



60 years FUEN / 25 years YEN
We are living diversity
in Europe

54th FUEN Congress
in Brussels

29th September - 2nd October 2009

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and the Hermann Niermann Foundation*

▶ Tuesday, 29th September 2009

from 15:00 hr Arrival and check-in/registration of the participants

DAY PROGRAMME - Fundamental right to political participation

Fundamental Right to Political Participation: presentation of the Fundamental Right by Dr. Oleh PROTZYK (ECMI), followed by plenary discussion led by Heinrich SCHULTZ, vice-president of FUEN

20.00 hr Opening by Hans Heinrich HANSEN, with welcome buffet in the lounge of Hotel CONRAD

21.00 hr Introduction to the congress

▶ Wednesday, 30th September 2009

DAY PROGRAMME - European Parliament

09.00 hr Walk to the European Parliament (circa 20 minutes by foot)

09.30 hr Entrance to the visitors area in the European Parliament

12.00 hr Break

13.00 - 15.00 hr Meeting with members of the European Parliament (public session of the European Dialogue Forum)

15.00 hr Free time

17.00 hr Guided town visit starting from Hotel CONRAD

20.00 hr Social jubilee evening at Hanse Office with reception offered by the German Land of Schleswig-Holstein

▶ Thursday, 1st October 2009

DAY PROGRAMME – Committee of the Regions

09.00 hr Entrance

10.00 hr Jubilee speech by FUEN-president Hans Heinrich HANSEN

10.30 hr Speech by secretary-general Gerhard STAHL of the Committee of the Regions

10.50 hr Speech prime-minister Karl-Heinz LAMBERTZ, German-speaking Community

11.10 hr Speech member of cabinet Johan HÄGGMAN,

11.30 hr Short welcoming speeches

11.45 - 12.45 hr Jubilee discussion with the presidents of FUEN

13.00 - 14.00 hr Lunch buffet – by the region of South Denmark in the Committee of the Regions

14.30 hr Part 2 Jubilee day in the Committee of the Regions: Debate with the member organisations and presentation of the network RML2future

19.30 hr Jubilee reception - 60 years FUEN - we are living diversity at Hotel CONRAD

DAY PROGRAMME – Assembly of Delegates

- 09.00 hr Entrance of delegates and guests
- 09.30 hr Assembly of Delegates of FUEN at Hotel CONRAD
1. Welcome by president Hans Heinrich HANSEN
 2. Assembly of Delegates – constitutive part a.
 - a. Election of the leader of the Assembly
 - b. Establishment of the quorum
 - c. Adoption of the agenda
 - d. Adoption of the minutes of the Assembly of Delegates 2008
 3. Statement on principles by the FUEN-president
 4. Report about the activity of the presidium and the Secretariat followed by discussion and debate on topics 3. and 4.
 5. Financial report and report by the auditors
 6. Discharge of the presidium
 7. Report by the Youth of European Nationalities (YEN)
 8. Motions
 9. Resolutions
 10. Miscellaneous

VISIT PROGRAMME to the Visit to the German-speaking community

- until 16.00 hr Arrival of the participants of the congress at the Europe-Hall of the Ministry of the German-speaking community in Belgium in Eupen.
- 16.00 hr Welcome Dr. Stephan FÖRSTER (Director of the unit for foreign affairs)
- 16.10 hr „Historical development and institutional build-up in the German-speaking community in Belgium Mr. Gerd HENKES (Press officer of DG)
- 16.30 hr „The education system of the German-speaking community in Belgium“ Mrs. Dr. Verena GRETEN (Director of the unit for education and budget)
- 16.50 hr „Function and role of the public broadcasting system in the German-speaking community in Belgium“ Mr. Rudi SCHRÖDER (Editor in chief of the Belgian broadcasting company)
- 17.10 hr „Economy and employment within the German-speaking community in Belgium“ Mr. Marc LANGOHR (Manager of the economy promotion agency of Eastern Belgium)
- 17.30 hr Discussion round with Minister Oliver PAASCH (Minister for Education, Training and Employment)
- Moderated by: Dr. Stephan FÖRSTER
- 18.00 hr Departure to the restaurant at Eupen Wesertalsperre
Dinner and end of the congress
- from 20.00 hr Departure

► At the age of 60, life starts ... FUEN celebrates its anniversary

It was no easy decision to take. FUEN celebrates its 60th anniversary. The family has been growing enormously during the past twenty years – many “lost brothers and sisters” came back after the end of the Cold War. Just before its jubilee congress FUEN had 84 member organisations in 32 European countries. The organisation consequently is the largest and most representative umbrella organisation of the autochthonous minorities in Europe. There were therefore ample reasons to celebrate this highlight of the umbrella organisation and its members in an appropriate way. But where should this feast take place?

After some deliberation the presidium of FUEN decided to celebrate the congress in the unofficial capital of Europe – in Brussels. It broke a tradition of holding the congress always in an area of one of the member organisation. But FUEN wanted to make a signal by choosing Brussels. The efforts undertaken to establish FUEN as voice of the autochthonous minorities and to get a foothold in Europe was to be bolstered with a congress in Brussels and with highlighting the successes of the previous years.

There was one problem that had to be solved first – the problem of the date. FUEN traditionally organises its congress in the week of Ascension Day. But for the congress in Brussels that was out of the question. The elections for the European Parliament were scheduled for June 2009 and in May we would have celebrated our congress in the absence of a public audience. All the members of the parliament and all the decision makers would have been in their home countries on election campaign. Therefore FUEN decided to move the congress to October – from 30 September until 2 October 2009.

After deciding the date, a suitable hotel had to be found. Many things had to be taken into consideration. Because, when a fashion fair takes place, or when the European Council is having a meeting, the hotels will be fully booked or just not affordable. Brussels knows two price levels. If there are no big meetings the town is pleasantly low-priced, but if there are fairs or political conferences the town does not come second to the metropolises of our world in terms of prices.

We were getting a little desperate. There was no congress hotel in sight – so what did we have to do? Almost giving up, we went along the large five-star hotels, without having the illusion that we would ever be able to afford it. But miracles exist – in the venerable Conrad Hotel, which belongs to the Hilton-group and which can be found in each town guide of Brussels – we were welcomed with much courtesy. We explained our possibilities and what we wanted. No problem, we were offered a formidable price and consequently we had a highly professional five-star conference hotel at our disposal.

During the preparation we were also very much helped by our friends and supporters of FUEN from the German-speaking Community. They were there for all our questions and they made it possible for the participants to visit the beautiful town of Eupen at the end of the conference.

