



Internal News:

Ethno-political conflicts in Europe

The OSCE and minority protection

(Copenhagen) Prior to the OSCE conference in Copenhagen, the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) jointly with the German and Danish minorities in the border area organised a seminar on the role of national minorities in search of stability in Europe. Prof. Asbjörn Eide, President of the UN workgroup on minority issues illustrated the current status of UN efforts towards minority protection; after summarising the range of international legal and political instruments, Silvo Devetak from Maribor (Slovenia) presented major issues involved in compiling the Charter for Security in Europe which the OSCE has to observe and continually promote.

In the final plenary discussion, FUEN President Romedi Arquint (Switzerland) emphasised the role of international organisations as partners for state institutions. As rapporteur for minority issues at the Council of Europe, Henning Gjellerod (Denmark) also assessed the international mechanisms of the Council of Europe for the protection of minorities as a first significant step, providing that these would be signed by all members of the Council of Europe and implemented in the sense they are meant. However, further measures, like the supplementary protocol to human rights—still gathering dust in a drawer—would have to follow. Anke Sporendonk and Sigfried Matlock, representatives of the two minorities in the German–Danish border region, illustrated the mutually agreeable yet not totally conflict-free coexistence with the respective majority population which is based to a not inconsiderable extent on the German–Danish treaty and generously interpreted regulations granting a high degree of autonomy in educational and cultural fields.

In a status analysis of the Baltic region, Dr Priit Järve from the European Centre for Minority Issues in Flensburg sees substantial potential for conflict in the still unsolved question of citizenship for the Russians, a previous majority now forming a minority, and consequently, in the relationship of Estonia and Latvia to Russia.

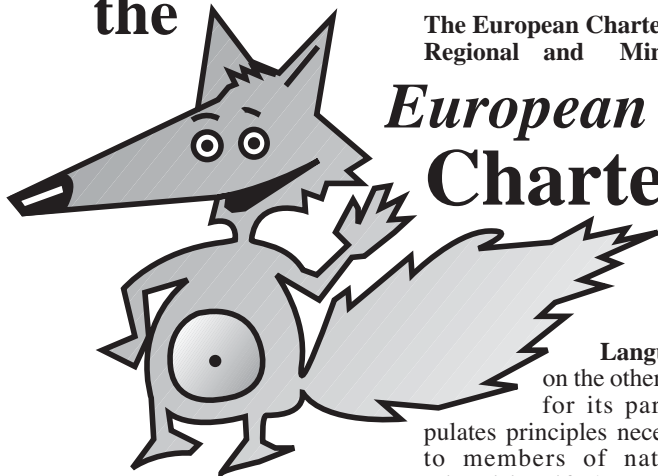
As the matter is currently topical, the Hungarian representative of the Hungarians in the Romanian parliament Dr Ferene Peesi spoke in Copenhagen. He agreed with Romanian's ambassador Dr Grete Tartler Tabarasi that a stabilisation of the coalition government and isolation of fundamental nationalistic currents were of the greatest significance in consolidating the democracy in Romania.

The FUEN Presiding Committee considers the ethno-political conflict potential to be one of the greatest risks to stability in Europe also in future. The committee compiled a policy document for the attention of the OSCE containing concrete demands and expectations placed on national and international organisations concerned with minority policies.

The Charter of Local Self-Government and Protection of National Minorities

Based upon the preliminary work of the CPLRE, the Council of Europe drew up the European Charter of Local Self-Government in the Eighties which came into force on 1st September 1988 and which includes the common European standards designed to further and protect the rights and liberties of local corporations. The message of the Charter of Local Self-Government is

Have you heard of the



of Local Self-Government?

as follows: all matters of public interest which can most usefully be dealt with at the lowest level of democratic institutions - municipalities, regions - should also be able to be undertaken by the citizens of these institutions. The key framework conditions for the smooth running of the local autonomous body are then set out in a few articles.

The Charter of Local Self-Government refers to the democratically legitimised institutions such as municipality or region. It determines the vehicles in which political decision-making processes should take place. These concern such areas as health, environment, economy, education, culture and administration, therefore

major, politically relevant political areas. Only certain areas are of specific or vital interest to members of national minorities. The important thing is that all interest groups are represented in such political structures and that majority decisions taken are democratically legitimised. It is of importance to the national minorities that they are involved in the general political responsibility. This prevents them from becoming outsiders or embracing separatism as states where minority protection is viewed with scepticism tend to fear.

