution.

German Foreign Affairs Minister Steinmeier stressed that the German presidency wants to increase the participation of civil society in the discussion among states inside the OSCE. In relation to the protection of minorities, said Steinmeier, “Europe today is a very, very diverse continent, in the East as well as in the West. Minorities should be protected in modern states so that these states bring societies together rather than dividing them, and we absolutely must not permit minorities to be instrumentalised in conflicts. This also means that we must combat every form of political extremism, intolerance and discrimination.”

FUEN is pleased with the approach by the German OSCE-presidency and offers to work together with the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with the FUEN members from all over Europe on models of dialogue and conflict in which civil society is strongly involved..

Speech by Foreign Minister Steinmeier in Vienna, 2 July 2015



## MEETING ABOUT THE WORKING GROUP OF GERMAN MINORITIES (AGDM) IN BERLIN

6/7/2015

During an extraordinarily hot meeting in the premises of the Ministry, the German Federal Commissioner for Issues Related to Ethnic German Resettlers and National Minorities Hartmut Koschyk MP and the representatives of the AGDM (Working Group of German Minorities), FUEN and the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI) discussed the activities of the Working Group of German Minorities. The Working Group, which is organised under the umbrella of FUEN, is preparing the upcoming annual meeting in Berlin in November this year.



In the presence of FUEN (and IVDK: Germans in Russia) vice president Olga Martens, AGDM-chair Koloman Brenner, VDG (Germans in Poland)-chair Bernard Gaida and DFDR (Germans in Romania)-director Benjamin Jozsa had a debate about upcoming projects, cooperation and their expectations. The meeting was also attended by FUEN secretary general Susann Schenk and Project manager Eva Penzes. The main topic for discussion was the preparation for the annual meeting of AGDM in 2015, which will be in Berlin from 9-12 November. On 12 November a conference by the Commissioner will take place in the Federal Ministry of the Interior. It has been confirmed that the German foreign affairs minister Steinmeier will meet the participants at the conference.

There was a lively exchange of opinions about the latest meetings and visits by Hartmut Koschyk MP to the German minorities and to politicians, e.g. in Austria and in Slovakia. Koschyk underlined the importance of AGDM and FUEN as the European umbrella structure for minority issues. Further topics discussed at the meeting were therefore the anticipated installation of a AGDM coordination office in Berlin, the FUEN Congress of 2016 in the European Capital of Culture Breslau/Wrocław, the House of Minorities and institutional funding for FUEN.

After the discussions a joint meeting about the German schools and education outside Germany and cooperation with the German minorities took place. This meeting was attended by representatives of the foreign affairs ministry, the conference of education ministers of the Germany lands and the world association of German schools abroad.





August 2015

THE SECRETARIAT OF FUEN WISHES YOU ALL A NICE AND RELAXING SUMMER TIME

3/8/2015



The Secretariat of FUEN is having its summer recess and will be back at your service on 1 September. We wish you all a nice holiday period and look forward to start working again for the European minorities after the summer break, recovered and full of energy.

## AS OF NOW FUEN IS PRESENT IN BERLIN

THE FEDERAL UNION OF EUROPEAN NATIONALITIES HAS A PRESENCE IN THE BUNDESHAUS BUILDING IN BERLIN AS OF NOW

4/8/2015



This step was made possible because of the support of the German Federal Government Commissioner for Matters Related to National Minorities Hartmut Koschyk.

As FUEN and the office of the Commissioner announced today, the presence will function as coordination office for the Working Group of German Minorities AGDM, which operates within the framework of FUEN. “In close cooperation with the Minority Secretariat of the four autochthonous national minorities, the Youth of European Nationalities and the institutions of the Sinti and Roma, the visibility of the minorities is clearly strengthened on the German Federal level and in the German capital. We will use that”, said FUEN Secretary General Susann Schenk, who is very pleased with the office.

This autumn also a representation of FUEN in Brussels will follow.

### **Working Group has a coordination office now**

Under the roof of the Federal Union of European nationalities, the largest umbrella organisation of the autochthonous national minorities in Europe, the German minorities have had their own Working Group since 1991.

This Working Group of German Minorities AGDM currently brings together 21 organisations. FUEN now succeeded in establishing a coordination office to coordinate the cooperation within AGDM.

As of now Eva Adel Penzes will coordinate the office in Berlin. Born as a German of Hungary, she majored in German studies and formerly worked as director of YEN and later as project manager for FUEN.

“We want to have a close strategic cooperation with the Federal Republic of Germany in order to guarantee the future of the German minorities, their language and culture. Furthermore we make an important contribution in our own countries, where persons belonging to the German minorities are seen as Germans and contribute to good relations with Germany. Since the latest annual meeting of AGDM in Berlin, we actively pushed for establishing an office in Berlin, and we are very glad that we succeeded”, said Koloman Brenner, the chair of the Working Group.

The AGDM Coordination Office enables and supports the enhanced cooperation between the organisations and to strengthen the visibility of the German minorities in Berlin. With the new office it is also possible to ensure that funding and activities are bundled and better coordinated. To that end also the upcoming annual meeting will contribute, which takes place in Berlin from 9-12 November 2015.

“The representation of minority interests in Europe – as peace policy – is more urgent than ever before. As a person belonging to the German minority in Denmark, I know how much is needed to contribute to more understanding and dialogue after war and conflict. It is a fundamental prerequisite to give non-governmental organisations that are committed to this the adequate means. A presence in Berlin is another step in the right direction”, said Hans Heinrich Hansen, FUEN President. “I thank Hartmut Koschyk in particular, who always considers the interests of the minorities also from a European perspective and thus has become a close ally for FUEN.”

**Photo FUEN:** Representatives of FUEN, the German Federal Ministry of the Interior and Federal Government Commissioner Hartmut Koschyk in Berlin  
from left to right: **Jens Krumsieg**, German Federal Ministry of the Interior; **Susann Schenk**, FUEN-Secretary General; **Benjamin Jozsa**, Demokratisches Forum der Deutschen in Rumänien DFDR-Germans in Romania, Director; **Olga Martens**, FUEN-Vice President, Vice President of Internationaler Verband der Deutschen Kultur IVDK-Germans in Russia; **Hartmut Koschyk MP**, Federal Government Commissioner for Matters Related to Ethnic German Resettlers and National Minorities; **Dr Koloman Brenner**, Working Group of German Minorities AGDM in FUEN, Chair; **Eva Penzes**, Working Group of German Minorities AGDM in FUEN, Coordinator; **Bernard Gaida**, Verband der deutschen sozial-kulturellen Gesellschaften in Polen VdG-Germans in Poland, Chair

## OPEN DAYS OF THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT IN BERLIN: FUEN WILL BE THERE

28/8/2015



On 29 and 30 August 2015 the German Chancellery and the German federal ministries provide everyone with the opportunity to see where, how and on which issues the German federal government is working.

This year, FUEN will be present in the new building of the German Ministry of the Interior (BMI) with our new coordination office for the Working Group of German Minorities AGDM, and we will present our activities to the public in Berlin. Next to FUEN also the Minority Secretariat of the four autochthonous minorities in Germany and the Federal Government Commissioner for Matters Related to Ethnic German Resettlers and National Minorities will be there.

The Open Days of the German government in Berlin this year celebrate the 25th anniversary of German unification. But also in regard to more recent developments there will be a diverse programme full of information and entertainment. Among other things there will be a deployment training of sniffer dogs, there will be dance, music and sports and the federal police will make parachute jumps.

Since the government moved from Bonn to Berlin, the Open Days of the German government have been a major attraction. Every year far more than hundred thousand visitors come to the ministries and also for people outside the Berlin the event is no secret anymore.

More information:

[Programme of the Open Days on 29 and 30 August \(German\)](#)

[Homepage German Ministry of the Interior \(mainly German\)](#)

[Flyer by the German federal government \(German\)](#)



September 2015

## STATELESS FOR 22 YEARS

“MY COUNTRY IS MY PRISON,” SAYS MRS GÜLTEN KAYAL FROM RHODES, GREECE

1/9/2015

A high number of ethnic Turks in Greece have had their citizenship withdrawn under Article 19 of the Citizenship Law that was in force from 1955 until 1998. This law was abused by the Greek authorities during that period to get rid of a maximum of ethnic Turks.

The most amazing case is the story of Mrs Gülten Kayal from Rhodes who Human Rights Without Frontiers Int'l (HRWF) met last week. She went to Germany in 1985 and was married in Frankfurt to another ethnic Turk two years later. On several occasions, she had her visa renewed without any problem at the local Greek consulate. In 1993, she went back to Greece to take part in the elections. Imagine her surprise when she was told she had lost her citizenship! Her husband however was not deprived of his but until he went back to Rhodes several years later, he lived and worked abroad without his wife because she did not dare leave Rhodes in case she would not be allowed back to her country.



Since then she has tried three times with the help of a lawyer to get back her citizenship. To no avail. This has dramatic consequences because she is still stateless more than 20 years later. She cannot vote, she cannot open a bank account, she cannot get a loan, she cannot get her pension, she cannot be covered by the national health insurance, she cannot...

“Since 1993, my country has been my prison because I am undocumented,” she told HRWF. According to a reply by the Greek Ministry of the Interior to a parliamentary question asked by İlhan Ahmet, the former MP for Rhodope in the Greek Parliament in May 2005, 46,638 Turks (Muslims) in Thrace and the Island of Rhodes (Dodecanese Islands) were deprived of citizenship until 1998. The provision was repealed in 1998, although failing to nullify previous decisions of withdrawal of citizenship. The only process made available for regaining Greek citizenship was to apply for naturalization as any foreign citizen.

The former Article 19 of the Greek Nationality Code was in contravention of, inter alia, Article 12, paragraph 4, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ratified by Greece by Law 2462/1997), which provides that ‘no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter his own country,’ and Article 3, paragraph 2, of the Fourth Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights, which states that ‘no one shall be deprived of the right to enter the territory of the State of which he is a national.’ This Fourth Protocol has yet to be ratified by Greece. National and international organizations continue to urge Greece to resolve the negative consequences of Article 19.

The case of Mrs Gülten Kayal is probably only one among many others that are still pending. HRWF urges the Greek authorities to solve this case and any other that will come to its knowledge.

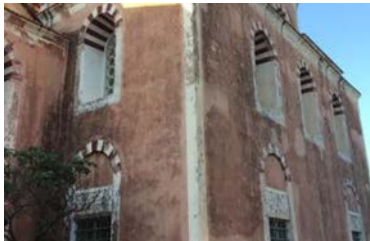
This article was written by [Human Rights Without Frontiers Int'l](#)

## FUEN UNDERTOOK A FACT-FINDING MISSION TO RHODES AND KOS

1/9/2015

The Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) undertook a fact-finding mission to the Dodecanese Islands Rhodes and Kos on 27-30 August 2015.

During the visit hosted by our member organization Rhodes, Kos and the Dodecanese Turks Culture and Solidarity Association, FUEN Vice President Halit Habip Oglu and the Director of Human Rights Without Frontiers Int'l (HRWF) Willy Fautré have monitored the situation of the Turkish minority living in Rhodes and Kos. The delegation met with members of the Turkish minority and representatives of civil society in Rhodes and Kos.



The delegation heard many problems of the Turkish minority during their visit. Furthermore the delegation visited cultural and historical Ottoman monuments and buildings in the two islands and found that the Ottoman cultural heritage was destroyed.

Article by HRWF about Mrs Gülten Kayal, whose citizenship was withdrawn and has been stateless for 22 years



## FUEN IS PRESENTING THE EUROPEAN MINORITIES IN BERLIN

2/9/2015

During the weekend of 29-30 August, FUEN and its new AGDM-coordination office in Berlin presented itself during the Open Days of the German Federal Government in the new building of the German Ministry of the Interior in Berlin for the first time. AGDM – the Working Group of the German Minorities organised within the framework of FUEN – has existed since 1991 and currently joins together 21 German organisations across Europe.



Together with the Minority Secretariat in Germany and the four autochthonous minorities in Germany, this year also the German minorities who are represented in FUEN were given much attention. By being there, FUEN was able to inform the Berlin audience about AGDM, the German minorities in Central and Eastern Europe and in the CIS-states and to increase their knowledge.

The German Federal Government Commissioner for Issues related to Ethnic Resettlers and National Minorities Hartmut Koschyk MP was present as well. This year Mr Koschyk invited representatives of the German minority from Romania, since the year 2015 is dedicated to the memory of the deportation of Germans from Romania into the former Soviet Union 70 years ago.



On the last day the German Minister of the Interior, Dr Thomas de Maizière also visited the stand of the minorities. He asked about the activities, praises the work and commitment and was happy with all the representatives, and especially happy with the participation of the Sorbs.

During the Open Days of the German government more than 10,000 people visited the new building of the Ministry of the Interior. As a whole, about 156,000 people visited the Open Days and received information about topics of their interest.



