



60 YEARS

FEDERAL UNION OF EUROPEAN NATIONALITIES  
1949-2009



#### Imprint

Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) · President Hans Heinrich Hansen

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# Jubilee brochure 60 years FUEN

Published on the occasion of the 60th jubilee of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), which was celebrated in 2009 in the Committee of the Regions and in the European Parliament in Brussels.

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# FUEN - 60 years of dedication for the minorities of Europe

FUEN, the Federal Union of European Nationalities, is a piece of living, active Europe, colourful, diverse, and non-conform. This is our strength: we give diversity a voice.

And this voice has many tones, sometimes loud, sometimes quiet, but always authentic, because it lives from the experiences of its members and member organisations, all of which have had, and still have, an eventful life. FUEN is therefore a piece of concentrated history of the people in Europe. Minorities live under different conditions than the majority population, because they have quite obviously been seen as political pawns. The minorities have tackled this problem, and have not just behaved the way they were supposed to.

What FUEN is working towards is to ensure that this non-conforming independence is preserved. What we are working towards is that we, as minorities and as people, can be what we want to be – and not just follow the norm like well-behaved sheep. When we talk of Europe, we mean the essence of this splendid union. The members of FUEN think and believe in what has made Europe what it is: a community with many different languages, many different cultures, and many different ways of living and being.

FUEN is the mouthpiece of its members at European level. It is, in the best sense, the civil society representatives of the autochthonous European minorities.

## Brief history

The early years of FUEN were marked by the barbarous experiences of the Second World War and the crushing persecution and appalling exploitation of the minorities. In 1949 the message heard in many European countries, and from many minority and regional representatives was: "Never again!" The nation state had failed – something had to be done.

In 1989, Frederik Paulsen, North Frisian from Germany and founder member of FUEN, spoke in Versailles about how FUEN came into being:

"The genesis of FUEN began with a conference held by the French federalists, an organisation by the name of "La federation", whose secretary was the Breton Joseph Martray, on 29th April 1949 at the Palais Chaillot in Paris.

Several West Frisians and North Frisians were also invited to the conference. This Breton-Frisian contact resulted in the passing of a motion that all the minorities of Western Europe should be invited to the next conference. This second conference, the actual foundation conference, was originally meant to take place in September in Merano in South Tyrol. But at the last moment it was forbidden by the Italian government, something that created a major political stir, and not just in Italy. The foundation conference was then postponed until the 19th and



Joseph Martray

20th of November 1949 and moved to Versailles. The initiator and organiser of this conference was the Breton Martray.

More than 200 delegates took part. Most were French regionalists who wanted to oppose the concentration of power in the capital. The same went for the participants from Italy, Switzerland, Germany and the Netherlands. They were

there to represent regions, not ethnic groups or language minorities. Martray recognised the problem, and skilfully steered the delegates of the ethnic groups into seeing that they needed to establish their own organisation, our Federal Union of European Nationalities, FUEN."

Hidden behind these words is another piece of history, one that could not be more exemplary. Why was it a Breton who championed the establishment of a minority organisation at European level; why did the Italian government ban the conference?

The history of the minorities and the establishment of FUEN are history in focus. A government shows its true face in how it treats its minorities.

The man we honour as the "father of FUEN", the Breton Joseph Martray, died in 2009 at the age of 95. At the jubilee congress he was paid tribute for what he achieved in his lifetime – because for the Breton cause, and for FUEN, he was a vitally important champion of the idea of minorities.

## The decisive historical turning point 1989/1990

The history of FUEN has always been closely intertwined with the history of Europe. The collapse of the Eastern bloc resulted in many new nations in Europe. The national minorities in Central and Eastern Europe had the opportunity to organise themselves, and demand their rights. FUEN accepted many new members in those years and developed into a pan-European organisation.

The subject of minorities in Europe was promptly put on the agenda as the national conflicts broke out in the Balkans on such



From left to right: Jes Schmidt, German in Denmark and former FUEN-Vicepresident, Jytte Skadegård, Svend Johannsen, former FUEN-Vicepresident and Povl Skadegård, former FUEN-Secretary General.

a devastating scale. There was no security policy conference where the topic of minorities was not on the agenda.

The European decision makers recognised that a solution had to be found in order to prevent more conflicts like those in the Balkans.

