

FUEN CONGRESS MAIN RESOLUTION 2024

On developing a European Legal Framework for Minority Protection and Promotion

The Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) adopted the following resolution at its Assembly of Delegates on 21 September 2024 in Husum • Hüsem:

The situation of several autochthonous national and linguistic minorities worldwide, and particularly in Europe, is deteriorating, with a concerning decline in minority protection. This was the main conclusion of the 'Ewald Ammende' International Expert Conference, organized by FUEN on 3-4 March in Brussels. The conference recommended that FUEN advocate for a comprehensive EU legal framework with clear protection standards to effectively safeguard and promote the rights of national and linguistic minorities, including their culture, language, and identity, and to launch a new cooperation forum for civil society organisations focused on minority rights.

With regard to the European Union

1. FUEN calls for the establishment of a comprehensive EU legal framework for the protection and promotion of national and linguistic minorities in Europe and a recognition that they represent a benefit of every society. This framework should set a common European policy standard that ensures the full respect of both collective and individual human rights for persons belonging to national or linguistic minorities, allowing them to live as equal citizens in all aspects of private and public life.
2. National and linguistic minorities must receive greater attention within the EU institutions and should become an integral part of one of the new Commissioners' portfolios. FUEN urges the EU institutions, to actively support in collaboration with Member States the cultural and linguistic diversity represented by national and linguistic minorities as a fundamental aspect of the European way of life.
3. FUEN calls on the new European Commission to re-evaluate the proposals of the Minority SafePack European Citizens' Initiative (MSPI), which was supported by more than one million citizens and a large majority of the European Parliament. The Commission should develop a European strategy and legal measures based on the MSPI.
4. The Commission should set up an advisory body to offer expertise in policymaking and implementation of EU legislation concerning traditional national and linguistic minorities in the EU and its neighborhood.
5. Following the European Council's decision to open accession negotiations with Ukraine and Moldova, FUEN urges the EU institutions to ensure that the candidate countries and also all EU member states fulfill the Copenhagen criteria, including improving their legal frameworks on the protection of national minorities.

6. FUEN strongly supports the re-establishment of the European Parliament Intergroup for Traditional Minorities, National Communities and Languages, which is for the time being the only forum within the EU institutions dedicated to addressing the challenges faced by linguistic and autochthonous minorities in the EU and neighborhood.

With regard to the Council of Europe

7. The Council of Europe should prioritize and reinforce minority protection on the organization's agenda and strengthen the cooperation with civil society active in the field of minority protection by facilitating their participation as observers in its dedicated bodies.
8. FUEN deploras that despite its longstanding consultative status by the Council of Europe, the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) decided in June 2024 not to admit FUEN as observer. FUEN reaffirms its key objective to combat discrimination against national minorities, promote their diversity and ensure their full inclusion in society. FUEN commits to maintain a critical voice when member states take measures negatively affecting national minorities or when they tolerate discriminatory actions against them.
9. FUEN recommends establishing a designated parliamentary body on autochthonous national minorities within the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to ensure systemic dialogue and cooperation between representatives from all Council of Europe member states on minority protection, as envisaged by the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML).

With regard to the United Nations

10. Acknowledging the significant work of the UN on minority issues at the global level, FUEN recommends the establishment of a permanent Forum on Minority Issues. The Forum should coordinate efforts relating to the rights and concerns of minorities, provide first-hand information and expertise on minority protection and promote dialogue on minority issues.
11. FUEN strongly supports the efforts of the UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, and encourages him to engage in a continuous and meaningful exchange with civil society active in the field of minority protection and encourage member states to enhance their consultative channels with minorities.

With regard to the civil society

12. FUEN seeks to enhance cooperation among European civil society organisations representing traditional national and linguistic minorities by establishing a European Minority Council to synchronise efforts and better represent the voices and interests of national minorities.