## GREEK CONSUL-GENERAL VISITS FLENSBURG

8/9/2015

Georgios Arnatoutis, the first counsellor and Consul General for Greece visited the House of Minorities to meet FUEN today. The consul, who was born in Athens and has been in Hamburg since September 2014, stated that he wanted to know more about FUEN and its activities.

The meeting is a result of the FUEN Congress that took place this year in Western Thrace. In the presence of Vice President Halit Habipoglu, President Hans Heinrich Hansen and Vice President used the opportunity to also present the minority situation in the German-Danish border region.

During the open and stimulating meeting the approach by Greece in relation to how it deals with its minorities was illuminated, the topics of educational autonomy and freedom of religion were discussed and FUEN pleaded for more participation of the minorities. FUEN handed over the resolutions that deal with the minorities in Greece and with the Western Thrace Turks once again.

Furthermore the meeting addressed the current challenges in relation to refugees. In that regard, the experiences of FUEN and its member organisation are of the utmost importance.



### Resolutions adopted at the Congress in Komotini:

[FUEN Main Resolution](#)

[FUEN Resolution on Greece](#)

[Resolution of the Turkish Minority of Western Thrace](#)





## INTENSIVE WEEK IN STRASBOURG: STATE OF THE UNION, REFUGEES, FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND STRATEGIC COOPERATION WITH THE MINORITY INTERGROUP IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

11/9/2015

This week, FUEN attended the first plenary session of the European Parliament after the summer break. It was a week in which the European response to the refugee crisis was making all the headlines and in which Jean-Claude Juncker, the president of the European Commission gave his first State of the Union speech in the Parliament. FUEN was also present at meeting of the Intergroup for Traditional Minorities, National Communities and Languages.

In his State of the Union speech, president Juncker spoke about the immense challenges that the European Union is facing and that can only be mastered if Europe works together:

“I believe the immense challenges Europe is currently facing – both internally and externally – leave us no choice but to address them from a very political perspective [...]. This is not the time for business as usual. [...] Instead, it is time for honesty. It is time to speak frankly about the big issues facing the European Union. Because our European Union is not in a good state. There is not enough Europe in this Union. And there is not enough Union in this Union. We have to change this. And we have to change this now.”



In relation to the refugee situation in Europe, Juncker emphasised that how to handle it, is first of all a matter of humanity and of human dignity. He stated that Europe has clearly under-delivered on common solidarity with regard to the refugees who have arrived in the EU.

FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen: “With the refugee crisis of the last few weeks, we now see very clearly what will happen if Europe is not looking after basic human values. We have seen that before, as these values are also not respected in relation to national minorities in a number of states in Europe. Up to now the European Commission denied that it bears responsibility for the minorities. The large group of refugees from war and crisis areas now demand a common solution from the politicians in Europe. By now, the refugees have reached the German-Danish border region too, where FUEN is located. Also here people have recognised that violence is not a solution against those who are looking for help. It is encouraging to notice how many people in many countries of Europe are supporting the refugees and that also politically things are starting to change.”

This week was also the week that the non-legislative resolution on the situation of fundamental rights in the EU (2013-2014) was adopted by a majority of the European Parliament. The resolution calls for the full use of existing mechanisms to ensure that the fundamental rights and values of the EU are respected, protected and promoted. As a result of the active engagement of the members of the Minority Intergroup, and also other Members of Parliament, the resolution contains a chapter on the promotion of minorities that reiterates many of the demands raised by FUEN over the past years towards the European institutions. FUEN has the hope that now, in a serious crisis, the European Commission and the Council will listen to the Parliament and start to act to fulfil their self-proclaimed fundamental rights and values, also in regard to the protection of the national minorities in Europe.

The resolution states that the European Parliament “invites the EU institutions to elaborate a comprehensive EU protection system for national, ethnic and linguistic minorities in order to ensure their

equal treatment, taking into account the relevant international legal standards and existing good practices, and calls on the Member States to ensure effective equality of these minorities, particularly on issues of language, education and culture.”

Furthermore the Parliament “encourages the Member States that have not yet done so to ratify and effectively implement the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and urges the Member States and the Commission to take all necessary action to tackle any disproportionate administrative or legislative obstacles that could hinder linguistic diversity at European or national level.”

In the meeting of the Intergroup on Thursday the floor was given to CIRCOM, the European Association of Regional Television. The organisation, bringing together regional public television in 31 countries in Europe, functions as a network for its members, it organises trainings and an annual prize. Three representatives, from Galicia in Spain, from Poland and France presented examples of how regional public television functions in their countries: from programmes in the national language for very small minorities in Poland, to the Galician television station in Spain and the difficulties some stations in France have to find sufficiently qualified journalists to produce their programmes in Breton and Corsican. Furthermore they emphasised the importance of regional public television for a democratic, pluralist society and asked the support of the Parliament in raising the attention for regional media in European policy and legislation, e.g. in the Audiovisual Media Services Directive, in which regional television is not mentioned at all.

The Members came with examples from their regions, where regional media are under threat. Gyula Winkler MEP mentioned the example of the Romanian television, which has gone bankrupt and may have to cut regional programmes for minorities. There was also criticism on the low amounts of budget received for some minorities in Poland; if the citizens, including minorities, fund these media, they should also be able to have television in their own language, and e.g. only 10,000 Euro for the German television in Poland cannot be taken seriously for a serious television programme, according to Herbert Dorfmann MEP.

**Links:**

[State of the Union address by Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission](#)

[Resolution on the situation of fundamental rights in the EU \(2013-2014\)](#)

[CIRCOM: European Association of Regional Television](#)



## THE WAVE OF REFUGEES REQUIRES SERIOUS EFFORTS TOWARDS CREATING PEACE

18/9/2015



The Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) and the Youth of European Nationalities (YEN) express their solidarity with the refugees, who are currently coming to the European Union. The current refugee wave is a situation that has to be solved by the European society as a whole and requires solidarity and help from all European states. It poses a fully new challenge for the community of states, consisting of both intangible and material challenges.

The Presidium stands united: **“A strong humanitarian effort is imperative, and local action is key in order to guarantee respect for human dignity.”** The members of the Presidium and staff of FUEN Hans Heinrich Hansen, Martha Stocker, Dieter Küssner, Bernhard Ziesch, Halit Habipoglu, Lorant Vincze, Olga Martens, Susann Schenk, Eva Penzes, Frank de Boer and Matic Germovšek Ž., the President of the Youth of European Nationalities (YEN) come from Germany, Denmark, South Tyrol, Austria, Slovenia, Hungary, Romania, the Netherlands and Greece.

With more than 90 member organisations across Europe, FUEN is the largest representative organisation of the autochthonous national minorities.

**“The solidarity shown by our member organisations is impressive and we call on all of you to continue with your actions”,** the Presidium of FUEN and YEN agree. **“It is extraordinary how people provide support. We support the efforts of our member organisations locally and call on the states in Europe to provide help wherever they can.”**

FUEN is of the opinion that it is just as necessary – additional to all the humanitarian efforts – that Europe together with Russia, the United States, the Gulf states, Turkey and other countries start working on politically effective and lasting solutions for peace. These solutions should allow people to organise their own life in peace and dignity and under acceptable social and economic conditions in their own home country.

**We demand from European politicians that they take serious and resolute measures to arrive at lasting peaceful solutions.**

We consider that the question in regard to what consequences the refugee policies will effectively have on minority policy in Europe and on the situation of the autochthonous minorities in Europe, who for a major part are members of FUEN and YEN, currently must play a lesser role. First of all the question of peace shall be on the top of the agenda. The Presidium is aware, though, that the current refugee wave will have its effect on the situation of minorities and minority policies in Europe.

However, FUEN expresses its hope that the resolution of this major challenge, that brings together a great many nationalities, also creates an opportunity to develop a new perspective on the issue of minority protection in Europe as well.

[Joint Statement of FUEN and YEN on the refugee crisis in Europe](#)



## DELEGATION OF THE SOCIETY OF SWEDISH LITERATURE IN FINLAND (SLS) VISITS FUEN

21/9/2015

On Friday 18 September a delegation of the [Society of Swedish Literature in Finland \(SLS\)](#) visited FUEN and the House Minorities in Flensburg.

The circa 20 members of the executive and scientific board of the Society were in Flensburg as part of a study visit to Schleswig-Holstein and the German-Danish border region, which also included meetings with the Schleswig-Holstein government in Kiel and visits to the universities of Kiel and Sønderborg.



of

FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen welcomed the guests in the House of Minorities and told them about the activities of FUEN, which is the largest umbrella organisation for the autochthonous national minorities in Europe. Subsequently President Hans Heinrich Hansen, FUEN Vice President Dieter Paul Küssner, Jens A. Christiansen of Sydslesvigsk Forening, Chairman Dr Jørgen Kühl of the European Centre for Minority Issues and Prof Dr Elin Fredsted of Flensburg University told the guests from Finland about how the minorities and majorities on both sides of the German-Danish border are living together. The meeting was concluded with a lunch in a restaurant nearby.



The group was particularly interested in the experiences of FUEN in the field of multilingualism. They do not consider themselves as a minority in Finland, but as the guardians of the Swedish language in Finland. The short visit to the House of Minorities, however, did make an impression on the delegation and FUEN has gained friends and supporters among the Swedish-speaking Finns.

The purpose of the Society of Swedish Literature in Finland is to disseminate knowledge about Finland's Swedish-language culture. The Society was founded in 1885 and publishes works of scholarship and nonfiction about the culture, language, society and history of Finland's Swedish-speaking minority. As the organisation managing the Swedish Cultural Foundation the Society is one of the largest private funders of research in the humanities and social sciences in Finland.



## FUEN PARTICIPATED IN THE SÁMI SYMPOSIUM IN BERLIN

22/9/2015

Tuesday 22 September FUEN participated in the Symposium **“Sámi Contemporary: A Symposium about Minorities and Identities”**. Politicians, academic experts, artists, representatives of the media and activists discussed together about how important legislation and law, art and architecture, language and media are for minorities and their identity, and in particular how important these are for the Sámi.

In a forum on the rights of minorities the speakers were the Swedish State Secretary for Culture Per Olsson and the Finnish Member of Parliament Eva Biaudet and also Judith Walde, the head of the Minority Secretariat in Germany, who spoke about the minorities in Germany and how they are working together on the European level within the network of FUEN.



The symposium was organised in Berlin by the Nordic Embassies in cooperation with the Freiburg Research Group in Sámi Studies and is part of the programme around the art exhibition Sámi Contemporary, which is on display in the Nordic Embassies in Berlin until 27 September.

The Sámi are an indigenous people, who form a minority in Finland, Norway, Sweden and Russia. According to estimations there are approximately 40,000 Sámi in Norway, 20,000 in Sweden, 7,500 in Finland and 2,000 in Russia. The Sámi have their own historical and cultural area of settlement, their own language, culture and history. They are the only group that is recognised as an indigenous people within the area of the European Union, Norway and the Kola-Peninsula.

The Sámi-languages are related to the Finnic languages of Finnish and Estonian. According to UNESCO the Sámi languages are endangered; one of the Sámi languages already has already become extinct.

In Norway, Sweden and Finland the Sámi have their own parliament, the Sameting (Sámediggi). The Sámi Parliamentary Council (SPC) is the body for parliamentary cooperation in Finland, Norway and Sweden, in which also the Sámi from Russia are represented as permanent observers. Transnational cooperation between the Sámi enhanced the position of their culture, language and legislation. Despite all, the Sámi still face the challenge how to assert and strengthen their rights as an indigenous people and how to strike a balance between traditions and a modern way of life.



FUEN is a partner of the Sámi-organisations.

## OSCE ANNUAL HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE IN WARSAW; GERMAN 2016 CHAIRMANSHIP ANNOUNCES THAT NATIONAL MINORITIES ARE ONE OF THE PRIORITIES NEXT YEAR

23/9/2015

This week, at the annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Mr Gernot Erler MP, the Special Representative of Germany for the OSCE Chairmanship 2016, presented his programme and the priorities for 2016..



From Germany's point of view, Europe is facing the most severe crisis for the European security regime since the end of the Cold War. In this respect "the current occurrences in and around Ukraine do not only question principles such as the inviolability of borders, but are also increasing the pressure on human rights, fundamental freedoms and the principles of democratic governance."

The core of the conflict preventing function of the OSCE remains dialogue and cooperation. As the largest human rights conference in Europe and in the OSCE-area as a whole, the meeting is a forum for dialogue between states and civil society on an equal footing and the main event where the implementation of human rights commitments by states are being reviewed.

The Special Representative underlined how important common standards are. The High Commissioner on National Minorities and her predecessors have developed important standards for minority protection, said Erler. With silent diplomacy and with seminal recommendations her office has significantly contributed to creating more harmony between majorities and national minorities.