The minorities issue was also a security issue, and this is when the Council of Europe minority documents came into being, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities.

In the early nineties FUEN was vigorously canvassing for sustainable and far-reaching protection of minorities in Europe. There were many fascinating drafts for such minority protection - such as the Cottbus Declaration of FUEN.

But we have to accept that for the states involved, this was not really about sustainable safeguarding and advancement of minorities, it was just a way of quickly pacifying minority issues in Europe.

So the states agreed on a "light" version of minority protection: the Language Charter and the Framework Convention are in our opinion such "light" products.

This is why FUEN has always emphasised that this cannot be the endpoint in minority legislation.

FUEN continues to demand that we must establish more stringent minority protection in Europe, protection that far transcends what is in the aforementioned documents.

## The European Union

It is almost historical irony, that in recent years it is the European Union that has provided the strategic incentives for minority protection. Historical irony, because the EU has always been very anxious not to speak out on the question of autochthonous minorities in Europe.

With the adoption of the Copenhagen Criteria, which listed the protection of minorities as a condition of acceptance into the EU, the EU had however created a *fait accompli*. In order to fulfil the criteria, many of the new EU states created good minority protection legislation. FUEN welcomed the Copenhagen Criteria but at the same time lamented the double standards this produced. The new member states were obliged to implement new, better minority protection, whereas the criteria did not apply to the "old" EU countries.

And another problem loomed ahead in addition to these double standards. The fact that some states were back-peddalling from the standards that had been achieved. Why should a new EU state fulfil standards for the protection of minorities when other EU states are not required to?

So as gratifying as the Copenhagen Criteria were, it is quite apparent that nobody had thought about how these standards were to be guaranteed after acceptance as an EU member. The revised Slovakian Language Act has created quite a stir in recent weeks - also throughout Europe. The intentions of this law are a blatant example of backing away from standards that have been achieved.

FUEN is of the opinion that a minority language must be protected and promoted. 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 is also 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. FUEN fears that we have yet to encounter other examples of this, and we need a clear signal from those responsible for Europe, that they are serious about protecting minorities.

FUEN is an organisation that goes beyond the EU. All the states of Europe should stick up for the protection of minorities, and the EU must lead the way. How can you expect Georgia to implement any minority protection legislation when Greece doesn't even recognise that it has any minorities?

George Bernhard Shaw once said:

**"The worst sin toward our fellow creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them"**

Therecently(2009)publishedbookbytheformerrepresentative of South Tyrol in the European Parliament, Michl Ebner, is entitled "Unity in Diversity" and is about European minorities. In the foreword the former chair of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, says:

"The right to use one's own language and to experience it being taught and disseminated is just one example of a greater right, the right to express oneself and assert oneself like all other Europeans."

FUEN can only agree and calls on the Commission to act according to these words.

## Europe and the extinction of languages

Many of the smaller and smallest languages in Europe are threatened with extinction. FUEN, through its Network RML2future, funded by the European Commission and South Tyrol, is actively involved in supporting the smaller and smallest languages in Europe. With our limited means, and by setting up a European centre of expertise FUEN attempts to do our bit to promote the smaller and smallest languages.

But this is where the politicians also need to do something. Cultural diversity in Europe is under threat, and we need a policy that puts the active promotion and revival of the smaller and smallest languages in Europe on the agenda.

Speakers of regional and minority languages are the prototypes of the multilingual Europeans, because what they do today will be an everyday occurrence in future. By preserving their language they contribute to the diversity of Europe. They are innately multilingual, they use the languages of the neigh-

bouring regions, learn other languages, and acquire expertise that is prerequisite for living together in a multicultural society.

## No one has to be afraid of us

There is no need to be afraid of the autochthonous minorities in Europe. We do not make any territorial claims or destabilise the states we live in. We live in European regions, and we want these regions to flourish. One 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.

## FUEN as political player

FUEN's portfolio is very diversified. In recent years we have become more political – which not everyone is happy about. But it is our job to stand up for the minorities at European level, and we can only do that if we are taken seriously politically and we plead our case with a sense of proportion, but also with self-confidence.

The fact that we have raised our profile in recent years is also significantly due to the many incentives for which we have to thank our young people. YEN – the Youth of European Nationalities – is celebrating its 25th jubilee in 2009.

## A well hidden secret

The presence of the autochthonous minorities in Europe is one of the best-kept secrets in Europe. We are working to change that, and we are having success.

