

FUEN & YEN RESOLUTION 2016-11

Resolution on the refugee situation in Europe

At the Assembly of Delegates in Wrocław / Breslau, on 21 May 2016, the Delegates of the Member Organisations of the Federal Union of European Nationalities adopted the following resolution:

The Youth of European Nationalities (YEN) and the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) are the two largest European networks, representing the ethnic, national, and language minorities in Europe. YEN and FUEN, together with over 130 member organisations, work actively for the preservation of minorities and their rights and strive, through intercultural exchange with the majority population and other minorities, to support and live a united, inclusive, and diverse Europe. We as YEN and FUEN believe that every person should be treated equally.

Migration has taken place throughout history and has shaped Europe. Today Europe has to face a huge challenge due to the influx of people for example from the Middle East and North-African countries. Syria has been suffering from war for the last five years, during which most of the infrastructure was destroyed, so many people do not have any other chance than leaving this country. These refugees have no other choice but starting a dangerous journey to come to Europe by crossing the Mediterranean Sea and the Aegean Sea if they want to live a decent life. According to UNHCR, 3735 people died in 2015 while taking these sea routes hoping for a better life. Refugees spent a huge amount of money in order to reach Europe, more than 90% of asylum seekers had to pay a large fee to human traffickers to bring them to Europe.

States should put all their efforts in establishing a common European approach to tackle the situation. Individual Member States approaches, e.g. by building fences, can not be effective in an European Union of 28 Member States and will only lead to partial solutions and isolation of entire societies.

This refugee situation should be approached first of all from a humanitarian perspective. Many volunteers throughout Europe have shown their solidarity by helping the 1,8 million refugees, who arrived in Europe.

Unfortunately, media operates with negative stereotypes by using a language, which creates fear. Refugees face cultural prejudice of European citizens. Many people do not try to understand the cultures, beliefs and values of the refugees but rather stick to their own prejudices against foreigners. This may lead to racism, xenophobia and neglecting basic human values.

Therefore, we, the Youth of European Nationalities and the Federal Union of European Nationalities urge European countries and institutions to:

- Find a common European approach for tackling the refugee crisis.
- Ensure conditions for the preservation of the cultural identity of people fleeing to Europe as preserving cultural diversity is one of the main goals of YEN and FUEN. Governments and European institutions have to work on the social inclusion of refugees granting them access to education and the social system.
- Build inclusive societies in order to prevent exclusion of these people. History taught us that exclusion of parts of the population leads to radicalization and social unrest.

- Work together to find a common policy, to stop unequal treatment, hate speech, sexual, xenophobic and racial violence against refugees and prevent them from forced labour.
- Punish the use of hate speech, especially on social networks. While legislators and politicians have to work on proper regulations, public campaigns such as “no hate speech movement” and #DiversityConnects should raise awareness on this topic in order to prevent violation. Hate speech of political parties, organisations, media and people that influence public opinion have to be outlawed.
- Respect the arrangements of the Geneva Convention and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which state that refugees cannot be forced back to the countries they fled from if their life could be in danger there.
- Prevent the breakdown of families and facilitate cross-border family reunification.
- Provide access to education, vocational training and the labour market for asylum seekers as soon as possible. Furthermore, the validation of previously acquired qualifications abroad has to be facilitated.
- Guarantee young people the right of residence, at least until they complete their apprenticeship, training or studies.
- Act against ideologies that lead to jihadist terrorism or lead to parallel societies in which European values are systematically undermined (the rule of law and fundamental rights, the freedom of speech, equal rights between women and men and dialogue between religious communities are essential elements of our value system)
- Establish a European framework of integration addressing the challenges of urban ghettos, providing language and integration courses, respect for our values and the role of the state and state authorities;

Furthermore, YEN and FUEN call on European and national media to:

- Pay more attention on the language used in public. Media play a significant role in public dialogue and the use of inappropriate language creates fear.