Erler mentioned the following three priorities of the German chairmanship in 2016: first of all appropriate attention should be given to the subject of tolerance and non-discrimination, possibly with a special event organised by the chairmanship. Secondly, and important in particular for FUEN and its member organisations, Germany wants to devote more attention to the subject of national minorities, and focus on their abilities as bridge-builders and agents of reconciliation between states. And thirdly, Germany wants to highlight the importance of the freedom of expression and freedom of media coverage, in these turbulent times.

FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen is pleased, but not surprised with the priorities of the German chairmanship in 2016: "FUEN has been in discussion with the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs for some time now, with the idea to make use of the experiences and expertise of the national minorities and our member organisations for security and cooperation in Europe. For this, the German OSCE chairmanship offers a great opportunity."

[Speech Mr Gernot Erler MP in Warsaw \(German\)](#)



*Photo below, from left to right:*

*OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Dunja Mijatović, Special Representative of Germany for the OSCE Chairmanship 2016 Gernot Erler, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Astrid Thors and Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Michael Georg Link support the campaign "OSCE United in Countering Violent Extremism." (OSCE 2015)*

## MINORITY COUNCIL AND MINORITY SECRETARIAT IN GERMANY TURN TEN YEARS OLD

24/9/2015

FUEN congratulates the Minority Council and the Minority Secretariat in Germany. FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen is in Berlin personally to congratulate the members of the Minority Council. All of them are also members of FUEN. The gifts brought along are for the Minority Secretariat of the four autochthonous national minorities in Germany.

Have a great party!

### More information:

[Press release Minority Secretariat \(German\)](#)





## FUEN PARTICIPATES IN THE EU CONFERENCE ON THE OCCASION OF THE EUROPEAN DAY OF LANGUAGES 2015

25/9/2015

In the run-up to the European Day of Languages, the European Commission organises a conference on Friday 25 September 2015 that will highlight the central role of languages for the European project and discuss the implications of multilingualism in schools, enterprises and organisations.



Speakers will be Vice President Kristalina Georgieva of the European Commission, responsible for Budget and Human Resources and Vice President Ioan Mircea of the European Parliament. Experts will speak about the importance of languages, about linguistic diversity in the classroom and in the labour market, about the role of languages in democratic participation and about multilingual communication on the web. Frank de Boer, member on behalf of FUEN in the EU Civil Society Platform for Multilingualism will participate at the conference in Brussels.

In the past years, FUEN notices, the European Commission has had a narrow economic approach to languages. Furthermore the current European Commission has no longer a Commissioner with multilingualism and linguistic diversity in his or her portfolio. FUEN regrets this.

In the [Minority SafePack](#), the European Citizens' Initiative for the European minorities, FUEN defined the main elements for a successful language policy for the regional and minority languages in Europe.

Languages serve for much more than economic purposes alone. Languages are one of the important traits that define a community. They express, reflect and reinforce a sense of belonging. The right to one's mother tongue is a human right. In this context the quest for of a multilingual society has received a new relevance with the recent large wave of refugees who are coming to Europe.

The conference can be watched as a [web-stream from 12:15 hr onwards](#).

### More information:

[Languages in Multicultural Europe – EU lunchtime conference](#)  
[European Day of Languages at the Council of Europe](#)

## SEVERAL GUESTS ARE VISITING AND MEETING FUEN IN THE HOUSE OF MINORITIES

25/9/2015

After a visit of Grænseforeningen and a meeting with the head of the unit Northern Europe of the German Foreign Affairs Ministry Klaus Zillikens and with William Boe, the envoy of the Danish Embassy in the German-Danish border region that took place on the invitation of Renate Schnack, the Minority Commissioner of the Land of Schleswig-Holstein, today a group of scholarship holders of the Egon-Bahr-Fellowship programme were in Flensburg, to discuss with FUEN the topical issue of refugee and minority policy. Welcome!



*Top: Klaus Zillikens of the German Foreign Affairs Ministry, William Boe, envoy of the Danish Embassy and Schleswig Holstein Minority Commissioner Renate Schnack together with the representatives of FUEN and the minorities in the German-Danish-border region.*

*Middle: Knud-Erik Therkelsen and Mette Bock of Grænseforeningen*



*Bottom: Group of scholarship holders of the Egon-Bahr-Fellowship programme visiting Flensburg*

## FUEN ON THE OCCASION OF THE EUROPEAN DAY OF LANGUAGES: IN YOUR OWN LANGUAGE YOU ARE AT HOME...

25/9/2015

On 26 September each year, the European Day of Language is enjoyed by thousand of people across Europe and by schools, governmental institutions and NGOs in all countries of Europe.

It is an annual day of celebration that was initiated in 2001, during the European Year of Languages. Its aim is to alert the public to the importance of languages and increase intercultural understanding, to promote the rich linguistic and cultural diversity of Europe and to encourage lifelong language learning in and out of school.



The Day of Languages was an initiative of the Council of Europe to celebrate the rich mosaic of different languages that coexist in Europe: including official state languages, world languages and evidently, the minority languages of Europe.

**FUEN uses the European Day of Languages as an opportunity to cherish the minority languages of Europe and the people that speak these languages. It is important that people keep their own languages alive with confidence, with heart and soul. The regional and minority languages, as has to be stressed over and again, are contributing to the rich and unique linguistic diversity in Europe.**

**Each language has the right to exist. Every person has the right to speak his or her language(s), to learn and to develop them.**

It is never too late! This is also the slogan of the project **“[Language diversity](#)”**, which was initiated by FUEN. On the **[project website](#)** information and promotion materials are available in more than 40 different languages.



FUEN recommends the new YEN-song, as a motivation to celebrate the Day of Languages 2015 and for the next year as a whole. A quote from the text:

**As long as we keep on speaking, nothing will make us fail. We fight for our precious culture and never stop, while we're here to stay. Our dreams remain. We will prevail. Our roots are strong. We will go on...**

The new YEN-song with subtitles at YouTube





## SEVEN THOUSAND GUESTS AT THE SUCCESSFUL CULTURE FESTIVAL OF THE GERMAN MINORITY IN POLAND

FUEN CONGRATULATES VDG WITH THEIR SUCCESSFUL FESTIVAL

30/9/2015



Seven thousand guest, including many from outside Poland and several representatives from the member organisations of FUEN, were in Wrocław / Breslau to participate in the Culture Festival of the German minority last Saturday (26 September). The festival was organised by the Association of German Social Cultural Societies in Poland (VDG). Both Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany and Grzegorz Schetyna, Foreign Minister of Poland had agreed to act as patrons.

After it was opened with a holy mass in the church of Saint Mary on the Sand, the Culture Festival started in the Centennial Hall of Wrocław. The German minority presented itself in the best possible way, with information desks and a wide variety of music and dance groups from all over Poland.

Important political guests and salutations, a literary competition and a debate with historians complemented the programme. The Festival was concluded with a performance by the popular singer Andy Borg.

VDG-Chair Bernhard Gaida spoke about the difficult situation for the German minority in the People's Republic of Poland after the Second World War: "The socialist apparatus with its nationalist leanings treated us brutally. Therefore we need the support of both the Polish and also the German government, but also we ourselves must want to use the German language in schools and at home. There must be a willingness to use the existing possibilities and to create a new situation."



The Polish Secretary of State Stanisław Huskowski admitted that he is aware that there is much that still has to be done: “I know that, despite our good relations, there are still issues that have to be sorted out. However, I reassure you that the problems of the German minority will be solved.” The German Government Commissioner for Matters Related to Ethnic German Resettlers and National Minorities Hartmut Koschyk, who also attended the festival, offered support on the part of the Federal Republic of Germany.

From 18 until 22 May 2016 the Association of German Social Cultural Societies in Poland (VDG) will organise the annual FUEN Congress. FUEN congratulates VDG with the success of the Culture Festival and looks forward to the congress in 2016 – that will take place in the European Capital of Culture Wrocław / Breslau 2016.



October 2015

## FIRST JUDGMENT IN A EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE CASE

MINORITY SAFEPAK OF FUEN IS STILL PENDING IN LUXEMBOURG

1/10/2015

### *Summary*

The European Court of Justice issued its first judgment on a European Citizens' Initiative. It decided against the initiative "For a Europe of Solidarity". This initiative has a completely different subject than the Minority SafePack Initiative, but the judgment nevertheless contains a number of interesting aspects. The Court finds that the European Commission has an obligation to state very clearly the reasons why it rejected a proposal. Once their proposal to use this high-praised instrument of direct democracy, is rejected, the citizens have a right to receive a well-founded reasoning for this rejection.



Minority SafePack Initiative.

FUEN thinks that there is a good chance that the rejection of the Minority SafePack Initiative – the initiative of the autochthonous national minorities in Europe – does not fulfil the criteria set by the Court. That alone could be enough to annul the rejection decision of the Commission, aside from the other points where FUEN and the European Commission have a difference of legal opinion. We therefore look forward to see how the Court applies these rules to the case of the

Some other positive developments took place in the European Parliament this week, where the Members will vote on a report with recommendation for a reform of the European Citizens' Initiative rules in October. The Parliament wants the ECI to become more effective and more citizen-friendly and that a number of practical problems will be solved.



The Minority SafePack Initiative, which was submitted by a high-level citizens' committee in July 2013, was rejected in September 2013 and has since been pending before the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg. FUEN expects that the hearing that precedes the judgment will not take place before the end of 2015.

The European Citizens' Initiative Minority SafePack is the most important initiative in the field of the European minorities in the past years.

## European Court of Justice

The European Court of Justice gave a judgment yesterday in the first case concerning a European Citizens' Initiative (ECI). The initiative "For a Europe of Solidarity" calls for European rules regulating that government debt will be put aside when countries are in "a state of necessity", i.e. when their health and education systems, as well as their wages and pensions are collapsing. In May, FUEN visited the [court hearing on this case](#).

The action to repeal the decision of the European Commission was rejected by the Court, but the judgment contains some interesting guidelines on the reasons that the European Commission has to provide if it decides to reject a proposed European Citizens' Initiative. The Court underlined that the citizen proposing an ECI has to be able to understand for which particular reasons the European Commission did not register that proposal. Especially in cases where a proposed initiative contains detailed and specific descriptions, the European Commission has an obligation to state very clearly the reasons why it rejected the proposal.

There is a good chance that the reasoning of the Commission does not fulfil the criteria set by the Court in the case of our own [Minority SafePack Initiative - One million signatures for diversity in Europe](#). In the court case of yesterday the ECI-proposal was much less detailed and the Commission's rejection more elaborate, so that the arguments of the initiators were quashed by the Court.

## Report by the European Parliament

Meanwhile the European Parliament is also working on proposals to improve the European Citizens' Initiative. Since the beginning of the year the Parliament has dealt with the issue. In February FUEN was one of the organisers of an ECI who were given the chance to [present the case of their European Citizens' Initiative at a hearing in the Parliament in Brussels](#) before the members of the Constitutional Affairs and Petition Committees. The Parliament wants to remove obstacles and improve the effectiveness and user-friendliness of the ECI. Since 2012, more than 40% of the ECIs have been rejected and the appetite of launching an ECI has significantly dropped; currently there only 3 active initiatives.

Most Members of Parliament have understood the dramatic situation and the message this radiates to the European citizens. The ECI was thought to be an instrument to strengthen the democratic legitimacy of the European Union; instead it has destroyed trust, since no ECI so far – not even the ones that succeeded and collected more than 1 million signatures – has been followed up by legislative action by the European Commission. On 28 September the Constitutional Affairs Committee voted on the report by Mr Schöpflin MEP, and it was adopted unanimously.

There are several important recommendations in the report that touch on issues that are also of importance for the [Minority SafePack Initiative](#).

Issues that were raised by the Parliament are the reasoning provided by the European Commission in case of refusal, and the many complaints of organisers about this. The Court case of yesterday has given already some guidance in this regard. Also the role of the Commission in the ECI-process is questioned by the Parliament: the Commission decides on registration, manages the registration process and decides in the end on the political follow-up. This might lead to a conflict of interests.

The Parliament invites the Commission to consider the registration of initiatives that only for a part fall within the competences of the European Commission. Further recommendations are made in relation to the conditions, the data-requirements, the time-schedule for the collection phase and the legal position of initiators of ECIs. The Parliaments also wants that citizens have the option of using one's mother tongue, as this is encouraging citizens' participation.

It is expected that the final report will be adopted after a final plenary debate in the European Parliament in October this year. Also the Council of the EU will elaborate its position, before the European Commission will come up with a proposal for a revised ECI Regulation, probably by early 2016.

### **FUEN and the Minority SafePack**

FUEN legal advisor Frank de Boer, who is involved in the court case on the Minority SafePack Initiative currently pending in Luxembourg, expects that both the judgment of today and the developments in the European Parliament will have an effect on the outcome in the Minority SafePack Initiative-case.