With his empirical research Professor Pan, former president of FUEN, collected important numbers:

- In the 45 states belonging to Europe, there are more than 300 national minorities numbering about 100 million people.
- That means that almost every seventh European considers himself to belong to a autochthonous, national minority.
- Around 90 languages are spoken in the European Union.
- Of these 37 are official state languages and consequently 53 are so-called "stateless" languages, i.e. regional or minority languages.

Romano Prodi rightfully said:

**"Europe is a Union of minorities."**

## Lacking influence

The are big and small nation states in the EU, and if you are recognised as a nation state by the other nation states the size your population is irrelevant when it comes to being accepted into the machinery of power in the EU. On the other hand, there



are quite a few minorities in various nation states that have a larger population than the smallest EU member states. They are not part of the power apparatus, and they only have a limited influence over their own fate. And this holds serious potential for conflict which can only be solved through dialogue, where you sit opposite one another as equals and negotiate with one another as equals.

The history of FUEN is a history of perseverance, continuity and reliability.

FUEN is built on our great diversity of its members, on what is now great professionalism, and with our unshakeable belief that we, the minorities, make a difference in society.

Jean Monnet:

## 60 Years without parting with principles

In its 60-year existence, FUEN has given a home to the many different minorities, and has been the point of contact for understanding one another.

The annual congresses and assemblies of delegates are not just real, living intercultural dialogue, they are also platforms for exchanging experiences and ideas, and very importantly, they give these chastised, suppressed minorities, who are struggling to be recognised, the opportunity to express their fears and hardships in front of a large audience, and where they can articulate these to their nation states in the form of resolutions. This is an important valve, which helps to dissipate aggression. And the old saying that together we are stronger was never more true.

FUEN's strength is that it is a democratic union that has not been swayed from its principles for the sake of short-term success. FUEN has remained true to its goal of being the mouthpiece of the minorities in all matters concerning their existence.

**"Cooperation between nations, while essential, cannot alone meet our problem. What must be sought is a fusion of the interests of the European peoples and not merely another effort to maintain the equilibrium of those interests."**

The European idea cannot be expressed in a better way. It is not about domination, but about unification, it's all about the recognition of ideas and diversity.

We, FUEN, are part of it.

## FUEN Presidents 1949 - 2010

1949 - 1954	Charles Plisnier	B - Walloon
1954 - 1957	Dr. W. Kok	NL - West Frisian
1957 - 1959	Hans Joseph Matuschka	PL - German
1959 - 1963	Hans Schmidt	DK - German Nordschleswiger
1963 - 1967	Svend Johannsen	D - Danish Südschleswiger
1967 - 1969	Séverin Caveri	I - Aosta-Frenchman
1969 - 1973	Dr. Friedl Volgger	I - South Tyrolean
1973 - 1977	Hans Ronald Jørgensen	D - Danish Südschleswiger
1977 - 1982	Dr. Karl Mitterdorfer	I - South Tyrolean
1982 - 1986	Dr. Reginald Vospernik	A - Carinthian Slovene
1986 - 1990	Pierre LeMoine	F - Breton
1990 - 1994	Dr. Karl Mitterdorfer	I - South Tyrolean
1994 - 1996	Prof. Dr. Christoph Pan	I - South Tyrolean
1996 - 2007	Romedi Arquint	CH - Rhaetian
From 2007	Hans Heinrich Hansen	DK - German Nordschleswiger

# Four FUEN-presidents take a trip down memory lane

During the FUEN jubilee 2009 in the Committee of the Regions in Brussels, four former presidents participated in a discussion led by FUEN-vice-president Martha Stocker. At this place follow some statements from an animated conversation.



## Pierre LeMoine FUEN-President 1986-90 Breton

During whole his life LeMoine put himself out for the rights of the oppressed, starting in the resistance movement against the German occupation. After that he fought for the rights of the minorities. He spent eight years in prison.

"Looking back – would you now still dedicate such a big part of your life to the minorities?"

Pierre LeMoine: "Absolutely. I was raised in the spirit of resistance, in the spirit of the fight against the dictatorship during the Second World War. After I was prompted by my father and a brother of mine, I entered the fight against dictatorship when I was 16 years old.

