

Activity report Living Diversity – the Brussels Project 2006

Presented at the General Assembly of the Federal Union of European Nationalities in Tallin, May 2007

In general:

Central in the project “Living diversity” are the rights, special needs and demands of the autochthonous minorities in Europe, to be supported by a strong representation at the European level.

The decisive factors to obtain results are political lobbying and an assertive and sustainable information policy. In these fields lies the main function of the project.

The objective is to enhance the influence of the autochthonous minorities at the European level and in the middle term to establish a “permanent representation” in Brussels for the minorities in Europe.

History:

Since May 2006 the common scheme of FUEN and YEN has projects status under the name of “Living diversity”.

Due to the financial support of FUEN-member organisations from the German-Danish border region (BDN & SSF) and the Sorbs (Domowina) the start period was made possible.

Since 1/1/2007 FUEN took over the financing with 0,5 FTE.

A feasibility study has been written, which is acknowledged by the boards of FUEN and YEN as basis for their work and based on the study the strategic decisions have been taken.

A “roadmap 2010” defined the targets for the middle term.

The charter for the autochthonous, national minorities in Europe is the document of the project that deals with the substance.

(Documents can be obtained on request directly from the “Living Diversity” – project.)

Living Diversity - The Brussels Project 2006

Below the activity report of 2006, which also can be downloaded from the homepage www.living-diversity.eu. Here it is complemented with a list of activities and thematic focus areas.

In May 2006 the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) and the Youth of European Nationalities (YEN) launched its Brussels Project, with support of a number of their member organisations. The project has as its goal to improve the political participation of both minority organisations on the European level. This is being done by making direct contact to the relevant decision makers, as well as by involvement in content of the different policy fields and policy subjects. The target is to establish a permanent representation of interests in Brussels in the medium-term.

Because of the Brussels-Project in 2006 the written statement of principles – the Charter of autochthonous, national minorities in Europe – was worked out. The Charter was adopted by the official bodies of FUEN and YEN in 2006.

The contact with the European Parliament has played an important role in the past months. The chairman of the Intergroup for national minorities, MEP Csaba Tabajdi, spoke as keynote speaker at the latest FUEN-Congress in Bautzen / Budysin of a "strategic partnership" with both umbrella organisations that has to be expanded.

During the congress in Bautzen also the previously mentioned Charter was officially signed. For the Brussels Project a documentation of the FUEN Congress was written.

FUEN and YEN, through the Brussels Project, regularly take part in the meetings of the Intergroup for national minorities in the European Parliament. Invited by the the chairman of the Intergroup Csaba Tabajdi the commissioner of YEN and FUEN, Jan Diedrichsen, was able to present the common Brussels-scheme of YEN and FUEN. In further talks possible options for cooperation between the parliament and the minority organisations were discussed: intended are a forum for dialogue at the European Parliament and a common Fact Finding Mission.

Moreover contact were made with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and also the Committee of the Regions expressed its interest, to engage in closer cooperation and concrete projects with the minority organisations. Furthermore the collaboration with other minority regions in Europe and with the minority organisations there was intensified.

Together with the new budgetary period of the European Union from 2007 – 2013 also the conditions to obtain support for regional and minority languages are changing. Since a few days the conditions for the future support for networks of regional and minority languages are available. In the coming weeks will be decided how the regional and minority languages will take a share in the support from the European Commission. This theme dominated the year 2006 and will also be of great important for the European minorities in the new year.

The year 2007 offers the European autochthonous minorities opportunities to position more strongly as important actor in the European civil society. The EU proclaimed 2007 the "European Year of Equal Opportunities for All", the new Fundamental Rights Agency in Vienna starts its work, Germany hoisted the flag for revitalisation of the European Constitution during its presidency and the EU appointed a new commissioner, who "only" deals with multilingualism – just to mention only a few developments.