The jubilee congress was visited by 180 staying guests in the hotel and much more than 200 guests at the events; a plus of 20% in comparison with the previous year. They spent some intensive days in the beautiful Conrad Hotel, in the European Parliament, in the Committee of the Regions and amongst our friends of the German-speaking Community.

On the next pages we made an overview and a documentation of three intensive days. We hope you will enjoy the texts and also the photos and we will see one another in 2010 – when the minorities of Europe will meet again – this time in Slovenia.

We want to use this opportunity to very much thank all our supporters and sponsors (see back of the documentation). We also would like to thank our great YEN-friends, who helped us in an attentive way with many operational tasks

We also thank Georg Buhl, who provided us with his nice and professional photo collection.

Political Participation and the convenience of a five-star hotel

Since 2006 – the adoption of the European Charter for autochthonous national minorities – the document on principles of FUEN – each congress is held with a substantial theme. The motto of the congress refers to one of the 13 Fundamental Rights listed in the Charter. Appropriate to the jubilee in Brussels, the Assembly of Delegates had chosen the Fundamental Right to Political Participation.

For the elaboration of the Fundamental Right FUEN engaged in cooperation with the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) in Flensburg, Germany. ECMI belongs to the most-renowned scholarly establishments in Europe that deal with issues of European minorities.

Dr. Oleh Protsyk, senior research associate at ECMI, worked out a draft for the political fundamental right, which he presented to the delegates on the first day of the congress, Tuesday 29 September. It was followed by a lively discussion – many proposals were made by the delegates.

FUEN-vice-president Heinrich Schultz, who is responsible for the fundamental rights, explained what the next steps will be:

“With the competent elaboration and presentation by Dr. Protsyk and your many comments, we have gone through a first reading of the fundamental right. We take your suggestions into account in our further elaboration. The Fundamental Right to Political Participation will be with us until the next congress in 2010, where we will – in a second reading – finally adopt it”, said Heinrich Schultz.

You find a summary of the discussion on the fundamental right and the next steps further in this documentation.

The member organisation of the Western-Thrace Turks used the first meeting of the congress to ask attention from the participants of the congress for an urgent issue. Shortly before the elections the Greek government called on the recruits in the barracks within the area of settlement of the Turkish minority, to cast their votes in the area of the minority. This would result in influencing the distribution of votes and loss of mandates to the disadvantage of delegates from the Turkish minority, chairman Halit Habipoglu explained. The reaction of the delegates was one of indignation, and quickly the decision was taken to prepare an urgent resolution on this subject for the Assembly of Delegates that took place three days later.



Business comes before pleasure at FUEN. After the deliberations about the Fundamental Right to Political Participation had been finished, the president of FUEN invited all participants to an unofficial opening in the lobby of the hotel, where a welcoming buffet was waiting.

President Hans Heinrich Hansen cordially welcomed all guests and was glad about the active participation already on the first day; he however hastened to explain the ambience of the congress hotel: “We did not suddenly receive tons of money. We have got this hotel based on very good conditions – so please enjoy it! But do not make false assumptions; we still are a poor NGO, fighting for the minorities. Just do not indulge yourself too much. The mini-bar and all extras must be paid by you.

Tired legs and approachable European politics

The European Parliament took centre stage during the second day of the congress.

The highlight of the day was an open session of the European Dialogue Forum in the European Parliament – in the presence of the circa 200 guests of the congress. The European Dialogue Forum is a formalised cooperation that was founded in 2008 between the European Parliament and FUEN. The basic idea of it is to have a dialogue in which the minorities can present their suggestions, wishes and concerns – on par – to the members of the parliament and together work out strategies and solutions for these issues.

Before the guests from all over Europe could meet with the members of parliament however, the entrance to the parliament building was an obstacle on the programme. The security regulations in Brussels are high – but fortunately the employees are also very friendly. Uncomplicated and helpful they allowed the 200 visitors – from Siberia to Denmark – entrance to the European Parliament.

In the canteen lunch was served. It was preceded by a guided tour in the parliament and an explanation about the functioning and tasks of the House and a discussion afterwards.

In the largest room of the parliament – behind the plenary room – the guests of the congress gathered. The European Dialogue Forum presented its work. For FUEN the following delegates participated: FUEN president Hans Heinrich Hansen, Bernhard Ziesch, Dieter Paul Küssner, Halit Habipoglu, Hester Knol, Nicolai Sdrula, Jabik Van der Bij, Koloman Brenner, Daniel Hegedüs and also several members of the European Parliament (MEP) had responded to the invitation.

One of the initiators of the Dialogue Forum – Csaba Tabajdi, former president of the Intergroup for National Minorities – explained the motives and the importance of the body. Also his designated successor in the Intergroup, Kingá Gál, expressed herself positively on cooperation with the European minorities and with FUEN. “The cooperation with FUEN and direct involvement of minorities I see as one of the most important tasks”, according to Kingá Gál, MEP from Hungary.

The MEPs took two hours of their time, which is very long according to Brussels’ understanding of time, and discussed with the FUEN participants

and guests in the room about ideas and strategies.

A summary of the session can be found further on in this documentation.

Despite the programme of the day that was already quite strenuous, only few congress participants allowed themselves a longer break after the visit to the parliament. Most people went for a city tour through the old, traditional parts of Brussels. When you visit the European



institutions, you sometimes forget about the historic city centre of Brussels, and there is much that can be discovered there. The guided tour was long – between 5 and 10 kilometres, depending on who you were speaking with. But the participants were unanimous in their opinion that the tour was worth the effort. Brussels is much more than “just” the EU.

The day ended with a reception in the Hansa Office. The Hansa Office is the permanent representation of the German Lands of Schleswig-Holstein and Hamburg in Brussels. The leader of the Hansa Office, Thorsten Augustin, welcomed all guests. The reception was made possible by financial contributions from the regional parliament of Schleswig-Holstein and the Danish region of South Denmark.

On 1 October the jubilee of FUEN was officially celebrated – one day long.

As FUEN expressed its ideas to celebrate its jubilee in Brussels, the Committee of the Regions and its secretary-general did not hesitate long. They gave us the permission to use the House of the Regions in the Jacques Delors-building in Rue Belliard. The complete fifth floor was provided to FUEN and its guests and it would be a beautiful day.

Next to secretary-general Stahl and FUEN-president Hans Heinrich Hansen also the prime-minister of the German-speaking Community, Karl-Heinz Lambertz attended the meeting. Unfortunately the EU Commissioner for Multilingualism Leonard Orban had to cancel on short notice. In his place Johan Häggman came, member of Orban's cabinet and already long-time befriended with FUEN.

The speakers had been given the instruction to approach the issue of minorities from a positive perspective – not describing them as burden for the national state or as funding-junkie, but to consider what one can say about minorities as a positive contribution for Europe.