They deprived us of the history and the language of our country, as is the case today with the minorities in France. In France –

according to the state – there are no minorities. France is the country of human rights, the only existing state under the rule of law and French is the only existing language.

When I was a child, there were one and a half million Breton-speaking people. Breton is a Celtic language that is critically endangered today, because France never signed the Language Charter. Today 200 000 people speak the language.

After the war I studied mathematics, and it became clear to me that I turned into a stranger in my own country. I did not understand the language particularly well and I poorly knew the history of my country. I was a descendant of the Gauls and decided that I did not want to be a stranger in my own country. I then learnt the language of my own country, engaged in the economy and later in politics.

"In 1949, still a student, I was already active in Paris and I went to Versailles and attended the foundation of the Union."



"Which were in those days the reasons, ideas, motives for the foundation of the Union? Was not the basic idea that the regions should gain a voice, not just the minorities?"

"The original idea was to completely change the French structures, to establish a federal state. But according to the founding father Joseph Martray this search for new structures for France should also lead to new structures for the whole of Europe. The World War that just had ended had made it obvious that Europe was in dire need of a new start.

Spain had Catalonia and the Basque Country, Italy had South Tyrol but also in Germany several regions wished more influence. Ultimately the whole of Europe did become a union.

Brittany in fact wanted to act as an independent, European region and in all the elections in France since 1949 Europe has been endorsed with a large majority. The latest European election showed this once again. The turnout in Brittany was higher than the French average."

"It is correct that people say that the original idea of FUEN was to build a federal Europe based on the regions in Europe."

## Karl Mitterdorfer FUEN-President 1977-82, 1990-94 South Tyrolean

"Originally the foundation of FUEN was planned to take place in South Tyrol. For some reasons this was not possible. What were these reasons?"

"At those days it was not possible to decide freely where to hold the foundation meeting. Today we have at least the free choice to decide that the 60 years jubilee is celebrated in Brussels. Much has happened since then – back in 1949."

"The fact that the Council of Europe was founded in 1949 after several wars was a very significant step leading to peaceful coexistence of the European population."

"In the same period one also tried to solve the problem of the national minorities in some way, because after the war the United States did not make any statements on this issue. Therefore 1949 was also the year of the foundation of the Federal Union of European Regions and Minorities, as the name was in the beginning, and the cooperation was very good in fact. But soon it turned out that regionalism and minorities are two different political fields. The regions separated into an organisation of their own and what was left became the Federal Union of European Nationalities.

In the deed of foundation of this federal Union was stated very clearly that in a union of states there is a particular need to take account of the minorities. This first declaration of FUEN was in sharp contrast to the states. One should not forget that since the French revolution the ideal perception of the state was the national state, in which it was very clear that just one

nation should call the shots. The minorities were not taken into account at all. As a result the Federal Union directly clashed with the states. And those states also have never wanted to recognise the Federal Union. It has taken a very long time before FUEN reached a certain level of recognition internationally. The Federal Union of European Nationalities acquired the advisory status at the Council of Europe. But only much later. It was not self-evident either. The Council of Europe always made up lists about those organisations eligible for this advisory status. Four times FUEN applied for a place on this list. Three times the application was rejected, and the fourth time it was postponed.

I always thought that it was France that denied us the admission to advisory status. However after talks with the Italian ambassador in Strasbourg I gradually came to the conclusion that in fact it all the time had been Italy that said no to our admission. It was a happy coincidence that at that time Andreotti was foreign minister of Italy, and that I knew him. Because Andreotti was of the opinion that FUEN should obtain this status, it then also happened."

"The Council of Europe was born in the same year as FUEN. FUEN now has the status of observer."

"Pierre LeMoine held this function in the Council of Europe for 17 years."

## Reginald Vospernik FUEN-President 1982-86, back then representative of the Council of the Carinthian Slovenes

"I would like to tell two anecdotes from the history of the FUEN-Congresses, that illustrate clearly what a long way FUEN has come in these 60 years. I think about a congress in Gorizia, back in 1966. Everyone looked forward to the congress, which lasted exactly five minutes."

"The president of FUEN, the Dane Svend Johannsen announced to all that the congress was forbidden by the Italian authorities. It is hard to imagine such a situation in the unified Europe we have today. But back in 1966 it was the time of the bomb attacks in South Tyrol and the Italians were very frightened that whatever subversive elements would be able to destroy the foundations of the Italian state. And thus everyone went home again."

