

# Autonomia to normalność Silesia Deserves Autonomy

General Assembly of EFA | CMC | EFAy  
European Political Party, Foundation and Youth Party | 30<sup>th</sup> March - 1<sup>st</sup> April, Katowice, Silesia  
@EUPARTY-EFA #Katowice17 #AnotherEurope #Autonomy4Silesia



*Recapitulative political statement on the main issues discussed in the General Assembly 2017.*

## The Future of Europe:

**"Self-determination and Autonomy are universal and natural."**

The European Free Alliance (EFA), European Political Party created in 1981, that groups 49 parties fighting for self-determination of the peoples of Europe, present in 19 Member States of the European Union (and two states outside the current EU), held its Annual General Meeting in the city of Katowice in Silesia from 30 March to 1 April 2017.

This general assembly was hosted by Ruch Autonomii Śląska (RAS), a member of EFA for more than 15 years, representing the interests of the Silesian nation. RAS joined the regional government for the first time in 2010 and is currently again part of the regional government placing Warsaw's governmental party PiS in opposition. It was the best attended General Assembly in years with delegates from 41 EFA parties from all corners of Europe.

RAS strives for the re-establishment of the Autonomy Silesia once had. In view of the very hostile, centralist response to this in Warsaw, RAS campaign under the banner "Autonomy is normal" (Autonomia to normalność).

The Silesian nation wants recognition for its distinct identity in Poland, for an official status for its language, for more respect. It assertively claims the right to self-determination, the right to decide on the future of Silesia. The EFA denounces the centralist-jacobin attitude of Poland and calls for a change.

During its General Assembly, the EFA took stock of the progress of self-determination processes and defence of peoples and cultures in the European Union, in an era dominated by Brexit and a changed US administration. EFA sees signs of hope that extreme-right populist parties in Austria and the Netherlands were countered but still sees anti-European feelings grow and the European desintegration discourse prevail.

The EC white paper on the Future of the EU should result in a joint text approved in Rome by the 27 Member States. The Juncker Commission proposes either to: 1) Carry on; 2) to limit the EU to just the single market; 3) to do more with those who want; 4) to do less but more efficient; 5) to do much more together. EFA believes the main debate should not be on competences but about democracy, sovereignty and citizens' empowerment. The narrative on the Europe of peoples is put forward by EFA. We need a structure that will ensure that each level of the multilayer governance of the EU deals with the appropriate

competence, and this also includes Europe's component nations, peoples, regions and local governments.

EFA cannot stand aside while, in times of commemoration of the Great War, the peace project called European Union shipwrecks. While a discourse existed on the evaporation of the nation states, the re-empowering Members States push the debate towards the disintegration of the European Union itself. EFA wants a strong Europe but wants #AnotherEurope!

In Catalonia the year 2017 will be historic: a nation prepares for independence, a new State grows to reinforce the European project. In the UK after the Brexit referendum a second Scottish independence referendum will become a reality and after the recent elections in Ireland, where the unionist monopoly was shattered, the Irish re-unification and referendum to decide over that, is on the table.

EFA wishes our 4 parties in the UK very good results in the local elections of the 4th of May, the first elections after the EU referendum of June 2016. EFA also shows that our 4 parties can keep their status in our organisation if they so wish, regardless the fact that the UK will leave the EU.

In France important elections are approaching, not only are our EFA parties campaigning for more decentralisation and autonomy but they campaign against anti-European xenophobe populism. The effect of the territorial reform are devastation for Alsace and Savoy while In Iparalde for the first time one region with all Basque speakers was formed. In Occitania, on the contrary, the territorial reform has granted the name "Occitania" to only one third of the Occitan territory which can bring a number of negative consequences that will mainly affect the development of policies in favour of the Occitan language. In Corsica the nationalist government makes progress delivering upon its promises and integrating political forces in a long-term strategy.

EFA denounces that the Spanish central state blocks the Catalan democracy via juridical actions by refusing to negotiate and to look for political solution to political problems. EFA brands Spain as a poor democracy that refuses to acknowledge the principle of self-determination, ignoring and blocking modern democracies that develop within the territory of the Iberian Peninsula; and denounces the Spanish government attitude against peace building and reconciliation in the Basque Country. EFA renews its call to bring political prisoners closer to home and demands from the Spanish Government a responsible attitude regarding the disarmament process of ETA.

