



FUEN

Federal Union of European Nationalities

RESOLUTIONS 2022

ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES IN BERLIN ON 1 OCTOBER 2022

FEDERAL UNION OF EUROPEAN NATIONALITIES
FÖDERALISTISCHE UNION EUROPÄISCHER NATIONALITÄTEN
ФЕДЕРАЛИСТИСКИЙ СОЮЗ ЕВРОПЕЙСКИХ НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫХ МЕНЬШИНСТВ
UNION FÉDÉRALISTE DES COMMUNAUTÉS ETHNIQUES EUROPÉENNES

RESOLUTIONS 2022

FUEN Main Resolution 2022 on the war against Ukraine and strengthening the global and European framework for the protection of minorities

- 2022 – 01 Resolution – Madedonian Association "Ilinden" – Tirana
- 2022 – 02 Resolution – Rhodes, Kos and the Dodecanese Turks Culture and Solidarity Association
- 2022 – 03 Resolution – Pro-Language Platform Association (Plataforma per la Llengua)
- 2022 – 04 Resolution – Turkish Minority of Western Thrace, submitted by the Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe (ABTF), the Friendship, Equality and Peace (FEP) Party and the Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association (WTMUGA)
- 2022 – 05 Resolution – NGO "Russian School of Estonia"
- 2022 – 06 Resolution – Association of German Socio-Cultural Societies in Poland
- 2022 – 07 Resolution – Ecumenical Federation of Constantinopolitans (EFC)
- 2022 – 08 Resolution – Society of Meskhetian Turks "Vatan"
- 2022 – 09 Resolution – Confederation of Slovene Organisations (SSO)

FUEN MAIN RESOLUTION 2022

Resolution on the war against Ukraine and strengthening the global and European framework for the protection of minorities

The Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) adopted the following resolution at its Assembly of Delegates on 1 October 2022 in Berlin:

Russian invasion of Ukraine

- A. Europe is currently experiencing the greatest crisis since the end of World War 2. War has already been raging in eastern Ukraine since 2014. Crimea, Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhya were annexed in violation of international law and must not be recognised. Since Russia's attack on 24 February 2022, the freedom of all of us has been threatened. This is a time when Europe must stand together.
- B. We condemn the Russian war of aggression and war crimes. We emphasise that in the interest of cohesion and conflict resolution and prevention, it is important to protect and support all minorities living in the country. The minorities living in Ukraine acknowledge themselves citizens of Ukraine. They are affected by Russian aggression just like any other Ukrainian citizen.

The FUEN

- C. Stresses that it is important to emphasise the minorities' belonging to Ukraine and to appreciate their participation in the defence of the country. There must be no attempt to marginalise the minorities.
- D. Stresses that all minorities living in the country must be protected from encroachment and discrimination.
- E. Stresses that the support of Ukraine by the minorities living in the country after the end of the war should lead to a new minority policy of Ukraine, granting rights to all minorities and language groups living in Ukraine, based on European conventions on human and minority rights.
- F. Points out that many members of the minorities in Ukraine were forced to leave their homes. A particularly vulnerable group among the refugees are members of the Ukrainian Roma community, some of whom experienced discrimination in the host countries while fleeing.

30th Anniversary of the UN Declaration on Minorities

- G. 18 December 2022 marks the 30th anniversary of the adoption by the United Nations (UN) of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. The Declaration is the first international document to recognise both the existence and identity of minorities, and the only international UN human rights instrument to deal exclusively with the rights of minorities. The Declaration's guiding principles have lost none of their relevance over the past 30 years, and increased attention must be paid to the implementation of its principles.

- H. Notes that the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities contribute to the political, economic and social stability and progress of the countries in which they live and are essential to the peace and stability of the respective societies.
- I. Considers it worrying that minority issues have featured extremely low on the United Nations agenda over the last decade and believes that it is time for the United Nations to invest more in the area of minority policy.

