

FUEN · Schiffbrücke 41 · 24939 Flensburg · Germany

To: Members of the Vaste Commissie van
Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap

Flensburg, 1 December 2014

Dear Members of Parliament,

We write you because of the letter about the future of public media in the Netherlands that State Secretary Mr Dekker send to the Dutch Parliament on 13 October 2014, and about the position of the Frisian language within that context. Having read this letter, we noticed that it does not make mention of the special situation in regard to regional broadcasting in Friesland. That position is significantly different than in other regions of the Netherlands, because there are no alternatives available offering programmes in the Frisian language on a daily basis and for a wide variety of target groups.

With the ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities, the Netherlands committed itself to protect the Frisian language, including in the media.

In the Report submitted on 19 September 2012 by the Dutch Government on the implementation of the Framework Convention, the Government of the Netherlands wrote the following:

“Omrop Fryslân will continue to exist as an independent organisation. The integration of the national and regional broadcasting companies will not have any impact on the duties of the regional Omrop Fryslân in Friesland. The Media Act makes express provision for the duties and position of Omrop Fryslân. Lastly, the existing budgetary frameworks will continue to be maintained.”

In the Comments of the Dutch Government on the Opinion of the Advisory Committee (20 December 2013), the Government wrote:

“The recommendations of the Hoekstra Committee concerning the necessity for Frisian-language media and specific policy to make such programming possible will be entailed in this process. The function which is fulfilled by Omrop Fryslân, being the provision of Frisian-language programming, is not under debate.”

We remind you of the main findings of the Hoekstra Committee, which formulated three essential elements in regard to the Frisian language in the media:

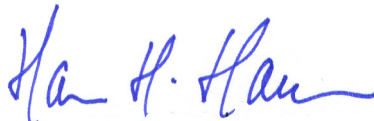
- The special position of the Frisian language has to be translated into a specific policy in regard to the public media available in Frisian;
- There has to be a fully adequate spectrum of programmes in the Frisian language, available on a daily basis and in different platforms;
- There has to be broadcasting that will cover the whole region with Frisian-language programming.

In the Bestuursafpraak Friese Taal en Cultuur, the Government of the Netherlands also pledged to both provide sufficient finances for full-fledged and pluriform Frisian programming on radio, television and in the internet and to respect the advise of the Hoekstra Committee report.

We kindly ask you to consider the special position of public media in the Frisian language, taking into account the international obligations that the Netherlands has undertaken and the wise advise of the Hoekstra Committee. We hope that with your influence the State Secretary will amend his plans so that the protection and promotion of the Frisian language in the media will be guaranteed.

We hope for your consideration and will continue to follow what will happen in the dossier of the reform of the Dutch media.

Yours sincerely,



Hans Heinrich Hansen
President of FUEN

The Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), is the largest umbrella organisation of the autochthonous, national and linguistic minorities in Europe with more than 90 member organisations in 34 European countries. FUEN was founded in Paris in 1949 and represents the interests of the European minorities on regional, national and in particular on the European level. FUEN is committed to protect and promote the language and culture of the European minorities.