The speakers did not disappoint us – many concrete and interesting thoughts were expressed, ranging from a sustainable language policy that includes the regional and minority languages (Häggman) to a “minority aptitude test for politicians” (Lambertz). The speeches are printed in the documentation, so you can read them once again.

The jubilee was also a meet-again with formerly active and meritorious persons, who have characterised the work of FUEN during the past decades. Of the five presidents of FUEN who are still alive, four personally came to the congress.

FUEN honorary president Karl Mitterdorfer, Pierre Le Moine from Brittany, Carinthian-Slovene Reginald Vospernik and Christoph Pan from South-Tyrol talked about their experiences as presidents; what difficulties and beautiful experiences were typical for their term in office. This interesting conversation between the witnesses about a former period in FUEN, which was led by Martha Stocker, and also about European history, marked the end of the first part of the jubilee day. The conversation will be published by FUEN at a later stage.

Afterwards the member organisations had the opportunity to present topics important for them in the plenary room of the Committee of the Regions, in a moderated, open exchange of opinion. A lively discussion with many suggestions for the work of FUEN followed.

The event in the Committee of the Regions was concluded with a vivid presentation of the FUEN network *rml2future*.

The jubilee day was concluded in a festive way in the congress hotel Conrad. The 60 years' jubilee of FUEN was finished off in a relaxed atmosphere with a sumptuous jubilee dinner and with excellent wine brought from South Tyrol.



Two new members of the family and a visit to Eupen

The Assembly of Delegates is the highest statutory body of FUEN and makes the most important directional decisions for the work of the umbrella organisation. The Assembly gathered in Hotel Conrad on the last congress-day.

The delegates had to decide on the adoption of a total of 10 resolutions. All these resolutions were accepted. The Assembly of Delegates for example addressed all the Heads of State and Government of the European Union and Commission-President Barroso in a letter. FUEN



demands in the letter amongst other things the creation of a minority commissioner or at least assignment of the remit to one of the existing portfolios within the Commission. At the same time the Assembly of Delegates asked attention for the problem that minority protection seems to be given less and less notice and that there is a trend away from the standards that have been achieved. The Delegates warned – referring to the political events of the recent past – not to lose sight of minority issues.

For professional reasons the two vice-presidents Jurij Brankack (Lusatian Sorb from Germany) and Andrea Rassel (Rhaetian from Switzerland) left



the presidium before the end of their term. For one year, until the obligatory elections, Hauke Bartels and Urs Cadruvi took over their positions in the presidium.

The FUEN-family has grown further in Brussels. Two organisations were unanimously accepted as

new member. The Italian-speaking Community in Switzerland and the German minority from Latvia now also belong to the FUEN-family. As a result FUEN now has 86 member organisations in 32 countries.

Hans Heinrich Hansen, president of FUEN, presented the annual report of the presidium and FUEN-director Jan Diedrichsen reported on behalf of the secretariat about the activities and the financial situation of FUEN – both contributions are included in this documentation.

The end of the jubilee congress of FUEN was at the friends and supporters of FUEN, at the German-speaking Community (DG) in Belgium. The DG invited the delegates of FUEN for a concluding visit to Eupen.

Stephan Förster moderated a presentation where in the presence of minister Oliver Paasch the participants gained insight in the diverse activities and competences of the DG. Whoever would have thought that the guests of the congress would have had enough of minorities and their various issues, was wrong; the hosts were loaded with questions and an interesting debate developed.

In Eupen hospitality is written with a capital H and thus the FUEN congress ended with a nice dinner together with the hosts at Eupen Reservoir, after which the participants started their way back home.

Fundamental Rights for the autochthonous, national minorities: 10

The Right to Political Participation

After the adoption of the Right to Education in 2007 and the Right to Media in 2008, the adoption of the Right to Political Participation followed in the FUEN jubilee year 2009.

After an introduction by FUEN-Vice-President Heinrich Schultz, Dr. Oleh Protsyk, senior research associate at ECMI, delivered a presentation of the Right to Political Participation for the autochthonous, national minorities in Europe. Afterwards a discussion took place that was led by FUEN-director Jan Diedrichsen, in Hotel CONRAD in Brussels.

In this first reading of the Fundamental Right, Dr. Protsyk provided an overview of Political Participation, its definition in international legislation and political documents, as well as different ways of access. He described the Right to Political Participation as a universal human right to take part in government decision-making directly or through freely chosen representatives.

Political Participation is a condition for

- realising the needs and aspirations in various realms of public life
- maintaining, expressing and promoting identities of minority communities
- ensuring the presence and visibility in the public sphere
- promoting full and effective equality
- fulfilling commitments to democratic governance and accountability in minority communities

Political Participation can be guaranteed through: electoral participation and voting, engagement in political party activity, participation in legislative processes and executive processes and through consultative bodies, also in the form of minority self-governance and autonomy.

In the active discussion that followed in plenary, many participants and delegates used the possibility to give their opinion to selected subjects, especially concerning the forms of political participation, and they supported these with examples from the various minorities.

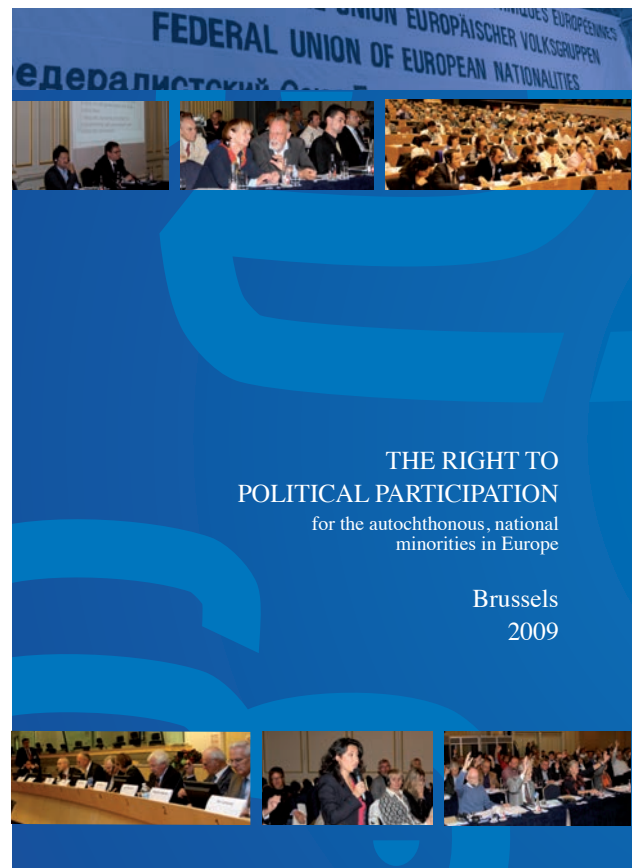
Two main aspects, which affect the political participation significantly, appeared in the

discussion: on the one hand the relations between majority and minority and the contact between them, on the other hand the issue of the own internal organisation – regarding structures, legitimation, fundamental rights and representativeness.