The European Charter of Regional and Minority

European Charter

Languages on the other hand for its part stipulates principles necessary to members of national minorities if they are to protect, preserve and foster their linguistic and cultural identity. These principles are of prime significance, they cannot be left to the mercy of local majority decisions. They go beyond the reach of Local Self-Government, even beyond that of state sovereignty, by reminding the community of states about and binding it to fundamental values which are a part of Europe's legal and cultural heritage. National minorities require this assurance if they do not wish to be subjected to permanent outvoting by the majority. The European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages thus forces the majority to constructive co-operation and respect for the legitimate needs of the national minority affected.

These two instruments created by the Council of Europe therefore complement each other. The Charter of Regional and Minority

Languages had hitherto been criticised by the minorities as it failed to provide political structures for solving their problems. The question of what dimension the institutions affording Self-Government, in whatever form, should have continued to be ignored. Precisely this difficulty is now dealt with in the Charter of Local Self-Government. Conversely, the latter has been the subject of well-founded fears on the part of members of national

minorities that it offers no guarantee that their specific needs will be respected. Its combination with the Charter of Regional or Minority Languages now creates this shelter.

Those who are sceptical about the demands of the national minorities do not need to fear that, as a result of their involvement in the structures of local and regional self-government, they will warm to separatist leanings and thus jeopardise state cohesion.

FEDERALISM, REGIONALISM, LOCAL AUTONOMY AND MINORITIES

FINAL DECLARATION

(in short; more see p. 06)

1. The participants in the Conference on Federalism, Regionalism, Local Autonomy and Minorities, held by the Congress of Local and regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (CLRAE) and the Friuli-Venezia-Giulia Autonomous region in Cividale del Friuli (Italy) from 24 to 26 October 1996:

A. Recommend that the CPLRE draw up a draft recommendation to governments indicating:

- a. under what circumstances - for instance, ethnically homogenous areas, strong sense of belonging to a minority community, linguistic and cultural traditions that differ from those of the majority population, or the presence of different minority groups, etc - the relevant minorities should have the right to an appropriate form of self-government (municipal, provincial, regional), it being ensured that they continue fully to respect the territorial integrity of the state concerned and remain loyal to it;
- b. the powers which the autonomous authorities concerned should, as a rule, be granted, as well as the right of such authorities to cooperate and form consortia in conformity with article 10 of the European Charter of Local Self-Government;
- c. the means for ensuring that minorities' local and regional self-government actually help to integrate them into their national communities and European society as a whole, rather than isolating them from the latter;
- d. the criteria to be applied when defining the geographic limits of the autonomous authorities, where the concentration of the minority population justifies the establishment of such authorities;
- e. the need to consult, if appropriate through their representative organisations, the members of the minorities concerned, with regard to the granting, extension or any other modification of minority self-government at local or regional level in order to reach a consensus among all those concerned;
- f. the forms local self-government should take and the institutions it should involve, as well as the way they should operate, when geographical, economic, social or historical factors mean that the territory of the authority concerned is populated by groups from different ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural backgrounds;
- g. ways and means of promoting transfrontier cooperation between local and regional authorities in whose territory a significant number of minority members is concentrated;

B. Also recommend that the CPLRE take account of this declaration when finalising the draft European Charter of Regional Self-Government.



DECLARATION

THE PROTECTION OF MINORITIES AND EUROPEAN SECURITY The FUEN proposal for the European Security Charter

- 1 The FUEN is convinced that the OSCE process is the appropriate framework for considering the constructive impact that minorities could and should have on European security, stability and prosperity. The minority issue has become a top-priority political and security problem for the countries concerned, as well as for the international relations. The feasibility of linking the unresolved minority issues with new security risks, such as are drug trafficking, terrorism, and proliferation of weapons for mass destruction should not be excluded from the consideration. This is one more reason why the minority issue should be considered as one of the basic elements of the European Security Charter.
- 2 The fostering (or where necessary renewal) of faith in the values of multicultural, multiethnic and multireligious society is the essential issue at stake in the process of building democracy and justice in any society, and must find an adequate response in the European Security Charter. In order to reaffirm this notion in the societies concerned, fresh ethnic policies are needed. In terms of education the Hague Recommendations Regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities sponsored by the OSCE HCNM provide a solid foundation for achieving this goal. In addition, anything contributing to the spread of misunderstanding and hate between ethnic and religious groups should be removed from school curricula.