“Today, we have seen that the Court is looking closely into the arguments that are used to reject an proposed European Citizens’ Initiative. The citizens who propose an ECI should understand why their proposal was rejected, and the Commission is under the obligation to provide a detailed reasoning, which it certainly did not do with the Minority SafePack Initiative.”

He also praised the European Parliament for addresses some urgent problems in the current setup of the ECI:

“FUEN is glad that the Parliament took up several of the problems where organisers of the ECI have run into. We hope that once this report is adopted, also the other institutions will start working on a genuinely effective and citizens-friendly European Citizens’ Initiative.”

FUEN expects that the hearing for the Minority SafePack Initiative at the European Court of Justice will take place by the end of this year, or in the beginning of next year. After the hearing it will probably take approximately three months before the final judgment will be announced.



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION ORGANISES ANNUAL COLLOQUIUM ON FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS 2015

FOCUS ON ANTI-SEMITIC AND ANTI-MUSLIM HATRED, BUT PROBLEMS OF TOLERANCE AND RESPECT AFFECT OTHER EUROPEAN MINORITIES TOO

1/10/2015

The European Commission organises a high level colloquium in the Egmont Palace in Brussels today and tomorrow that looks at trends and underlying reasons for anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim incidents in the European Union. It is the Commission's response to the heinous terrorist attacks against Charlie Hebdo and a Jewish supermarket in Paris and the worrying trends in regard to anti-Muslim hatred across the European Union.



Prominent speakers such as Vice President Frans Timmermans and Justice Commissioner Věra Jourová, but also ministers from Luxembourg, Belgium and Sweden, mayors, rabbis and imams and also representatives of civil society and businesses try to address the challenges linked to anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim hatred. In different sessions the participants will discuss the existing European policy framework, the enforcement of anti-discrimination legislation, the role of employment in fostering social inclusion and the role of education. Also the specific issue of hate speech online, on the Internet, will be addressed.

While acknowledging that both anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim hatred are a genuine problem that must be addressed on all levels in the European Union and beyond, the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) is of the opinion that the problem is much wider and affects more people than the two religious groups who are the subject of the Fundamental Rights Colloquium 2015. The lack of tolerance for diversity affects other European minorities too, foremost the Roma, who are repeatedly victim of exclusion and hate attacks. But even well-established national minorities such as the Sorbs in Germany were the victim of racist attacks in the early this year.

For FUEN it is clear: a fundamental rights approach cannot limit itself to discrimination based on religion alone, but has to look at the exclusion of non-religious groups too. This comprehensive approach is one of the elements that FUEN proposed in its [Minority SafePack Initiative, the European Citizens' Initiative for the minorities in Europe](#). Hate crimes based on the grounds of ethnic or religious origin must always be combatted when they are committed against autochthonous national minorities, independent of their religion or belief. Politicians should not trivialise or ignore the seriousness of hate speech and hate crimes, or even exploit intolerance for political gains. Tolerance and respect for diversity must be the basis of our societies today and in the future. That is why FUEN is strongly supporting the campaign Diversity Connects of the [Youth of European Nationalities \(YEN\)](#).



### More information:

[European Commission: Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights](#)  
[Diversity Connect campaign of the Youth of European Nationalities \(YEN\)](#)

Photos: © European Union, 2015

## EDUCATION POLICY IN SLOVAKIA IN REGARD TO THE TEACHING OF HUNGARIAN AND OTHER MINORITY LANGUAGES REQUIRES FURTHER EUROPEAN ATTENTION

2/10/2015



The Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) strongly supports the efforts of its member organisation MKP-SMK (Party of the Hungarian Community) to improve the quality of education for the minorities in Slovakia, and in particular for the Hungarian minority. A recent reform of the curriculum in minority schools is leading to a serious decrease in the number of class hours in the minority language. According to Member of Parliament for MKP-SMK Pál Csáky:

“Slovakia decided to take targeted steps against minority schools. These measures are clearly of discriminatory character and go against the European values of multilingualism and multiculturalism, therefore the European Commission should step forward.”

In response First Vice President Frans Timmermans of the Commission wrote first of all that he does not have the power to act, but he also wrote the following:

“Let me [...] say that I strongly believe in the protection of minorities, minority rights and minority languages and that I am very sympathetic to your cause. I agree with you that the values of multilingualism and multiculturalism are a part of the European heritage and they should guide the EU.” FUEN is deeply concerned about the education situation for the minorities in Slovakia. It has noticed that more than 26 thousand citizens have signed a petition, protesting against the new education policy of the Slovakian government. Because of its concerns, FUEN recently sent a letter to Mr Juraj Draxler, Minister of

Education of the Slovak Republic, about the recent reforms of the curriculum in minority schools that leads to a serious decrease in the number of class hours in the minority language.

In the letter FUEN expressed its concern, and called on the government of the Slovak Republic to recognise, protect and support the linguistic and cultural diversity of the autochthonous national minorities in Slovakia as an asset and enrichment of social life in their country. FUEN encourages the Slovak Republic to take political decisions as close as possible to its citizens, to take account of the petition on this matter and to engage in a dialogue with those who submitted the petition.

Education Minister Draxler failed to respond to the substantive demands of the petitioners. In his reply to FUEN he asserted that the total number of class hours is higher than for schools with Slovak as language of instruction, but the Minister did not explain why the decision to limit the number of optional class hours (which are normally used in minority schools to enhance the learning of the mother tongue) was taken.

FUEN Vice President Loránt Vincze is not satisfied with the response by Minister Draxler: “FUEN appreciates the prompt reply of the Minister. However, we do not consider the response satisfying and therefore we consider that the issue of Hungarian minority education requires further European attention.”

The next meeting of the Intergroup for Traditional Minorities, National Communities and Languages of the European Parliament will take place in Strasbourg next week. During the meeting on 8 October 2015, the situation of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia will be discussed, including a proposal by MKP-SMK for a detailed legal, financial and institutional system for minority rights protection in Slovakia.

## SECOND WEEK OF THE OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING: FUEN WAS WELL REPRESENTED IN WARSAW

2/10/2015

With several of its member organisations, FUEN was well represented this year at the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw, the largest annual human rights conference in Europe. The meeting ends today.

In many sessions over the course of two weeks the member organisations of FUEN have been raising attention for the deficiencies in minority protection and human rights that still exist in several countries in Europe.

FUEN member organisations ABTTF and BTAYTD, representing the Turkish minority in Western Thrace (Greece), raised attention for the fact that Greece refuses to recognise the minority as Turkish and reported problems with the freedom of association, hate speech and problems with the religious freedom and in the education system. Also the Turkish minority from Rhodes and Kos (Greece) reported about problems with the freedom of religion.



The Lezghin minority, represented by FUEN member organisation FLNCA, asked attention for the discrimination of their minority in Azerbaijan and the problems they have in maintaining relations across the Azerbaijan-Russian border. The International Society of Meshketian Turks VATAN, asked for a solution to the issue of the repatriation of their minority to their homeland in Georgia.

The programme in Warsaw had a dedicated session on Roma and Sinti issues and the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, also a member of FUEN, had organised a special event in the plenary hall in Warsaw.

“Antigypsyism is just as anti-Semitism rooted in European history for centuries. Today this particular form of racism is a targeted and systematic policy of exclusion and racism, as practiced by right-wing extremist parties in particular in the election campaign, but also by nationalist governments of various countries in Eastern and Western Europe,” said Romani Rose, Chairman of the Council of German Sinti and Roma. OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Astrid Thors summarised the importance of minority rights for peace and security: “Integration policies based on good governance and respect for minority rights, including equal access to justice, are a prerequisite to lasting peace and security in multi-ethnic states.”





*Photo:*

*FUEN represented at the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting: representatives of the Turkish minority in Greece (Western Thrace and Rhodes, Kos), Meshketian Turks and Judith Walde of the Minority Secretariat, representing the autochthonous, national minorities in Germany.*

#### **Written statements submitted by the FUEN Member Organisations:**

##### **Central Council of German Sinti and Roma**

[1 October: Antigypsyism in elections campaigns and by governments, hate speech in the internet \(English\)](#)

[1 October: Antigypsyism in elections campaigns and by governments, hate speech in the internet \(German\)](#)

##### **Federal Lezghin National and Cultural Autonomy (FLNCA)**

[1 October: Discrimination, division and the rights of the Lezghin minority in Azerbaijan \(English\)](#)

[1 October: Discrimination, division and the rights of the Lezghin minority in Azerbaijan \(Russian\)](#)

##### **Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe (ABTTF)**

[30 September: Recognition of the Turkish minority in Western Thrace, Greece; intolerance and distrust towards the minority, hate crimes; need for dialogue](#) [30 September: Freedom of religion for the Turkish minority of Western Thrace, Greece](#)

[1 October: Schools of the Turkish minority of Western Thrace, Greece](#)

**International Society of Meshketian Turks “VATAN”**

[1 October: Problems with the restoration of citizenship and repatriation to Georgia, the homeland of the Meshketian Turks \(Russian\)](#)

**Rhodes, Kos and the Dodecanese Turks Culture and Solidarity Association**

[30 September: Recognition and minority status for the Turks living in Rhodes and Kos, Freedom of religion](#)

**Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association (BTAYTD):**

[21 September: Freedom of expression, free media and hate speech against minorities in Greece](#)

[23 September: Freedom of assembly and association; non-implementation of decisions of the European Court of Human Rights on this issue by Greece](#)

[29 September: Discrimination and hate crimes against the Turkish minority](#)

[30 September: Freedom of religion for the Turkish minority of Western Thrace, Greece \(I\)](#)

[30 September: Freedom of religion for the Turkish minority of Western Thrace, Greece \(II\)](#)

[1 October: Violation of the rights to education of the Turkish minority of Western Thrace, Greece](#)

# FUEN PRESENTS TWO WRITTEN STATEMENTS TO THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

5/10/2015

The Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), which has special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, presented two written statements for the 30<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Human Rights Council that took place between 14 September and 2 October in Geneva.

Having closely monitored the situation of the Turkish minority living on the Rhodes and Kos Islands of Greece, FUEN brought this issue on the table at the UN in order to attract attention to the problems of this minority. FUEN has recently carried out a fact-finding mission hosted by “Rhodes, Kos and the Dodecanese Turks Culture and Solidarity Association” to the Rhodes and Kos Islands where it had the chance to observe the real situation of the Turkish minority. Following this mission, FUEN brought forward the problems of the Turkish people on Rhodes and Kos in the areas of education, religion and their foundations through its written statement presented to the UN Human Rights Council.



In its second written statement, FUEN put forward the problems regarding the repatriation process of the Meskhetian Turks to their homeland. Having closely monitored the issue of the repatriation of the Meskhetian Turks to Georgia for a long time, FUEN declared that around 400-450 thousand Meskhetian Turks are living away from their homeland today. After conducting several fact-finding missions to Georgia, FUEN observes that Georgia has failed in its commitment to resolve the repatriation problem within 10 years after its accession to the Council of Europe. Our member association the International Society of Meskhetian Turks paid a visit to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in January 2014 where it explained the shortcomings and deficiencies of the legislation passed in Georgia in 2007. FUEN underlines that the Georgian government must create a simplified and open procedure and show a strong political will.

## Full text version of the written statements

[The repatriation question of the Meskhetian Turks to their homeland in Georgia](#)

[The problems of the Turks in Rhodes, Kos and the Dodecanese](#)

(UN Photo)

# PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE: MIGRATION AND REFUGEES, WOMEN BELONGING TO MINORITIES, THE IMPLEMENTATION OF JUDGMENTS AND MONITORING OF STATES

5/10/2015

The autumn session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe took place from 28 September until 2 October. Among the topics discussed were the refugee crisis, the situation of women belonging to minorities, the implementation of judgments and the monitoring of states in regard to the obligations in regard to human rights and democratic standards.



The Assembly consists of 324 elected members of the parliaments of the Council of Europe's 47 member states. They reflect the political opinion across the continent and their mission is to uphold the shared values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law that are the "common heritage" of the peoples of Europe.

## **Assembly wants a holistic and rights-based approach to migration**

EU countries should avoid a narrow emphasis on border control and security in dealing with the migration crisis, and instead embrace a holistic, rights-based and effective approach involving countries of transit and origin. The Assembly said the EU's existing policy of "externalisation" of border control left migrants and refugees at risk of exploitation, abuse and violence.

The Parliamentary Assembly also took issue with the EU's Dublin system, which determines which country is responsible for treating asylum applications. The system is dysfunctional and ineffective and should be urgently reformed to ensure "equitable burden sharing" among member States, according to the Assembly.

