



FUEN - Federal Union of European Nationalities  
UFCE - Union Fédéraliste des Communautés Ethniques Européennes  
FUEV - Föderalistische Union Europäischer Volksgruppen  
Федералистский Союз Европейских Национальных Меньшинств

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Birthday present for FUEN: Governor Durnwalder congratulates FUEN and partners with the Network for Multilingualism and Linguistic Diversity**

“For us this is a beautiful birthday present so in the beginning of the year – FUEN reaches the age of sixty in 2009 and today our network for multilingualism and linguistic diversity starts its work.” The president of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), Hans Heinrich Hansen, is happy with the achievements at a press conference in the House of the Province in Bolzano today (9 January 2009).

Together with five partners FUEN founded the Network for Multilingualism and Linguistic Diversity. The network, which will work for three years, is supported by the EU Commission with circa 500 000 Euro. The region South Tyrol-Trentino accepted to cover the co-funding for the network with 50 000 Euro annually.

In Bolzano the network was launched with a press conference in the presence of governor Louis Durnwalder, the president of the European Academy Dr. Werner Stuffleger and FUEN-president as well as FUEN-vice-president Martha Stocker from South Tyrol and other representatives of the FUEN-presidium and the Youth of European Nationalities. “In Europe critically endangered animals and plants are protected. This should be no different with people, in regard to culture and identity. We must do all we can in Europe for our cultural and linguistic diversity. Otherwise an important part of our heritage will be lost. With 84 members in 34 countries FUEN is an important partner for the preservation of this heritage. We in South Tyrol are glad that we can make our contribution to the diversity in Europe with the support we give to the network”, governor Durnwalder emphasised.

The European Academy in Bolzano (EURAC) assumed the project coordination of the network and cooperates in the network as scientific partner. Next to EURAC, the other project partners are the German-speaking community in Belgium, the German and Danish minority in Denmark and Germany, Højskolen Østersøen in Aabenraa, Denmark, the Youth of European Nationalities as well as the Carinthian Slovenes in Austria.



F.l.t.r. FUEN Vice-president Zlatka Gielert, FUEN Vice-president Andrea Rassel, FUEN Vice-president Dr Martha Stocker, FUEN-President Hans Heinrich Hansen, governor Dr Luis Durnwalder and EURAC President Dr Werner Stuffleger.

“In South Tyrol one recognises that multilingualism is not finished only with English or another big language; in the multitude of regional and minority languages there is much potential. We are very grateful to South Tyrol and its governor for the support to the network”, Hans Heinrich Hansen stated.

Susann Schenk, head of the FUEN-secretariat in Flensburg and Lusatian Sorb, gave an outline of the main subjects the network will work on. The network will in particular use the existing potential of natural bi- and multilingualism in the European minority regions. “Monolingualism can be cured. Together with our partners we will have ourselves judged if we will have made a tangible contribution to the continued existence of the small and smallest languages in Europe.”