It was pointed out, that it is not only about how the majority deals with the minority, but other way round too. The prerequisite is that the minority representatives are taken seriously and that they are being listened to.

Also democracy as a decision-making procedure was discussed controversially and the question was raised, if democratic systems create real conditions for equal participation of minorities in the first place. Both special rights and the principle of decision-making “not about us, without us“ were seen as an inevitable condition. At the same time reference was made to the fact that democracy represents not only an inflexible process, but has to be characterised by other aspects like respect, tolerance, acknowledgement of diversity and fundamental human rights.

The greatest controversy in the debate was caused by the question of the political representation: who can better represent the



interests of the minority groups, own minority parties or members of parliament with minority background in the mainstream parties.

Own parties demand indeed for greater political and financial efforts of the minorities and small, scattered living minorities have often less chances for success in election, but on the other hand there is a risk of cooptation in the mainstream parties and the exertion of influence on the methods of minority representation.

It was stated in the debate that “best practice examples“ of political participation are helpful, however it is not possible to pass them on directly or to find the best minority participation model or an electoral model, which is useable for all the minorities. Different countries have different kind of laws and traditions in the electoral systems; furthermore minorities have various demographic, historical and geographical situations.

Nevertheless “best practices“ are needed as references and case examples. More emphasis is put on self-governance and recognition of minorities. Special regulations are needed so that political participation is enabled for minorities. The challenge is to work on a fundamental right, which minorities can use and which closes the gap between economy, politics and the minority. The various models and systems should be presented in more detail. An evaluation of national minority policies is necessary. In this context FUEN plays a significant role. In the field of political parties, minority parties and cooperation within mainstream parties have to be examined.

At the FUEN Assembly of Delegates on the 2nd of October 2009 at Hotel CONRAD in Brussels the delegates gave the FUEN Presidium the task to continue to work on the Fundamental Right to Political Participation. The first reading by Dr Oleh Protsyk and the discussion during the FUEN congress 2009 that followed, will be the basis for the further steps.



The exchange of experiences and the necessary transmission of background information are of vital importance. This will be enabled through conferences on the fundamental right to political participation.

First public meeting of the European Dialogue Forum in the European Parliament in Brussels

The first meeting of the European Dialogue Forum took place in the European Parliament in Brussels on 30 September 2009 during the 60 years' jubilee of FUEN (Federal Union of European Nationalities), in the presence of circa 200 guests. The meeting, which took two hours, was led by FUEN-director Jan Diedrichsen.

FUEN-president **Hans Heinrich Hansen** explained the basic idea behind the European Dialogue Forum: the first formalised discussion body for the autochthonous minorities on the European level is based on an initiative of FUEN, the Youth of European Nationalities (YEN) and the Intergroup for National Minorities of the European Parliament (EP). A structured dialogue between members of parliament (MEPs) and representatives of minorities will contribute to the tabling of current problems and the elaboration of long-term, sustainable strategies for the autochthonous minorities.

Below a selection from the contributions of the debate during the first meeting of the European Dialogue Forum follows.

After a welcome by FUEN-president Hans Heinrich Hansen the floor was given to the designated new president of the Intergroup for National Minorities in the European Parliament, Kinga Gál.

Kinga Gál told that her relations with FUEN go a long way back. Already in 1997 she established her first contacts. Because of her job at the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) in Flensburg she has been working for several years in the close vicinity of the FUEN Secretariat.

She thanked the president of the Intergroup of the previous parliamentary period, Csaba Tabajdi, for his efforts to establish a formalised cooperation with FUEN and for the foundation of the European Dialogue Forum.

The EPP-politician from Hungary made clear that she wanted to continue and expand the cooperation with FUEN. Concrete objectives will have to be defined and together strategies have to be elaborated. As main topics for her work she mentioned the work with the minorities and their representatives in the Dialogue Forum, the integration of other relevant political institutions like the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the Fundamental Rights Agency and European language policy.

Csaba Tabajdi congratulated FUEN with its birthday. According to him, FUEN is the most important representative organisation of the minorities in Europe and with its 60 years of history and experiences it is also the most important cooperation partner for the European Parliament.

Tabajdi underlined the potential there is in a European Dialogue Forum – it is time that the formalised dialogue between minorities and politicians is improved also on the European level. He promised to cooperate, also in the coming parliamentary period.

Ulrike Rodust, MEP from Schleswig-Holstein/Germany is glad that she, as newly elected member of the European Parliament, can work together with the minorities. She especially wants to disseminate the good minority dialogue that has been worked out in her home region. Ulrike Rodust also promised that she will continue to strive for institutional and financial support for the work of FUEN.

Edit Bauer, MEP from Slovakia, joined the queue of people who congratulated FUEN and said that minorities unfortunately are too often still trapped in isolation and that FUEN is an organisation that can show the minorities the way out of this isolation. Bauer thanks FUEN for its strong position on the Slovakian Language Act and not letting them alone in the battle. This type of legislation is a shame for Europe, as is the lack of possibility to intervene. Bauer speaks out in favour of the Lisbon Treaty and against double standards.

Iuliu Winkler, MEP more or less congratulated himself, as he stressed. His party namely – the party of the Hungarians from Romania – is also member of FUEN. A formalised dialogue between the minorities and the political decision makers is urgently needed. He demanded an EU Commissioner for minority issues and mentioned the opportunities that will emerge with the new EU Lisbon Treaty. The parliament should establish a new framework text on the rights of minorities in the EU.

Herbert Dorfmann, MEP from South Tyrol/Italy – who is a newly elected representative of the German-speaking South Tyroleans – underlined that working on minority issues will be an important part of his work and therefore also the cooperation with FUEN. South Tyrol and FUEN

have a close and trustful cooperation together since decades.

Bernard Ziesch, minority representative in the European Dialogue Forum proposed that the European Dialogue Forum in the strategies it will elaborate will take account of the intercultural competences of the minorities as added value for Europe. The Lusatian Sorb Ziesch referred to his experiences in the Euro-region Neisse, where four languages are spoken: Sorbian, Polish, Czech and German.

Hester Knol, minority representative in the European Dialogue Forum spoke about the experiences of the European youth organisation YEN in the field of “new and old minorities”. This is a subject also the European Dialogue Forum should discuss, according to Hester Knol, West-Frisian from the Netherlands and current president of YEN.