Second anecdote: the congress in Eisenstadt in 1970, as the FUEN-president, South Tyrolean Friedl Volgger, had to leave on the last day and I as vice-president had the honour to lead the congress. In the evening there was an application for membership from the League of Prizren, the Albanians from Kosovo, from amongst the delegates. Already before, FUEN admitted the Union of Kosovars, and we noticed much too late that these were two rivalling groups. A wild scene followed, allegedly including threat with the use of weapons and the honoured wife of the Secretary General, Skadegaard, had to be brought to the hospital for nervous breakdown.



In my time I tried, unfortunately without success, to reach the status at the Council of Europe. I was president of FUEN between 1982-1986 and at that time it was a small revolution in FUEN that after a French-speaking and a German-speaking president now also a purely Slovenian-speaking president could be elected. Today this is no issue at all anymore, because nowadays the minorities enjoy equal rights. In those days however it was an important step that also a Slavic minority, member of the FUEN since the congress at Faakersee, obtained the status of president."

Karl Mitterdorfer: "FUEN always tried to table the issue of minorities in the public discourse. I remember the big conference in Vienna, where the proposals of FUEN were discussed and where there was at first a discussion on the concept of government. It was not possible to find a common definition of government and a common definition of the concept of minority. There were countries that wanted to include everything in the concept of minority, e.g. refugees and migrant workers. Other asserted that there were no minorities. It was very difficult. In the end the participants said that each state for itself had to define if it has minorities and what type of minorities it has.

At that time FUEN had to underline that when a common definition of this concept would not be found, a European regulation for this issue would of course not be achievable. FUEN then tried to propose submissions of its own, in order to let the Council of Europe come with a definition. On the basis of a proposal by Professor Pan, FUEN adopted the so-called Cottbus Declaration, which was sent to several governments.

Later the declaration was of decisive importance in the discussion, and was the basis for official decisions by the state actors."

## Christoph Pan FUEN-President 1994-96 South Tyrolean

"What benefit did both documents, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, bring?"

"The Framework Convention has at the time 39 European state parties and the Charter is ratified by 24 state parties. The implementation is monitored in periods of five years for the Framework Convention, and three years for the Language Charter and this is repeated each time again. Back then, the mechanism was looked at with scepticism. But in practice we were pleasantly surprised, the mechanism has been considerably more effective than we had hoped.

Three years after both instruments entered into force only half of the requirements of both instruments were fulfilled. Five years later already 2/3 of the 36 countries had fulfilled the minimum of 50%. A process was started that is nowadays still going on. However there is also a negative development as well. That is the disappearance of the Copenhagen Criteria, which were examined too superficially. What will happen when a state, like Slovakia, falls back? What measures have been foreseen within the EU? In such cases FUEN should give an impulse.

There is another case. When we think back, France gave Europe with its French revolution of 1789 a tremendous gift, with democracy and human rights, freedom and equality and fraternity. But from that point they stood still. Today we can hold that 220 years after the revolution there are two states in Europe that are resisting innovation."



"One of these is the French Republic and the other is Greece. The oldest peoples of Europe, the Celts and Bretons are critically endangered because France with its many traditions is not able to adapt to the modern world. In the coming years we have to consider how to put new strategies in place in order to cope with such remnants and to bring positive development, because our solidarity is for everyone."

"Please tell shortly about the best experiences you had during your time in FUEN"

Reginald Vospernik: "The best moments during all the encounters, at all the congresses, assemblies always were about meeting old friends. A special moment was yesterday, as I met LeMoine, Mitterdorfer and Pan, and many other people."

Christoph Pan: "Similar like colleague Vospernik. You are always in the same boat with other representatives of minorities. In Europe that is a nice experience, if you can overcome national borders, and meet each other. You don't see the borders anymore. It still is a delectable feeling."

# 25 years YEN

In 2009 the Youth of European Nationalities (YEN) and the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) celebrate the 25th and 60th jubilee of their foundations together. YEN, which originated from the youth committee of FUEN, has been active as an independent youth organisation since 1984. Both organisation share a long history of cooperation.



"YEN and FUEN are co-operating now for more than 25 years. I'm very happy that the young people are being heard and supported in the network of FUEN and together projects like the European Dialogue Forum and RML2 future can take place which couldn't be that powerful without this co-operation. I'm looking forward to the next 25 years of co-operation."

