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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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...after the anniversary congress 1999:

How have we profited from belonging to the FUEN

By Tadeusz S. Willan, Chairman of the Masurian Society
Excerpts from Storchepost 1999/06, p. 30 ff.

...Thanks to connections with minorities in other countries, we were no longer so gullible and naive but became more realistic. We protected our members from exaggerated expectations and bitter disappointment.

Thanks to the Federal Union of European Nationalities, we also found our way to non-German national minorities. We learned to understand, appreciate and respect them. We have grown fond of the Karachay people from the distant Circassian Republic in the Russian Federation. We got to know the Aromanians in Macedonia, Albania and Bulgaria. We discovered that there were Greek ministers, Serb academy members, Bulgarian state award-winners, Romanian Olympic Games participants, Macedonian and Albanian peoples' heroes who were Aromanian. But no one was to know this. Or they themselves were not inclined to emphasise this too much. Because the Vlachs, as they are also called, have not been too well appreciated in the states they have settled in for a good 100 years. We felt deep sympathy for the Tartars returning to the Crimea. We admire their courage and inextinguishable love for their home.

Under the influence of FUEN, we acquired emotional maturity to maintain good connections with the national minorities we live in the same country with. Together, we work with the Ukrainians, White Russians, Lithuanians and Jews living in Poland. White Russian authors and journalists take part in our cultural events, Ukrainian and Lithuanian songs sound

out, White Russian and Jewish prose is read. For us, FUEN is a window to the world in the true sense of the word. The invitations to congresses, seminars and meetings opened up the world for us; we have been able to see German, Hungarian, Romanian, Czech and German, Hungarian and Romanian, Czech and Swiss, Italian and Austrian and now Danish cities and enter into contact with life out there, outside our region and our own country. Such journeys educate and enrich, they change the attitude of people, perfect their personalities. I think that, particularly thanks to these trips, those who undertook them have become able to better and more cleverly lead the ethnic groups they represent.

New structure in the FUEN-Secretariat

At the 44th Congress on Nationalities from 12 to 16 May this year in Haderslev, Armin Nickelsen said farewell after 12 years in the office of the Secretary General. His speech is included in the congress documentation (see ways of ordering on p. 4). How are things going to be in the FUEN Secretary General's office without a Secretary General?

Armin Nickelsen has suggested a method of restructuring to the Presiding Committee by which his work can be delegated to several persons in future. The Presiding Committee approved this proposal and agreed to it unanimously. It involves President Romedi Arquint taking over all travel issues, i.e. foreign policy matters in Strasbourg at the Council of Europe and European Parliament meetings as well as the responsibility for arranging and reporting on future fact-finding missions. He will, of course, be supported by the Vice-Presidents in these matters. Former Secretary Frank Nickelsen will manage the Secretary General's office as a director and be supported by an additional part-time person in the office.

Slovakia no longer in Council of Europe monitoring

On 21 September 1999, the Parliamentary Assembly at the Council of Europe released Slovakia from monitoring although there are still considerable shortcomings both in legislation and in practice as far as minority groups are concerned. In particular, the law governing the media from Meciar's day should be revised.

FUEN arranges event on the OSCE implementation conference in Vienna

During the implementation conference of the OSCE from 20 September to 1 October 1999, FUEN organised an NGO event on issues of national minorities and their



DDr. Erhard Busek

significance in Europe on 23.9.99. After Copenhagen in 1997 and Warsaw in 1998, it was the third FUEN event of its kind. This time the theme was 'Accomplishments and Prospects' of the minorities in Austria. The main speech 'Europe needs its minorities' held by ex-Vice-Chancellor Dr Eduard Busek



VIENNA
REVIEW Conference

Vienna, 20 Sept. - 1 Oct 1999

aroused great attention. Subsequently, the minorities in Austria had the opportunity to highlight their specific situations. The event, held by the Austrian centre for ethnic groups, was rounded off by a statement from the Department of National Minorities of the Austrian government. This event was documented and can be obtained shortly from the FUEN General Secretary.

further information see page 2

Excerpts from the speech by Romedi Arquint as the FUEN contribution to the NGO meetings

FUEN recognises the significant role the OSCE plays in the issue of national minorities. Experience in recent years has clearly illustrated how this international organisation possesses various excellent instruments allowing it to fulfil a stabilising function, on the one hand between purely military scope for intervention and political capabilities of the international community and, on the other hand, the chaotic developments in crisis areas. The experience, however, has also proven that the means and instruments available to the OSCE are not adequate.