Dieter Paul Küssner, minority representative in the European Dialogue Forum told about the scientific “Competence Analysis – Minorities as Standortfaktor in the German-Danish border

the European Dialogue Forum is institutionalised, including sustainable financial conditions. 13

Daniel Hegedüs, minority representative in the European Dialogue Forum, directed his attention to the concrete effects of the EU Lisbon Treaty and proposed that the European Dialogue Forum would deal with what can be concretely derived from Article 2 of the new treaty, which is so often quoted, and in which the minorities are mentioned. The YEN-representative in the Dialogue Forum also urged to think about the situation of the Roma and Travellers.

Jens A. Christiansen, FUEN-Delegate of the Danish minority in Germany underlined that the European Parliament is also our Parliament, the Parliament of the minorities. We do not want to create parallel societies, but we want to discuss our interests with the MEPs. Christiansen proposed to elaborate a Greenbook with subjects that are of importance to the European minorities. This would only be possible when the financial and organisational conditions are met and he asked the European Parliament to support us in creating these conditions.



region”, which for the first time analysed the minorities as an added value for a region. He suggested that the European Dialogue Forum could initiate such a study in a European context.

Csaba Sogor, MEP from Romania underlined the importance of NGOs as cooperation partner for politicians – as critical companions they should provide the politicians with information.

Martha Stocker, FUEN-vice-president from South Tyrol questioned in her contribution why there is no EU-funding for such an important and prominent organisation as FUEN? According to Martha Stocker three main courses must be followed. First, the rights of the minorities on the European level must become enforceable and the minorities must not be solely dependent on the discretion of each individual national state, a commissioner for minority issues must be established and a direct representation of minorities must be established on the EU-level.

Peter Meyer, FUEN-delegate of the German minority in Denmark considered it necessary that

FUEN-president Hans Heinrich Hansen summarised the meeting and emphasised that it is not self-evident that so many MEPs attended this joint meeting for so long – it is a positive sign for our future cooperation. He took up the concrete and strategic proposals of the meeting and explained that these will be included in the preparation of the next meeting. In the beginning of 2010 a working meeting together with the MEPs will be planned in which the topics for the new legislative period of the European Parliament will be substantiated.

Speech by FUEN-president Hans Heinrich Hansen at the Assembly of Delegates

Dear Friends,

Many of you here are not as old as FUEN – and that is a good sign!

And when we pass review of the organisation over these few days it is nothing more than a bit of history. We, the older ones, have lived this history, so for us it brings back memories and experiences; for us it is more present, because it is also a piece of our own history.

That said, when I think of YEN, I see a truly refreshing renewal, and also the desire to carry on the tradition of FUEN. So thanks also to you young people.



Here at the conference of delegates I want to say loud and clear: FUEN may be 60 years old, and that is an age where one begins to see things more philosophically and be a bit wiser.

But that does not mean that we have lost our passion or our rage about certain things – such as the Slovakian language law. Quite the opposite: because of our experience we can do something about it. And that's what we want to do at this congress.

We are the voice of the autochthonous national minorities, and you give us this voice. And I thank you for this.

Five presidents have left their mark on FUEN. Four of them are with us today. Yesterday afternoon you experienced them with Martha Stocker as wonderfully lively, compassionate and wise people.

I'll say it again, because I am personally very pleased that here today we have been able to bring together all the presidents from 1977 to 1996.

I regret that my predecessor Romedi Arquint could not also be here in Brussels. In his speeches he always placed FUEN in a great philosophical and progressive European context, and thus rendered the idea of minorities a great service.

But there cannot be joy without sadness. There have also been several deaths over the last year, and I would therefore ask you to stand up and join me in remembering those who have passed away.

Of those no longer with us I would like to mention two well-known personalities by name. Joseph Martray died in June at the age of 95. He was the first secretary-general of FUEN, from 1949 to 1952, and he was the founding father of our organisation.

Armin Nickelsen passed away in June 2008 at the age of 74. He was the first full-time secretary-general of FUEN, from 1987 to 1999. Armin's great ability to communicate and smooth things out made it possible to release a lot of tension in FUEN and establish a lot of internal relationships.

We will remember the deceased with honour.

Address

The amended Slovakian Language Law has created quite a stir in recent weeks – also throughout Europe. The intention of this law is, in my opinion, a blatant example of backing away from standards that have been achieved.

FUEN has quite clearly stated its position on this.

A minority language must be protected and nurtured. To restrict its use, or even make it a punishable offence, as is the case here, is a violation of everything FUEN stands for, and should also be a violation of the fundamental principles of the EU.

It is also conspicuous that the EU is not getting involved here, and not clearly coming out on the side of the Hungarian minority.

When countries do not come out on the side of minority protection and back-pedal on standards it

is a European problem.

When it comes to the protection of minorities, the EU has to lead the way – but it must also practise what it preaches.

FUEN is an organisation that goes beyond the EU. It is an NGO, which means we do not have to be as diplomatic as the EU, which means that FUEN can speak out louder and clearer than the EU

We propose that we should send all the European heads of government a letter asking them to advocate sustainable protection of minorities.

The credo should be “Don’t make the mistake of avoiding the issue of the autochthonous minorities or ignoring it as something unimportant. History has shown that if you do, it will seriously boomerang on you.

The European minorities are an expression of the much-quoted diversity in Europe. We are the salt in the soup.

With our cultural and linguistic diversity we shape the continent – a continent that will and must not be a united Europe in the sense of the United States of America. The Europe, I want to see is a Europe of many cultures and languages – but not a Europe that is just a collection of nation states. Europe is much more, and here in front of this gathering of delegates I will repeat our offer to the institutions of the EU that we, in the dialogue forum, and also in other contexts – such as fact finding missions, and our idea of working to secure peace by promoting dialogue between the democracies. FUEN and the EU can work together in all these areas, and in many more areas!

Yesterday clearly showed that our strategy of getting our teeth stuck in as lobbyists at European level is working. We were able to organise a meeting of the European Dialog Forum in the European Parliament with several MEP’s, and in the presence of 150 of our congress guests. With this we are showing that we must be taken seriously in European politics. We want to work together and we want to help shape things.

Our co-operation in the EU, OSCE, the Council of Europe, in all the relevant monitoring processes – PR work, involvement in European discourse, drawing up recommendations etc. are tasks where we can do our bit and in which we would like to be much more intensively involved.

There is no need to be afraid of us - the autochthonous minorities in Europe, We do not make any territorial claims nor wish to destabilise

the states we live in. We live in European regions, 15 and we want these regions to flourish.

Officials should not see us as a threat, but as potential for the development of these regions. In some regions in Europe this potential offered by the minorities has been recognised, and the minorities are accepted as teammates in the development of the region.