Hester Knol



Name  
Youth of European Nationalities

Organisation  
European independent non-governmental youth organisation (ENGYO)

Acronym  
YEN

Foundation  
In 1984 on the Knivsberg in Nordschleswig/Denmark

Member organisations  
Youth organisations of the autochthonous, national minorities in Europe

Number of members (October 2009)  
37 Organisations in 20 European countries

Main projects  
The Easter Seminar – annual congress in the week before Easter, organised at one of the member organisations  
Youth Leader Seminar  
Choir project Voices of Europe

Seat  
Ljouwert/Leeuwarden, Netherlands  
and Bautzen/Budyšin, Germany

Board  
Board of 7 persons  
President Hester Knol

Main documents  
Charter for the autochthonous national minorities in Europe, statutes and rules of procedure

Cooperation projects  
European Dialogue Forum at the European Parliament  
Network for Multilingualism and Linguistic Diversity in Europe

Homepage  
[www.yeni.org](http://www.yeni.org)



# 60 years FUEN



"60 Years of FUEN – 25 years of YEN are two wonderful jubilees in 2009 for the minorities. We look back at good and fruitful cooperation, especially in the past years we got many things off the ground together with the youth."

Hans Heinrich Hansen



Federal Union of  
European Nationalities

## Name

Federal Union of European Nationalities

## Organisation

Representation of interests and umbrella organisation of the autochthonous national minorities in Europe

## Acronym

FUEN

## Foundation

In 1949 in Versailles

## Member organisations

Organisations of the autochthonous national minorities in Europe

## Number of members (October 2009)

86 Organisations in 32 European countries

## Main projects

FUEN-Congress – annual main congress

EUROPEADA – European football championship for the European minorities

RML2future – Network for Multilingualism and Linguistic Diversity

## Seat

Flensburg/Germany

## Presidium

Presidium of 8 persons

President Hans Heinrich Hansen

## Main documents

Charter for the autochthonous national minorities in Europe, statutes and rules of procedure

## Cooperation projects

European Dialogue Forum at the European Parliament

Network for Multilingualism and Linguistic Diversity in Europe

## Homepage

[www.fuen.org](http://www.fuen.org)

[www.europeada2008.net](http://www.europeada2008.net)

[www.rml2future.eu](http://www.rml2future.eu)

# FUEN - on the road to a powerful representation of interests for the autochthonous minorities in Europe

In its self-conception FUEN represents all the autochthonous minorities in Europe. Each minority should feel at home in FUEN. Independent if it is rich or poor, small or big.



This means that FUEN potentially represents each seventh European citizen – thus more than 100 million people. In our Charter for the autochthonous minorities in Europe that we adopted in Bautzen / Budysin in 2006, we described our self-conception and defined the core themes of our work defined through a list of fundamental principles.

Our aims are very ambitious and the group we represent is very large. With 2,5 employees and a voluntary presidium it is hard to align our own aspirations with our actual capabilities.

But our task, to be a strong, assertive mouthpiece for the European minorities that is taken seriously, is very urgent now.

The umbrella organisation EBLUL, that was active for regional and minority languages throughout Europe dismantled itself in 2010. Since a number of years the umbrella organisation had not received any European funding anymore, which ultimately made a continuation of its activity impossible.

FUEN regrets this. Throughout the years EBLUL did important work. The voluntary winding up has as a result that there is only one speaker of the autochthonous minorities left – FUEN.

The political situation in Europe in regard to minorities is not looking good. The subject does not play an important role. The issue of cultural diversity and European language diversity taking into account the regional or minority languages might be addressed in some political speeches, but only incidentally shows up in concrete European policies. The states of Europe – not all of them, but quite a few – also cut the minorities from their list of priorities. There are some countries that back away from the standards in minority legislation they reached before. The worldwide financial crisis at the moment is a welcome reason to reduce support for minorities, also in those countries that see themselves often as forerunners in regard to minorities. Many minorities in Europe are affected. However, there are also some good examples. Denmark, where the parliament unanimously adopted a modern act on support for its kin-minority in Germany or Poland, which seriously makes an effort to develop a commendable model of minority protection and also supports its own minorities abroad. Russia wants to implement the Language Charter and started cooperation with the Council of Europe for this reason. The coming months will show if the initiative is serious, as the minority and nationality conflicts in Russia are almost overwhelming. In recent months



we criticised the situation in Belarus, but also Greece remains a negative example with a minority policy that simply cannot be tolerated. The Balkans should provide European politicians ample food for thought if their negligent minority policy may not be too superficial and rather instigate conflicts. The Language Act in Slovakia is a blatant example how countries can move away from standards of minority protection that were already reached. The silence of the EU on this topic and the very restrained criticism from the OSCE are also significant signs.