The most fruitful partnership between majorities and minorities can be created if minorities are given the chance to take part in the decision-making process at all levels of society, particularly when decisions are passed on matters which define their status and rights. Commendable suggestions in this respect were adopted at the 42nd Congress of FUEN held in Pörtlach (Austria) on May 10, 1997 (see the adjoined text). Moreover, the time is ripe to consider various models of ethnic autonomy as one way to regulate minority issues and promote stability and security.
- 3 Regional commitments to the rights of minorities could have a positive impact on the stability of particular areas of Europe. This is why the states concerned should support international co-operation of this kind, which is also one of the most effective ways of achieving European cohesion and integration.
- 4 The adoption of standards on minority rights, their supervision and the development of pragmatic programmes contributing to peace and stability in Europe are three main tasks facing the European international organisations. With regard to new standards, it is not necessary to reaffirm the need to accept finally the protocol on minority rights in the European Convention on Human Rights. All the European states participating in the OSCE are also members of the Council of Europe, so the inclusion of this demand in the European Security Charter can be recommended. In addition, mechanisms should be developed within the OSCE aimed not only at preventing or managing conflicts but also at observing and supervising the implementation of commitments which are contained in the documents adopted subsequently by the CSCE and OSCE.

Copenhagen, 16.12.1997

Meeting of Slavic FUEN-member organisations in Cesky Teslin/Czeski Cieszyn

At the beginning of October, Slavic FUEN member organisations organised a seminar on minority protection in Europe. The council of Polish people in the Czech Republic, a full FUEN member since May, had extended an invitation to this seminar. Apart from

FUEN member organisations, other associations of minorities from Eastern Europe also attended and showed their interest in cooperating with FUEN. Guests at the seminar were Wawrzyniec Fójcik delegate of the Czech parliament and

President of the council of Polish people, FUEN Vice-President Dr Ludwig Elle and Dr Andrej Sulitka, Secretary for national minority issues in the respective Czech ministry. Five speeches and detailed discussions chiefly revolved around the opportunities for

seminar were able to visit, and other schools offering Polish as a subject. In contrast to this, Fójcik considered opportunities for political activity, the use of the Polish language in administration, etc. as insufficient. He called for compilation and publication of a complex catalogue defining rights for members of national minorities in the Czech Republic.

expressing and implementing the specific interests of national minorities in Eastern Europe. Of course, the experience and problems of minorities in the host country played a significant role. For example, the council of Polish people were able to show their extensive scope for cultural activities (which guests were actually able to see) and how the Polish minority has extensive opportunities for teaching their native tongue with the state Polish grammar school in Cesky Teslin/Czceki Cieszyn, which participants in the

Andrej Sulitka, a representative of the government, paid tribute to FUEN's work, mentioning the organisation of the coming Congress on Nationalities in **Prague (20-24 May 1998)**. He also announced that the Czech Republic was preparing for ratification of the framework agreement on minority protection and underscored the Czech government's view on minority protection as being based on the strict principle of equality for all citizens. Other speakers included historian Dr Viktor Gankiewicz from the University of Simferopol, Vice-Chairman of the council of Polish people Bronislaw Walicki, Ms Mag. Francziska Chocholác from the council of Polish people and FUEN Vice-President Dr Ludwig Elle.