The inadequate minority protection system in Europe

- J. Reiterates that the few regional instruments for the protection of minorities that exist in Europe do not meet the need for minority rights. Is concerned about the apparent lack of interest in this issue within the institutions of the European Union, the most visible symptom and result of which is the refusal of the European Commission to recognise the legitimacy of the concerns of national and linguistic minorities following the submission of the European Citizens' Initiative "Minority SafePack" and to comply with its request.
- K. Recalls that it was the tragedy and horrors of war in Europe's recent history that led to the recognition of the need for a legal and political framework to protect the rights of minorities and the adoption in the Council of Europe of the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, but also the adoption by the European Union of the Copenhagen Accession Criteria on respect for and protection of minorities.
- L. Expresses concern that in the ensuing decades, international attention to the situation of minority communities has steadily declined, due to a misguided perception that the issue of minority rights is politically sensitive or that it is best dealt with at the national level.
- M. Strongly believes that minority rights are not exclusively a national issue and that the European Union should reaffirm this principle in view of the accession perspective of the Western Balkan countries, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia in order to achieve meaningful results in terms of security, good inter-ethnic relations, peaceful reconciliation, human rights and cultural diversity.

With regard to the war against Ukraine calls

1. To explicitly take into account the protection and support of all minority groups in dealing with the consequences of the war against Ukraine.
2. To ensure that minorities in Ukraine are given equal consideration in humanitarian assistance and any form of support and that their voices are heard in the discussions around the current needs of the people of Ukraine and around the future of Ukraine.
3. To publicly acknowledge the contribution of all minorities to the defence of Ukraine.
4. To condemn discrimination against minorities in Ukraine and against minority refugees in all host countries.
5. For the inclusion of all Ukrainian minorities as equal beneficiaries in initiatives such as the "Recovery and Development Plan of Ukraine" and all other integration and assistance programmes, including through a permanent dialogue with their representatives.

Calls therefore on the United Nations bodies and in particular the Human Rights Council and the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights to:

6. Renew efforts to protect and promote the rights of minorities throughout the world.
7. Put into practice the 2013 UN Secretary-General's Guidelines on Racial Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities and to mainstream minority rights into all UN pillars and activities.
8. Integrate minority rights into the work of the UN system at international, state and regional levels, while developing better partnerships and stronger synergies with intergovernmental or transnational organisations.

Calls on the institutions of the European Union and its Member States to:

9. Provide the European Union with clear competences and obligations to establish a comprehensive minority rights framework to protect and promote the rights of its minorities.
10. Fully integrate the monitoring of the situation of national and linguistic minorities into its rule of law mechanism, to make recommendations to Member States or to promote the exchange of best practices on minority rights.
11. Take into consideration the vulnerable position of cultural and linguistic communities without a kin-state that are particularly endangered by assimilation, calls for their adequate support.
12. Engage in mutually reinforcing cooperation with the United Nations and the Council of Europe in the field of minority rights protection.
13. Explicitly take into account the protection of minority groups when dealing with the consequences of the war in Ukraine. As a candidate country for accession to the European Union, Ukraine, as well as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey must fully comply with the standards of democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights, including minority rights. FUEN therefore stresses that the legal framework of these countries should contain the necessary provisions on the right of national minorities to use their languages in all areas of administrative and public life, including the right to education in their mother tongue, which is guaranteed by the constitution of the respective countries and the international standards and conventions ratified by them.

RESOLUTION 2022 – 01

Macedonian Association “Ilinden” – Tirana

The Delegates of the Member Organisations of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) adopted the following resolution at their Assembly of Delegates in Berlin, Germany on 1 October 2022:

Resolution about the situation of the Macedonian Minority after the Parliamentary decision about a territorial reform in Albania

1. FUEN welcomes the decision of the Parliament of the Republic of Albania no. 13/2022¹ “For the creation of a Special Parliamentary Commission for administrative and territorial reforms in the Republic of Albania” and asks the Special Parliamentary Commission for administrative and territorial reforms in the Republic of Albania to support the creation of the municipalities of Golo Brdo and Gora. In the area of Golo Brdo, the administrative units Trebishte and Ostren are part of the municipality of Bulqiza, and the administrative unit Stebleva is part of the municipality of Librazhd. In the area Gora, the administrative units of Shishtavec and Zapot are part of the municipality of Kukes. The areas Golo Brdo and Gora are inhabited by the Macedonian national minority and have their unique characteristics. The creation of the municipalities of Golo Brdo and Gora will preserve the ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious identity of the Macedonian nationality in these areas. It will also strengthen the economy and will ensure the development of the areas Golo Brdo and Gora.
2. FUEN calls on the Government of the Republic of Albania to respect the Law on minorities, adopted on October 13th 2017, no. 96/2017² and to adopt regulation provided in this law, given that it has been five (5) years since the adoption of the Law on national minorities.
3. FUEN calls on the Government Commissioner for Protection against Discrimination to work for the concrete implementation of all regulations of the Law on Minorities in Albania.
4. FUEN calls on the Government of the Republic of Albania to declare May 21st – the World day for cultural diversity for dialogue and development³, as national holiday – Day of national minorities in the Republic of Albania.

