



Łużycki Alians



LUŽICKÁ ALIANCE
ČESKÁ REPUBLIKA



THE LUSATIA GLOW

EUROPEAN INTEGRATION INITIATIVE

JOINT DECLARATION

LUSATIA GLOW - A NEW PARADIGM OF SMART INTEGRATION

**AN INNOVATIVE GRASSROOTS COHESION APPROACH FOR A NEW EU —
THE CROSS-BORDER MINORITIES AS THE CONNECTING SYNAPSES OF A
NEW EUROPEAN INTEGRATION MODEL**

The Traditional EU Paradigm: Unity in Diversity and Democracy

The foundation of the EU after the second world war was the result of the catastrophic confrontation between chauvinistically acting national states in the 19th and 20th centuries, competing for cultural dominance, international influence, and economic resources at the global level.

As a multilateral, cooperative political project, aiming to reconcile the justified interests of smaller and larger nations alike, differentiated by diverse language, culture, history, economic strength, and mentalities, the EU has developed a unique political methodology and culture, which globally serves as an admired example for democratic balancing of interests in mutual respect.

Today, the EU uniquely combines democracy and rule of law, economic success, performant healthcare and educational systems, with civil rights and one of the lowest economic inequality indices in the world¹, allowing its member states accelerated economic development, and its citizens unprecedented personal opportunities and freedom.

While we have come to take for granted these advantages of a strong EU as transnational community, ensuring peace, shared burdens, economic wellbeing, and freedom for our citizens, the EU founding motivations fall increasingly into oblivion, with aggressive nationalism and confrontative politics seeing an unfortunate revival, also inside the EU, which is per se perceived as a threat to the nationalist world view.

Nationalism, an intellectual concept of the 19th century, is a synonym for group egoism, ambitions of domination, lack of cultural understanding of others and the prime source of conflicts, whether we look into history or, these days, at the threats towards Ukraine, the situation in some parts of South East Europe, the populist campaign which took place around the Brexit, or other current conflicts outside and inside the EU.

Therefore, in order to secure its long-term success, the EU has to develop now concepts to become stronger rooted in the civil society of its member states, and to use the competences of its citizens better, in order to become more independent from the volatility of national politics in its member states.

The New EU Paradigm: Regional Cultures as cross-border Cohesion Factors in a Europe based on Human Rights

Native ethnic and cultural minorities are integral part of the cultural heritage and diversity of Europe, and reflect either earlier political structures, or are the result of arbitrary demarcation of frontiers by the national states.

In fact, most EU countries are surrounded by regions, inhabited by old-established cross-border minority populations, who use the language of the neighbouring country as primary mother tongue, or a very closely related language of the same language family (so-called “language continua” across borders), synaptically connecting adjacent member states.

In addition, the EU is an exclusive home to a series of regional minority cultures, which are not related to any of the official EU member state cultures. For these so-called non-kin cultures, the EU is of particular significance as transnational political reference level.

About 40 – 50 million EU citizens actively speak a regional language, in addition to the official language of their respective member state². A much greater number of EU citizens, though, can be expected to remain emotionally affiliated to these regional cultures, without mastering the languages.

EU citizens competent in a regional language, are intrinsically multi-cultural, used to constantly put themselves into different positions (the national and the minority perspective), and are able to understand different mentalities (e.g. of neighbouring countries, resident state, minority society).

As such, regional culture-affiliated EU citizens are a valuable political resource, predestined, to act as pathfinders for intercultural understanding and collaborative cross-border problem-solving at the national state level, inside the EU and beyond.

As only democracy and rule of law based on inseparable human rights can reliably provide protection for the needs of EU citizens affiliated to regional cultures, these citizens are **particularly supportive of democracy**, protected by a strong and successful EU, which provides a globally unique transnational reference framework, in cases where regional culture interests are in competition with national member state priorities, which may suddenly change to the worse, or openly be denied as a result of political changes in the member states³.

While the EU as a whole, very clearly commits to safeguarding and enhancing the rich cultural and linguistic diversity of Europe^{4,5}, practical policies in many member states continue to pursue a policy to “dry out” living regional cultures in favour of complete assimilation to a single “pure” national state culture, following nationalist concepts of the 19th century. Assimilative pressure on regional cultures is being exerted by marginalisation as a folklore, absent or inadequate funding, negative discrimination in media and public, up to subtle insinuations of disloyalty towards the national state.

For the EU as the most ambitious transnational political structure of the 21st century, in contrast, it is vital to actively develop, use and preserve the intercultural competences of its citizens, to strengthen regional and transnational environments, and to support EU-friendly civil society initiatives, helping to counteract nationalistic concepts, actively challenging the key values of the EU: civil rights, democracy, collaboration and the rule of law.

The investment in regional cultures as a **cross-border cohesion factor** of a modern transnational organisation, will allow to leverage the societal contribution of cultures without own statehood, thereby providing an innovative benchmark and exemplary model of collaborative cross-border integration of European Union diversity with potentially global impact.

The LUSATIA GLOW (LG) Initiative, therefore, represents a profound paradigm change, intending to strengthen the cross-border connectivity of regional cultures, as transnational cohesion 'synapses' of a multidimensional bottom-up grassroots integration model across the European continent for a more resilient, new EU, which is deeply rooted in its civil society.



SLAVONIC EUROPE

International Network for Slavonic Cooperation

- 1 <https://wid.world/news-article/2020-regional-updates/>
- 2 EP briefing 2016 PE 589.794
- 3 <https://www.courthousenews.com/top-eu-court-backs-citizen-initiative-to-protect-minority-languages/>
- 4 Treaty on the European Union (TEU, art. 3(3))
- 5 Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (CFREU, art. 22)