Council of Europe Human Rights Dept. <http://www.dhdirhr.coe.fr>

Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

Opening for Signature: 01.02.1995 Conditions: 12 Ratifications

Entry into force • date: 01.02.1998

Member States	Date of Signature	Date of Raification	Date of entry into force	*
AL Albania	29.06.1995			
AND Andorra				
A Austria	01.02.1995			
B Belgium				
BG Bulgaria	09.10.1997			
HR Croatia	06.11.1996	11.10.1997	01.02.1998	
CY Cyprus	01.02.1995	04.06.1996	01.02.1998	
CZ Czech Republic	28.04.1995			
DK Denmark	01.02.1995	22.09.1997	01.02.1998	D
EST Estonia	02.02.1995	06.01.1997	01.02.1998	D
FIN Finland	01.02.1995	03.10.1997	01.02.1998	
F France				
D Germany	11.05.1995	10.09.1997	01.02.1998	D
GR Greece	22.09.1997			
H Hungary	01.02.1995	25.09.1995	01.02.1998	
IS Iceland	01.02.1995			
IRL Ireland	01.02.1995			
I Italy	01.02.1995	03.11.1997	01.03.1998	
LV Latvia	11.05.1995			
FL Liechtenstein	01.02.1995	18.11.1997	01.03.1998	D
LT Lithuania	01.02.1995			
L Luxembourg	20.07.1995			D
M Malta	11.05.1995			
MD Moldova	13.07.1995	20.11.1996	01.02.1998	
NL Netherlands	01.02.1995			
N Norway	01.02.1995			
PL Poland	01.02.1995			
P Portugal	01.02.1995			
RO Romania	01.02.1995	11.05.1995	01.02.1998	
RUS Russia	28.02.1996			
RSM San Marino	11.05.1995	05.12.1996	01.02.1998	
SK Slovakia	01.02.1995	14.09.1995	01.02.1998	
SLO Slovenia	01.02.1995			
E Spain	01.02.1995	01.09.1995	01.02.1998	
S Sweden	01.02.1995			
CH Switzerland	01.02.1995			
MK Macedonia*	25.07.1996	10.04.1997	01.02.1998	D
TR Turkey				
UA Ukraine	15.09.1995			
GB United Kingdom	01.02.1995			
Non Member States				
AR Armenia	25.07.1997			
BY Belarus				

* The former Yugoslav Rep. of Macedonia

* R=Reservations; D=Declarations; T=Territorial Declarations

Modest success for indigenous peoples

The workgroup of the UN Human Rights Commission has, in its third round of negotiations to compile a declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples, shows the first modest signs of success. However, the declaration will not be passed until far into the future. The indigenous peoples' demand for self-determination still remains a bone of contention.

The Romanians in Croatia

On 18th February 1994 a Treaty of friendship and cooperation was signed at Bucharest, between the governments of Rumania and the Republic of Croatia, providing for the assistance, by the respective States, of the minority groups living in

minority due to assimilation by the Croatian population is ongoing and occurring at an even faster rate than in the past, since compulsory school attendance and the invasiveness of the Croatian-language mass media has made the survival

groups, also in favour of the Istro-Romanians.

In this respect, we wish to expressly quote the documents by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the European Charter of Regional and

Rumanian minorities in Istria (about 1.000 persons who declared themselves Rumanian communities in the Mura and Drava Valleys, who are legally gathered into a national association since 1995, with headquarters at Pribislavec. Therefore, we appeal to the FUEN so that, in accordance with art. 3 of its charter, it may contact the Croatian and Rumanian governments to request the application of the laws and bilateral agreements in favour of the minorities, amongst which the Rumanian minority in Croatia, and so that it may raise the issue before the international organisations such as the Council of Europe, the Council of Europe's ad hoc Committee for the Protection of National Minorities, the Council of Europe's Committee for Culture and Education, the Office of the OSCE High Commissioner for national Minorities at the Hague, the European Parliament's Committee for Juridical Affairs and the Rights of Citizens and all the other organisations dealing with the protection of minorities.

by
Emil Ratiu
(Asociata Culturale Lu Istro-Rumeni »Andrei Glavina«)



On microphone: Emil Ratiu (Asociata Culturale Lu Istro-Rumeni »Andrei Glavina«)

both countries.

To date, this treaty, which was ratified by the Rumanian parliament in September 1994, has remained unenforced, with regard to the Rumanians of Croatia, who are not legally recognised as a minority ethnic and linguistic group in Croatia and have no cultural institutions, Church or schools in their own language.

The Istro-Romanians language school ceased to exist in 1925 following the death of the great teacher ANDREI GLAWINA, and the two young Rumanians sent by their community to study as teachers in Rumania, in 1935, never returned to their country, prevented from doing so first by the war and then by the Communist regime established in Yugoslavia. The administrative autonomy of the Istro-Romanians - embodied in the Istro-Rumanian municipality of Valdarsa - was abolished in 1943, following the coming to power of TITO and the Communists, who refused the community any rights. The process of rapid disappearance of the ethnic

of an ethnic minority with no schools or mass media in its own language a virtually impossible feat.

Thus, we are appealing to the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) - whose task it is to protect small minorities unprotected by any laws - to request the application of the international and national laws on the protection of minorities and small ethnic

Minority Languages of 5th November 1992, the Framework Convention for Minorities in Europe of 1995 and the bilingual agreements and treaties, such as the above mentioned Rumanian-Croatian Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation of 18th February 1994 and the Agreement on Cooperation in the fields of education, culture and science between the Government of Rumania and the Government of the Republic Croatia, signed on 19th May 1993 (articles 2 & d, 4 and 15).