## **ECMI Director Tove Malloy on "The situation of women belonging to minorities"**

Prof Dr Tove Malloy, the director of the European Centre for Minority Issues in Flensburg, was invited to present at a hearing on "The situation of women belonging to minorities", organised by the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination. The hearing aimed to raise awareness and stimulate discussion about some of the specific issues that women belonging to national minorities face in accessing their rights. Prof Malloy's speech outlined various dimensions of discrimination that women belonging to minorities face: discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, education, employment, or poverty. She also highlighted a political dilemma for many women with minority background: "are they claiming human rights as women or as a member of a minority? And second, how do they make sure they have representation in all aspects of life, if they are marginalised and lack information as uneducated and illiterate?" In her address, Prof. Malloy tackled the issue in the light of international human rights law as well as in practice.

## **Call for firmer measures against States ignoring Strasbourg Court judgments**

The Parliamentary Assembly deplored "the lack of political will" of certain States to fully and rapidly implement judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, and has urged the Council of Europe's ministerial body – which oversees implementation – to "take firmer measures" with States that do not comply. In a recommendation based on a report by Klaas de Vries (Netherlands), the Assembly urged the ministers to make use of a new infringement procedure introduced in 2010, which allows the Court to rule on whether a State has breached its obligation to abide by the Convention.

The Assembly also expressed deep concern at the high number of Court judgments that have still not been implemented by the States concerned – a figure that it says remains stable at nearly 11,000 cases. Almost



80 per cent of the backlog came from only nine countries – Italy, Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Greece, Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria.

For Greece the Assembly stated that the passive attitude towards the issue of the freedom of association of the Turkish minority reveals a lack of political will in this respect. In Bulgaria there are the still outstanding issues of unjustified refusals to register an association aiming at achieving the recognition of the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria and the eviction of persons of Roma origin. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Sejdić and Finci judgment (concerning discrimination of persons belonging to ethnic minorities due to legal restrictions to stand for parliamentary and presidential elections) remains non-executed, despite three interim resolutions of the Committee of Ministers.

### **Monitoring: new periodic reviews**

The Assembly has begun a series of “periodic reviews” which will assess how far Council of Europe member States are fulfilling their obligation to uphold the Council of Europe human rights and democratic standards – beginning with reports on Andorra, Belgium, Croatia and Cyprus. Another 13 member States are already subject to either a full monitoring procedure or “post-monitoring dialogue”, which involves more frequent assessments in greater depth.

The report shows several shortcomings, but also some positive developments. In Georgia, there is an increase in intolerant discourse against minorities and although not addressed by the Assembly, there is still the outstanding issue of the repatriation of the Meshketian Turks. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the continuing ethnic divide and persistent lack of any credible efforts to reform the Constitution creates problems of exclusion of some minorities. In Ukraine, human rights abuses and violations of international human rights and humanitarian law are committed by all sides in the conflict in the east of the country. In Turkey, the Assembly deplores the recent suspension of the peace process with regard to the Kurdish question.

On the other hand, the Assembly welcomes the efforts to build a political consensus on a more efficient federal State and greater autonomy for the federated entities in Belgium. For Croatia it encourages the authorities to further promote the rights of national minorities and to pay particular attention to the situation of the Serb and Roma minorities, which face specific discrimination. The Assembly strongly welcomes the recent renewed impetus to the peace talks in Cyprus and encourages President Anastasiades and Turkish Cypriot leader Akıncı to continue their efforts to bring lasting peace to the country.

### **More information:**

[Prof. Malloy presents at PACE hearing in Strasbourg](#)

[Autumn Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe](#)

## **INTERNAL NEWS: FUEN, A CHILD-FRIENDLY ORGANISATION**

6/10/2015

Jenni Ali-Huokuna will soon be back with us in FUEN, but now as Jenni Jones. After maternity leave she will again be responsible for you, the member organisations, and for the network. We are happy to have her back with us.

*On the photo: the children of the FUEN ladies: Secretary General Susann*

*Schenk, Office Manager Roxana Nelamischkis and Member/Network Coordinator Jenni Jones*



## FUEN MEETS MESHKETIAN TURKS AND KARACHAY-BALKARS IN MOSCOW

6/10/2015

From 1-4 October 2015, FUEN Vice President Halit Habipoglu paid a working visit to Moscow in order to meet two FUEN member organisations. Firstly the International Society of Meshketian Turks “VATAN” representing the Meshketian Turks and secondly the Karachay-Balkars and their organisation Bars El: Social Organisation for Fostering and Development of the Karachay-Balkar Traditions. Vice President Halit Habipoglu also visited the Kumuk Association that represents the Kumuks and is not yet a member of FUEN.



During the meetings he had with the three organisations in Moscow, Halit Habipoglu stressed that FUEN is the only non-governmental organisation that brings together the national minorities in Europe under one roof and in a spirit of solidarity, currently with more than 90 member organisations from 33 European countries. Vice President Habipoglu said that we would welcome an application for membership from the Kumuk Association.

The Kumuks have a large population in the Caucasus, mostly living in the Autonomous Republic of Dagestan in the Russian

Federation, in Chechenya and in North Ossetia. The Kumuk Association works closely together with IVDK, the organisation of the Germans in Russia, and already participated in the conference “Minorities in Border Regions” that was organised by FUEN in Sønderborg in June 2015.



## FUEN SPEAKS AT THE KIEV DIALOGUE

11/10/2015

Tomorrow the eleventh Kiev Dialogue will start (12 and 13 October 2015). The title this year is “Between crisis and reforms – human rights and justice in Ukraine” and accordingly the situation in Crimea, the conflicts in the South East of Ukraine, the refugee problem and minority issues are on the agenda.

FUEN is represented by FUEN Vice President Bernhard Ziesch, who will be part of a panel on the rights of minorities and the conflict in the South East of Ukraine.



The aim of the conference is to elaborate recommendations on how to improve the human rights situation in Ukraine and more specifically in Crimea.

FUEN is actively working for the more than 20 national minorities in Ukraine; 7 minority organisations are member of the largest European umbrella organisation.

Several minorities in Ukraine, including member organisations of FUEN, are present at the Kiev Dialogue, such as the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People and the Council of the Germans in Ukraine.

The Kiev Dialogue is a non-partisan, independent initiative, which developed from the German and Ukrainian civil society. The “Kiev Dialogue” is based on the idea of an undivided, open, democratic and free Europe. The objective is to deepen and strengthen the dialogue between the opinion-forming elites of the two societies in order to make a contribution to European unity where the peoples of Europe live peacefully and democratically together.



FUEN is represented by FUEN Vice President Bernhard Ziesch, who is also the director of Domowina, the Federation of Lusatian Sorbs. As a regular participant in the monitoring and reporting procedures of the Council of Europe for the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, he is an expert on the legal and practical possibilities of minority protection in Europe. Since the nineties Ziesch has been organising the Seminars of the Slavic Minorities in Europe, in which also regularly minorities from Ukraine are participating.

### More Information:

[Homepage of the Kiev Dialogue](#)

[Programme \(English\)](#) [Programme \(Ukrainian\)](#) [Programme \(Russian\)](#)

# 18TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SLAVIC MINORITIES TAKES PLACE IN CROATIA

## CZECH MINORITY HOSTS THE MEETING FOR THE SECOND TIME

13/10/2015

*“The shared commitment of the Slavic Minorities inside FUEN”,* is the main theme of the Seminar of the Slavic Minorities this year. It is already the 18<sup>th</sup> time that the working group comes together within the framework of FUEN. From 15-18 October the Council of the Czech national minority of Bjelovar - Bilogara County / Rada české národnostní menšiny Bjelovarsko-bilogorského županství invites several Slavic minorities to Daruvar, Croatia. For the Czech minority, who have been a member of FUEN since 2011, it is the second time they are hosting a seminar.



Chairman Damir Malina and FUEN Vice President Bernhard Ziesch developed a varied programme. The main subjects are the hosting minority themselves, the exchange of experiences and stronger cooperation. There will also be political talks on the situation of the minorities in Croatia. Croatia has 22 recognised minorities. So far, four of them are members of FUEN, and there are regular contacts to further minorities. The Council of the Czech national minority has been a member of FUEN since 2011. According to their own numbers, there are approximately 10,000 people belonging to the Czech minority.

The seminar this year will also address three internal subjects, says organiser Bernhard Ziesch: firstly the preparation for the Assembly of Delegates at the FUEN Congress of 2016, where elections will take place, secondly the cooperation of the working group within the framework of FUEN and in regard to project funding and thirdly also the further development of the working group in the internet.

The seminars of the Slavic minorities inside FUEN have been organised by Domowina – the Federation of Lusatian Sorbs since 1996, alternately in Lusatia, the home region of the Sorbs in Germany and in a different region, organised together with a host minority. This model has been stimulating the establishment of new working groups within the framework of FUEN.

### Sorbian summary:

„Zhromadne džěło słowjanskich mjeńšin pod třěchu FUEN” rěka tema lětušeho seminara Federalistiskeje unije europskich narodnych skupin (FUEN), kiž wotměje so wot 15. do 18. oktobra pola českeje mjeńšiny w Daruvaru w Chorwatskej.

W srjedźišću seminara steji situacija českeje mjeńšiny, wuměna nazhonjenjow a hłuše zhromadne džěło pod třěchu FUEN, zdobom rjad politiskich rozmołwow k situacije mjeńšinow w Chorwatskej.

Lětuši seminar ma scěhowace zaměry za zhromadne džěło, praji FUEN vice-president Bjarnat Cyž:

“Sprěnja budžemy přihotować wólbnu zhromadźiznu a FUEN-kongres 2016 we Wrocławju, zdruha chcemy so dorozumić wo dalšim zhromadnym džěle džěloweje skupiny pod třěšu FUEN a dalšich zhromadnych aktiwitach na polu projektoweho džěla. Jako třeće čežišćo smy sej předewzali, kwalifikować internetowu stronu džěloweje skupiny słowjanskich mjeńšinow FUEN a z tym naše zjawnostne džěło polěpšić.”

FUEN je z wjace hač 90 člonskimi organizacijemi w 33 europskich krajach najwjetši třěšny zwjazk awtochtonych narodnych mjeńšinow abo ludowych skupin w Europje. Wona bu 1949 w Parisu založena. Domowina organizuje wot lěta 1996 seminary za słowjanske mjeńšiny FUEN.



## FUEN ATTENDED THE OPEN DAYS OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

15/10/2015

FUEN attended the Open Days – the European Week of Regions and Cities this week.

On behalf of FUEN, Frank de Boer participated at the events and workshops organised by the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions. One of the subjects dealt with was the social inclusion of mobile EU-citizens in regions and cities of Europe, many of whom have a minority background. FUEN also used the Open Days to intensify its contacts with the representatives of European regions, and to speak about the important role that national minorities have for cross-border cooperation in Europe.



The OPEN DAYS is an annual Brussels-based four-day event during which officials from regions and cities' administrations, as well as others like experts and e.g. representatives of civil society, can exchange good practices and know-how in the field of regional and urban development. It is also a platform for the development of EU Cohesion Policy, raising the awareness of decision-makers about the fact that regions and cities matter in EU policy-making.

The OPEN DAYS, organised by the Committee of the Regions and the European Commission, is the biggest European public event of its kind, with some 6 000 participants and 600 speakers from all over Europe and a programme of some 100 workshops, debates, exhibitions and networking events on regional and local development. Regions and cities are involved in the making of most EU policies. Sub-national public authorities in the EU are responsible for one-third of public expenditure (EUR 2 100 billion per year) and two thirds of public investments (about EUR 200 billion), the latter often to be spent in accordance with EU legal provisions.

Represented in the Committee of the Regions that are supporting FUEN financially are amongst others Schleswig-Holstein, Saxony, Brandenburg, Carinthia, the German-speaking Community in Belgium, the Autonomous Region of South Tyrol-Trentino and the Autonomous Province of Bolzano-South Tyrol.



# FUEN ESTABLISHES A EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE IN BRUSSEL/BRUXELLES

THE GERMAN LAND OF SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN PROVIDES SPACE IN ITS HANSE-OFFICE

15/10/2015

The Federal Union of European Nationalities will have a representative office of its own in Brussel/Bruxelles from October 2015. That is announced by the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) and the Land of Schleswig-Holstein.



Federal Union of European Nationalities  
Flensburg / Flensborg · Berlin · Brussel / Bruxelles  
[www.fuen.org](http://www.fuen.org)

*“As a European interest organisation it is essential to be present at the European level with a permanent representation. We are glad and expect that it will strengthen our engagement with the European institutions and international organisations on a lasting basis.”*, said FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen.

The Land of Schleswig-Holstein provides FUEN with the appropriate framework in the Hanse-Office, the Representation that it shares with of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg at the EU. It is made possible through the support from the Prime Minister of the Land of Schleswig-Holstein Torsten Albig, his Minority Commissioner Renate Schnack and Minister Anke Spoorendonk.

