

# ACTIVITY REPORT

of the Federal Union  
of European Nationalities  
for the year 2011



Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN)  
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[www.fuen.org](http://www.fuen.org)



## Five years of the Charter 2006-2011

FUEN is with 90 member organisations in 32 European countries the largest umbrella organisations of the autochthonous, national minorities in Europe. The basis of its activities is the Charter for the autochthonous, national minorities in Europe, adopted in 2006.

The Charter presents the self-conception, the basic principles and fundamental rights of the European minorities, as well as political demands and recommendations for action in regard to minority protection.

In 2011 it has been five years since the Charter for the autochthonous, national minorities was elaborated and adopted. The year 2011 and the annual congress were dedicated to the five year anniversary (2006-2011) of the adoption of the Charter.

Among its most important topics and hence the guidelines for FUEN are:

*to emphasise the positive significance of the autochthonous, national minorities for the development of the European civil society,*

*to call for the preservation of natural bilingualism and multilingualism and for the preservation of the regional or minority languages that are often threatened by extinction – as a natural richness of Europe and a factor of cultural and regional identification – by providing the necessary conditions and support,*

*to substantiate again the necessity on comprehensive minority protection and active support for minorities as the guarantors of stability, peace and diversity in Europe,*

*to bear out the need for further development of European minority protection,*

*to urgently demand that minority protection remains a central topic of a political discourse at regional, national and European level, in which the autochthonous, national minorities are included.*

In his keynote speech at the annual congress of 2011, FUEN president Hans Heinrich Hansen emphasised the importance of the Charter as guiding document in the work of FUEN. In an open forum the annual congress discussed the significance of the Charter and the European minorities for Europe. The political demands and recommendations for action enshrined in the Charter were reinforced, as they pave the way for the adequate political representation of the autochthonous, national minorities in Europe we strive for.

# South Tyrolean Minority Award 2011

A special sign of recognition for the activities of FUEN under the leadership of Hans Heinrich Hansen, who belongs to the German minority in Denmark, was the conferment of the South Tyrolean Minority Award 2011.

At a official ceremony with around 200 guests in Tyrol Castle near Meran/Merano, Hans Heinrich Hansen, the president of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), received the South Tyrolean Minority Award for the Federal Union of European Nationalities from governor Luis Durnwalder. The price comes with a sum of 20,000 Euro.

“FUEN understood that peaceful Europe can only exist over the long term if peace reaches the most remote corners”, said Durnwalder. He mentioned South Tyrol today as an example of how minority conflicts can be solved – “peaceful and only with much, much patience”.

Governor Durnwalder directly addressed FUEN-president Hans Heinrich Hansen and thanked him personally for his commitment: “we here in South Tyrol hold you in high regard for your commitment, also for our region, for the Ladins as well as for all those minorities all over Europe. I know of the great voluntary engagement you invest and how many kilometres you travel



Governor Durnwalder, FUEN-president Hans Heinrich Hansen and Vice-governor Bergner.

Photo: Press office of the land South Tyrol

through Europe acting for the minorities – and I speak on behalf of the minorities in Europe when I thank you for your achievements”, said Luis Durnwalder.

Hans Heinrich Hansen thanked South Tyrol for this great honour and considered it as encouragement for the – often critical – monitoring of the minority policies of the European Union, the regions and states of Europe by the largest organisation of civil society representing the autochthonous minorities.

## FUEN Annual Congress of 2011

The annual congress of FUEN in 2011 took place from 1 – 4 June 2011, at the Burgenland-Croats in Austria in Eisenstadt/Željezno. Around 180 guests from more than 20 European countries responded to the invitation from their umbrella organisations – the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) and its member organisation Hrvatsko kulturno društvo. The Congress was supported by the Federal Ministry of the Interior of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Land of Burgenland.

The focus of the Congress was on the situation of the Roma in Europe. With speeches, a panel discussion and a working group the situation of the Roma as an autochthonous minority in Eu-

rope was discussed. The result of all this was the adoption of the “Eisenstadt Declaration”.

In the light of recent developments an urgent appeal was addressed to the Federal Government of Austria in Vienna. The reason was the revised Minority Act, which was elaborated totally without the involvement of the Burgenland Croats. This was criticised by the congress in a clear protest letter. Also the chairman of the Committee of Experts of the European Language Charter, Prof. Oeter, gave Austria a very modest mark from the perspective of the Council of Europe for its compliance with the European standards.

