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now **ACTUEL**

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

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Internal News

1997 could be a historic year for minority politics in Europe. In all probability, the two international agreements of the Council of Europe will come into effect this year. The framework agreement on the protection of national minorities and the Charter on regional and minority languages will achieve the required number of state ratifications for them to be implemented. Even if both instruments are not optimum they do demonstrate some progress on the way to improving international legislation towards the protection and promotion of national minorities. We will have to experience how this works. It seems important to me that the national minorities will be able to rely on these instruments more and more and learn to work with them. International organisations, like FUEN, will make use of this chance to present reports and comments from their point of view to the expert commissions. Unfortunately, despite extensive intervention, FUEN has not been able to have the NGO included in these expert committees; these are only composed of governmental representatives.

The ministers' summit of the countries in the Council of Europe on 10th and 11th October will only mention the subject of national minorities in passing. And this, even though the issue of minorities and majorities coexisting is anything but satisfactorily solved. On the contrary, there are latent conflicts—some have broken out, some are kindling—in all parts of Europe and these are all too frequently the result of state arrogance and a lack of understanding for the fundamental rights to free cultural development for an individual and social identity. These conflicts are still kindling and demand improvements to the international law system.

Legislation is one thing, but equally significant is the political culture and communication. FUEN thus emphasises the importance of dialogue. In particular, the national minorities are called upon to enter into dialogue and, in their special position, are also able to enter into it. A dialogue conducted according to humanitarian and democratic tradition is how they arm themselves against the lack of understanding and the arrogance of power. Just as important for national minorities is dialogue amongst themselves and with each other. In recent years FUEN has frequently attempted to strengthen this dialogue by manifold activities—re-

gional events, meetings of experts, local visits, etc. A climax is indubitably the annual FUEN congress in Bad Pörtschach (Austria) to which we are expecting numerous delegates, state representatives and guests. I look forward to an interesting programme and to lots of good discussions.

FUEN-President Romedi Arquint

Welcome to the FUEN congress in Carinthia, Austria!

The Council of Carinthian Slovenes/Narodni svet koroških Slovencev considers it a special honour to be hosting the Congress on Nationalities of the Federal Union of European Nationalities. As a long-serving member organisation of the FUEN, we recognise the increasing significance of the FUEN congresses for the ethnic groups in Europe.

We are delighted that the 42nd FUEN Congress on Nationalities with European dimensions will be taking place in Pörtschach beside the wonderful lake, Wörthersee, from 7th to 11th May 1997 and that this will focus on the political representation and participation of ethnic groups, which is also a current issue in Carinthia. We would like to thank the FUEN Presiding Committee for



Nanti Olip, Representative of the Council of Carinthian Slovenes (l.) and Dr Reginald Vospernik, former FUEN President

appointing us as their hosts.

At this point, we would like to send out a warm welcome to all delegations and experts who will be taking part in the congress. Together with the FUEN, we will make every effort to ensure you have an interesting and pleasant stay in the heart of Carinthia.

Member organisations express their solidarity with Horno/Rogow

At the beginning of February, FUEN Vice-President Dr Ludwig Elle contacted the member organisations of FUEN in the name of the roof association of the Lausatian Sorbs Domowina with the request for solidarity and support for the village of Horno/Rogow in the German federal state of Brandenburg. This village lies in the region where the Sorbs have settled and, according to the plans in the brown-coal industry, is to be dissolved so that an open brown-coal pit can be set up. Over 100 Sorbian villages and settlements have been victims of the brown-coal industry since the beginning of this century. Resettlement of over 10,000 Sorbs from their customary village communities and the tens of thousands of workers coming to this region have considerably reduced the proportion of the Sorbian population and substantially accelerated their assimilation. Numerous FUEN member organisations followed the call of Domowina. They expressed their protest and anxiety to the President of the Brandenburg state government and their solidarity with the demands of the Sorbs. The national Presiding Committee of Domowina would like to say how grateful they are to the respective member organisations of FUEN for the support they offered.