Prime Minister Albig underlined the important role of FUEN for European minority policy: *“Schleswig-Holstein is not only the German Land with four minorities, we are also a reliable partner of the international minority organisations. Therefore I am glad that in the future FUEN will operate on the European level from our Hanse Office. Minorities are regularly affected by war and displacement in our European neighbourhood; look at the Roma in the Balkans or the minorities in Ukraine. FUEN has the expertise to have a positive influence on current conflicts in and around Europe. That is why FUEN needs a strong foothold in Brussel/Bruxelles.”*

The representative office in Brussel/Bruxelles will be established until the end of the year by Frank de Boer, legal and policy advisor of FUEN. De Boer, who belongs to the Frisian minority in the Netherlands, had a leading role in the elaboration of the Minority SafePack – the European Citizens’ Initiative for the autochthonous, national minorities. He is an expert in the field of minority protection and minority rights and together with the Presidium of FUEN, De Boer will represent FUEN on the European level and at the international organisations.

*“After the Office of the House of Minorities in Flensburg and the FUEN office in Berlin were established already before, FUEN will then be active in three locations: Flensburg, Berlin, Brussel/Bruxelles. The official opening will follow until the end of the year”*, said Susann Schenk, the Secretary-General of FUEN.

**Photo FUEN:** Under the leadership of FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen and FUEN Secretary General Susann Schenk, FUEN has opened three new locations over the past 12 months, with the help of its partners and member organisations: the Office of the House of Minorities in Flensburg, the FUEN office in Berlin responsible for the coordination of the Working Group of the German Minorities and the FUEN representative office in Brussel/Bruxelles.

**Way of writing Brussel/Bruxelles:** FUEN has decided to use the combination Flemish/French (Brussels = English, Brüssel = German).



## DRAW FOR EUROPEADA2016 IN BOLZANO/BOZEN ON 14 DECEMBER 2015

16/10/2015



The 3rd European football championship of the autochthonous, national minorities is being held between 18-26.06.2016 in South Tyrol. 24 men's teams and up to 8 women's teams are expected to compete. The Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) and the Federation of South Tyrolean Sport Associations (VSS) announce that the group draw will take place in Bolzano/Bozen on 14.12.2015. This will take place immediately after the group draw for UEFA's EURO2016 in Paris.

FUEN will announce the names of teams taking part before the draw.

The 2016 tournament is being held in the Puster Valley and neighbouring Gader Valley, and is being organised by the German-speaking South Tyroleans and the Ladins. The game venues that have been selected are Sand, Niederdorf, Olang, St. Martin, Pfalzen, Ahrntal, Mühlwald and Enneberg.

The groups will play the preliminary rounds at the selected venues. The EUROPEADA aims to foster partnerships between the teams, their local sport clubs and players. After the group draw on 14.12, the teams and the fans will know exactly where their teams will be contesting the preliminary rounds.

EUROPEADA is a major sporting event that combines the fair competition of a European sports festival with issues concerning autochthonous, national minorities. The focus is on peaceful and tolerant co-existence, diversity, and preservation of Europe's cultural and linguistic heritage, and the opportunity to experience it here.



## SEMINAR FOR NON-KIN-STATE MINORITIES IN SWITZERLAND

23/10/2015

From 23 -25 October 2015, the conference “Giving a Voice to Peoples without a Kin-State” is taking place in Scuol, in the Rhaeto-Romansh region of Switzerland. For FUEN, Frank de Boer is participating in the conference.

Representatives of several minorities without a kin-state, such as the Aromanians, Sámi, Frisians, Sorbs, Meshketian Turks, Crimean Tatars, Ladins, Friulians and the host-minority the Rhaeto-Romansh have arrived yesterday. Most of them are members of FUEN. Over a period of three days, the smaller European linguistic and cultural communities without a kin-state will exchange their experiences, discuss common challenges and find possible solutions.

It is now twenty years ago that the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by the Council of Europe was adopted. Together with renowned experts the strengths of the Convention will be discussed, as well as the weaknesses that have to be addressed to secure the survival of minority cultures in Europe.

Next to presentations and discussion, there will also be a cultural programme with musicians from different minorities. A group of journalists from several minority newspapers in Europe who are on a study visit organised by MIDAS will join the participants of the seminar.

### More information:

[Programme of the seminar](#)



## FUEN PRESIDENT SPEAKS AT MEETING ON THE OSCE CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES IN VIENNA

29/10/2015

Thursday 29 and Friday 30 October the High Commissioner on National Minorities together with the Serbian Chairmanship and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights organise a meeting on the contribution by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to the Protection of National Minorities.

Because of FUEN's expertise and prominent role in the protection of the European minorities, and the experience that FUEN has with good practices on cross-border cooperation, FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen has been invited to sit on a panel focusing on national minorities in inter-state relations and the High Commissioner's Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations.



President Hansen will also give FUEN's opinion on the state of minority protection in Europe and speak about his own experiences in positive developments that took place in the German-Danish border region. The OSCE meeting focuses in particular on the recommendations and guidelines issued by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities over the past 20 years. During two days the participants will take stock of the OSCE contribution to the protection of national minorities, especially through the prism of these guidelines and recommendations. In particular, it will assess the achievements as well as explore challenges and identify ways to address remaining implementation gaps. More information:

[OSCE Contribution to the Protection of National Minorities](#)

November 2015

## FUEN PRESIDENT HANS HEINRICH HANSEN IN VIENNA: “THE BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESSFUL MINORITY POLICY ARE EQUALITY AND GENUINE DIALOGUE AMONG EQUALS”

FUEN AND ITS COOPERATION WITH THE OSCE HIGH COMMISSIONER

4/11/2015

FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen participated in the high-level conference in Vienna, organised by the High Commissioner on National Minorities of the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) last Thursday and Friday.

The main aim of the conference was to take stock of the situation in Europe, 25 years after the adoption of the Copenhagen Document, which laid down important principles for minority protection in Europe. The Vienna Implementation Conference analysed the international legal and political documents and recommendations and also the status of implementation in the different states. A particular emphasis was given to two recommendations from the High Commissioner: the Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations on National Minorities in Inter-State Relations and the Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies.



FUEN was the only European non-governmental organisation represented on the panel.

FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen spoke about his experiences in the German-Danish border region and explained the backgrounds of the process moving the region from a very difficult situation to a status of togetherness based on equivalence between minority and majority. *“Dialogue among equals, equality and respect for one another, that is what it is all about. FUEN can help, and show good examples and solutions based on our experiences and our network”*, said Hans Heinrich Hansen, summarising the commitment of FUEN.

Unfortunately, it was obvious that there are relatively few good examples in Europe; in many countries majority and minority are far away from a situation of partnership and trust. There are tensions and mistrust, as was shown from the interventions from representatives of minorities and states from Greece, the Baltic States, Georgia and also from Ukraine and Russia.

In her concluding statement, Astrid Thors, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, referred to the contribution made by FUEN: “I think it is worth noting what President Hansen said about dialogue: we cannot honestly have dialogues if the majority is not ready to have the dialogue between them. Minorities also can serve as building bridges between states and I am glad to mention that the incoming German chairmanship will give this topic more attention in the future.”

On Monday 2 November 2015 FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen participated in a conference in preparation of the German OSCE chairmanship organised by the German Foreign Affairs Ministry and the Centre for International Peace Missions in Berlin.

**Photos:**

President Hans Heinrich Hansen as part of the panel; President Hans Heinrich Hansen, High Commissioner on National Minorities Astrid Thors, Schleswig-Holstein Minority Commissioner Renate Schnack and FUEN Legal/Policy Advisor Frank de Boer in Vienna; Participants of the Implementation Meeting.

**More information:**

[Speech by FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen](#)

[Press release OSCE: Peace and stability in Europe impossible without protecting and promoting human rights, including rights of persons belonging to national minorities, say participants at OSCE meeting](#)

[OSCE Implementation Meeting: Homepage with the programme, statements](#)

[Programme of the OSCE Implementation Meeting](#)

[Ljubljana Guidelines](#)

[Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations](#)

[Copenhagen Document](#)



## FUEN ATTENDS PREPARATION MEETING FOR THE GERMAN 2016 OSCE CHAIRMANSHIP IN BERLIN

5/11/2015



FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen and Eva Adel Penzes participated in a meeting organised for the preparation of the German 2016 OSCE Chairmanship in Berlin. In the building of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs representatives of civil society discussed about the main topics of freedom of speech and freedom of the media, tolerance and non-discrimination and the positive role of national minorities.

FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen also had meetings during these days with the rapporteurs of the budget committee in the German Parliament, Mr Brandl MP and Mr Gerster MP, and with Bettina Hagedorn, Franz Thönnies und Sabine Sütterlin-Waack, who are also Members of the Parliament.



## SECOND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP OF TURKIC MINORITIES TAKES PLACE IN BAKU

9/11/2015



The second annual meeting of the Working Group of the Turkic Minorities in FUEN is taking place in Baku, Azerbaijan this week. From 9 until 12 November 2015 representatives of the Turkic minorities from several countries of Europe will meet for the second time, after the Working Group was established in Ankara in 2014. The local host is FUEN member organisation “VATAN”, which represents the Meshketian Turks in Azerbaijan.

The other participants in the event in Baku are the representatives of the Western Thrace Turks in Greece, the organisations ABTTF, DEB and BTAYTD, and the representatives of the Turks of Rhodes and Kos, also from Greece. Other there will be representatives of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People and the Crimean Karaites from Ukraine, and also the Karachay-Balkars, Meshketian Turks and for the first time the Kumyks from Russia.

During the meeting the participants will exchange their views on the developments in their minorities and discuss about the activities of the Working Group in the future. The minorities will also speak with representatives of the government in Azerbaijan, and there will be a social and cultural fringe programme where they can get to know the historical sights of the capital of Azerbaijan.

## POLITICAL TALKS IN BERLIN: 24TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP OF GERMAN MINORITIES

9/11/2015

More than 40 representatives from 20 organisations of German minorities meet for their annual meeting in Berlin. The Working Group of German Minorities, or AGDM, under the roof of FUEN has organised a challenging programme full of political talks and meetings.

*“It will have been almost one year ago that we tried the same format of political discussions at the AGDM-meeting for the first time. This has been a year in which Europe and the world have profoundly changed and the developments have made us concerned and gave us much food for thought. Minority policies and the policies on refugees are closely related”,* said FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen, a German from Nordschleswig, in Denmark.



The annual meeting takes place within a framework of further activities in Berlin. Immediately afterwards the German Federal Commissioner for National Minorities has invited all for the conference “Identity, Homeland, Belief” that takes place in the new building of the Federal Ministry of the Interior. Just before and during the annual meeting the ifa-media days organised by the German Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations “ifa”, are taking place.

*“It is a five-days around the clock package for the German minorities in Berlin”,* says Eva Penzes, the coordinator of AGDM, who is responsible for organising the annual meeting. The meeting is organised by the Berlin Office of FUEN for the first time. The programme was planned in close cooperation with the partners in Berlin.

*“We are glad that since the latest meeting in November 2014, we have succeeded to establish the AGDM Coordinating Office in Berlin, with the support we needed. It is important that the minorities are present in Berlin under the European roof of FUEN”,* says Koloman Brenner, the chair of the Working Group. *“I thank German Federal Government Commissioner Hartmut Koschik and FUEN for their tireless commitment during the past year.”*

The annual meeting is supported by a grant from the German Federal Ministry of the Interior.

### [Programme Annual Meeting AGDM \(German\)](#)



## XVIII<sup>TH</sup> FUEN-ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SLAVIC MINORITIES FROM 15 UNTIL 18 OCTOBER 2015 IN DARUVAR, CROATIA - REPORT OF THE ANNUAL MEETING PUBLISHED NOW

11/11/2015



The annual meeting of the Slavic autochthonous national minorities and ethnic groups in FUEN was prepared and organised under responsibility of Domowina – the Federation of Lusatian Sorbs. The Czech minority in Croatia has been hosting the meeting.

The main subject of the annual meeting was to continue the discussion among the Slavic minorities about their experience with applying for funding for projects in regard to multilingualism and culture exchange from the European funds. In this context joint project proposals for future cooperation among the Slavic minority organisations were coordinated.

This considered in particular the experiences of some of member organisations with using European funding for cross-border cooperation. In a session on topical issues, the minorities could speak about their current situation. The main emphasis during this session was on the position of the Ruthenes in Ukraine, who currently have to work under a very difficult political situation.

Another subject of the annual meeting was the preparations for the FUEN Congress in Wrocław next year, where a new Presidium will be elected. A third subject that was presented was the status of preparations for the EUROPEADA European Football Championships for the autochthonous national minorities in South Tyrol.



The host-organisation, the Czech minority in Croatia, presented itself at many occasions during the annual meeting. Furthermore, also the situation about the other minorities in Croatia was extensively covered.