Activity overview:

1. MIDAS-Conference, 5-7 May
2. Preparation meeting / exchange with SSF/FUEN – Flensburg, 9 May
3. Meeting with EBLUL committee Denmark, 9 May
4. **Strategy meeting Flensburg, 11-12 May**
5. FUEN-Congress 2006, 24-28 May
6. Plan D-Conference Brussels / Commissioner Margot Wallström, 7-8 June
7. Meeting with Hans Heinrich Hansen / Susann Schenk / Stephan Kleinschmidt / Judith Walde in Knivsberg / Brussels funding – 18 June
8. Partnership for Diversity (Pfd) – EBLUL-conference, 28-31 June
9. Intergroup-meeting in Strassbourg, 5-7 July
10. Strategy meeting with Csaba Tabajdi in Brussels, 12-14 July
11. Meeting with EU-Commission J. Delmoly, T. Condesa, 12-14 July
12. Working meeting with Susann Schenk, 7 August 2006
13. Meeting with Simon Faber, 11 August 2006
14. Meeting with Romedi Arquint, Frank Nickelsen, 11 August 2006
15. Meeting with Hans Heinrich Hansen, Heinrich Schultz, Peter Iver Johannsen, 14 August 2006
16. Lecture at exchange „Řeč! Heraus mit der Sprache! Speak“, in Bautzen/Budyšin, 15 August 2006
17. Working meeting with Judith Walde, Susann Schenk in Bautzen / Budyšin, 15 August 2006
18. Board meeting FUEN Zürich, 16 August 2006
19. Meeting Peter Iver Johannsen, Hans Heinrich Hansen, Apenrade, 28 August 2006
20. Meeting Easter Seminar 2008: DJN, Junge SPitzen, Apenrade, 28 August 2006
21. Meeting with Heinrich Schultz, Jens Christiansen, Flensburg 31 August 2006
22. Meeting Landesinvestitionsbank Brussels, reception Brussels with Hans Heinrich Hansen and Peter Iver Johannsen, 5-6 September 2006
23. Meeting with the government of the German-speaking community in Belgium in Eupen, 7-8 September 2006
24. Meeting Dialogforum Norden, Europäische Akademie Sankelmark, 21 September 2006
25. Meeting working group European Union Schleswig-Holstein, Kiel 22 September 2006
26. FUEN-meeting of SSF, BDN, SdU, SSW in Apenrade, 25 September 2006
27. Strategy meeting of FUEN and YEN in Berlin, 26 September 2006
28. Talk together with Jens Christiansen (SSF) with the representative of the European Commission in Berlin, Valerie Benvideo, 27 September 2006
29. Talk together with Hans Heinrich Hansen and Frank Nickelsen with public officer Krieg in the Ministry for Education in Brandenburg, Potsdam, 28 September 2006
30. Participation in the FUEN-AGDM meeting in Opole, Poland 28 September – 1 October 2006
31. Meeting Csaba Tabajdi and invitation of the Secretary General of the EU Committee of the Regions, 9 October
32. First preparation meeting Easter Seminar 2008 in Nordschleswig – 19 October 2006
33. Meeting with SSF Flensburg and Heinrich Schultz 23 October 2006
34. Participation in the meeting with the Committee of Experts about the Language Charter for Denmark, 24 October 2006