Photo: Roger Melis; published by Dietz Verlag Berlin GmbH in 1995: Homo—a village in Lusatia wants to live by Michael Gromm/Roger Melis. 128 pages, 44

The following can be obtained from the FUEN General Secretary:

Status reports from Slovakia
 Status reports from the Carpathian region
 Status reports from the Crimean Tartars
 Jubilee report: 40 Years of Cooperation in the German-Danish Border Region

The following brief portraits have appeared in following FUEN-Now Actuel numbers:
 No. 53: Hungarians and Germans in Romania
 No. 54 Bretons in France
 No. 54 Slovenes in Italy
 No. 55 Sorbs in Germany
 No. 55 Carinthian Slovenes in Austria
 No. 56 Rhaeto-Romanics in Switzerland
 No. 57 Sinti and Roma in Germany
 No. 58 Crimean Tartars in the Ukraine

Association of Hungarians in Romania as government partners

The political party of the Hungarian minority in Romania (RMDSZ)—a member association of FUEN—is involved in the Ciorbega government where, apart from holding the Ministry of Tourism and 7 state secretary positions it also administrates the Ministry for Minority Issues. This is the first time the Hungarian ethnic group has

taken part in national administration since 1920.

FUEN would like to congratulate the RMDSZ with Bela Marko at the head on its responsible task and is convinced that, with this responsibility in the government, it has set a sign for reconciliation and the goodwill towards ethnic peace in Romania



Bela Markó, RMDSZ-President

The Crimean Tatars

Conclusion and recommendations of the FUEN

1. Initial position

According to our information, 250,000 Crimean Tartars have returned to their home in the last 9 years. This accounts for a 10% proportion of the population. 67% of the Crimean population consists of Russians. Most of these have been in Crimea for 2 to 3 generations where they have settled in houses, farms and villages of the Crimean Tartars. In addition to the remaining approx. 14% of Russian-speaking people, there are also members of the national minorities of Greeks, Germans, Armenians, Bulgarians, Krimtschaks and Karaim. Even if the legal right exists for Crimean Tartars to recover illegally taken property, one can imagine the virtually overwhelming difficulties of asserting this in practice. The Crimean Tartars demand these rights and are trying to make use of these with all legal means and in agreement with the constitution of the Ukraine. Added to the basic problem of substituting injustice experienced for new injustice, are the often too bureaucratic obstacles in local and regional administration which extensively comprises of Russians. Despotic and unearnest allocation of building land and housing, harassment in providing civil rights, unequal treatment as compared to mostly Russian immigrants, are only a few examples of the tensions arising from this.

Bearing the desolate economic situation for the whole country and all members of the population in mind, the difficulties of integrating an additional quarter of a million within a short period become quite clear. Two statements seem basic under these signs:

1. The authorities and the local population have largely succeeded in integrating the Crimean Tartars who have returned, in as far as these can settle, organise and integrate themselves to an extent. In other words, the return and initial settlement have been successful—with a few exceptions—without releasing an uncontrolled potential for conflict. The new political situation with its great vacuum has undoubtedly provided a positive contribution to more pragmatic, sometimes incidental, and less structured procedure. This explains how founding and setting up a certain kind of parastatal Crimean Tartar structure was tolerated and also recognised *de facto*.

2. The same has to be said of the repatriates. Their great expectations have been dampened by just as great a disappointment, but despite this, they have adhered to law and order in asserting their rights. They also show great maturity in not taking misguided situations as a means of demanding ideological extremes which could lead to terror, but in pragmatically orienting their policies.

2. The role of international organisations

The role of the OSCE has been pointed out occasionally. We have the impression that the activities

of this organisation, particularly in the early phase of political reorientation, have been exceptionally helpful. These mainly comprised creating openness for dialogue between the various groupings and subsequently preserving and strengthening this. In order to gain the confidence of the representatives of the various groups it would indubitably be an advantage if a team/person could work locally for a longer period, as Andreas Kohlschütter did in 1994–95.

