



COFOE

by  FUEN

FUTURE MANIFESTO

WISHES AND DEMANDS
OF EUROPE'S MINORITIES
FOR THEIR EUROPE OF THE FUTURE

Result paper of the European minorities to be presented at the conference "The Cultural and Linguistic Diversity of Europe – Models and Challenges" within the framework of the "Conference on the Future of Europe" on 28 march in Flensburg/Flensburg, Germany



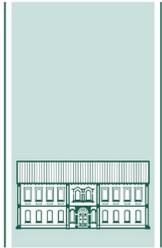
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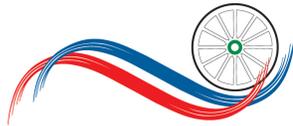
BUND DEUTSCHER



NORDSCHLESWIGER



NORDFRIISK
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Verband Deutscher Sinti und Roma e. V.
Landesverband Schleswig-Holstein



EUROPE DIRECT
Südschleswig



EUROPEAN CENTRE
FOR
MINORITY ISSUES



MINISZTERELNÖKSÉG
NEMZETPOLITIKAI ÁLLAMTITKÁRSÁG



BETHLEN GÁBOR
Alap



Gefördert durch den
Minderheitenbeauftragten
des Landes

Schleswig-Holstein
Der Ministerpräsident



INTRODUCTION

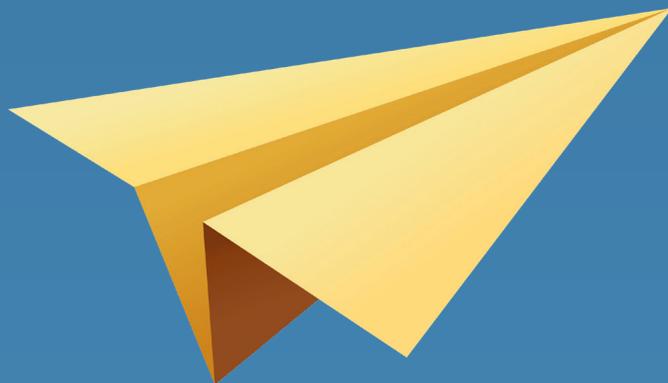
The minorities' voice in the Conference on the Future of Europe

Europe is changing, the European Union is preparing to review its priorities and it is in the fundamental interest of minorities, to participate in the series of dialogues on the future of Europe, to make proposals and to help shape the future of Europe. The series of consultations launched by the institutions of the European Union entitled "Conference on the Future of Europe" is a good opportunity to clearly formulate the goals and expectations of the autochthonous minorities in Europe.

The Federal Union of European Nationalities is organising two conferences on the future of Europe in the first half of 2022, with the participation of local and international partners.

This paper summarises the proposals developed by FUEN, the minorities in the borderland, ECMI (European Center for Minority Issues), ELEN (European Language Equality Network) and NPLD (Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity).

All these proposals have been uploaded on the official platform of the EU Commission. Please find more information on the back page of this brochure.



PROPOSALS FROM THE Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN)

EU policy framework for the benefit of minorities

Making the Copenhagen criteria a continuous obligation for all member states

Complete incorporation of the monitoring of the situation of minorities into the EU's rule-of-law monitoring mechanism

Common framework of EU minimum standards for the protection of minority rights

Unrestricted cross-border access to audio-visual services

Protection of vulnerable regional and minority languages through the establishment of a European Language Diversity Centre

Protection of minorities through legislation and the promotion of existing best practices

Strengthened cooperation between the EU and the Council of Europe

FUEN Proposals for the Conference on the Future of Europe

1. **EU policy framework for the benefit of persons belonging to autochthonous national and linguistic minorities**

The European Union is today one of the most important international guarantors of the respect of the rule of law and fundamental rights. Its founding treaties enshrine the protection of minorities and recognise the importance of cultural and linguistic diversity. Defending the rights of minorities around the world is also one of the priorities of its external action. However, the Union still lacks a consistent policy for the protection of the fundamental rights of its autochthonous national and linguistic minorities and of the cultural heritage of which they are the living depositories.

The EU should therefore build a policy framework for the benefit of persons belonging to its autochthonous national and linguistic minorities either within the framework of the current provisions of the Treaties or through the insertion of specific new provisions on the occasion of a Treaty change that follows the Conference on the Future of Europe.

2. **Incorporating the monitoring of the situation of autochthonous national and linguistic minorities into the EU's rule-of-law monitoring mechanism**

The European Union has at its disposal a broad toolbox of to promote and defend its founding values, prominent among which is the Rule of Law Mechanism, an instrument set up to support Member States in safeguarding and protecting the rule of law.

Despite the fact that in Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union it is established that the Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, the European Union does not monitor the respect for their rights in the Member States.

The European Union should therefore fully incorporate the monitoring of the situation of its autochthonous national and linguistic minorities within its rule-of-law monitoring mechanism.

