

Small peoples without a kin – state

Declaration adopted by the participants of the international seminar which was held in Scuol, Switzerland, on 23.-25. October 2015

Preamble

- Recalling that the cultural heritage of Europe in its diversity is part of European civilization.
- Stating that small peoples characterize themselves through their strong will to preserve their language and culture and to adapt to the conditions of our time.
- Considering that the existence of a kin-state in many ways strengthens the position of kin-minorities in other states, whereas small peoples without a kin-state are clearly in a weaker position, and that they are particularly endangered by assimilation and ultimately by extinction and, thus, are in need of special protection.
- Stressing that small peoples are multilingual and therefore models for shaping the Europe of tomorrow, and that multilingualism is a value which grows in human relations.
- Acknowledging that the preservation and promotion of the identity of small peoples needs public recognition and firm support which in times characterized by demographic changes must be accorded also outside of their areas of traditional settlement.

Recommendations to the states where small peoples without a kin-state live

- Fully respect the right of everyone to self-identification as enshrined in Article 3 (1) of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.
- Understand and recognize the special needs of small peoples without a kin-state.
- Identify the fields of their specific needs, such as:
 - Teaching of their native language - need of sufficient teaching materials and qualified teachers
 - Private and public media using their native language
 - Effective participation in decision-making in matters affecting their rights and interests, and existence of a negotiation mechanism with national authorities

- Autonomy rights – territorial or personal – for the protection of their language and culture within a clear and firm legal framework
- Acknowledge that meeting the special needs of small peoples without a kin-state requires provision of financial and human resources and may require positive measures.

Recommendations to international organs

- Be concerned of the potentially venerable position of small peoples without a kin-state and formulate opinions and recommendations accordingly.
- The monitoring organs of the relevant Council of European Instruments should develop a specific strategy on how to address the problems of small peoples without a kin-state.

Recommendations to small peoples without a kin-state

- To be loyal to their democratic states.
- To aim for a democratic and representative organizational structure
- To respect the human rights of all individuals belonging to their group.
- To be ready to participate as equal partners when negotiating measures for the implementation of their needs.
- To establish close links and co-operation among themselves in order to make their voices better heard in the international arena.