The solidarity effect and moral support were emphasised by the Crimean Tartars with relationships to international organisations. They work in the UN, are members of FUEN and can cooperate with various international foundations and institutions.

The sound and practical projects, as for example carried out by the 'rebirth' foundation in Bakhchisaray thanks to support from such organisations, seem to be of significance here.

The aid programmes of the EU and the Council of Europe met with a less positive echo. The implementation of these, e.g. the PHARE programme, was considered sluggish. It is also regretted that little is seen of these funds and the fear is that the majority of them disappear in bureaucracy and do not reach their actual target.

In general, international solidarity appears far too seldom in tangible form. In view of the great social and economic problems the region has, the financial aid for repatriation should function more directly, more efficiently and more generously.

Recommendation:

Consolidation of aid on the part of international governmental and private organisations is urgently essential to relieve the social misery among the Crimean Tartars who have returned.

3. Political representation

3.1 The Crimean Tartars as they see themselves
The Crimean Tartars refer to themselves as the original or the state people of the Crimean peninsula. They indicate the history and culture formed by the Crimean Tartars over centuries and see the development since the end of the 18th century as injustice. They have a vision of reinstating the Crimean Tartar state in Crimea. In addition, the Crimean Tartars have no home country apart from the Crimea. We heard virtually no insistence on the extreme position of a state ruled by Crimean Tartars nor of an autonomous Ukrainian republic. The significance of Milli Firka as a pool for radical demands for self-determination and rule of the Crimean Tartars over the Crimea seems to show practically no major growth.

The way the Crimean Tartars see themselves as the state people of the Crimea has an important symbolic function and serves as an aid in legitimisation. This is why we can understand that almost everyone we spoke to differentiated between themselves as the original

people and the other Greek, Bulgarian immigrants who came to the Crimea later.

Recommendation

The collective features of identification must not be underestimated. They should be taken account of in a suitable way, e.g. in the Ukrainian constitution or by official recognition in their own institutional structures.

3.2 Representation in parliament

Since 1991, the Crimea has held the status of the Autonomous Republic of the Crimea. The Crimean Tartars and the national minorities are represented in parliament and also have members on superior committees. Their rights of representation however have not been legally set down. Due to the majority election principle and the distribution of the Crimean Tartars and members of national minorities all over the region, their chances of being accordingly represented in parliament are slim. It seems to us to be exceptionally important to secure the representation of the Crimean Tartars in parliament by specific regulations prior to the next elections in March 1998. This would have to be asserted by the state for the region of the Crimea (due to the minority protection regulations in Ukraine's constitution). If this does not succeed, the political position can be expected to become more critical. This actually means that the nationalistic powers among Crimean Tartars could

become radical and that, in addition, the nightmare of a terrorist underground movement could become reality.

Recommendation

The representation rights of the Crimean Tartars and those of the national minorities of the Autonomous Republic of the Crimea are to be guaranteed by means of legislation—before the next parliamentary elections.

3.2 Local and regional participation and self-determination

It seems just as important to us for the future for the Crimean Tartars and national minorities to be better integrated into the political system on a local and regional level. A possible way would be to improve cooperation and defining of competencies with the well-functioning local and regional MEDZHLIS. This is very well organised, has an involved team of staff and should work as closely as possible with the governmental bodies and be integrated into these to prevent any strengthening or drifting apart from state bodies.

Recommendation

The local and regional MEDZHLIS are to be integrated into governmental administration with the competencies and responsibilities being clearly set out.



**Council of
Europe:**

Monitoring: A new Commission

The parliamentary assembly of the European Council is conducting an inspection of member states (and future member states) in order to ascertain that standards relating to human rights and democratic security are being observed. Within this context, it is monitoring the progress of the presidential election in Chechnya (this is the first democratic election

since the withdrawal of Russian troops after the cease-fire which followed four years of warfare. The reports of monitoring activities in Albania and Estonia are further, very recent, examples of the measures taken by the parliamentary assembly in this domain.