This is where we come in, because we have a lot to contribute when it comes to the development of Europe.

Surveys and analyses of the election results for the EU parliament have shown that the number of pro-Europeans is greater in minority regions as the national average. This should give those in power something to think about, those who always dream of a European public and a European civil society – the European minorities would make a stable building block in such a pan-European foundation.

Let me give you another specific example of our European dimension, our language project. In the area of natural bilingualism and multilingualism the minorities in Europe represent an enormous reservoir. Minorities know all about living in several cultures, they are, if you like, the prototypes of the modern European. They have a close-knit relationship with Europe and their regions.

They start out in life speaking more than one language, they use the languages of the neighbouring regions, and they learn more languages and acquire expertise, which is prerequisite for living together in a multicultural society.

In the future, people will accomplish a great deal of things in life using several languages – everyday life as well as in career or education. Language is as emotional as it is functional. Language is native country and the big, wide world.

Address

In finishing off let me come back to us, to FUEN, to our general secretariat and our working conditions.

Over the last couple of years we’ve made a great leap forward, we are sought-after dialogue partners and we are consulted by many political organisations. Our experience is in demand when it comes to the groundwork for political decisions.

This is because we have become more professional. We have appointed two new

members of staff, Jan Diedrichsen and Susann Schenk, a German North Schleswiger and a Sorb. Together with Frank Nickelsen they make up the General Secretariat of FUEN. I hear from many sides that there now blows a different, newer, more powerful wind, that the foundations on which FUEN stands have become much broader, because it is more professional.

This does us good, and it does the General Secretariat community good.

This professionalism and this new drive are important if we want to continue positioning ourselves as the European representatives of the autochthonous minorities.

We want to be the ombudsman, the civil society representative of the minorities

We want to be the co-operation partner for the European decision-makers; we are after all the biggest umbrella organisation for the European minorities.

But this all requires sufficient resources.

At the moment we are hearing a lot of nice words from all sides, they would fill volumes – but unfortunately funding is short supply. The development of FUEN is in danger of stalling because we are lacking money and 80 % of the work we do is looking for the funds we lack.

If we want to continue this road to success we need to be able to plan reliably.

This year we have used up far too much energy in generating money, and I can tell you that the money is not flowing as richly in public budgets, in many funds and foundations as the officials like to imagine.

We often felt like we were in a shunting yard. Often we hear - No, sorry, we can't help, but you can go there and there, – too often.

These are well-meant pieces of advice, but you yourselves know what it feels like. It is not about not needing time for finance acquisition, but everything should be in reasonable proportion. The way it has been this year, the real work is suffering, and that cannot be allowed.

I ask you all to do your bit in helping to consolidate FUEN's finances. I know it is harder for some than for others, but nothing is impossible. It is simply not right that the General Secretariat always has to spend so much time reminding people that they have not paid their membership fees. We have always been very generous about this because we understand your situation, but it has to stop

sometime, because we are at the end of our tether.

So, that is my position, and that's enough of that. But there is one other thing that is very important: I ask you all to go to your respective governments or organisations that are well disposed towards you and canvass for the FUEN cause – not just for pleasant words, but for money as well.

Next year, even without the rear cover of the forthcoming elections in Germany, and without the 60th anniversary in the background, to go through the same hassle to get the money all over again is more than we can take, and it puts our staff in a position where they are uncertain about their future, and this is unacceptable.

But I don't want to finish off on such a negative note, because we have too many reasons to rejoice – especially the fact that with our combined energy we have been able to celebrate such a wonderful anniversary in such a generous setting. But now it's time to get back to work – and this afternoon a bit more party when we drive to Eupen at the invitation of the Germans in Belgium.

We're looking forward to that very much, and here and now I would like to say a big thank you to the German-speaking community in Belgium.

Thank you!

On the following pages a short overview about the activities of FUEN is given since the congress of 2008 in Pécs / Fünfkirchen. For more detailed information we refer to the printed annual report 2008, which was sent to all member organisations and which is available in the secretariat on request.

Furthermore we refer to the overview with highlights of 2009 in the form of our press releases, which are attached to this report and finally to the oral explanations by our president Hans Heinrich Hansen during the Assembly of Delegates.



On the financial situation of FUEN, which has played a major role since April 2009, we refer to the separate document on this particular topic.

In the activity report we will go deeper into the priorities that we announced in Pécs / Fünfkirchen and that were included in the Strategic Programme of FUEN (adopted in Bautzen in 2006).

- 1) Political participation
- 2) Improving the infrastructure and professionalisation
- 3) Strengthening the network
- 4) Content-related work

1) Political participation

The European Dialogue Forum, of which the FUEN-representatives were elected at the congress in Pécs, came together during two meetings. In Strasbourg they participated in the 10th anniversary celebration of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National

Minorities and they met in Kehl for consultation on the thematic direction of the Dialogue Forum.

In Brussels a constitutive meeting with the European Parliament under Csaba Tabajdi took place within the framework of the last session of the Parliament before elections. It became clear that some adjustments need to be made in the way of cooperation. Before the session the FUEN-representatives had a meeting in the Hansa Office in Brussels.

Furthermore FUEN participated in seven Intergroup-meetings of the European Parliament and initiated a meeting there of the Sorbian representatives of Domowina.

President Hans Heinrich Hansen attended a meeting of the DH-MIN committee of the Council of Europe. And there were talks with the cabinet of EU-commissioner Orban and with the secretariat of the Language Charter in Strasbourg.

Secretary-General Terry Davis of the Council of Europe visited FUEN and discussed in Flensburg with representatives about minority issues. He had to shorten his programme of two days because of the war between Georgia and Russia.

In March FUEN-president Hans Heinrich Hansen was together with other representatives of minorities at a talk with the German chancellor Angela Merkel.

During a presidium meeting Ljubljana a talk with the president of Slovenia took place.

During the intense preparations for the FUEN-congress the contacts with the Committee of the Regions in Brussels, our host, were intensified. Three meetings took place with Secretary-General Gerhard Stahl.

With several press releases, articles and statements FUEN participated in the public debate. Two themes in particular raised interest of the media (including the media of the majorities): the current conflict about the language act in Slovakia and the position of FUEN in regard to the issue of old and new minorities.

The newsletter FUEN sends out regularly has a circulation of 4.000.

2) Improving the infrastructure and professionalisation

FUEN also made some changes in its personnel. FUEN now has 2,5 full-time positions in Flensburg. The presidium works without an allowance.

Jan Diedrichsen bears the overall responsibility as director of FUEN – Susann Schenk leads the office and Frank Nickelsen is working as employee in the secretariat.



With these changes the staff capacity was increased by half a position in comparison to 2007 / 2008.