Let me describe this briefly using Georgia as an example with which our organisation is currently concerning itself. We know that the political situation in Georgia at present is anything but stable (the Abkhazia issue with around 300,000 refugees, Ossetia and Ajaria), we are aware of the problem of the Turkish Meskhets and their repatriation in their home, we know about the desolate economic situation in the country. To be able to provide efficient preventive measures here and defuse the conflicts, the OSCE would have to extend its field of activity. Apart from the UN troops, a strengthening of security in the crisis area, coordinated economic aid, assistance with the reconstruction of a functioning legal system and political institutions, should be mentioned.



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Recently the press reported that the USA had increased military aid for Georgia. This may be justified for geopolitical strategic reasons, but becomes absurd if the minimal economic and political fundamentals are not sustainably improved. Military presence does not suffice, ladies and gentlemen. It would be tragic if after escalation, in this country full of tension, the international community would again have to face the reproach of having failed to function at the time when preventive measures to create stability could still have been possible.

As a consequence not ultimately gained from the experience in Kosovo before the war broke out there has to be an appeal for the OSCE to receive increased means and responsibilities in order to:

actively initiate preventive measures without delay with sufficient financial and personnel support, be able to secure coordination for adequate inner security in the area of activity. FUEN already expressed these and other demands in their resolution submitted to the OSCE in Copenhagen in 1997.

Visit by FUEN: delegation in the Dolomite Ladins

A draft resolution compiled by the Union generale di Ladins dia Dolomites and submitted to the FUEN Assembly of Delegates in Haderslev was the reason for a visit to the Dolomite Ladins. It revolved around the questions of territorial integrity and political representation of the Dolomite Ladins. It was resolved in mutual agreement not to present the draft to the Assembly of Delegates although a delegation from the FUEN Presiding Committee was to attempt gain an impression of the general situation of the Dolomite

which it sees as a basis for discussion for further talks.



Ilda Pizzinini, UGL-President

A future-oriented policy in favour of the Ladin language and cultural community should concentrate on the following problems:

The inadequate situation of the Ladins outside the South Tyrol province by no means corresponds to international standards in the fields of education, state-promoted media, use of the Ladin language as an official language and on signs.

The actual inequality of the

implemented with difficulty), but on a coordinated solution of issues affecting the Ladins by all instances concerned in joint responsibility.

The Ladin organisations, primarily the Union generale but also the political parties of LADINS and SVP (Southern Tyrolean People's Party), should base their conceptual strategy on the European documents and push forward the European language charter. Sound political representation in all provinces and regions concerned (e.g. by reform of the constituencies).

Striving for a coordinated overall Ladin policy on language and culture. Stronger weighting on Ladin to guarantee sufficient knowledge of the spoken and written language at all levels of education.

News from the ethnic groups Brittany/Breizh

The latest news is not particularly pleasant as, once again, the French government is playing all the tricks it can to refuse to apply the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages.

However, there is considerable resistance to this subject and a large majority of the population as well as the elected representatives from Brittany are demonstrating for democratic implementation of the European directives on minorities. The Breton people want to retain their language and identity.

Nevertheless, this does not all point in the wrong direction: we have just heard that the French TV channel TF1 will be putting a Breton channel on the air called TV Breizh next March or April. A significant group of entrepreneurs and Parisian personalities of Breton origin are said to have agreed to take part in this historic event, which in our eyes is of major significance for the survival of the Breton identity and language.



The FUEN delegation: Dr. Ludwig Elle (3rd.f.r.), H.H. Hansen (r.) and Romedi Arquint (2nd.f.r.) visits the European Akademy Bolzano and its director Dr. Werner Stuflesser (2nd.f.l.).

