

International Seminar about cultural and linguistic communities without a kin–state

35 experts from 15 European countries representing a dozen cultural and linguistic communities without a kin–state (Small Peoples’) such as the Aromanians, the Frisians, Sorbs, etc., met at Müstair, in the Canton of Grison/Switzerland, talked for two and a half days about their linguistic, cultural and economic situation and found new innovative measures to improve their lives and institutions.

The Swiss based Convivenza Foundation - International Center for Minorities - as well as Eurac Research, based in Bolzano/Italy, organized a seminar on politics and constitutional law, education and culture as well as media and society under the patronage of the Council of Europe and its Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

The event took place from October 20th till 23rd 2021, in Müstair, Canton of Grison, Switzerland. Among the numerous sponsors, the seminar was financially supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the Directorate of International Law of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs as well as the Canton of Grison, the municipality of Müstair and the Lia Rumantscha.

The event was organized along the Governmental Learning Spiral[®], a method to create depoliticized spaces to enhance innovation and learning in the political context. Following this approach the experts developed five distinctive measures, which they considered as the most important and most urgent ones to improve Small People’s lives and institutions.

These are:

- the development of a digital strategy that enhances the cooperation among cultural and linguistic communities without a kin–state,
- the creation of a “Digital Corpus”, a collection and of printed language to enable the preservation of language of small people and improvement of electronical dictionaries and related translations,
- the provision of digital education for small peoples’ languages by developing a model and support structure for internet-based teaching instruments,
- the concretization of the legal commentary of Article 2 of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages regarding the distinction of national languages and dialects, and
- the creation of a concrete forum to strengthen the cooperation between Small Peoples’ rights and to get recognition in national and international bodies.

For each of the five measures a concrete implementation plan was developed. The measures and their state of implementation will be published in Volume 6 of the Convivenza Foundation's publication series. Furthermore, the experts agreed to the »Müstair Declaration«, where they summarized recommendations directed to the states where Small Peoples’ live, the European Union, international organs and to cultural and linguistic communities without a kin-state. This declaration can be downloaded at www.convivenza.ch.

The seminar concluded with a public event with local and traditional folk music, which was presided by the Government Councilor Dr. Jon Domenic Parolini, Head of the Department of Education, Culture and Environmental Protection of the Canton of Grison.

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