3. **Protecting autochthonous national and linguistic minorities by making the Copenhagen criteria a continuous obligation for all Member States**

The Copenhagen criteria, approved by the European Council in June 1993, contains the basic criteria that every candidate country for accession to the European Union must meet, among them the protection of the rights of minorities. Though the importance of this criteria in the accession process has to be acknowledged in the case of autochthonous national and linguistic minorities, one can today see its weakening. The reason for this is the EU's lack of true credibility, because, as opposed to other political criteria such as those on democracy and the rule of law for which there is an EU monitoring system in place, the criteria on the respect for and protection of minorities are not checked against existing Member States. Therefore, the EU should urgently end the practice of applying double standards for candidate countries and Member States in this area by expressly including in the Treaties that the respect for all the Copenhagen criteria is a continuous obligation for all Member States, which is continuously monitored.

4. **Building a common framework of EU minimum standards for the protection of rights of persons belonging to national and linguistic minorities**

Despite the fact that its founding treaties enshrine the protection of minorities and recognise the importance of cultural and linguistic diversity, the Union still lacks a consistent policy for the protection of the fundamental rights of its autochthonous national and linguistic minorities.

The European Commission should therefore draw up a common framework of EU minimum standards for the protection of rights of persons belonging to national and linguistic minorities, which are strongly embedded in a legal framework guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights throughout the EU. The European Commission would thus also respect the repeated calls of the European Parliament in this regard.

5. **Protecting vulnerable regional and minority languages through the establishment of a European Language Diversity Centre**

According to the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger 186 languages from EU Member States are vulnerable or in danger and three additional languages are listed as extinct.

However, despite the fact that its Treaties list the protection of its linguistic and cultural diversity as an obligation, the European Union has no strategy, action plan, policy or adequate financing sources to protect regional or minority languages that are diminishing or are severely endangered.

The European Union should establish a European Language Diversity Centre with the technical capacity to issue recommendations to the member States and the EU institutions, as well as the creation of specific financing sources for regional or minority languages. This would be in line with what the European Parliament and EU through a successful European Citizens' Initiative have already called for.

6. **Promoting cultural diversity and minority rights through unrestricted cross-border access to audio-visual services for EU citizens**

Unrestricted cross-border access to audio-visual services is in the interest of EU citizens. The current situation in this area today is fundamentally and seriously going against EU basic principles. Unjustified geographically-based content restrictions (geo-blocking) should therefore be made illegal in the EU. This is especially important for citizens belonging to national or linguistic minorities who speak a language, which is also used in neighbouring countries. These minorities are often too small to build up comprehensive media services of their own, so access to the media of neighbouring countries with the same language is of vital interest to them.

7. **Protecting minorities through legislation, the promotion of existing best practices and stepping up against attempts to restrict their rights**

Despite being founded among others on the value of respecting the fundamental rights of minorities, the European Union still lacks a consistent policy for the protection of its autochthonous national and linguistic minorities and their cultural heritage.

In the areas, where the Treaties allow for it, the European Commission should therefore adopt legislation or include in existing legislation provisions for the protection of national and linguistic minorities.

In other areas, it should make use of the Open Method of Coordination to the fullest possible extent in order to provide recommendations to Member States or to promote the sharing of available best practices in the field of protecting the rights of autochthonous national and linguistic minorities and foster their contribution to European cultural diversity. It should also defend these minorities from any national attempts to restrict their rights and freedoms, including the teaching of their language, self-expression in their language and its official use in public life.

8. **Protecting autochthonous national and linguistic minorities through strengthened cooperation between the EU and the Council of Europe**

According to the "informal division of competences" evident in the design of the European post-war architecture of international organisations, the Council of Europe came to be the organisation dealing with human and minority rights while the European Community/European Union the one dealing with economic integration. This is how the most important instruments in the field of the rights of national and linguistic minorities in Europe were developed under the remit of the Council of Europe: the Framework Convention on the Protection of national Minorities and the Charter of Regional or Minority Languages.

However, given the subsequent transformation of the EU into an "ever closer" political union, this situation must evolve in the direction of the EU taking ownership of the Council of Europe's tasks within its borders, including them in the EU rule of law monitoring framework. A good cooperation on standards and rights between the EU and the CoE has the potential to both deepen and embed these rights in the EU and its member States, as well as to widen their scope of application.



Further proposals

Other FUEN partners have also submitted proposals to the Conference on the Future of Europe.

European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI)

Include minorities in regional development planning



Evaluate the impact of territorial reforms on minorities



Promote minority contributions to cross-border development



Reinvigorating democratic legitimacy



European Language Equality Network (ELEN)

Regulation/Directive for Endangered Languages



Regulation/ Directive for minoritised language rights



EU Languages Commissioner, with the remit to ensure minoritised language rights



Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity (NPLD)

The promotion and protection of the European linguistic diversity





HOW TO ENDORSE THE PROPOSALS



Only those proposals that find the most supporters on the official online platform will be considered politically. Therefore, we would like to ask you to:

1

REGISTER
on futureu.europa.eu

2

SUPPORT there
by clicking on the blue “Endorse” button

Every click counts –

so we would be happy if you also inform your personal network about the campaign and help us to get as many supporters as possible for a better Europe of Diversity.