All the above mentioned treaties and agreements provide for school teaching in the language of the minority and have been punctually applied in Rumania in favour of the Croatian minority (about 3.000 persons), while they remain unenforced for the

Romania's coalition government retains power

Romania's coalition government experienced a crisis at the beginning of December 1997. One reason was the law on education: assurances officially agreed upon for the benefit of the Hungarian ethnic group threatened to crumble away, and military intervention in the small town of Odorhei in Transylvania aggravated the atmosphere additionally. Fortunately, the conflict was resolved and the association of Hungarians remains represented in the government, which can be regarded as a sign of political maturity and increasing understanding for peaceful coexistence between the various national groups in Romania.

5th Congress of Hungarians in Romania



FUEN Vice-President Joseph von Komlóssy (see photo p. 1) attended the 5th Congress of the Romániai Magyar Demokrata Szövetség (RMDSZ) from 3rd-4th October 1997. The delegates discussed the following problem complexes:

- the Romanian education system for Hungarian schools
- the non-reopening of the Hungarian Bolyai University
- Romania's settlement policy, and
- the lack of media presence for the Hungarians in Romania

(see order form on p. 6)

Astronaut Jean L. Chretien: Breton of the Year 1997



Jean L. Chretien

photo: armor magazine

Every year, the Breton magazine AMOR MAGAZINE calls upon its readers to elect the BRETON OF THE YEAR and three other Bretons whom they consider have rendered outstanding services to Brittany in the course of the year.

In December 1997, the winner was Jean-Loup CHRETIEN, astronaut and air force general, who was presented with the prize in LORIENT town hall (major port in Southern Brittany) at the end of December.

J. L. Chretien undertook three flights into space, the last one on the famous American space shuttle Atlantis. In addition, he spent one month in the Russian MIR space station. This Breton carries our flag, the GWENN HA DU, way beyond earthly borders and has stated in

several interviews that he feels himself to be 'far more a Breton than a Frenchman'. He also calls for young Bretons to emphasise their Celtic origins as their 'cousins' in Ireland, Scotland and Wales do.

J. L. Chretien is now 59 years old and lives in HOUSTON in the USA. He returns to his Breton roots in MONTROULEZ (French: Morlaix, on the northern coast of Brittany) as frequently as possible.

And he finally added: 'When we Celts meet in the United States, we are all first cousins'. When he disembarked from the space shuttle, he was greeted by BAGAD de BINIOU (a group of Breton bagpipers).

A university in Bolzano

Thanks not least to the energetic efforts of Governor Durnwalder, the Free University of Bolzano will finally become reality. It is due to be inaugurated in 1998 with the faculties of educational and economic science. The university is to work in German and Italian (with a number of lectures in English) and to span a bridge between the German and Italian-speaking cultures, thus taking on supraregional significance.



AVAILABLE

from the FUEN Secretary General:

STATUS REPORTS

Status reports from Slovakia	1995-09
Status reports from Slovakia	1996/97
Status reports from the Carpathian region	1996-03
Status reports about the Crimean Tartars	1996-10
Status reports from Romania	1997-10

FUEN-Now ACTUEL

With brief features on:

No. 53 Hungarians and Germans in Romania	1995-07
No. 54 Bretons in France	1995-09
No. 54 Slovenes in Italy	1995-09
No. 55 Sorbs in Germany	1996-02
No. 55 Carinthian Slovenes in Austria	1996-02
No. 56 Rhaeto-Romanics in Switzerland	1996-07
No. 57 Sinti and Roma in Germany	1996-10
No. 58 Crimean Tartars in the Ukraine	1996-12
No. 59 Carpathian Germans in Slovakia	1997-04
No. 60 Finns in Sweden	1997-07
No. 61 Aromanians in the Balkan States	1997-10

DOCUMENTATIONS

41st Congres of Nationalities Timisara/RO	1996
42nd Congres of Nationalities Pörschach/A	1997
DK - København: Stability or Instability	1997-12

RESOLUTIONS

of the FUEN Assembly of Delegates	
Cividale dal Friuli	1996-12

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43th FUEN Congress on Nationalities:
 20 to 24 May 1998 in PRAGUE / Czech Republic