¹ Vendimin nr. 13/2022 “Për ngritjen e Komisionit të Posaçëm për Reformën Administrativo-Territoriale në Republikën e Shqipërisë”

² Ligji Nr. 96/2017 Për mbrojtjen e pakicave kombëtare në Republikën e Shqipërisë

³ 21 May – World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development

RESOLUTION 2022 – 02

Rhodes, Kos and the Dodecanese Turks Culture and Solidarity Association (ROISDER)

The Delegates of the Member Organisations of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) adopted the following resolution at their Assembly of Delegates in Berlin, Germany on 1 October 2022:

Resolution about the recognition of the Turkish Minority in the Dodecanese (Greece)

In Greek media organs such as “Rodosreport.Gr” dated February 22, 2022, “Komotinipress” website dated February 25, 2022 and daily newspaper “Dimokratiki.Gr” dated June 29, 2022, it was reported that “There are no Turks in the Dodecanese”.

As reported by the daily “Rodiaki” dated May 22, 2022, the name of “Suleymaniye Madrasah”, which belongs to the Rhodes Turkish Foundation, has been changed to “Neoclassical School of the Medieval City of Rhodes”. What’s more, the name of the South Aegean Regional Directorate (Governorship of Dodecanese) was registered as the owner of the school.

Then again, Turkish-Muslim Foundation Properties in Rhodes and Kos were also sold at fire-sale prices.

In January and February 2022, a 34-acre land belonging to Turkish-Muslim Foundation Properties in Kos was sold to a tourism company in return for 181 thousand Euros. In addition to this illegal sale, more than 70 pieces of properties, mostly lands, belonging to the Kos Turkish-Muslim Foundation were either transferred or sold to municipalities to be converted into parks, parking lots and cemeteries. The Kos Foundation Property Administration, which made this decision, consisted of persons appointed by Greece rather than being elected by free vote.

As FUEN General Assembly, we demand the following from the Greek State:

1. Greece should recognize the Turkish presence in the Dodecanese, as evidenced by the Council of Europe’s “Resolutions on the Situation of the Greek Citizens of Turkish Descent in Rhodes and Kos” along with other historical documents.
2. Greece should respect and recognize the Turkish associations, which have been working for the recognition of Turkish identity in the islands.
3. The “Suleymaniye Madrasah”, which has a crucial place in the common culture of the Turkish community in Rhodes, should be handed back to the Rhodes Turkish Foundation and converted into a museum.
4. Bilingual Turkish schools, which were closed down in 1972, should be reopened in Rhodes and Kos.
5. The Greek State should adhere to the Rhodes and Kos Foundation Administration provision that states “foundation properties cannot be purchased, sold, possessed or inherited.” Adherence to this provision is also guaranteed by international treaties.
6. Members of Rhodes and Kos Turkish Foundation Administration should not be appointed by the state but instead elected by free votes of Turks/Muslims living in Rhodes and Kos.

RESOLUTION 2022 – 03

Pro-Language Platform Association (Plataforma per la Llengua)

The Delegates of the Member Organisations of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) adopted the following resolution at their Assembly of Delegates in Berlin, Germany on 1 October 2022:

Resolution on the protection and promotion of the Catalan language

With more than 10 million speakers, 9 million of which in Spain, Catalan is the 13th most spoken language in the European Union. In the autonomous regions of Catalonia, the Balearic Islands and Valencia Catalan is co-official language besides Castilian. But the Spanish Government portrays the citizens of Spain as belonging to a single nation and ethnicity, united by the Spanish language. The state authorities imposes the use of Spanish in public and private life.

For example, state civil servants in the Catalan-speaking territories are required to be fluent in Spanish but not Catalan.

Even though Spain has ratified both the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Council of Europe, 1992) and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (CoE, 1998), the Catalan language does not have equal rights.

The United Nations special rapporteur on minority issues visited Spain in January 2019 to analyse the situation (see the UN report from 9 March 2020). He concluded that the development in Spain has generally led to increasing obstacles to the use of minority or regional languages like Catalan.