**More Information:**

[Report about the Annual Meeting of the Slavic Minorities in FUEN in Daruvar, Croatia](#) (in German)

[Internet-page of the Slavic Minorities in FUEN](#)



## PRESENTATION OF THE PROJECT TO DEVELOP A PROTOCOL ON LANGUAGE DIVERSITY AS PART OF THE 2016 EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE DONOSTIA/SAN SEBASTIAN IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

12/11/2015

The bilingual town of Donostia/San Sebastian in the Basque Country is one of the two European Capitals of Culture in 2016 (the other is Wrocław/Breslau in Poland, where the FUEN Congress 2016 will be organised). FUEN legal/policy advisor Frank de Boer attended the first presentation of the project to develop a Protocol for Ensuring Language Rights in the European Parliament in Brussels on Tuesday 10 November 2015.



At the beginning of the meeting, Jordi Sebastià MEP, who hosted the meeting, set out the problems many European citizens face in using their mother tongue, e.g. in accessing media in their language. He also pointed at several cases where speakers of minority languages are harassed or persecuted by European governments. Language rights are not a second-class type of rights, but should be recognised as full-fledged fundamental rights, said Jordi Sebastià.

The Donostia/San Sebastian 2016 Foundation initiated the project to develop a new Protocol for Ensuring Language Rights in cooperation with the Council of Basque Language Entities Kontseilua. At the European Language Diversity Summit that will take place in Donostia/San Sebastian in December 2016, this Protocol will have to be adopted.

According to Kontseilua's Secretary General Paul Bilbao, the Protocol will build on several existing international legal and political documents, such as e.g. the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the UN Declaration on Minority Rights, and will continue where the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights (which was brought about by organised civil society in 1996) halted. The content should be applicable as a tool for national, regional and local government and have a real impact on the linguistic rights of citizens on grassroots level.

In the European Parliament the organisers told that they want to develop the Protocol based on a wide consensus of groups and organisations in Europe and with the help of a scientific committee of legal and linguistic experts who will start their work in December 2015. Over the course of 2016 the draft will then be circulated before it will be presented to the public at the European Language Diversity Summit in December 2016.



## FULL AGENDA FOR THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE 24TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FUEN WORKING GROUP OF GERMAN MINORITIES: IMPORTANT MEETINGS IN BERLIN

12/11/2015



Today, 12 November 2015 is the last day for the participants of the annual meeting of the Working Group of German Minorities in FUEN (AGDM) in Berlin. After three intense days in Berlin the representatives of the German minorities have the opportunity today to speak with German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier. In the afternoon they will participate in the conference “Home – Identity – Belief”, for which they were invited by the German Federal Government Commissioner for Matters Related to Ethnic German Resettlers and National Minorities Hartmut Koschyk MP. The German Minister of the Interior will give a keynote speech at this conference.

Over the past days there have been many meetings in the German capital. On Monday the representatives of the German minorities were at a round table discussion together with the German Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations (ifa) about the presence of the German minority online and in the new social networks. It is important to form networks and to reach new target groups in the home countries of the minorities and also to increase visibility in Germany. Otto Heinek, the chairman of the Self-Government of the Germans in Hungary stressed the importance of additional measures. Also the majority population should be addressed more effectively – this is an important prerequisite for the minority to achieve a positive perception of the minorities.

On Monday evening the participants of the AGDM Annual Meeting were invited for a reception at the Embassy of the Republic of Hungary. The envoy, Dr Katalin Karsai, told in her welcome speech that the Hungarian constitution refers to the minorities as “state building actors”, who are called upon to



contribute to the state and the society. The President of FUEN, Hans Heinrich Hansen, looked back and thanked Hungary for the role it played in overcoming the division of Europe in the important year 1989. Today, however, Hansen noticed that the House of Europe has deep fissures and cracks. Now comes an crucial moment for the minorities of Europe, who counted together are a seventh of all the Europeans: either we succeed in bringing about substantial improvements in the legal regime for minority protection and in its practical implementation or the subject will fade away from the European agenda for a longer period.

On Tuesday there was at first an internal meeting on the agenda and afterwards talks took place in the German Federal Parliament. The representatives of the German minorities has meetings with the different rapporteurs responsible for the budgets for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior in order to have an exchange of information and opinion.

Of the 21 representative organisations of the German minorities in Europe that are member of AGDM, 19 were represented. The President of FUEN, Hans Heinrich Hansen, used the opportunity to demonstrate the necessity of receiving institutional funding. The importance of FUEN was not long ago underlined with the request from the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs to support the Federal Government during the German Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2016. Foreign Minister Dr Frank-Walter Steinmeier chose minority policy as one of the main topics of the chairmanship. FUEN is willing and capable of making a contribution, but it cannot do this at zero cost. German Federal Commissioner Koschyk supported Hansen's arguments and noted that politicians unfortunately rely too much on external academic expertise and are make too little use of the rich wealth of experience that the national minorities and their organisations have.



The rapporteur for the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from the Socialist Group, Doris Barnett MP, reaffirmed the importance of the work both of FUEN and also of the German minorities for minority protection in Europe and promised to continue to support it in the future. The rapporteur of the Conservative Group, Alois Karl MP, referred to the additional funds that were adopted last year for the German-language schools in Romania and promised to increase the budget for the coming year from 750,000 Euros to 1 Million Euros. The two rapporteurs used the chance to receive information first-hand about the situation of the German minorities in their home countries.

In the next meeting, with the two rapporteurs of the coalition parties for the budget of the Ministry of the Interior, Martin Gerster MP and Dr Reinhard Brandl MP, the representatives of AGDM and Commissioner Hartmut Koschyk together stressed the necessity to continue the funding provided for the AGDM-Coordination Office in Berlin, which was establish this summer. AGDM-Speaker Dr Koloman Brenner called it "a very important step forward" for the organisation and the representatives mentioned several concrete examples of where they had been supported by the Coordination Office. After intense discussion on the situation of the minorities in their respective home countries the two budget rapporteurs expressed their gratitude and respect. Mr Martin Gerster and Dr Reinhard Brandl pointed to the strict rules of budgetary discipline. Yet they want to promote the cause of the German minorities in the on-going discussions on the budget.



Afterwards an exchange of information and thoughts took place on the promotion of the cultural heritage of the Germans in the East of Europe with the unit leader for the remit of “History and Remembrance” at the German Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and Media, Head of Section Ansgar Hollah. On Tuesday evening the representatives of the German minorities were invited in the Representation of Baden-Württemberg in Berlin, where the Minister of the Interior of the Land of Baden-Württemberg, Reinhold Gall, hosted the representatives of the Working Group of German Minorities in FUEN. According to the Minister of Baden-Württemberg, it is very important to him to foster and promote dialogue and cooperation with the German minorities. For that reason Minister Gall regularly is traveling to the home regions of the German minorities in Central and Eastern Europe. On behalf of the AGDM its chairman Koloman Brenner thanked Minister Gall and praised the commitment of the Land of Baden-Württemberg in regard to the German minorities in Central and Eastern Europe.



Together with the German Federal Government Commissioner for Matters Related to Ethnic German Resettlers and National Minorities, Hartmut Koschyk MP, on Wednesday at first a dialogue took place about the strategy for the Working Group of German Minorities and afterwards an internal meeting in which the Work Programme for 2015/2016 was discussed. Furthermore there were talks with the World Association of German Schools Abroad and a presentation of the YOU.PA grants programme of the Otto Benecke Foundation for young persons belonging to a German minority in Central and Eastern European countries. On Wednesday evening the day was concluded together with representatives of the youth organisations of the German minorities and the Youth of European Nationalities (YEN).

[Programme AGDM-Jahrestagung](#)

## SECOND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FUEN WORKING GROUP OF TURKIC MINORITIES (TAG) IN BAKU CONCLUDED SUCCESSFULLY

13/11/2015

From 9 to 12 November 2015, the second annual meeting of the Working Group of Turkic Minorities (TAG) in the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) took place in Baku, Azerbaijan. The meeting was hosted by FUEN member organisation Association of Meskhetian Turks “VATAN” in Azerbaijan. The meeting brought together the representatives of the umbrella organisations of Turkic minorities from six different countries in Europe.



On the first day of the meeting, a total of fifteen participants visited historical and cultural places in Baku. The delegation first visited the graveyard Fahri Hiyaban where former President of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev and other important figures lie and placed a wreath. The delegation later on visited the monument Şehitler Hiyabanı in remembrance of Azerbaijani and Turkish soldiers killed during the battle of Baku in 1918. The delegation also met with the Counselor for Religious Services of the Embassy of Turkey in Baku Prof Dr Kamil Güneş and visited the Palace of the Shirvanshahs in the afternoon.



At the end of the first day of the meeting, the delegation met with Kamal Abdullayev, State Counselor on Multiculturalism, Interethnic and Religious Affairs to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. During the meeting, FUEN Vice-President Halit Habipoğlu presented FUEN and the Working Group of Turkic Minorities (TAG) to the State Counselor. Vice President Habipoğlu provided Abdullayev with information on the Turkic minorities that are TAG members and asked for the support of Azerbaijan for the repatriation of Meskhetian Turks to their homeland Georgia.

During the second roundtable meeting at the Annual Meeting of TAG on 11 November 2015, FUEN Vice-President Halit Habipoğlu presented the activities of the Working Group carried out in the last year. Then, the participants told about the latest developments related to their minorities.

Afterwards, the Chairman of the Kumyk Association Ramazan Alpaut, who participated for the first time in a FUEN Annual Meeting, made a presentation on the Kumyk Turks who today live in Dagestan mostly.

Following a presentation by the Chairman of the host organisation Association of Meskhetian Turks “VATAN” in Azerbaijan İbrahim Ziya on the problem of repatriation of Meskhetian Turks to Georgia and their demands concerning the issue, Alpaut made a second presentation on the Turkic minorities and communities living in Russia in general.

During the second part of the roundtable meeting, ABTTF International Affairs Director Melek Kirmacı Arık presented the work carried out by FUEN for the Turkic minorities/communities at international platforms as well as potential activities before international organisations. After the expectations of TAG member organisations to FUEN and options for potential cooperation had been evaluated, a discussion took place on proposals for strengthening collaboration among the FUEN TAG members and accordingly, a common strategy for 2016 was adopted.

*Photos by ABTTF*



## FROM 2016, FUEN FUNDING BY THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY WILL INCREASE TO 500 000 EUROS

HANS HEINRICH HANSEN: APPRECIATION FOR THE MINORITIES

13/11/2015

The Budget Committee of the German Federal Parliament decided yesterday at its concluding meeting to drastically increase the funding for activities of the European umbrella organisation Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) as of 2016.



**In the future FUEN will receive a grant of 500 000 Euros.**

FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen:

“I am very glad that we succeeded in receiving this funding from the Federal Republic of Germany. It is the result made possible through many people who supported us, and made a contribution on many levels. On behalf of FUEN, I thank Bettina Hagedorn, the Deputy Coordinator in the Budget Committee for the Socialist Group and Franz Thönnies, the Deputy Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee (SPD), the two Budget-Rapporteurs Dr Reinhard Brandl (Conservative) and Martin Gerster (Socialist), for their efforts and also the Federal Government Commissioner for National Minorities Hartmut Koschyk (Conservative) and the Minority Commissioner of the Land of Schleswig-Holstein for their support.

**We consider this funding as recognition for FUEN and its members, but also as political and social appreciation of the minorities.**

It is a good step in the right direction and in accordance with the German foreign affairs policy for the German OSCE Chairmanship 2016, which wants to actively involve the minorities and their expertise into peace-making policies.

I am glad for FUEN and thank our members for their engagement.”

### Facts:

The Budget Committee of the German Federal Parliament decided at its concluding session for the Budget 2016 on 12-13 November 2015 to significantly increase German federal funding for the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) from 100 000 Euro now to 500 000 Euros. The new amount also includes funding for the Coordination Office in Berlin for the Working Group of German Minorities in FUEN that was established during this year.

Furthermore the Committee called upon the German Federal Government to provide more project funding and also funding for personnel and to examine whether in 2017 institutional funding from the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs can be given. Hence it is suggested that FUEN will become an institutional grant from the Federal Republic of Germany as from 2017.

Moreover, the Budget Committee decided to support the renovation of the House of Minorities with 600 000 Euros in 2016. The House of Minorities – a common project of FUEN, Sydslesvigsk Forening (SSF) and Bund Deutscher Nordschleswiger (BDN), will further bolster the position of Flensburg/Flensburg in Schleswig-Holstein as a European minority hotspot.



