



FEDERAL UNION OF EUROPEAN NATIONALITIES · FÖDERALISTISCHE UNION EUROPÄISCHER VOLKSGRUPPEN  
ФЕДЕРАЛИСТСКИЙ СОЮЗ ЕВРОПЕЙСКИХ НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫХ МЕНЬШИНСТВ · UNION FÉDÉRALISTE DES COMMUNAUTÉS ETHNIQUES EUROPÉENNES

## Lunch Debate 2.0 at the European Parliament

On Tuesday 24 January 2012, FUEN (the Federal Union of European Nationalities) organised the second FUEN Parliamentary Lunch Debate 2.0 together with MEP Herbert Dorfmann (EVP) at the European Parliament in Brussels. The first of these lunches was successfully co-hosted around six months ago with the Danish MEP Anne E. Jensen (ALDE): FUEN invites MEPs, representatives of the European Commission, representatives of minorities from all over Europe, and other interested persons to a relaxed lunch in the parliament restaurant.

In his welcoming speech Herbert Dorfmann supported the FUEN initiative aimed at strengthening the networking between MEPs and the umbrella organisation of the autochthonous minorities in Europe and promoting a structured dialogue between civil society and policy makers.

The Lunch Debate 2.0 was opened by the newly elected chair of the Intergroup for National Minorities in the European Parliament, Csaba Tabajdi (SD). Tabajdi assured FUEN of a positive cooperation with the Intergroup. His Finnish predecessor, Carl Haglund (ALDE), also welcomed the approximately 40 participants.

FUEN chose two main subjects to be discussed in the relaxed ambience of the parliament restaurant: the situation of the Roma in Europe, and the issue of regional and minority languages.

Dr. Jürgen Schöning, former minister in the German federal state of Thuringia and FUEN adviser, presented the FUEN project idea Minorities as Bridge-Builders, whose pilot project focuses on the solidarity of the European minorities in Europe with the Roma.

Dana Trama Zada, the person responsible for Roma issues in the cabinet of EU commissioner Viviane Reding also took part. FUEN has already had two personal talks with the EU commissioner, and Ms Zada said that the EU Commission would continue to work together with FUEN with regard to Roma issues.

“FUEN cannot solve all the problems the Roma have in Europe. But by expressing their joint solidarity, FUEN and the minorities in Europe can improve the social recognition of the. This is a major prerequisite for finding a solution for the many different problems the Roma face in Europe”, said Dr. Jürgen Schöning in emphasising one of the core ideas behind the FUEN Roma project.

The second focal issue was the question of regional and minority languages, and continued on from the in, recent language conference of the RML2future network held in the South Tyrolean town of Bozen/Bolzano. FUEN vice-president Martha Stocker presented FUEN's demands and recommendations. For FUEN and its network for regional and minority languages [RML2future](#), this is primarily about the small and smallest languages in Europe. “The Commission has to start thinking about how it can make an active contribution to safeguarding the linguistic diversity and cultural wealth these represent. We have made several recommendations that we would like to bring into the dialogue with the Commission”, said Martha Stocker.

“The lunch debate format has proven successful. We are delighted that so many of the Brussels MEPs have taken advantage of the opportunity to engage in discussions with representatives of the minorities and their umbrella organisation. We will continue to be committed to this dialogue between civil society and the world of politics. This was certainly not the last of these FUEN lunch debates in the European Parliament”, was the positive conclusion drawn by FUEN president Hans Heinrich Hansen regarding the event in Brussels.