Due to the lack of recognition the main Catalan-speaking regions are losing speakers and for new inhabitants it becomes easier to learn Spanish and make it their everyday language.

In summary, the Castilian supremacy still affects Catalan society and the use of the Catalan language in many different areas of public and private life (judiciary, education& universities, public administration and services, companies etc.).

The FUEN Assembly of Delegates calls upon Spanish authorities, EU member states and other international organizations to:

1. Ensure the Catalan language is officially recognized as a regional or minority language and that the language rights are fully respected by the Spanish government .
2. Make an exhaustive census of the existing linguistic minorities in Spain addressing issues like use of languages, linguistic preferences, feelings of minority belonging or self-identification (linguistic, religious or ethnic).

3. Recognize that the decrease in speakers of the native languages of Spain should be addressed by adequate public policies, supported by budget, setting concrete and measurable goals for the recovery of the previous levels of use of languages.
4. Normalize the use of Catalan in the Catalan speaking territories in the everyday life, in judiciary, education and universities, health care services, security forces, public administration and business life including by implementing minimum language proficiency requirements and providing public workers with the needed language training.
5. Monitor and fight against intolerance and discrimination based on language, especially in public services and administration, and effectively tackle hate speech.
6. Ensure that Spain complies with the European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages (ECRML) and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM).

RESOLUTION 2022 – 04

Turkish Minority of Western Thrace, submitted by the Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe (ABTTF), the Friendship, Equality and Peace (FEP) Party and the Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association (WTMUGA)

The Delegates of the Member Organisations of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) adopted the following resolution at their Assembly of Delegates on Saturday, 1 October 2022 in Berlin, Germany:

Violations by Greece of Rights and Freedoms of the Turkish Minority of Western Thrace

The Turkish minority of Western Thrace is an autochthonous, national minority in Greece. Its status was established with the 1923 Lausanne Treaty which provided the Turkish minority with the right to establish, manage and control at their own expense charitable, religious, and social institutions, schools and other establishments for instruction and education, to use their own language, and to exercise their own religion freely therein.

Adhering to the Treaty of Lausanne as the primary basis for its minority policy, the Government of Greece asserts that the Turkish minority is a religious one. The reference “Muslim minority” disregards the Turkish ethnic identity, which as a result of changes in the Greek politics in the 1980s has not been recognized yet.

The Turkish minority in Western Thrace continues facing serious violations of minority rights in Greece. The denial of the ethnic identity of the Minority has undermined the freedom of association. In the Bekir Usta and Others group of cases v. Greece which concern the dissolution of the oldest Turkish association in the region, the Xanthi Turkish Union (XTU), and non-registration of the two other Turkish associations by domestic courts, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) ruled in 2007 and 2008 that Greece violated Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights. 14 years after the judgments of the ECtHR, domestic proceedings were not re-opened by the local courts in light of the judgments of the European Court and its case law. The Xanthi Turkish Union organized a march to protest the Greek Court of Cassation’s rejection of its appeal on 29 June 2021 and the Prosecutor’s Office of Xanthi launched an investigation against the president of XTU seven months later on grounds of provocative speeches against the state and spreading fake news during the march.

We are deeply disappointed that Greece still has not executed the judgments in the Bekir Usta and Others group of cases v. Greece which is pending for more than 14 years. The failure in the execution of the judgments constitutes an important obstacle for the Turkish Minority in the use of its right to access justice.

Despite autonomy granted in education, the Greek State has gradually taken over their management from the Turkish minority. Despite demands from the Minority and recommendations from international bodies like the UN or Council of Europe, there is no bilingual pre-school (kindergarten) education and no steps have been taken by the Greek Government to establish such.

Furthermore, due to Government decision to close all schools with less than 9 students (including minority schools in the region), the number of Turkish minority primary schools has significantly decreased – from 194 in 2008 to 103 in 2022.

Although the religious rights of the Turkish minority have been specifically guaranteed for more than 100 years by several international peace treaties and despite the established autonomy in religion, Greece still does not recognize the right of the Minority to elect its own religious leaders and appoints since 1991 muftis on the ground that the muftis have legal authority on civic issues. The dual structure of government-appointed and minority-elected muftis continues, and elected muftis have been prosecuted with charges for usurpation of the Office of Mufti. Such charges were pressed in 2016 to the elected Mufti of Rodopi İbrahim Şerif as a part of an investigation into his participation in a mass circumcision ceremony for minority children. In 2021, the elected Mufti of Xanthi Ahmet Mete was sentenced to 15 months in prison for disturbing public order during a speech at the Friendship, Equality and Peace (FEP) Party Congress in Komotini in 2016.

