



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

## PRESS RELEASE

### FUEN-presidium talking with the Slovenian President Danilo Türk

The presidium of FUEN (the Federal Union of European Nationalities) led by its president Hans Heinrich Hansen met President Danilo Turk in the Slovenian capital of Ljubljana, where they discussed about the current situation about minority protection in Europe.

The State President, who has done academic work in the field of minorities in Europe knows the work of FUEN well. "FUEN is the most representative federation of the autochthonous minorities in Europe – I had my first contacts with the organisation already in the seventies", said Danilo Turk, underlining the important work of the umbrella organisation.

The FUEN-delegation gave a report about the main priorities in its work and about the upcoming jubilee congress in Brussels. This gave rise to an animated discussion about issues in the field of minorities today.

The guests presented the report on the Fact Finding Mission that took place in November 2008 at the request of the Council of Carinthian Slovenes and explained to the President the conclusions from the perspective of the European umbrella organisation.

"We expressed our worries about the decreasing concern for the interests of the autochthonous minorities in Europe and asked the President to advocate minority protection amongst his European colleagues", FUEN-president Hansen emphasised after the meeting.

The presidium of FUEN, who came to Ljubljana for its presidium meeting, also met the president of the parliament Pavle Gantar and the minister for Slovenes abroad Bostjan Zeks.



Photo: the FUEN-delegation in Ljubljana

"We were given an extensive insight in the efforts of Slovenia for its minorities. Some very good provisions have been developed for the minorities that are recognised, and these can certainly be ranked amongst the best in Europe", Hans Heinrich Hansen states after the visit in Ljubljana.

Next to the official visits and the presidium meeting there was also an exchange of opinions with representatives of FUEN-member organisation the Gottscheer minority. This German-speaking minority in Slovenia is not recognised as such and fights for its own survival as a group, and is confronted again and again with prejudices and suspicion.

We are full of admiration for the dedicated members of the Gottscheer community, who have engaged with much commitment and personal costs for the survival of their minority. We want to support this more strongly in the future. Therefore we called upon the political representatives of Slovenia to recognise the Gottscheer group as a minority and to support the work they do, Hans Heinrich Hansen explicates.