The Romanian Minister Borbély – belonging to



the Hungarian minority and FUEN-member organisation RMDSZ – used his speech to the delegates to promote the idea to consider within FUEN to start together a Citizens’ Initiative, which has become possible with the Lisbon Treaty. By gathering one million signatures such a Citizens’ Initiative on the European level can be realised. The delegates of FUEN agreed to look into such a minority citizens’ initiative.

A topical conclusion of the meeting in Eisenstadt took place with the speech by Dr. Valentin Inzko, UN High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina and EU Special Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, who also is a delegate of FUEN in his function as chairman of the Carinthian Slovenes. In a highly acclaimed speech the diplomat gave a very critical record of the past years in regard to the political elites in Bosnia and Herzegovina and looked with pessimism to

the future. However, the civic engagement of the citizens and the general potential of the people in Bosnia and Herzegovina was strongly emphasised by Dr. Inzko.

[www.congress2011.fuen.org](http://www.congress2011.fuen.org)



FUEV-Congress in Eisenstadt/ Željezno

## The Focus of FUEN

The congress marked the beginning of the involvement of FUEN in three main subject areas: Roma in Europe, the establishment of a centre of expertise for the European minorities and the networking initiative in the field of regional and minority languages.

### FUEN Project Solidarity with the Roma

The 10 to 12 million Roma in Europe are amongst the most excluded sections of the population on our continent and they partly live under inhumane conditions.

In the very complex issue of the Roma, FUEN aligns itself to the position of the European Parliament, which stated in its resolution on the Roma Strategy of February 2011 that the Roma in Europe are very heterogeneous groups and that therefore there cannot be only one strategy. We underline that together with the different civil society representatives common concepts will have to be elaborated in the field of issues of the Roma minorities. For this purpose FUEN started a pilot-project supported by the Hermann Niermann Foundation.

The goal of FUEN is to make use of the specific experiences, strategies and achievements of the autochthonous, national minorities in Europe, in order to work on the issue of the Roma. There are several examples for the solution of minority issues, which can be consulted as source of inspiration for the problems of the Roma.

Furthermore FUEN as civil society representative of the European minorities is based on the principle of “get help to help yourselves”. As a first conclusion the “Eisenstadt Declaration



FUEV-Congress in Eisenstadt/ Željezno

– Solidarity with the Roma” was adopted at the annual congress 2011, entailing concrete recommendations for action addressed to all relevant national governments and European decision makers. FUEN and its members undertake to make, within their power, an active contribution to solving this biggest European challenge in the field of minorities.

Based on the “Eisenstadt Declaration”, further development of a European project will be pursued, including the development of a concept for using and adapting the potential of the autochthonous, national minorities for working on the Roma-problems in Europe.

## FUEN Centre of Expertise

Together with member organisation Sydslesvigsk Forening and with the support of the Danish Parliament FUEN launched another new project: the establishment of a centre of expertise of the minorities. The South Schleswig-Committee of the Danish Parliament provided funding for the elaboration of a feasibility study on how to realise this project.

The main goal is:

To create a centre of expertise and information, which will become the European access point for questions and knowledge about the minorities in Europe as well as for questions, concrete challenges from the many European minorities,

To create an interface between research, politics and representatives of minorities and focus on the interests of the practitioners – the minorities in Europe,

To establish at its core a European political think-tank, where the search for approaches for solutions and supporting the minorities are combined.

The plan was presented during a parliamentary lunch in the European Parliament in June 2011.

## FUEN Networking Initiative

In 2011 FUEN launched a new networking initiative in the field of regional and minority languages. Since 2009, FUEN has been active in the field of regional and minority languages with its Network for Multilingualism and Linguistic Diversity, acronym RML2future, which has been funded by the European Commission ([www.rml2future.eu](http://www.rml2future.eu)).

After the self-dissolution of EBLUL-Europe there are three networks now that are funded by the European Commission and work for the interests of the regional or minority languages, namely the FUEN-network RML2future, the Mercator Network and the NPLD (Network for the Promotion of Linguistic Diversity). Additionally there are on national level still some EBLUL-committees, which are active in the field of regional and minority languages locally.

The aim of the initiative is to achieve political and institutional networking on the European level between the different actors in view of the support for regional and minority languages and European linguistic diversity.