As an EU Member State, Greece is a state party to the major international human rights conventions of particular relevance to the rights of minorities which is a part of international human rights law such as International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CPR), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) and Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and must comply with its obligations and respect rights enshrined in the international human rights protection mechanisms.

The lack of legal frameworks to ensure the protection of minority rights, prevents the EU to enforce efficiently the rule of law in the Member States and lead them to adopt legislations even depriving the earlier acquired rights of national minorities like in Greece.

The FUEN Assembly of Delegates calls upon Greece to:

- restore, protect, and promote rights granted to the Turkish minority in Western Thrace with the 1923 Lausanne Treaty and additional treaties signed between Greece and Turkey.
- ratify the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) and sign and ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML).
- restore, respect, and promote autonomy in education granted to the Turkish Minority with the right to use its mother tongue as the medium of instruction at all levels of education and establish bilingual Turkish pre-schools within minority schooling system.
- restore religious autonomy granted to the Minority in accordance with the treaties, namely the 1913 Athens Treaty and 1923 Lausanne Treaty, which Greece is a party and ensure that the Turkish minority enjoys its right to elect its own religious leaders as other known religions in Greece.
- implement, without any further delay, the judgment of the ECtHR in the Bekir Usta and Others group of cases v. Greece and allow the registration of associations under the names of the choice of their founding members whether they contain the word ‘minority’ and “Turkish”.

The FUEN Assembly of Delegates asks the EU to;

- protect and promote autochthonous minorities with more action, including with encouraging Member States to sign and ratify the FCNM and ECRML and to adhere to their provisions, which could provide an adequate basis for minority language protection at national level.
- establish a minimum set of EU rules and a protection regime for autochthonous minority groups in Europe and standards for the implementation of minority rights in all EU Member States.

RESOLUTION 2022 – 05

NGO “Russian School of Estonia”

The Delegates of the Member Organisations of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) adopted the following resolution at their Assembly of Delegates in Berlin, Germany on 1 October 2022:

Resolution about the closing of Russian schools and kindergartens in Estonia

The Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) has to state with regret that the new Estonian government has taken a course towards accelerating the estonianization of Russian kindergartens and schools. The corresponding provisions were included in the new coalition agreement. This is a gross violation of the rights of the Russian national minority (including the right to preserve national identity). It is also a matter of concern that the Russian invasion in Ukraine is being used by the Estonian government to reinforce an already decades-long policy of discrimination, deprivation of rights and pressure on the Russian population. FUEN believes that the observance of the rights of the national minority should not depend on the domestic political situation, and even more so the foreign political situation. The state must proceed from the spirit and provisions of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, as well as other international recommendations in this area.

Based on the above situation

FUEN calls on the Government of Estonia:

1. to reconsider the policy in the field of Russian schools and kindergartens and allow Russian national educational institutions to operate normally without the threat of closure or estonianization. The program for the development of the education of the Russian national minority must be developed taking into account the interest of the Russian national minority to preserve Russian schools and kindergartens.
2. to comply with all articles of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and adhere to the recommendations of international organizations (OSCE, ECRI etc.).
3. to stop considering the Russian national minority as a hostage of the foreign policy situation and an object for experiments in the internal political struggle. The Russian community in Estonia should be considered as a full-fledged subject in matters of its present and future.

FUEN calls on European institutions:

1. to pay attention to the fact that the Russian national minority in Estonia has become a hostage to the international situation. It is unacceptable and unethical for the Estonian government to somehow link the Russian national minority in Estonia with the events in Ukraine. It is all the more unacceptable to use the Russian invasion in Ukraine to justify and intensify discrimination against the Russian national minority in Estonia.

RESOLUTION 2022 – 06

Association of German socio-cultural societies in Poland

The delegates of the member organisations of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) adopted the following resolution at their Assembly of Delegates on 1 October 2022 in Berlin, Germany:

Resolution against the restriction of mother-tongue teaching and discrimination of the German minority in Poland

The Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) is concerned about two regulations of the Polish Minister of Education and Science, adopted in 2022 and approved by the Polish Sejm:

On 4 February 2022, an issued decree reduced the number of hours for the teaching of German as a minority language from three to one hour per week.