35. Participation in conference Bozen: Minorities – Law and Right / FUEN-Board meeting October 2006
36. Meeting with Dr. Detlef Rein (BMI) – 4 November 2006
37. Meeting with Jens A. Christiansen (SSF) – 7 November 2006
38. Information event of the EU Commission in Brussels about language support, 9 November 2007
39. Meeting of the EBLUL Denmark committee, 14 November 2006
40. Meeting with Tabajdi and presentation of the Brussels project in the Intergroup of the European Parliament in Straßbourg, 16 November 2006
41. Working meeting in Bautzen/Budyšin, 21-24 November 2006
42. Dialogforum Norden (representative for YEN/FUEN), 1 December 2006
43. Talk with minister Döring for European Affairs in Kiel, 4 December 2006
44. Participation in the YEN board meeting in Bautzen / Budyšin, 13-15 December 2006
45. Lecture “European minority politics” – Europäische Akademie Sankelmark, 5 January 2007
46. Meeting with FUEN vice-presidents Hans Heinrich Hansen, Heinrich Schultz, 15 January 2007
47. Meeting because of the conference EU Presidency in Brussels, 18 January 2007
48. Meeting with vice president Hans Heinrich Hansen, 25 January 2007
49. Meeting with vice-presidents Hans Heinrich Hansen and Heinrich Schultz, 29 January 2007
50. Amsterdam meeting with EBLUL Europe and Language Boards, 31 January 2007
51. FUEN-board meeting in Munich – 1 February
52. Lecture – “European minority politics” at Udviklingsfonds Nordborg 5 February 2007
53. Meeting about the conference EU-Presidency in Brussels 6 February 2007
54. Farewell party Hans Heinrich Hansen as BDN-chairman 10 February 2007
55. Talk Brussels / FUEN with State Secretary Bergner (BMI) – 10 February 2007
56. Intergroup Meeting of the EU-Parliament in Strassbourg – 15 February 2007
57. Denmark EBLUL committee meeting – 20 February 2007
58. Working meeting Bautzen / Budyšin 23-25 February 2007
59. Report YEN board 24 February 2007
60. Meeting with the head of the cabinet of the Secretary General of the Committee of the Regions in Brussels – 27 February 2007
61. Meeting Hanse Office Brussels – 27 February 2007
62. Meeting for the conference EU-Presidency in Brussels – 5 March 2007
63. Meeting with the director of the Landeszentrale politische Bildung in Kiel (Easter Seminar 2008) – 6 March 2007
64. Lecture Hellerup – “European minority politics” – 12 March 2007
65. Working meeting and EU summit in Berlin 24-25 March 2007
66. FUEN-board meeting 2-3 April 2007

Worked on / elaboration of documents / statements

- Charter for the autochthonus, national minorities in Europe
- Proposal for a statement of YEN and FUEN about future support for regional and minority languages in the EU funding programmes
- Preparatory document for Staatskanzlei Kiel: Minorities as EU-subject
- Support in the application at the BMI for the publication of the FUEN/YEN-Charter and FUEN-Documentation
- FUEN-Congress Documentation
- Statement about EU-language policy in regard to RML
- Newsletter

- Homepage: www.living-diversity.eu

FUEV-Congress:

- FUEN-Resolutions – reworking
- Manuscripts, printing, layout
- Press work before, during and after the congress
- Sending the Charter (making mailing list, accompanying letters – together with the YEN-office in Bautzen / Budyšin)
- Preparation of a FUEN Congress documentation
- Working out the results of the congress into a documentation

Press work:

- 34 Press releases on different subjects
- Scanned articles from newspaper are available at www.living-diversity.eu

Minutes

- Strategy meeting May 2006
- Minutes EBLUL – Pfd Sky June 2006
- Intergroup meeting Straßbourg – June 2006
- Talk with the EU-Commission – July 2006
- Eupen and Brussels visit – September 2006
- Strategy meeting September 2006

Monitoring / background reports:

- Regional- or Minority Languages
- Plan D
- 2006 year of equal opportunities
- Council of Europe – Parliamentary Assembly, Juncker report
- EU-Fundamental Rights Agency
- EU-Financial support
- Estonia-Dossier

Seminars / Discussions / Conferences

- EBLUL – Partnership for Diversity, July
- Rěč! Heraus mit der Sprache! Speak! – Youth Exchange 2006
- Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutscher Minderheiten in FUEN, September
- Multilingualism conference in Brussels
- Plan D-Conference in Brussels

April 2007
Susann Schenk, Jan Diedrichsen