There are therefore ample arguments to advocate a strong FUEN. But for the only minority organisation of Europe it is hard to reach a stable financial foothold. The European Commission rejected our application for funding for the third time now – on the ground that our field of action did not comply with the priorities of EU and the range of our themes was not sufficient. This answer should make us think. We may assume that our critical stand against some EU countries plays a role. But for FUEN it is determining that we will never bend for political pressure; we will always express our criticism, where this seems to be required. Also if this endangers the financial support we get.

FUEN can look back with satisfaction on what we achieved in recent years. With the adoption in 2006 of the before mentioned Charter, a milestone was set. We got a document to which we can refer again and again in our work. A self-conception, a definition, our fundamental principles and the 13 fundamental rights have become the foundation of our work since then. Each year we select one of these fundamental rights from the Charter and elaborate it. In 2007 we started with the Fundamental Right to Education, in 2008 the Fundamental Right to Media followed and in 2009-2010 we work on the Fundamental Right to Political Participation. It is our goal to work out a modern compendium of minority protection, which is mainly oriented towards the requirement of those who work in practice.

We are proud of our jubilee congress 2009 in Brussels. In the capital of Europe we celebrated 60 years of FUEN in the Parliament and in the Committee of the Regions. The fact that no less than 4 former presidents discussed about their time in FUEN (see the article in this report) showed us an interesting picture about the development of FUEN. With the congress in Brussels we wanted to set a signal – that we arrived as stakeholder organisation in the Europe centre of decision making.

But we reached a crossroads. We need financial consolidation and acquire resources in order to continue on the path we have taken.

In the past four years we found three new supporters: Saxony, Denmark and Hungary. But unfortunately other supporters, like the Hermann-Niermann-Stiftung, are no longer in the position to support us and also the Federal Republic of Germany during the past 10 years has cut its project support to FUEN in half.

As a result the presidium and the secretariat use a major part of their time on the acquisition of new financial resources and securing the budget. About 100 000 Euro per year are lacking in order to create a solid foothold for FUEN. We therefore hope to find additional states and regions that appreciate what we do and want to support our operational budget.

A second challenge we have in front of us is internal organisation development. FUEN is an old lady – however full of drive. We would like to try and better use this drive and energy in our work. There are already many individuals who invest lots of their voluntary engagement in our work. We want to do this more focused and extend it.

FUEN is just as strong as the sum of its members. We are satisfied with the great interest in FUEN. Ten organisations are on our waiting list and we have 86 members. We want to use this accumulated power for our European work.

YEN (Youth of European Nationalities) offers a good example – they worked on their own structures and actively try to involve more persons in their duties. We hope YEN can give us some suggestions. Additionally we see that the promotion of the youth is a very important field. If we also succeed in enthusing young people to work in FUEN, then we do things right. That is a good indicator for success.

## Political lobbying

Political representation of interests is a main concern for FUEN. Each seventh European citizen belongs to an autochthonous minority – but their political influence on the European level is minimal. In all the three supranational organisations – European Union, Council of Europe and OSCE – the subject of minorities receives less attention than before.

Two years ago FUEN established together with YEN the European Dialogue Forum and started a formalised cooperation with the European Parliament. There have been a number of meetings in the European Parliament and also internally we discussed about our priorities. Unfortunately the Dialogue Forum has not yet become the panel that we wanted to have. We would like to have a body where we can discuss with the politicians on an equal footing – find common solutions and long-term strategies. It will be one of our main tasks to really implement this vision.

In recent years we had an increased focus on the European Union. Even if we knew that the Council of Europe and the OSCE do important work in regard to minority issues. Especially the Council of Europe and its two main documents – the Framework Convention and the Language Charter – are of great importance for the issues of the minorities. But as our resources are limited, we unavoidably have to set our priorities. It is important for us that the issue of minorities is not left over to the Council of Europe alone, which though important, is less significant in terms of political power. The minorities are a main task for the European Union. That is what the FUEN is working for.