The initiative, for which a first meeting took place at the annual congress of 2011, moderated by Johan Häggman, former member of the cabinet of EU-Commissioner for Multilingualism Leonard Orban, was followed by a joint declaration of cooperation between FUEN and NPLD, the launch of proposals to strengthen the regional and minority languages in regard to the future funding programmes of the EU from 2014 and the preparation of a conference on European language policy in the beginning of 2012.

In the meantime we were successful in acquiring funding for a new multilateral project for the regional and minority languages in 2012-2013 which will follow-up on the network RML2future.

# Advocacy on European level

In May 2011, FUEN president Hans Heinrich Hansen and FUEN advisor Dr. Jürgen Schöning presented the activities of FUEN, and in particular the commitment to the Roma in Europe, during a talk with European Commissioner Reding in Brussels.

During the visit of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Knut Vollebaek in Flensburg, a talk took place with representatives of FUEN under the leadership of Hans Heinrich Hansen. Vollebaek ensured that he would participate at the FUEN Congress of 2012 in Moscow, provided it would fit into his schedule.

FUEN director Jan Diedrichsen presented FUEN and its member organisations at meetings of the Intergroup for Traditional Minorities of the European Parliament and at other meetings with MEPs.

The FUEN project Roma and Minorities was already in 2011, mainly by FUEN-advisor Jürgen Schöning, presented to the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and the EU-Member States, in particular to the representatives of Hungary.

The centre of expertise and its objectives were presented in 2011 mainly by FUEN director Jan Diedrichsen and FUEN president Hans Heinrich Hansen in cooperation with project partner SSF at the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Council of Europe and other partners.

The FUEN focus area of language was in 2011 mainly presented and taken care of by FUEN-vice-president Martha Stocker and by Judith Walde, the project manager of the Network RML2future.

## Parliamentary Lunch Debate

On 29 June 2011, FUEN extended together with the Danish Member of Parliament (MEP) Anne E. Jensen an invitation for a Parliamentary Lunch Debate in the European Parliament in Brussels. Over 50 representatives of all political parties, representatives of the European Commission and the Council of Europe, the members of the European Dialogue Forum as well as other interested participants came.

The main point was to revive the structured dialogue between civil society and Members of the European Parliament and to present the manifold activities of FUEN. The different focus areas of current minority work of FUEN were presented: the Roma-project “Solidarity with the Roma”, the new networking initiative in the field of regional and minority languages, the European Citizens’ Initiative, the presentation of the centre of expertise and the football championship of the minorities EUROPEADA 2012.



Parliamentary Lunch Debate in the European Parliament



# FUEN Seminars of 2011

The seminar of the working group of the German minorities (AGDM) took place in Eupen in October 2011 on the invitation of the German-speaking Community in Belgium. An overview of the seminar can be obtained on the webportal of the German minorities at [www.agdm.fuen.org](http://www.agdm.fuen.org), hosted by FUEN.

The seminar of the Slavic minorities in FUEN took place during the International Folklore Festival on the invitation of Domowina –Union of Lusatian Sorbs in Lehndorf/Lejno and Bautzen/Budyšin. The meeting was documented at [www.fuen.sorben.com](http://www.fuen.sorben.com).

## Statutory bodies 2011

### Presidium of FUEN

The seven-member presidium under the leadership of Hans Heinrich Hansen consisted in 2011 of: Heinrich Schultz, Zlatka Gieler, Olga Martens, Martha Stocker, Urs Cadruvi, Hauke Bartels and YEN-president Sebastian Seehauser.

The FUEN Presidium had the following meetings in 2011:

January 2011 in Bozen/Bolzano, South Tyrol for the annual kickoff meeting and a talk with governor Durnwalder and an annual press conference with Herbert Dorfmann MEP

April 2011 in Chur/Graubünden on the invitation of Lia Rumantscha including visits to several Rhaeto-Romance establishments

May 2011 in Eisenstadt/Željezno during the 56th FUEN-Congress

July 2011 in Bautzen/Budyšin on the invitation of Domowina, during the VIth International Folklore Festivals Lausitz and Seminar of the Slavic Minorities in FUEN

September 2011 in Klagenfurt/Celovec during the Third Regional Conference of the Network for Multilingualism and Linguistic Diversity, RM-L2future

October 2011 in Moscow on the invitation of Internationalen Verband der deutschen Kultur and the 20th Forum of the Germans in Russia

### European Dialogue Forum

The members of the European Dialogue Forum of FUEN and YEN met before the Parliamentary Lunch Debate in June 2011 for a discussion and preparatory meeting. A second Parliamentary Lunch Debate was prepared for January, in the presence of the members of the Dialogue Forum.



