



Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN)
Union Fédéraliste des Communautés Ethniques Européennes (UFCE)
Föderalistische Union Europäischer Volksgruppen e. V. (FUEV)
Федералистский Союз Европейских Национальных Меньшинств

Consultative Status
to the Council of Europe
and to the United Nations

Statut consultatif
auprès du Conseil de l'Europe
et des Nations Unies

Konsultativer Status
beim Europarat
und bei den Vereinten Nationen

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Place **TALINN / EE**
venue **WORLD Congress of the Finno-Ugrian Peoples**
Date **200408-14-16**

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me start with expressing a hearty thank you very much for the invitation and for the possibility given to the FUEN to take part for the first time in one of the WORLD Congresses of the Finno-Ugrian Peoples.

The Federal Union of the European Nationalities was founded just after the Second World War and was intended to contribute to a construction of a new peaceful Europe based on the respect, protection and the promotion of national minorities and the autochthonous peoples.

Neither the national-state conception nor the state philosophy of the Soviet system were able to realize inside of the state-borders the basic elements for an improvement of the situation of the small linguistic and ethnic communities.

It was only at the end of the nineteen eighties that in both parts of the continent the awareness for the rights of all peoples to maintain and to develop their own linguistic and cultural identity became of public interest.

And there were the ethnic civil wars – still existing both in Western Europe as exploding in the new states in transition - which forced the national and international institutions to put this problem on the political agenda and try to elaborate appropriate solutions. We are far away from having found them or implemented them in the political legal systems and in the heads of our society. Every day two of the 6000 languages of the world are disappearing, others threatened with extinction, we are still witnesses of ethnic conflicts, unreflected national-state ideology. Sometimes I ask myself if the public are not more interested in and dedicated to saving endangered animals or plants than the variety of languages and peoples.

The duty of a modern democratic state is to build up a system of principal equality for all citizens whatever language they may speak and whatever their ethnic origin and secondly to find appropriate solutions for preserving their individual and collective identity.

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The international institutions are requested to implement seriously a binding framework of rules essential for actualising the European heredity which lies in the variety of peoples and cultures.

The national minorities and the autochthonous peoples, their duty is on the one hand to hold on to their extraordinary and fantastic own history and culture, to find the way from the traditions to the needs of a modern world and on the other hand to build the bridge to the neighbours, namely the majorities.

The World Congress of the Finno-Ugrian Peoples continues to fulfil a third element: to collect and bring together the peoples of the same linguistic and cultural background, for discussing and elaborating strategies and operational ways to better cooperation in the field of the same problems and needs which have to be solved on a national level or in cooperation with the states concerned. And of course these problems are – and that is a main point for some of the Finno-Ungic populations, but not only for them, existential problems: not only is it important to maintain their linguistic and cultural heredity. The existence of peoples is first of all based on a security of economical, political and environmental foundation. The destroying of the economical living-area is the most brutal kind of liquidation of peoples. The FUEN goes in this direction: With more than 70 members who all are representatives of national minorities or ethnic autochthonous peoples, we are trying to create a common solidarity between these communities because we know: Together are we strong!

Let me end with the wish that in future the Congress of the Finno-Ugrian Peoples continues in its efforts to strengthen and to multiply the bridges, paths and crossings between the peoples and to struggle with the FUEN side by side for a new Europe where one of the most important principles would be to preserve and to improve the ethnic, linguistic and cultural variety.

Thank you for your attention!