On 10 February 2022, an amendment of the ordinance on the allocation of general education grants to municipalities in 2022 cut the funding for teaching German as a minority language .

None of the regulations have an impact on the educational situation in Poland in general or on other minorities in Poland and clearly constitute discrimination against the German minority in Poland!

The teaching of minority languages in Poland is based both on national legislation and on the international regulations of the Council of Europe. The Republic of Poland ratified the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) in 2000 and the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (ECRML) in 2009. As a national minority, Germans in Poland consider the decisions a violation of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, prohibiting discrimination, of the FCNM and ECRML of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, and a violation of the resolutions of the European Parliament, establishing the fundamental norms regarding minorities.

The current situation in Poland, in which the adoption of regulations restricts the rights of persons belonging to minorities, clearly indicates that the protection of minority rights must not lie solely within the competence of the Member States. We are committed to the protection of minority rights at the level of the institutions of the European Union and for the implementation of the proposals of the Minority Safepack Initiative (MSPI).

FUEN calls on the Government of Poland to:

- a. Adhere to the commitments and obligations to the Polish Constitution and national laws, and respect the right of the German minority to have the mother tongue promoted in the state school system;
- b. Revoke the ordinances on the reduction of teaching German and end the discrimination against the German minority and its language in the field of education, above all the stigmatization of children learning German as a minority language;

- c. Fulfil the international obligations arising from the ratified Framework Convention and Language Charter of the Council of Europe and of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, and to enable the teaching of the German language in the areas where the German minority lives.

FUEN calls on the institutions of the European Union to:

- a. Take measures in defence of the European values violated by the above-mentioned decisions of the Polish Sejm and Government;
- b. Take urgent measures to restore constitutional order to the German minority in Poland;
- c. Send a strong political message to Poland regarding the violation of the rights and freedoms of Polish nationals who are also EU citizens and belong to the German minority in Poland;
- d. Bring a formal action before the European Court of Justice against discrimination against the German minority in Poland, as well as to take sanctioning measures to induce the Polish government and parliament to immediately suspend the decrees reducing the teaching of German.
- e. Take measures to improve knowledge of the obligations of member states with regard to human rights and rights of minorities in the EU.
- f. Take measures to protect the endangered minority languages in the EU.

FUEN calls on the Council of Europe to:

- a. Increase pressure on Poland to fully comply with its obligations under the ratified FCNM and ECRML;
- b. Endeavour to prevent a further deterioration in the implementation of the ECRML by discriminating against the German language as the only national minority language for which Poland has reduced the number of hours taught;
- c. Take measures to improve knowledge of the obligations of the FCNM and ECRML to protect minority languages in the Polish government administration and local authorities.

RESOLUTION 2022 – 07

Ecumenical Federation of Constantinopolitans (EFC)

The Delegates of the Member Organisations of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) adopted the following resolution at their Assembly of Delegates in Berlin, Germany on 1 October 2022:

Resolution on the Evanescence of the Greek-Orthodox Minority and its consequence to their Welfare Foundations in Turkiye

In the date of proclamation of the Republic of Turkey on 29 October 1923, 15% of the population of Istanbul (i.e., about 125 000 people) were Greek-Orthodox. The Minority was not directly affected by the Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey, agreed with the Treaty of Lausanne (24/7/1923) but between 1923 and 2003, it has been continuously facing severe discriminations and challenges. Among the most serious violations were:

- a. Mobilization to labour camps of men between the ages of 18-45 (1941-42),
- b. Capital Tax implemented solely to the minorities (1942-44),
- c. Large-scale Pogrom of 6-7/9/1955,
- d. Deportation and forced migration of 60.000 minority members (1964-74).

Since 1923 the only recognized legal entity of the Minority – the Welfare Foundations (70) – were subject to severe restrictions, one of which was the prohibition to elect their administrators. Moreover, coordination bodies between welfare Foundations were abolished in 1925 and 1962. The direct consequence of these anti-minority measures resulted in the reduction of the numbers of the minority members living in the city – currently accounting to less than 1.000 persons. About 99% of its former members nowadays live as a refugee-expatriated Community in various European countries and in the USA.