The secretariat increased also in terms of space and now covers the whole house on the complex administered by the Danish minority in Flensburg, and not just the first floor. The FUEN Language Network also established a working place in Flensburg and there is much activity going on at Schiffbrücke 41. Guests who are interested are always welcome to come by and visit.

The amount of work considerably increased and the more contact with members, decision makers and media is sought, the more work has to be done.

3) Strengthening the network

An important objective of the work of FUEN is intensifying the contacts to our member organisations and strengthening our network.

During the stretch of time we report about on these pages, FUEN visited several organisations or attended their events. Additionally there were a number of invitations that the presidium was not able to answer yet.

An overview:

- Participation in the Youth Leader Seminar of YEN in Turawa/Silesia and in the jubilee seminar 2009 in Modra / Slovakia
- Participation in the annual assembly of Rainbow (Macedonians in Greece),
- Fact Finding Mission to Carinthia, participation in the Europe-Festival in Bleiburg/Pliberk and talks with representatives from the minority and politicians,
- Participation in the jubilee of ABTTF (West-Thracian Turks),
- Participation in the general assembly of Domowina – Union of Lusatian Sorbs,
- Participation and involvement in the annual meeting “Aarsmøde” of the Danish minority, which in 2009 had the theme National minorities in Europe,
- Talks in Eupen at the German-speaking Community (DG) and participation in the 25 years’ jubilee of DG in Berlin,
- Visit on invitation of the Latvian “Special Assignments Ministry for Social Integration” in Riga and meeting with the minorities in Latvia,
- Participation in the National Day of the Aromanians in Bucharest.
- Talk with Gottscheer Altsiedlerverband (German association) in Slovenia,
- Working meeting at the national self-administration of the Germans in Hungary, in Budapest.

The presidium had five meetings where it came together:

- Presidium meeting, Carinthia, November
- Presidium meeting, Bozen/Bolzano, January
- Presidium meeting, Heidelberg, March
- Presidium meeting, June, Ljubljana
- Presidium meeting, September, Brussels

Additionally several working meetings took place in the secretariat in Flensburg with the presidium members who live in the German-Danish border region.

The seminar of the Slavic minorities of 2008 took place in Schmochtitz/Smóchčicy, on invitation of Domowina and the meeting of the working group of the German minorities (AGDM) of 2008 was in Košice/Kaschau, organised together with Karpatendeutsche Verein (KDV) in Slovakia.



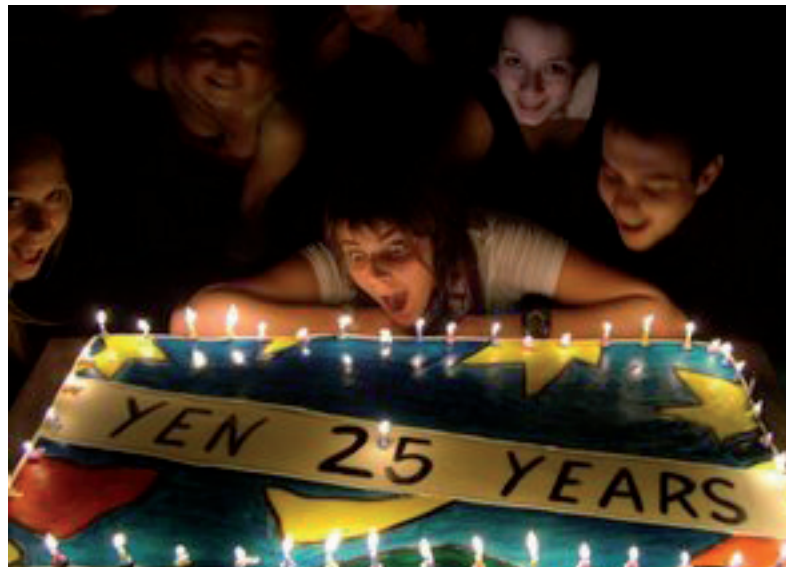
In Copenhagen a first preparation talk was held for a meeting of the minorities from Scandinavia. FUEN is in charge of the development of the project Democracy in Dialogue, which pools the competences of the minorities.

FUEN participated in several conferences – we in particular want to mention the participation in the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany to a Roma-conference of the EU-Commission in Athens and our invitation by the prime-minister of Hungary to a conference about cross border cooperation and minority protection, the conference on the 10th anniversary of the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities in Strasbourg as well as our participation in the Baltic Sea conference.

4) Content-related work

The guiding principles for FUEN and its political demands have been defined in the Charter for the autochthonous national minorities. After the Fundamental Right to Education was adopted in Tallinn in 2007 and the Fundamental Right to Information and Media of One's Own in Pécs in 2008, the year 2009 will be dedicated to the Fundamental Right to Political Participation. The discussion and adoption of the Fundamental Right is part of the congress in Brussels in 2009.

Next to the longer term strategy, which will continue to be oriented based on the Charter, taking position on topical issues will play a significant role for FUEN. As an example, we just



recently made a clear statement about the language conflict in Slovakia.

Another central position is taken by the new network RML2future, which will present itself and what it does during the congress. The work for the small and smallest languages in Europe is a substantial focus point for FUEN. The launch of the network took place in Bozen/Bolzano in April 2009.

We thank all our member organisations and financial supporters for participation and for their support to our FUEN-activity in 2008-2009.



FUEN - Federal Union of European Nationalities
 UFCE - Union Fédéraliste des Communautés Ethniques Européennes
 FUEV - Föderalistische Union Europäischer Volksgruppen
 Федералистский Союз Европейских Национальных Меньшинств

PRESS RELEASE

“We are living diversity - FUEN concludes its jubilee congress in Brussels”

With a festive celebration in the Committee of the Regions and a public meeting of the “European Dialogue Forum” in the European Parliament as highlights in a diverse and chequered programme, FUEN can look back positively at the jubilee congress that took place in Brussels from 29 September until 2 October 2009. FUEN was founded 60 years ago in Versailles.

“We are glad and also a bit proud that we succeeded in organising such a high-ranking congress in Brussels. We have come much closer to our goal to be taken seriously as NGO-stakeholder on the European level. I am particularly happy with the engagement of our members, who made the congress a complete success”, said FUEN-president Hans Heinrich Hansen.

About 200 guests from more than 30 European countries participated in the different parts of the programme with which the jubilee of the largest umbrella organisation of the autochthonous minorities in Europe was celebrated.

The European Dialogue Forum, which was jointly established by FUEN and the European Parliament, held a session in the European Parliament in the presence of 150 delegates and guests. The chair of the Intergroup for National Minorities, Kinga Gal MEP, underlined the significance of cooperation with FUEN, in order to give the minorities a voice in the European Parliament.

