**FUEN Main Resolution 2021**

**on the future of autochthonous national and linguistic minorities in the European Union**

The Delegates of the Member Organisations of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) adopted the following resolution at their Assembly of Delegates in Trieste, Italy, on 11 September 2021:

**In due consideration of:**

* the basic principles and fundamental rights referred to in the FUEN Charter for the autochthonous national minorities in Europe of 2006;
* the political demands formulated in its FUEN “Programmatic Declaration” adopted in Brixen

in 2013;

* the aims included in its FUEN “Minority Manifesto” adopted in Flensburg in 2014;
* the legislative proposals of the Minority SafePack European Citizens’ Initiative and the response of the European Commission thereon;
* the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) of the Council of Europe in 1998;
* the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) of the Council of Europe in 1998;
* the Treaty on the European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union;
* the Conclusions of the European Council of 1993 which established the requirements a country must fulfil in order to be eligible to join the European Union (the Copenhagen criteria);
* the Conference on the Future of Europe launched by the European Commission, the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament;

**the Federal Union of European Nationalities:**

Welcomes the Conference on the Future of Europe, a much-needed process of participatory democracy; considers it useful for the institutions of the European Union to provide for an open debate with citizens around their priorities for the EU.

Reiterates its strong disappointment regarding the Commission’s dismissal of the Minority SafePack European Citizens’ Initiative calling for legislative acts for the protection of the EU’s national and linguistic minorities, the founding values of the Union and Europe’s linguistic and cultural heritage; expresses nevertheless its hope that within the Conference due consideration will be given to citizens’ calls for the EU to act on behalf of national and linguistic minorities.

Points out that despite the fact that the European Union is today one of the most important guarantors of the respect of the rule of law and fundamental rights and that the EU Treaties enshrine the protection of minorities and recognise the importance of cultural and linguistic diversity, a consistent policy for the protection of national and linguistic minorities at EU-level is still lacking.

Considers that that the European Union has to depart from its current practice and recognise its national and linguistic minorities as a value and act for the protection of this value; highlights that even within a narrow interpretation of the EU treaties in force, the EU has the capacity to build a policy framework for the benefit persons belonging to national and linguistic minorities, as it has been confirmed by the Court of Justice of the EU in its ruling on the Minority SafePack ECI” (Case T-391/17).

By using the opportunity provided by the Conference on the Future of Europe, calls on the European Commission to take urgent action on behalf of national and linguistic minority communities, cultures and languages both within the confines of the current treaties and - in case of an upcoming Treaty revision - beyond them.

**Calls therefore on the European Commission to:**

* fully incorporate the monitoring of the situation of national and linguistic minorities within its rule-of-law mechanism;
* to make use of the Open Method of Coordination to provide recommendations to Member States or to promote the sharing of available best practices in the field of minority protection;
* to draw up, in line with the request of the European Parliament a common framework of EU minimum standards for the protection of rights of persons belonging to minorities, which are strongly embedded in a legal framework guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights throughout the EU;
* to initiate and engage in a mutually reinforcing cooperation with the Council of Europe in the area of protecting the rights of national and linguistic minorities, building on achievements and experience of the Council of Europe in the area of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and to include their recommendations in its rule-of-law mechanism;
* to actively encourage all Member Countries, who have not yet signed up to or ratified the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages to do so;
* to take urgent action for the protection of the EU’s endangered minority languages, including through the creation of a European Language Diversity Centre as it has been called for both by the European Parliament and the Minority SafePack European Citizens’ Initiative;
* to issue a strategy for the protection of its citizens belonging to national and linguistic minorities, akin to the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025 and the EU Roma strategic framework;
* to issue a Draft Council Recommendation for the protection of national and linguistic minorities, as it has been requested in the Minority SafePack European Citizens’Initiative;
* to include the added value of multilingualism and intercultural skills of national minorities in EU development strategies and funding programmes, such as the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF);
* to sufficiently address the concerns of minorities regarding cross-border access to media content broadcast across national borders including by providing exceptions in existing legislation for localisable linguistic minorities living in clearly defined areas so that they can view and listen to content broadcast across national borders in their mother tongue and to ensure that minority language concerns are included in future regulations.

**Calls therefore on the Member States that at possible Treaty Change following the Conference on the Future of Europe to:**

* Expressly include in its Treaties the protection of national and linguistic minorities and their cultures and languages as an unambiguous competence and obligation for the EU.
* Expressly include in its Treaties that the respect for the Copenhagen criteria is not limited to accession countries but is a continuous obligation for all Member States.