

## **OSCE 2010 REVIEW CONFERENCE**

**Warsaw, 6. Oct. 2010**

### **Working Session 7 - Tolerance and non-discrimination I**

#### **Statement of the autochthonous national minorities in Germany**

**With cutting the means for minorities, the state government of Schleswig-Holstein violates international agreements.**

The decision of the Schleswig-Holstein government to reduce subsidies for the schools of the Danish minority from 100% to 85% of the average costs per pupil at public schools is a devastating drawback for the Danish minority. This means a reversal of the pupil-cost-related equality between majority and minority, which was only reached in 2008. Furthermore, it once more challenges the role of the Danish schools as public schools for the Danish part of the population, which has been acknowledged by the school law of 2007.

As a consequence of this cut of at least 4.7 million Euros per year, up to 20 of the 47 schools run by the Danish School Association are threatened with closure. The consequences of such a cost reduction, however, reach far beyond effects on educational policy. It touches the lifeblood of the entire Danish minority because the Danish schools are not only places for education but also the centres of social and cultural life for the Danish population group.

With this policy, the state government violates not only the Bonn-Copenhagen Declarations, but also the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.

Furthermore, the frugal subsidies for the ethnic group of the Frisians in Schleswig-Holstein, maintaining their language and culture without the support of a mother country or kin-state, are cut to the same degree as the means for the majority of the population.

In this respect, it must also be noted critically that the general development of wages and prices has not been taken into account for the ratification of the Financing Agreement for the Foundation for the Sorbian Nation in 2009. The Financing Agreement has a term of five years.

The Minority Counsel declares that members of the national minorities, as citizens of this country, are of course willing to contribute their fair share to the necessary consolidation of the public budget. The prerequisite for this is, however, that the members of the national minorities are also financially treated as equal citizens and that the requirements for the reproduction of the minority cultures are taken into account adequately.

Therefore, the Minority Council demands from the Federal Republic of Germany that in consolidations of the budget:

- a) the national minorities will not have to bear a disproportionately high burden,
- b) the basic cultural provisions for the national minorities will not be endangered, and
- c) the general development of wages and prices will also be taken into account for institutions of the national minorities.

The Minority Council of the autochthonous national minorities in Germany supports the statement of the Central Council for German Sinti and Romanies on an improved protection against discrimination in the OSCE states.

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