

Witten, 04.10.2022

Press Release

**2022 FUEN Congress was held in Berlin**

The 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Congress of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) was held in Berlin, the capital of the Federal Republic of Germany, from 29 September to 2 October 2022.

The congress, which was hosted by four officially recognised national minorities and ethnic groups in Germany, was attended by the Federation of Western Thrace Turks (ABTTF) representing the Western Thrace Turks, the Public Organisation of Meskhetian Turks "VATAN representing the Meskhetian (Ahıska) Turks, the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People representing the Crimean Tatars and the Kosovo Youth Union Association representing the Turks in Kosovo, all at the same time members of the Working Group of Turkic Minorities/Communities in FUEN.

**The main agenda of the congress was the Russia-Ukraine war and minorities in the war**

At the opening session held at the representative office of the State of Brandenburg in Berlin, the situation of minority communities in international, regional and national conflicts was discussed with the participation of MEPs of the European Parliament, national politicians and representatives of non-governmental organisations.

In the sessions where the policy of minorities was discussed with the participation of the deputies of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Russian occupation of Ukraine and the ongoing war in Ukraine and the situation of national minorities were discussed with the participation of minorities in Ukraine.

In this session, Elvin Kadyrov, representing the FUEN TAG member Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People, took part as a speaker. Elvin Kadyrov reported on the situation of the Crimean Tatars in the war that took place due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine eight years after the occupation of Crimea. Kadyrov said that the Crimean Tatars, who continue to live in Crimea today, began to leave Crimea for fear of being sent to war against Ukraine after Russia's partial mobilization.

**The FUEN Award was presented to Italian politician Gianclaudio Bressa**

On the evening of the first day, the FUEN prize, which is given to those who contribute to the protection of national minorities, was awarded to Italian politician Gianclaudio Bressa this year.

Germany's minority policy was tackled with the participation of four officially recognised minority groups in Germany, which hosted the Congress, and in the afternoon, a visit was made to the Federal Assembly of Germany and meetings were held with politicians at the second day of the congress.

**Current issues were discussed at the FUEN TAG meeting held at the congress**

On the second day of the congress, where FUEN working groups meetings were held, FUEN TAG members came together. The main agenda topic of the FUEN TAG meeting, which was attended by the Western Thrace Turks, the Meskhetian Turks in Russia, the Crimean Tatars in Ukraine and Kosovo Turks as well as the Azerbaijanis in Ukraine, was the Russia-Ukraine war.

At the meeting, Turkic minorities and communities that are members of FUEN TAG conveyed the current situation in the countries where they live.

**In the elections held in the Assembly of Delegates, Nabi İbrahimcik from the Western Thrace Turks was elected as the Vice President of FUEN after Halit Habip Ođlu from the Western Thrace Turks who served as the Vice President of FUEN for three terms.**

At the FUEN Assembly of Delegates held on Saturday, 1 October, the elections for FUEN President and FUEN Presidium were held. As a result of the elections, FUEN President Lorant Vincze was re-elected as the President of FUEN with the votes of the delegates.

Halit Habip Ođlu, President of the Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe (ABTTF) and current FUEN TAG Spokesperson, who served as FUEN Vice President for three terms between 2013 and 2022, did not run for this year's board of delegates after serving three terms as vice president. As a result of the elections in which nine people competed as FUEN Vice President candidates, ABTTF Vice President Nabi İbrahimcik, one of the Western Thrace Turks, was elected as FUEN Vice President.

As a result of the elections, FUEN Vice-Presidents Daniel Alfreider (Ladin minority of Italy), Bahne Bahnsen (Frisian minority of Germany) and Gösta Toft (German minority of Denmark) were re-elected as FUEN Vice-Presidents, while Olivia Schubert (German minority of Hungary) and Bernard Gauda (German minority of Poland) were elected to the FUEN Presidium for the first time together with Nabi İbrahimcik.

**The draft resolutions submitted by the Western Thrace Turks, the Turks of Rhodes, Kos and Dodecanese Islands and the Meskhetian Turks were adopted.**

The FUEN Assembly of Delegates adopted the FUEN draft main resolution, which conveyed its view on the war in Ukraine and demanded the fulfilment of universal and European framework conventions and commitments in the protection of minorities.

The draft resolution submitted jointly by the ABTTF, WTMUGA and FEP Party, representing the Turkish community in Western Thrace in the Assembly of Delegates, as the Western Thrace Turkish delegation was unanimously adopted. In the draft resolution, it is stated that Greece continues to violate the freedom of self-definition and association of the Turkish community in Western Thrace, and although the Turkish community in Western Thrace is autonomous in the fields of education and religion, it is noted that this autonomous structure is attempted to be completely abolished by the state with the laws and practices recently adopted.

The draft resolution submitted by the Rhodes, Kos and Dodecanese Turks Culture and Solidarity Association (ROISDER) in which the issues and demands of the Rhodes, Kos and Dodecanese Turks in Greece including as regarding the foundations was also adopted with the votes of the delegates.

In the draft resolution submitted by the Public Organisation of Meskhetian Turks "VATAN", one of the members of FUEN TAG and which was adopted with the votes of the delegates, it was underlined that Georgia is now an EU candidate country and it was stated that Georgia did not fulfil its obligations regarding the return of the Meskhetian Turks to their ancestral homeland. The draft resolution demanded that Georgia comply with the Copenhagen Criteria by guaranteeing the return of the Meskhetian Turks to Georgia during the EU negotiation process.

**Six new member organisations in FUEN**

Following the amendment to the FUEN statutes, four new organisations at this year's FUEN Assembly of Delegates have become associate members of FUEN, as Romanians in Hungary, Frisians in Germany, Slovenes in Italy and Montenegrins in Albania.

Furthermore, the Alsatian community in France and the Macedonian minority in Greece also joined FUEN in the category of supporting members.

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