At the jubilee celebration three speakers congratulated FUEN, namely Prime-Minister Karl-Heinz Lambertz, Secretary-General of the



About 200 guests from more than 30 European countries met in Brussels

Committee of the Regions Gerhard Stahl and Johan Häggman, member of the cabinet of EU Commissioner Leonard Orban. FUEN-president Hans Heinrich Hansen addressed his keynote speech to the 175 visitors of the jubilee celebration, which was concluded with a jubilee-gala in Hotel Conrad.










In a first draft the Fundamental Right to Political Participation was adopted by the delegates of FUEN. The document, elaborated by the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI), gives the direction for what FUEN will work on in the coming months.

During the Assembly of Delegates 11 resolutions were adopted. The Assembly inter alia passed an open letter to all the heads of states and governments of Europe to make them aware of the dwindling interest of minority-issues in Europe

The FUEN-family was enlarged with another two members. The Italian-speaking community in Switzerland and the German minority in Lithuania were accepted unanimously. As a result FUEN now has 86 member organisations. Another five organisations are on the waiting list, and probably can be accepted as member in 2010.

The FUEN-congress ended with a visit to the German-speaking community in the East of Belgium. A discussion and a dinner with the participants was attended inter alia by Minister Oliver Paasch and director Stephan Förster of the liaison office in Berlin.

More information will soon follow on our website.

 Programme:	www.fuen.org/congress/2009/20090915Programme_EN.pdf
 Congress speeches / intros:	
FUEN-President Hans Heinrich Hansen to the jubilee	www.fuen.org/congress/2009/20091001_hhh_cor_EN.pdf
Gerhard Stahl, Secretary General Committee of Regions	www.fuen.org/congress/2009/20091001_cor_stahl.pdf
Karl Heinz Lambertz, Prime minister of German Speaking Community	www.fuen.org/congress/2009/20091001_dg_lambertz.pdf
Johan Häggman, member of the European Commission	www.fuen.org/congress/2009/20091001_ec_orban_haggman.pdf
Intro European Parliament	www.fuen.org/congress/2009/20091001_EU_intro_EN.pdf
 Press releases	
Jubilee celebration in Brussels – FUEN celebrates its 60th anniversary	www.fuen.org/press/20090918_congress_EN.html
We are living diversity - FUEN concludes its jubilee congress in Brussels	www.fuen.org/press/20091006_congress_EN.html
 Overview Congress	www.fuen.org/congress/2009/documents_EN.html
 Overview Assembly	www.fuen.org/assembly/2009/EN.html
 Right to Political Participation	www.fuen.org/congress/2009/20090930right_to_PP_EN.pdf
 Photo gallery	www.fuen.org/congress/2009/brussels_photos1/index.html (1-5)
 List of participants	www.fuen.org/congress/2009/20091002_TN_list.pdf
 Further links	
RML2future - Network for multilingualism and linguistic diversity in Europe	www.fuen.org/rml2future_EN.html
European Dialogue Forum	www.fuen.org/edf_EN.html



Network for multilingualism and linguistic diversity in Europe Netzwerk für Mehrsprachigkeit und sprachliche Vielfalt in Europa

The network RML2future is dedicated to the promotion of multilingualism and linguistic diversity in the Europe of the 21st century, actively involving the regional and minority languages (RML).

After the Network for Multilingualism and Linguistic Diversity has been selected as one of the projects accepted for funding under the EU-programme Lifelong Learning, it will start its activities in the year 2009. The network will work on active language policies and language promotion, with the aim to contribute to increased European multilingualism actively including the regional or minority languages.

FUEN is the founder of the network and initiator of the consortium.

The aim of the network is to promote the European objective of multilingualism, according to which each European should learn two additional languages beyond the proficiency of his/her mother tongue. In the course of this the European regional and minority languages are integrated and the pursuit is followed to use this resource of natural bi- and multilingualism.

For the multilingual regions in Germany, Denmark, Austria, Belgium and Italy that have been selected for the first years of the action of the network, scenarios for language transmission in the context of European multilingualism using the minority languages will be

developed. These scenarios serve subsequently for the use of the results to other multilingual regions, comprise scientific results and guidance for professionals and decision makers. These scenarios will be supported by actions in the field of early language learning, languages in adult education and certification and testing of language proficiency.

To exploit the regional education potentials in cooperation between professionals, experts and decision makers and to create the establishment of language friendly environments in the regions, integrating the minority languages, the network is aiming at the acquisition of necessary know-how in the field of language planning and language policies amongst the participants.

RML2future
Network for multilingualism and linguistic diversity

Network for multilingualism and linguistic diversity in Europe
Netzwerk für Mehrsprachigkeit und sprachliche Vielfalt in Europa

How many languages are being spoken in Europe? Wie viele Sprachen werden in Europa gesprochen? What does the acronym RML2future mean? Was bedeutet die Abkürzung RML2future? How many languages in Europe are stateless languages and are not amongst the national languages? Wie viele Sprachen in Europa sind staatenlose Sprachen und zählen nicht zu den Nationalsprachen? How many citizens of the EU speak more than two languages? Wie viele Bürger der EU sprechen mehr als zwei Sprachen? What is the most important aim of the network RML2future? Was ist das wichtigste Anliegen des Netzwerkes RML2future? What is the most used European surname, translated across all the languages? Welches ist quer durch alle Sprachen, der häufigste europäische Familienname?

The answers to these and other questions you can find at / Antworten auf diese und weitere Fragen finden Sie unter
or just contact us at / oder kontaktieren Sie uns unter

www.rml2future.eu
info@rml2future.eu



www.fuen.org



www.eurac.edu



www.dglive.be



www.hojoster.dk



www.nsk.at



www.yeni.org

The network is supported by the European Commission and the Autonomous Region Trentino-South Tyrol.
Gefördert wird das Netzwerk durch Mittel der Europäischen Kommission und der Autonomen Region Trentino-Südtirol.





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60 YEARS FEDERAL UNION OF EUROPEAN NATIONALITIES FUEN JUBILEE CONGRESS BRUSSELS 2009

Acknowledgement

We thank the institutions for the support that made this 54th congress of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) possible.



European Parliament

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions

Committee of the Regions



Bundesministerium
des Innern



Federal Ministry of Interior



German-speaking community
in Belgium



Schleswig-Holstein Parliament



Region Syddanmark



Autonomous Region Trentino - South Tyrol

Gemeinnützige
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Stiftung des bürgerlichen Rechts

Hermann Niermann Foundation



Sparkassenstiftung Schleswig-Holstein



Bund Deutscher Nordschleswiger



Sydslesvigsk danske Ungdomsforeninger



Sydslesvigsk Forening