A question that is discussed throughout Europe nowadays and also increasingly touches on the issue of the autochthonous minorities, is the relation between the so-called new and the old minorities. When is a minority autochthonous and how should we act on the problems of the new minorities? The discussion on those many numerically strong minorities in Europe that came into existence through immigration is becoming more and more brisk.



## The Charter of FUEN clearly defines our self-conception:

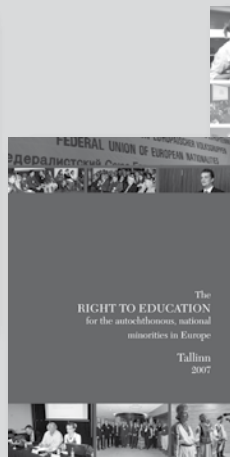
"An autochthonous, national minority / ethnic group should be understood as community,

1. that is resident in an area of a state territory or scattered around a state territory,
2. that is of smaller number than the rest of the state population,
3. the members of which are citizens of that state,
4. the members of which have been resident in the area in question for generations,
5. that is distinguishable from the state's other citizens by reason of their ethnic, linguistic or cultural characteristics and who wish to preserve these characteristics."

The groups that fulfil these five criteria are autochthonous minorities according to FUEN.

In our opinion it is not a good idea to confound the issue of new and old minorities. There are similarities and overlaps that we should examine. We have the opinion that it is making more sense to create a legal framework for new minorities, instead of integrating this field in the sphere of the Framework Convention for National Minorities, as is proposed by some experts. The requirements and demands of autochthonous and allochthonous minorities are very different and it would be rather detrimental for both the new as well as the old minorities to confound definitions and substance then that it would bring benefits.

In the course of FUEN-Congresses good ideas pop up. We want to develop a green book in which our political demands are concretely worked out. It will be a paper that we can use to present our demands to the European institutions. Another proposal that we are thinking of is the idea that FUEN will develop into an advisory body for minorities in regard to the monitoring system of the Framework Convention and the Language Charter. Many minorities in Europe neither have the resources nor the know-how to react within the monitoring procedures with their own shadow-report or with a reaction to the state reports. FUEN should act here and advise and support the minorities.



Apart from political involvement there are other important areas of work. With our network RML2future we achieved to get a foothold in the field of language promotion. We planned to establish a competence centre for the promotion of regional and minority languages in the course of the next two years. We see it as a great chance given to us through the financial support by South Tyrol and the European Commission. We will increase our involvement in the field of language promotion.

Two years ago we had much success – also in the media – with the Europeada: the football championship of the European minorities. In 2012 the next Europeada will be held – when UEFA organises its football tournament in Poland and Ukraine, we will have our next European championship of the minorities in Lusatia, Germany.

It is important for us that the majority population and the political decision makers realise that the minorities – that is each seventh citizen of Europe – are not a potential threat but instead an added value, enrichment. In order to prove this, our annual congresses are an important flagship. In Europe there is a lot of discussion on identity and future – where Europe is going. It would certainly help to have a look at the minorities. The European minorities and FUEV would like to play a stronger role to shape this path and is ready to take it on.



# APPEAL FOR DONATIONS

In order to continue its job for the protection of the autochthonous national minorities effectively, FUEN is dependent on support, in particular on financial support.

## Bank account

Account holder: FUEN

Bank: Sydbank Flensburg

Bank code: 215 10 600

Account number: 1000 351 600

IBAN: DE 55 215 106 001 000 351 600

SWIFT: SYBKDE22

FUEV e.V. (a registered society), has a notice of exemption from the German tax office in Flensburg, tax number: 15290 7452 0 of 30 June 2008 as a recognised charity and is allowed to issue certificates of donation, according to the template of the tax office.

On receipt of the donation (100,- Euro minimum) you will receive a donation certificate by return of mail, which will mention that we will use the allocated amount only for our statutory aims.

If you have questions, please contact the Secretariat in Flensburg.  
Thank you very much for your support!



**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? Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlillanysiliogogoch! - What is this? / Was ist das? 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](http://www.rml2future.eu)  
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We would like to express our gratitude to all sponsors and member organisations who have supported FUEN in many ways over the years.



## FUEN MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

86 organisations of the autochthonous, national minorities in 32 countries