Three commissions are responsible for the parliament's monitoring activities, however the recent increase in the workload, which is partly due to the influx of new members, is making their task extremely difficult. In order to alleviate this situation, the parliamentary assembly proposes to assign all inspection duties to a »Monitoring Commission« which is to consist of 40 members and the chairpeople of the three commissions which have hitherto been in charge of this field. The report dealing with this proposal has been drawn up by Marcelle Leutz-Cornette (Luxembourg, PPE).

The creation of a new commission has an unpleasant association for the NGO. The Parliamentary Assembly rejected cooperation of this NGO with a marginal majority. This means an important chance to strengthen the non-governmental organisations and to recognise them as partners in dialogue for the important issues of the international community was missed.

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The Carpathian-German Society (KDV) in Slovakia



From l. to r.: Otto Sobek; M.A. Gertrud Greser, President of the Carpathian-German Society in Slovakia and Ondrej Pöss
photo: Karpatenblatt 03.03.1997

The Carpathian-German Society (KDV) in Slovakia was established in 1990 as a citizens' association of Germans in Slovakia with the aim of revitalising and further developing the almost obsolete native tongue and culture. This was meant as a contribution to forming the future perspectives of a minority. The Carpathian Germans in

Slovakia are what we can refer to as a dispersed minority. Today, they still live in the historic settlement areas, and this fact is also reflected in the organisation of the society. The KDV has 39 local communities to 5 regional and geographic divisions. These are Bratislava (Western Slovakia), the so-called Hauerland in Central

Slovakia, Upper Zipa (region below the High Tatras), lower Zipa (valley of the River Hnilec) and the Bodwa valley in the east of the country. Every community and every region has their elected presiding committees; the charmen of each region, the national chairman, their two representatives, a treasurer and a representative appointed by the young interest group form the Council of the Carpathian Germans; this meets every three months to discuss and resolve upon important

society issues. Every three years an assembly of delegates takes place (so-called Assembly of Delegates) during which the national chairman and the vice-chairmen for the regions are elected.

The communities, i.e. the regions, are extensively in-

dependent in planning and organising/arranging cultural activities. The national office mainly pursues a mediating and coordinating function and is responsible for all activities (particularly regarding the submission of applications and account-settling with state bodies or foreign counterparts). It represents the interests of the society against third parties, is the contact for official bodies at home and abroad and is involved in, e.g. arranging or implementing medical and social aid projects carried



Dipl. Ing. Eduard Buras, Cultural Representative of the Carpathian-German

out by the Federal Republic of Germany in the German settlement areas of Slovakia.

Visit to the Carpathian Germans in Slovakia

From 20–23rd February, FUEN President Romedi Arquint and FUEN Secretary General Armin Nickelsen visited the Carpathian-German Society in Slovakia. The FUEN delegation held talks with the regional chairman, M.A. Gertrud Greser, the Officer for Culture, Dipl. Ing. Eduard Buras, the ladies and gentlemen of the Council of Carpathian Germans and the Association of Compatriots from the Federal Republic of Germany. Romedi Arquint greeted the Assembly of Delegates in the name of FUEN and Armin Nickelsen extended greetings to the Assembly in the name of the Association of German North Schleswig people.

Ms M.A. Gertrud Greser was elected President of the Carpathian Germans with an overwhelming majority (89%) for the next three years!



Gertrud Greser during an informative visit to the office of FUEN General Secretary Armin Nickelsen.

Opening of the new documentation and culture centre of the German Sinti und Roma

Speech by the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Roman Herzog (16-3-1997)

I would like to extend a warm welcome to you all in this new documentation and culture centre.

First of all, I would like to congratulate you on this attractive building. I have come here to acknowledge that I am the Federal President of all Germans, this also means the Federal President of the German Sinti and Roma. This, in fact, goes without saying, but should perhaps be emphasised once more.

Alongside our Jewish citizens, you share the same past horrors of persecution and genocide during the dominance of national socialism. These are experiences which some time make it difficult to treat each other impartially. Impartiality hardly existed in the past. What did exist was more a two-sided relationship. On the one hand, there is a long tradition of 'gypsy romanticism' in Germany.