Ladins on the spot.

The FUEN delegation comprising President Romedi Arquint and Vice-Presidents Ludwig Elle and Hans Heinrich Hansen had the opportunity to judge the position of the Dolomite Ladins on the three days of their visit. It came to the following conclusions

Ladin lingual and cultural community due to administrative and political separation not caused by itself can only be resolved by positive discrimination (i.e. not taking anything away from the South Tyrolean Ladins, but giving the others more). The focus should not be on regional restructuring (which could only be

Thirty years of AIDLCM

On 23, 24 and 25 July 1999, the congress celebrating thirty years of AIDLCM took place in Montroulez (Morlaix) in Brittany. A total of 70 representatives from the whole of Europe took place in the presence of the delegate for the Morlaix constituency from the French national assembly who opened the discussions and the first attachÉ to the mayor of the town.

In their speeches, these two high-ranking personalities spoke in favour of promoting minority languages, condemned the attitude of France's central government on the European Charter for Minority Languages and declared themselves willing to foster the teaching of the Breton Celtic language in Brittany with all means possible.

Since it was established, AIDLCM has remained in close and friendly contact with FUEN, and our Breton Vice-President Per Le Moine took this congress celebrating the thirtieth anniversary as an opportunity to express the great interest our Union shows in the activities of our colleagues. The President of AIDLCM, incidentally, who currently represents a Belgian ethnic group, warmly greeted the presence of our Union at this event.

The congress participants were presented with several resolutions that confirm our own activities and point in the direction of the work FUEN has been carrying out for half a century: strength comes from unity and the resolutions passed by AIDLCM will support our own activities. Increasingly close connections between the various associations supporting rights for minorities are a pledge to success for us: let us hope that the governments recognise that, now and in future, our work is a factor for peace in Europe and in the world.

Fact-Finding-Mission in Kosovo and Montenegro

11th to 15th July 1999

On behalf of the the FUEN its Vicepresident, Bela Tonkovic visits the Autonomous Province Kosovo and the Republic Montenegro in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

I KOSOVO

Kosovo is one of two autonomous provinces within the Republic of Serbia (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia). It lies in the south of the country and borders on Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro.

Kosovo covers an area of 10,887 km² and its capital is Pristina. Since the Albanians, the majority of the population, did not take part in the census of 1991, the exact number of inhabitants is not known. It is estimated that some 2 million people were living in Kosovo at that time, approx. 80% of them Albanians, 11% Serbs, the remainder Romanies, Slav Muslims, Turks and Croats. The majority are of the Islamic faith, while the Serbs are orthodox Christians and a small section of the Albanian and Croatian communities are Roman Catholics. It is impossible to estimate how many people live there today.

After the constitution of Yugoslavia was introduced in 1974, Kosovo, like the northern province of Vojvodina, was granted extensive autonomy. However, this was for the most part withdrawn by the Serbian regime under Slobodan Milosevic in 1989. In the early 1990s, the legitimate provincial government was removed and replaced by a provisional administration from Belgrade.

The Albanians were dissatisfied with Belgrade's politics and set up a parallel administration of their own which gradually organised its own health, education and tax system. They finally even established their own army, the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK).

The situation slowly deteriorated to such an extent that the Yugoslavian army occupied Kosovo. The police, paramilitary units and the Serbian nationalists perpetrated acts of terrorism and ultimately also the mass murder of Albanians, which prompted NATO to launch a military offensive (March-June 1999).

Following the signing of the treaty between NATO and Yugoslavia in early June 1999, the Yugoslavian army, police and paramilitary units withdrew in mid-June and

NATO troops under the supreme command of the UNO (KFOR) entered Kosovo. The UNO also set up a civilian administration which is not yet functioning properly.

Kosovo suffered extensive destruction throughout the crisis.



FUEN-Vicepresident
Bela Tonkovic

At present, an administrative vacuum prevails in Kosovo: the Yugoslavian administration system no longer exists and the UNO administration has not yet been organised.