Coming to power in 2003, the present Government of Turkiye, recognized the misdoings of the past, initiated some remedy measures, and started top level communications with the EFC. Despite that throughout the period 2010-2022, the EFC submitted many proposals with the aiming to prevent the complete disappearance of the Orthodox minority of Istanbul, no progress has been achieved. An exception is the case that the Turkish Development Agency's (TIKA) supported the Social Solidarity Program of EFC (2019-2021) for refugee minority members. This was the first act of the type since after 1923.

The austere situation, which threatens the very existence of the minority, was even more exacerbated by the announcement on 18 June 2022 of the Regulation of Elections for the administrations in the non-Muslim Welfare Foundations. This came as a severe blow as it followed a 10-year election prohibition period and seriously affected the survival of the minority. According to this Regulation 650 administrators are needed for the 70 Greek-Orthodox Welfare Foundations, which is an impossible task since the total population is less than 1.000 persons. The Regulation is prohibiting the participation of minority members forced to live outside

Turkiye. Moreover, the Philanthropic Balikli Hospital, the largest Greek-Orthodox foundation, is exempted from elections and a non-elected administration has been in office for 31 years, violating the laws of Republic of Turkiye.

Considering the above the General Assembly of FUEN invites the Government of Turkiye:

1. To respond to the proposals of the EFC for remedy measures towards the Greek-Orthodox Minority and in particular to the one for active support for repatriation of youth living outside of Turkiye as expatriates.
2. To revise the Regulation of Elections in the Minority Welfare Foundations, allowing the participation of the expatriate members, taking into account the severe population depletion of the Minority living in Istanbul.

RESOLUTION 2022 – 08

Interregional Society of Meskhetian Turks “Vatan”

The Delegates of the Member Organisations of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) adopted the following resolution at their Assembly of Delegates in Berlin, Germany on 1 October 2022:

Resolution on the return of the Meskhetian Turks to Georgia

The Republic of Georgia is now an EU candidate country. The society of Meskhetian Turks “Vatan”, sincerely support the desire of the Republic of Georgia to become a member of the European Union.

However, we would like to draw the attention to the fact that the Republic of Georgia continue actively to oppose the return of the Meskhetian Turks to their homeland. The Meskhetian Turks were criminally deported in 1944 to USSR. Despite the law on return, passed by the Parliament of Georgia in 2007 and the obligations taken before joining the Council of Europe Georgia has still not solved this problem. A return never took place! There are no contacts to representatives of the Meskhetian Turks – the “Vatan” Society. Meskhetian Turks, forced to live in nine different countries, demand the right to return to their homeland.

The basic principles and values of the European Union are incompatible with a situation where the consequences of such a humanitarian catastrophe as the forced deportation from the territory of Georgia still remain an tragedy for all Meskhetian Turks.

FUEN calls on the Government of Georgia to

Implement all obligations in the Law on Return as decided in 2007.

FUEN calls on the European institutions to

Ensure that the Meskhetian Turks can return to Georgia as decided by the Parliament of Georgia and to respect the Copenhagen Criteria (1993) about human rights and the protection of minorities.

RESOLUTION 2022 – 09

Confederation of Slovene Organisations

The Delegates of the Member Organisations of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) adopted the following resolution at their Assembly of Delegates in Berlin, Germany on 1 October 2022:

Resolution about the Parliamentary representation of the Slovene Minority in Italy

Based on the results of the constitutional referendum held in Italy at the end of September 2020, the Parliament adopted the decision that the new Italian legislature will have a reduced number of MPs – 400 instead of 630 in the Chamber of Deputies and 200 instead of 315 in the Senate. The reform was supposed to be accompanied by a new electoral law, but such has not been adopted over the past two years. Hence, on 25 September, a new Italian Parliament with smaller number of parliamentarians will be elected with the old electoral law. This situation could lead to the non-election of the Slovenian representatives. In fact, with almost half of the seats, many more votes are needed for the election.

Article 26 of Law no. 38/2001 for the protection of the Slovenian minority in Italy provides that the Slovenian representative is elected to the Italian parliament on the basis of a facilitated system. Unfortunately, in all these years this article has not yet been applied in the electoral laws for the renewal of the parliament. The Slovenian minority living in the Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia thus risks not having its own representative in the Italian parliament for the first time since the war. This would be a very serious fact for the Slovenian minority, but also a setback to Italian democracy.

The FUEN congress asks Italy to resolve the question of the Slovenian representative in the Italian parliament as soon as possible.



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