But on the other, there is a profound anxiety, equally marked by clichés.

Consequently, I can only repeat what I said a fortnight ago when the 'Week of Brotherhood' began: reconciliation and the initiation of peace—wherever necessary—always begin with a turnaround of false attitudes. With enlightenment on the foolishness and narrow-mindedness of how enemies are seen. Enlightenment about the clichés, reconciliation and peace thus always come from people who first see another human being in their neighbour.

This centre is now a place to remember the history of the Sinti and Roma, but chiefly to remember how this country, also their home, has treated them. The exhibition we are opening today shows how a long duration of discrimination ended in persecution and murder. There were in the region of 500,000 victims of this murder, among these over 20,000 German Sinti and Roma, these are dimensions of barbarism. They also show that the majority population was not willing and not able to grant the

relatively small ethnic group protection and safety.

A persistent legend still recounts that the Sinti and Roma became involved in this murder by chance. This is not correct. Genocide of the Roma and Sinti was born of the same motivation, of insane racism, with the same intention and the same will, as the planned and total extermination of the Jews. I would just like to remind you that the Minister of the Interior, Frick, decreed on the 3rd January 1936 that the Nürnberg laws on racism applied just as much to the Sinti and Roma as to the Jews. And the Minister for Justice, Thierack, added in 1942 that 'all Jews and gypsies are to be completely destroyed'. Hitler himself ordered Himmler to deport all Sinti and Roma without exception to the extermination camps. They were thus

murdered, systematically, family by family, from babies to elderly people, in the regions under the influence of the national socialists. The national socialist state denied them their centuries-old right to a home state with this legislation on racism, robbed them of their homes and property and deported them from their workplaces as employees, labourers, self-employed entrepreneurs or civil servants—or even as former soldiers of the imperial army—with their families to Auschwitz and all the other extermination camps. At this point, I would like to particularly welcome the Sinti and Roma who have survived this persecution and maltreatment and are today living witnesses of this genocide. They deserve admiration, because, despite the terror they experienced, they have found the strength to work towards self-confident representation for the Sinti and Roma.

Inhuman persecution must remain vivid in our memory. In our actions, we must always remain aware of what racism, hybris and prejudice can lead to. The victims are of significance for the present, they serve as a deterrent, as a warning of indifference, self-satisfaction and narrow-mindedness.

In the post-war period, this was not always comprehended. The old way of thinking in prejudices was spread by authorities and courts. It took several decades for discrimination to be banished. It seems to me that

and to counteract the false images in people's heads. The public has to be made conscious of the actual history and the life situation; too much has remained undisclosed. This is why I am pleased the centre could be erected with substantial support from the federal government, which should be a clear sign that the German state is aware of its responsibility for the Sinti and Roma.

However, the documentation and culture centre is also a sign that a minority, long pursued by prejudice and discrimination, is now taking its future self-confidently into its own hands. The Central Council of German Sinti and Roma has its home here. Both are working together. The Central Council, supported by the centre, has always followed a consistent policy to represent the interests of the ethnic group in the many years of its existence—and, I would like to add—



President of the German Sinti and Roma, Romani Rose (l.) with President of the Federal Republic of Germany Roman Herzog.

not until the end of the seventies, when the Sinti and Roma organised themselves, did a time of rethinking begin to develop. Even today, we have still not reached our target.

I hope that the centre will constitute a place of openness, of enlightenment, that it will help to break down the reservation other people are met with.

What is important, is also that it is oriented to the future. The great effort put into documenting, archiving and exhibiting will only be worthwhile when it contributes to a better future. The more people see this exhibition—and future ones—the stronger the consciousness will become, this is what I am hoping for, that the Sinti and Roma belong to us, are part of our society and, with their special culture, are an enrichment for this land.

It will be the future task of the centre and the exhibition to be a place of learning

this policy has always been very self-confident and successful.

For us all, I hope this centre becomes a symbol for a good future. And then we will have learnt our lesson from the past.