According to Ms Crista Meinderma, deputy head of the UNO agency for human rights in Belgrade, who is currently working in Kosovo, her agency keeps an eye on the situation and then reports to the other UNO structures. Special attention is being given to the Serbs and Romanies in the light of their especially difficult position. Daily acts of terrorism, murder and plunder were perpetrated chiefly against Serbs and Romanies who were also driven from their homes. Members of other ethnic groups are also suffering a similar fate, albeit to a lesser extent. Bands from Albania, often armed, are involved in rioting. Peace reigns only in those places where people protected each other even before the NATO offensive.

The legal system in place up to now has lost all credibility with the Kosovo Albanians, says Volker Turk, the UNO representative for the legal system. The UNO civil administration is endeavouring to establish a multi-ethnic legal system, but is encountering grave difficulties because the judge candidates do not feel they are receiving adequate protection. A multi-ethnic police force is urgently needed. KFOR is not capable of performing the duties of a civil police force as the soldiers neither have the appropriate

training, nor are they equipped for the job. In the present situation, it is hard to put an end to the terror and to people being driven from their homes.

In some places, the local KFOR commanders have meanwhile set up a provisional local administration made up of representatives of all local ethnic groups and some, as in the village of Yanyevo (Liplyan municipality), are now working satisfactorily.

According to Momcilo Trajkovic, the copresident of the Serb People's Church Committee of Kosovo (the other copresident is Bishop Artemije), some 100,000 Serbs have fled Kosovo to date. Around 110,000 are still there, but their fate is uncertain. On 11th July 1999, this committee ceased its co-operation with the Political Council of Kosovo (put in place by the UNO) and KFOR due to the ineffective protection of Serbs. The UNO officials in Pristina regret this decision.

Security is the key issue, as Trajkovic explains. At present, the Serbs can only seek asylum within the walls of their monasteries and convents where demand for food and medicine is great. He claims that several concentration camps now exist for Serbs and others who collaborated with the former administration. People are being abducted to these camps where they are maltreated and often killed. The UNO administration has allegedly been informed of the situation. Mr. Trajkovic also laments the destruction of 15 churches, monasteries and convents, as well as other parts of the Serbian cultural heritage. If the UNO administration and KFOR do not alter this situation fast, the only people left in Kosovo will be Muslim Albanians.

It is of paramount importance that the safety of the people and of their property be guaranteed and also that multi-ethnicity be ensured at all levels

(administration, legal system, schools..).

II. MONTENEGRO

The Republic of Montenegro is the smaller republic in the Yugoslavian federation. It lies in the south of Yugoslavia and borders on Serbia, Kosovo, Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Croatia and the Adriatic Sea. It is 13,812 km² in area and its capital is Podgorica. The population numbers half a million, of which 78% are Montenegrins, 13% Slav Muslims, 7% Albanians, 1.5% Croatians and 0.5% Romanies.

The government of Montenegro includes a Ministry for the Protection of the Rights of the Members of National and Ethnic Groups (set up one year ago) and a Ministry of Confessions, in which all ethnic groups and confessions are represented.

The Minister for the Protection of the Rights of the Members of National and Ethnic Groups is Mr Luigi Luncaj, an Albanian, his deputy is Mr Orhan Sahmanovic, a Muslim, and the speaker is Ms Nedyelyka Sindik, who is

Croatian. They were selected as a result of co-operation between institutions of the various



ethnic groups and the government and are deemed to be representatives of their respective ethnic groups.

Thanks to their language difference, the Albanians have schools from before the crisis (6 secondary modern and 3 intermediate schools), programmes in Albanian on public radio and television, a private radio station and state-funded sections of two newspapers.

The Muslims have one monthly and one six-monthly magazine which is financed by their cultural associations. They have no schools, nor any radio or television programmes.

The Croats have no schools nor newspapers, no radio nor television programmes.

The Montenegrin laws guarantee all ethnic groups the freedom to establish their own political and cultural organisations. The state is not, however, obliged to finance them, nor does it.