Meeting of the European Dialogue Forum in Brussels

### FUEN Assembly of Delegates

The FUEN Assembly of Delegates on 3 June 2011 adopted the new statutes of FUEN that in particular give rules on the admission and membership of organisations. Additionally the new system of membership fees was adopted.



The FUEN Assembly of Delegates admitted four new member organisations and adopted the following resolutions:

Based on the latest developments in Austria, the Burgenland Croats had submitted a resolution on the revision of the Ethnic Group Act. Furthermore resolutions were submitted by the Aromians from Romania, the Sorbs from Germany, the Western Thracian Turks from Greece and the Danish minority from Germany. Next to the decision to explore the opportunities for a European Citizens' Initiative, the candidacy of the Crimean Tatar activist Mustafa Dzemilev for the Nobel Peace Prize was supported in a resolution – he visited the FUEN Congresses several times.

During the congress a meeting and a Café Philosophique took place continuing the Quo vadis process, which supports in the internal strategy and development of FUEN as an umbrella organisation.



FUEN Assembly of Delegates 2011

## Communication and information media

Many press releases, background reports, statements and declarations as well as the documentation of the congress of 2011 can be accessed at [www.fuen.org](http://www.fuen.org).

FUEN is active on Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/FUEN.FUEV.UFCE> and  
Twitter <http://twitter.com/livingdiversity>.

EUROPEADA 2012 and the Network RML2future have their own homepages and have their own promotion materials. ([www.europeada.eu](http://www.europeada.eu) and [www.rml2future.eu](http://www.rml2future.eu)).

## EUROPEADA 2012

In the presence of 100 guests the group draw of the football championship of the European minorities, the Europeada 2012, took place in the Representation of the Free State of Saxony in Berlin on 1 December.

The championship is organised by FUEN, the umbrella organisation of the autochthonous, national minorities, and in 2012 it is jointly organised with Domowina, the Federation of Lusatian Sorbs. 19 teams from all over Europe will try to beat the defending champion from South Tyrol. In 2008 the first championship of the European

minorities took place at the Rhaeto-Romansh minority in Switzerland.

Many of the participating teams had come to Berlin and under a lot of media attention they followed the group draw with excitement. The programme also included presentations about the EUROPEADA of 2008 and 2012 and the premiere of the Europeada anthem “Bala Bala Bala” in the Sorbian language.

[www.europeada.eu](http://www.europeada.eu)

# Financing and Funding

The institutional funding of FUEN in 2011 was guaranteed by grants from the Land of Schleswig-Holstein, the Free State of Saxony, the Autonomous Region Trentino-South Tyrol, the Autonomous Province Bozen-South Tyrol, the Danish Ministry of Education, the Land of Carinthia and the German-speaking Community in Belgium as well as by membership fees from the FUEN member organisations, various revenues and donations. A grant by Hungary did not come in 2011. The institutional budget therefore was managed with limited means. The financial budget of FUEN is only to a limited degree in compliance with the level of activity of our European umbrella organisation.

The institutional budget of 2011 encompasses 2.5 employees, costs for rent and associated costs such as electricity and cleaning, material costs such as leasing of a copy machine, office

and consumable supplies, telephone and web-hosting costs, meeting costs, expenses for publications and translation as well as other costs, e.g. administrative fees, notary costs, tax consulting fees and furthermore travel and accommodation costs for employees, for the president and for thematic priorities.

In 2011 FUEN received project funding from the German Federal Ministry of the Interior, the Land of Burgenland, the Hermann Niermann Foundation, the EU-programme for Lifelong Learning, the Danish Ministry for Education/South Schleswig-Committee.

FUEN managed the available financial resources in a prudent and economic way. The annual report 2011 was both evaluated by the auditors of FUEN as well as by the BDO auditing company.





# Thanks to the sponsors

FUEN takes the opportunity to thank all sponsors, who supported FUEN with financial contributions in 2011



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