



## Activity report 2008 / 2009

On the following pages a short overview about the activities of FUEN is given since the congress of 2008 in Pécs / Fünfkirchen. For more detailed information we refer to the printed annual report 2008, which was sent to all member organisations and which is available in the secretariat on request.

Furthermore we refer to the overview with highlights of 2009 in the form of our press releases, which are attached to this report and finally to the oral explanations by our president Hans Heinrich Hansen during the Assembly of Delegates.

On the financial situation of FUEN, which has played a major role since April 2009, we refer to the separate document on this particular topic.

In the activity report we will go deeper into the priorities that we announced in Pécs / Fünfkirchen and that were included in the Strategic Programme of FUEN (adopted in Bautzen in 2006).

- 1) Political participation
- 2) Improving the infrastructure and professionalisation
- 3) Strengthening the network
- 4) Content-related work

### **1) Political participation**

The European Dialogue Forum, of which the FUEN-representatives were elected at the congress in Pécs, came together during two meetings. In Strasbourg they participated in the 10th anniversary celebration of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and they met in Kehl for consultation on the thematic direction of the Dialogue Forum.

In Brussels a constitutive meeting with the European Parliament under Csaba Tabajdi took place within the framework of the last session of the Parliament before elections. It became clear that some adjustments need to be made in the way of cooperation. Before the session the FUEN-representatives had a meeting in the Hansa Office in Brussels.

Furthermore FUEN participated in seven Intergroup-meetings of the European Parliament and initiated a meeting there of the Sorbian representatives of Domowina.

President Hans Heinrich Hansen attended a meeting of the DH-MIN committee of the Council of Europe. And there were talks with the cabinet of EU-commissioner Orban and with the secretariat of the Language Charter in Strasbourg.

Secretary-General Terry Davis of the Council of Europe visited FUEN and discussed in Flensburg with representatives about minority issues. He had to shorten his programme of two days because of the war between Georgia and Russia.

In March FUEN-president Hans Heinrich Hansen was together with other representatives of minorities at a talk with the German chancellor Angela Merkel.

During a presidium meeting Ljubljana a talk with the president of Slovenia took place.

During the intense preparations for the FUEN-congress the contacts with the Committee of the Regions in Brussels, our host, were intensified. Three meetings took place with Secretary-General Gerhard Stahl.

With several press releases, articles and statements FUEN participated in the public debate. Two themes in particular raised interest of the media (including the media of the majorities): the current conflict about the language act in Slovakia and the position of FUEN in regard to the issue of old and new minorities.

The newsletter FUEN sends out regularly has a circulation of 4 000.

## **2) Improving the infrastructure and professionalisation**

FUEN also made some changes in its personnel. FUEN now has 2,5 full-time positions in Flensburg. The presidium works without an allowance.

Jan Diedrichsen bears the overall responsibility as director of FUEN – Susann Schenk leads the office and Frank Nickelsen is working as employee in the secretariat.

With these changes the staff capacity was increased by half a position in comparison to 2007 / 2008.

The secretariat increased also in terms of space and now covers the whole house on the complex administered by the Danish minority in Flensburg, and not just the first floor. The FUEN Language Network also established a working place in Flensburg and there is much activity going on at Schiffbrücke 41. Guests who are interested are always welcome to come by and visit.

The amount of work considerably increased and the more contact with members, decision makers and media is sought, the more work has to be done.

## **3) Strengthening the network**

An important objective of the work of FUEN is intensifying the contacts to our member organisations and strengthening our network.

During the stretch of time we report about on these pages, FUEN visited several organisations or attended their events. Additionally there were a number of invitations that the presidium was not able to answer yet.

An overview:

- Participation in the Youth Leader Seminar of YEN in Turawa/Silesia and in the jubilee seminar 2009 in Modra / Slovakia
- Participation in the annual assembly of Rainbow (Macedonians in Greece),
- Fact Finding Mission to Carinthia, participation in the Europe-Festival in Bleiburg/Pliberk and talks with representatives from the minority and politicians,
- Participation in the jubilee of ABTTF (West-Thracian Turks),
- Participation in the general assembly of Domowina – Union of Lusatian Sorbs,
- Participation and involvement in the annual meeting “Aarsmøde” of the Danish minority, which in 2009 had the theme *National minorities in Europe*,
- Talks in Eupen at the German-speaking Community (DG) and participation in the 25 years’ jubilee of DG in Berlin,
- Visit on invitation of the Latvian “Special Assignments Ministry for Social Integration” in Riga and meeting with the minorities in Latvia,
- Participation in the National Day of the Aromanians in Bucharest.
- Talk with Gottscheer Altsiedlerverband (German association) in Slovenia,
- Working meeting at the national self-administration of the Germans in Hungary, in Budapest.

The presidium had five meetings where it came together

Presidium meeting, Carinthia, November  
Presidium meeting, Bozen/Bolzano, January  
Presidium meeting, Heidelberg, March  
Presidium meeting, June, Ljubljana  
Presidium meeting, September, Brussels

Additionally several working meetings took place in the secretariat in Flensburg with the presidium members who live in the German-Danish border region.

The seminar of the Slavic minorities of 2008 took place in Schmochtitz/Smóchčicy, on invitation of Domowina and the meeting of the working group of the German minorities (AGDM) of 2008 was in Košice/Kaschau, organised together with Karpatendeutsche Verein (KDV) in Slovakia.

In Copenhagen a first preparation talk was held for a meeting of the minorities from Scandinavia. FUEN is in charge of the development of the project *Democracy in Dialogue*, which pools the competences of the minorities.

FUEN participated in several conferences – we in particular want to mention the participation in the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany to a Roma-conference of the EU-Commission in Athens and our invitation by the prime-minister of Hungary to a conference about cross border cooperation and minority protection, the conference on the **10th** anniversary of the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities in Strasbourg as well as our participation in the Baltic Sea conference.

#### **4) Content-related work**

The guiding principles for FUEN and its political demands have been defined in the Charter for the autochthonous national minorities. After the Fundamental Right to Education was adopted in Tallinn in 2007 and the Fundamental Right to Information and

Media of One's Own in Pécs in 2008, the year 2009 will be dedicated to the Fundamental Right to Political Participation. The discussion and adoption of the Fundamental Right is part of the congress in Brussels in 2009.

Next to the longer term strategy, which will continue to be oriented based on the Charter, taking position on topical issues will play a significant role for FUEN. As an example, we just recently made a clear statement about the language conflict in Slovakia.

Another central position is taken by the new network RML2future, which will present itself and what it does during the congress. The work for the small and smallest languages in Europe is a substantial focus point for FUEN. The launch of the network took place in Bozen/Bolzano in April 2009.

We thank all our member organisations and financial supporters for participation and for their support to our FUEN-activity in 2008-2009.