The Albanians and Muslims have several cultural societies and institutions, the Croats only one cultural society. The Albanians and the Muslims also have their own political parties which do enjoy parliamentary representation, although no direct mandate.

The members of the ethnic groups are dissatisfied because they are only allowed to spell their names in the official Montenegrin way.

Some new laws aimed at regulating the life and the legal situation of the ethnic groups (law on NGOs, matriculation ...) are at present being drafted.

The government of Montenegro fosters the setting-up of national libraries and institutes for the language and history of each ethnic group. From the year 2000 onwards, the funds for these institutions

Romania's law on education passed

The parliament in Romania accepted the draft of the long disputed law on education before the summer break. Agreement was reached thanks to a compromise between the government and the strongest opposition party. The most strongly disputed part of the law was to allow teaching in the minority language. The Hungarians comment critically that history and geography in the sixth form may only be taught in Romanian.

Latvia: the new bill on languages meets resistance

The bill passed at the beginning of July is to ensure use of the Latvian language in most walks of life and is to overcome the dominance of the Russian language prevalent since occupation by the Soviet Union in 1940. Russians in Latvia see the law as an attempt to exclude them from public life.

are to be assured from the national budget. In addition to this, the government is planning to cofinance certain projects initiated by the ethnic groups.

All ethnic groups wish to extend their own education and information systems and cultural societies, as well as their funding from the public coffers.

An entire year after its re-formation, the only Croatian cultural society, Napredak in Donya Lstva (Tivat), still has no rooms in which to work. The society's president blames this on the personal attitude of the mayor of Tivat, who allegedly does not like the society's.

The Republic of Montenegro is a land in transition, aware of its problems and difficulties as well as being poor. Its endeavours to solve the problems are evident. Time and time again, both the ethnic groups themselves and the government stress their willingness to solve their problems in dialog and also their need for information and support.

III. CONCLUSIONS

FUEN can make a valuable contribution towards the protection of national minorities in both Kosovo and Montenegro, despite their very different situations. This was something everyone wished for expressly.

France: lingual dispute continues

French President Chirac refuses to establish the legal basis for promoting regional languages as proposed by the government. The background is the centuries-old dispute between Republican 'Jacobins' on the one hand and numerous lingual and cultural minorities on the other, like the Bretons, Flemish, Corsicans and Alsations.

Worldwatch demands the appropriate steps after the 'bloodiest century'

The report draws attention to the fact that three times as many people have died in war this century than in all the centuries between Christ's birth and 1899. Of the 103 armoured conflicts since 1899, 97 have taken place within the borders of the respective countries. 70% of all victims have been civilians, in the 1990s even 90%.



Help FUEN!

The financial situation of FUEN is rather modest. And in order to stand up for the protection of national minorities in future, it depends on financial aid (bank account, etc.).

FUEN e.V. is recognised by the inland revenue of Flensburg, tax No. 15290/F619, of 2.3.99, as a non-profit-making society and may issue the respective certificates for donations which can be submitted to the inland revenue.

When the donation has been received, you will immediately receive a certificate stating that we will only use the amount given to us for the purposes stated in our statutes.

FUEN's account is at the Union Bank Flensburg, sort code 215 201 00, No. 0012084.

AVAILABLE

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
Status reports from the former Yugoslavia	1998-03
Status reports from Georgia	1998-11

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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
No. 62 Romanians in Croatia	1997-12
No. 64 Germans in the Czech Republic	1998-05
No. 64 Polish minority in the Czech Republic	1998-05
No. 65 Romanians in the Ukraine	1998-07
No. 66 Wallachs in Bulgaria	1998-12
No. 67 Germans in Denmark	1999-03

DOCUMENTATIONS

41st Congres of Nationalities Timisara/RO	1996
42nd Congres of Nationalities Pörschach/A	1997
43rd Congres of Nationalities Prague/CZ	1998
44th Congres of Nationalities Haderslev/DK	1999
DK - København: Stability or Instability	1997-12
PL - Warszawa: The National Minorities in PL	1998-11

RESOLUTIONS

- of the FUEN Assembly of Delegates

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