**Press release:**

[Bettina Hagedorn MP, the Deputy Coordinator in the Budget Committee for the Socialist Group](#) (in German)

[Federal Government Commissioner for National Minorities Hartmut Koschyk MP](#) (in German)

[Dr Sabine Sütterlin-Waack MP](#) (in German)

Sydslesvigsk Forening ([Deutsch](#)) ([Danish](#))

[Südschleswigsche Wählerverband \(SSW\)](#) (in German)



**Photo:**

*FUEN Secretary General Susann Schenk and FUEN President Hans Heinrich Hansen in front of the House of Minorities in Flensburg/Flensburg*

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE BUND DEUTSCHER NORDSCHLESWIGER (BDN) WITH ITS 70TH ANNIVERSARY

23/11/2015



Congratulations to the Bund Deutscher Nordschleswiger (BDN) - the umbrella organisation of the German minority in Denmark.

The German minority came into existence as the result of a plebiscite, which was held in 1920. After the Second World War, the Bund Deutscher Nordschleswiger was founded. BDN evolved into an important institution in today's border region for the more than 15,000 members of the minority. Amongst other things it operates German kindergartens, schools, libraries, sport associations and runs an own newspaper.

FUEN President and former BDN chairman Hans Heinrich Hansen will participate in today's celebrations and wishes the BDN all the best for its future.

## FUEN ATTENDS THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON MINORITY ISSUES IN GENEVA

24/11/2015



Today 24 and tomorrow 25 November 2015 the annual United Nations Forum on Minority Issues takes place in the Palais de Nations in Geneva. Over 500 participants from all regions of the world will gather in order to discuss key issues of global concern regarding the treatment of minorities by criminal justice systems, and to make specific recommendations to protect and promote their rights. On behalf of FUEN, legal/policy advisor Frank de Boer is attending the Forum.

The Forum's recommendations on guaranteeing the rights of minorities in the criminal justice system will be presented to the UN Human Rights Council in March 2016.

Every year, as requested by the UN Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur on minority issues organises and guides a Forum on minority issues to provide a platform for promoting dialogue and cooperation on issues of national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. The Forum aims at identifying and analysing best practices, challenges, opportunities and initiatives for the further implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities.

### **More information:**

[UN Minority Declaration \(1992\)](#)

[UN Forum on Minority Issues](#)



December 2015

## EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT DISCUSSES DUTCH MINORITY LANGUAGE POLICY IN THE CARIBBEAN

... AND PROPOSES SUBJECTS IT WANTS TO DISCUSS IN THE INTERGROUP MEETINGS OF NEXT YEAR

2/12/2015



The meeting of the Intergroup in the European Parliament on 26 November 2015 showed that the European Union goes clearly beyond the European continent. On the agenda of last week was a presentation about the situation of the Papiamentu on the island of Bonaire, which is an integral part of the Netherlands in the Caribbean. Ruben Severina, chair of the SPLIKA Foundation, told about the developments in Bonaire.

Papiamentu is a language of its own that differs strongly from other languages spoken in the area, such as English, Spanish and Dutch. Similar to English, which combines French, Latin and Germanic influences, Papiamentu lent from Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, but also Arawak (an indigenous language) and Yiddish. On the island of Bonaire, and also on neighbouring islands of Curacao and Aruba, Papiamentu has been spoken for centuries. Approximately 130,000 people use the language on a daily basis.

However, since Bonaire became a sort of Dutch municipality after the constitutional reform of the Netherlands Antilles in 2010, the language of instruction in schools is shifting to Dutch and Papiamentu is no longer a mandatory examination subject. Still, the majority of the population (63%) has Papiamentu as



his or her mother tongue, although this number is decreasing, because of immigration.

According to Severina, the Netherlands should recognise Papiamentu as a minority language under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. There is no good reason why the Dutch government should refuse this. Nevertheless the Dutch government is very hesitant and hiding behind formal arguments, that the citizens are already permitted to use Papiamentu in council meetings or at court, or communicate with the island government and that it doubts if Papiamentu qualifies for application of the European Language Charter. For Severina, it is clear that Papiamentu requires protection and for that he received support from the Members of the Parliament.

In the second half of the meeting the Members of Parliament discussed what items it should put on the agenda of the coming year. In December there will be a meeting about the minorities and the minority situation in Ukraine. Topics suggested for 2016 were e.g. a meeting on education at elementary level and the closure of schools; a presentation by the European Court of Justice or the European Court of Human Rights on minority issues they encounter in their work; on minorities in Bulgaria; on citizenship issues in Latvia and the proposal to use one of the sessions for a discussion with the responsible European Commissioners on how they see minority issues in the EU. The MEPs were invited to submit additional topics to the chairs of the Intergroup.

Furthermore the Intergroup wants to organise a seminar in 2016 on the impact of the economy on minority regions. This seminar will take place in Brussels, where more time will be available than there is during the plenary meetings in Strasbourg.

*Photos: European Parliament 2015*



## UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON MINORITY ISSUES DISCUSSES THE ISSUE OF MINORITIES IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

4/12/2015

On 24 and 25 November 2015 the annual UN Forum on Minorities Issues took place in Geneva. At this meeting minorities from all over the world come together in Geneva to discuss a specific theme that is of relevance to minorities and also to address their problems and grievances to the international community. It is the only place on the global level where representatives of minorities are able to speak and get into direct dialogue with the representatives of Member States of the United Nations. FUEN legal and policy advisor Frank de Boer attended the Forum.

The Minority Forum was prepared by the Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, Ms Rita Iszák, and chaired by Joshua Castellino, a law professor and minority expert from England. Approximately 500 representatives of UN Member States and minorities attended and addressed the Forum, including representatives from FUEN member organisations ABTTF and Ec.Fe.Con.



International law protects persons in contact with the criminal justice system who belong to national or ethnic minorities. It prohibits discrimination in the administration of justice and creates obligations for states to ensure that justice systems are sensitive to, and facilitate the effective participation of minorities. In this regard the role of the police cannot be underestimated: in many cases disproportionate numbers of persons belonging to a minority are coming into contact with the police, which underscores the importance of strict non-discrimination. This risk increases where the police force does not reflect the diversity within the population.

The debate at the Forum could be divided into two elements: first of all minorities and state parties made comments to the draft recommendations on “Minorities in the Criminal Justice System” from their experience. These interventions were often quite detailed in regard to what has to be done to improve the situation.

On the other hand, minorities told about their personal experiences and showed that in many countries the situation on the ground is light-years distanced from what is written down in the law, in treaties and international recommendations. Most of these statements were about the problem of exclusion and the lack of accountability of perpetrators, the impunity of officials in cases of discrimination and harassment of minorities. But much more serious minority problems were addressed too: about the genocide, mass killings and systematic rape on the Yazidi population of Iraq and Syria by ISIS, the forced expulsions and killings of the indigenous population in the Ogaden region, slavery in Mauritania, the situation of dehumanised and excluded Dalits in South Asia. In most cases, the justice system appears to be largely ineffective.

In the breaks of the Forum, side-events were organised. One of these was organised by the Ecumenical Federation of Constantinopolitans (Ec.Fe.Con) and dealt with the redress of past violations against minorities in Turkey and necessary reforms in the criminal justice system. In another side-event, organised jointly by the mission of Austria at the UN and Minority Rights Group, the floor was given to minorities from Pakistan, Iraq and Sri Lanka to give a detailed account of their problems with combatting impunity and the need for effective justice in their countries. At the side event at the second day, experts

and UN officials elaborated on the development of minority rights and the chances for improvement of the framework of protection inside the United Nations system.

The system of minority rights protection at the global level is much weaker than the minority framework in Europe. There is a Minority Declaration adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1992, which resembles European documents such as the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities, but unlike the Framework Convention it effectively is only a Declaration and does not come with a system of monitoring or binding rights. Also the UN Forum on Minority Issues cannot do much more than issuing recommendations and forward these to the Human Rights Council and General Assembly, and hope that they will be applied by the states.

Nevertheless, the Forum is important because it brings together the representatives of minorities from all continents and because the states' representatives are genuinely listening to them during the Forum. Almost half of the Member States of the United Nations were present during the meeting and many of them responded directly to the statements of minorities, or presented the situation in their countries.

**More information:**

[UN Minority Declaration \(1992\)](#)

[UN Forum on Minority Issues](#)



*FUEN Advisor Frank de Boer*

## EUROPEADA 2016: THE TEAMS HAVE BEEN ANNOUNCED!

IN ANTICIPATION OF THE EUROPEAN FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP OF THE NATIONAL MINORITIES

14/12/2015



On Monday 14 December 2015 the group draw for the EUROPEADA 2016 took place in the presence of representatives of the associations and team in Bolzano/Bozen, South Tyrol at the Salewa Tower – almost at the same time as the group draw for the UEFA EURO 2016. The following teams will compete next year for the title in South Tyrol from 18 until 26 June 2016:

### Men

**Group A (Venue: St. Vigil in Enneberg):** Ladins, Crimean Tatars, Turkish Minority of Western Thrace, Hungarians in Romania

**Group B (Venue: Niederdorf):** Roma, Karachay-Balkars, The Romansh, Selection of the minorities in Estonia

**Group C (Venue: Ahrntal):** Carinthian Slovenes, Lusatian Sorbs, Germans in Denmark, Hungarians in Slovakia

**Group D (Venue: Sand in Taufers):** Occitans, Danes in Germany, Slovaks in Hungary, Aromanians

**Group E (Venue: Olang):** South Tyroleans, North Frisians, Germans in Poland, The Manx

**Group F (Venue: Pfalzen):** Cimbrians, Germans in Russia, Germans in Hungary, Serbs in Croatia

### Women

**Group A (Venue: Mühlwald):** Occitans, South Tyroleans, Lusatian Sorbs

**Group B (Venue: St. Martin in Thurn):** Germans in Russia, The Romansh, Ladins



## The EUROPEADA

After the EUROPEADA was organised in 2008 at the Romansh in Grisons, Switzerland, and in 2012 at the Lusatian Sorbs in Germany, the European football championship of the autochthonous national minorities will take place in South Tyrol in June 2016. In the Pustertal Valley and the Badia Valley for the first time 24 teams will compete for the title; last time there were 19 teams. The championship will take place at the same time as the EURO 2016 of UEFA. The Manx, Hungarians in Slovakia, Hungarians in Romania, Serbs in Croatia and Crimean Tatars will take part for the very first time.

The organiser of the football tournament is the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN). The local hosts are the Ladins and the German-speaking South Tyroleans, who won the EUROPEADA two times.

There is, however, one major difference with the UEFA EURO 2016: for the first time next year, there will be a women's tournament, too! Like the male teams, also the female teams consist of persons belonging to minorities, who compete against each other in non-professional football. "We are very glad that we have succeeded in having not only a men's tournament, but also a women's tournament", says Susann Schenk, Secretary-General of FUEN.



At the EUROPEADA the living diversity of autochthonous minorities meets – this makes this European football championship a very special and major sportive event. An integral part of the EUROPEADA is also its Cultural Day, where the different minorities present themselves.

## The Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN)

Did you know that almost every seventh European belongs to an autochthonous minority? FUEN represents the interests of these European minorities on the regional, national and in particular on the European level. With more than 90 member organisations in 33 European countries, FUEN is the largest umbrella organisation of the autochthonous, national minorities in Europe.

FUEN works for the preservation and the promotion of the identity, language, culture, rights and traditions of the European minorities. FUEN is their voice at the international organisations, foremost the European Union and the Council of Europe, but also at the United Nations and the OSCE. FUEN was founded in Paris in 1949 and is currently based in three locations: in Flensburg, Berlin and Brussels.

More information: [www.europeada.eu](http://www.europeada.eu)

### Contact persons:

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Local Organisation committee Siegfried Stocker, President +39 0471 966 467

### More information:

[Press release](#)

[Overview teams and games](#)



## FUEN WISHES YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS

Än ouer di üülje bousem juchted e jülstäär.  
Dan et wus önj e jülnächt, as åål dāt schaid.  
En jülnächt wid tubääg önj e tid. Di ulerjarste jül.  
Und über dem alten Stall leuchtete der Weihnachtsstern.  
Denn als dies geschah, war es Weihnachten.  
Ein Weihnachten vor langer Zeit. Das allererste Weihnachten.  
And above the old stable the Christmas star twinkled.  
Because it was the night of Christmas when it all happened.  
A Christmas night a long time ago; it was the very first Christmas.

**The FUEN team is on Christmas Holiday. We will be back on 07 January 2016.  
Merry Christmas and a happy new year 2016!**



Quelle / Source: Jül önj e bousem – Weihnachten im Stall / Astrid Lindgren. Bille fon Harald Wiberg. (Nordfrisk Institutt, Dt. Übers.: Anna-Liese Komitzky, Übers. ins Boklingharder Fries: Thomas Steensen ...), Lizenz des Verl. Oetinger, Hamburg. – Text dt. und fries. (Itzsch), Bräist / Bredstedt.

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# EUROPEADA

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