We welcome ChA and PSM who are both in government for the first time and show with their 30<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary (2016) to have grown to maturity as parties.

EFA welcomed the rejection of the constitutional reform in December 2016 in Italy and sees positive evolutions in Aosta, South-Tyrol and Lombardia. Our party ALPE entered into the government as the key party, putting Union Valdôtaine in opposition for the first time in 40 years. A new future emerges. ALPE has one year before elections to change the course of the region. EFA hopes that better Autonomy statutes can be developed throughout the whole country.

EFA denounces the evolution in Poland towards authoritarian rule. More persistently than ever, the government and parliamentary majority try to eradicate the Silesian and other minorities. The centralism of Warsaw is incompatible with the democratic wish of the Silesians to be respected and with the basic European laws and values. We would like to

express our deepest hope that after this dark period Poland will emerge as a more democratic country.

In Finland continuous breaches of the Ålands Autonomy statute put more pressure on the Swedish language. Ålands Framtid, as the only independentist party, pushes the agenda of the other parties.

In Germany we see how SSW in its second governmental mandate shows to be a stable and constructive party guaranteeing the rights for the Danish minority. In Bavaria all preparations are being made to re-enter into the Bavarian Landtag in 2018.

In Austria our member Enotna Lista is vigilant more than ever with pressure on language and identity increasing, while in Croatia our member booked two symbolic victories in the run up to local elections.

Since the 4-day war in April 2016 in the Artsakh Republic EFA has stepped up its presence in the region, with our delegation participating in the 25 ears Independence celebrations (Sept. 16) and the recent Constitution referendum in early 2017.

EFA continues to focus on the right to self-determination as a universal right and as a part of human rights. Everywhere in the world, whenever possible, Europe must defend national minorities -because Europe is built up by minorities but also by stateless nations and emerging new states. We are Europe! Europe must also defend the right for peoples to self-determination and the respect for all cultures, identities, languages and all democratic and peaceful political ambitions of all European peoples (either more autonomy or full independence). EFA will exercise its solidarity with all peoples in their fight for freedom in the European Parliament and in any other fora.

#### **Discussions and decisions of the EFA GA:**

- 1) Following the request and proposal of RAS, the **European Free Alliance** decided to hold the 2017 General Assembly in **Silesia** to support the ambitions of the people to re-establish Autonomy. EFA supports our member party within the Polish centralist context and urges RAS to co-operate with other parties and movements in Poland who advocate autonomy.
- 2) EFA amended its **Articles of Association and the Rules of Internal Order** with the aim to be fully compliant and ready for the first official registration as European Political Party under the new rules of the European Parliament. A New Authority created in the EP will register and monitor EU parties.
- 3) EFA adopts the closed **budget 2016, the amended budget 2017 and the budget proposal 2018** and the connected activity plans. Higher budgetary possibilities and sound management have to go together with a higher sense of responsibility of all members to generate the needed own resources.
- 4) Our political family embraces **3 new observer parties**. **Inseme per a Corsica** aims to work together with PNC within EFA and in Corsica on a long-term strategy of integration in one political entity. **Patrie Furlane** works for the Friulan language and identity and **Oljka** works for obtaining autonomy and respect for the Istrian identity within Slovenia. EFA welcomes the 3 observer and reaches in 2017 almost the level of 50 member parties. EFA has currently 14 Member parties in government: ALPE, Bloc Nacionalista Valencia, ChA (all for the first time), ERC, FNP, N-VA, PNC and Inseme PSM RAS SNP Slovenska Skupnost SSW Democratic Party of Artsakh

- 5) Motions were approved, to stop the eradication of bees, in support of the Sahrawi, Palestinian and Kurdish peoples, to support our parties in the UK after Brexit. Furthermore motions were approved in support for Games for Stateless nations, to study and improve energy sovereignty and to better serve our nations with Trans-European Networks (TEN's).
- 6) Declarations to stop hate crimes with the Turkish minority in Greece, to support the Slovene language in Austria and the Hungarian minority in Romania, were approved. EFA continues its support for the Catalan nation on its way to form its own state. Support for demilitarisation of the Balkan, the officialization of the flag of the city of Rijeka and a support to the ambitions of the city to become cultural capital in 2020. EFA supported declarations to help the Artsakh republic, the self rule of Moravia and the Kashubian minority in Poland. An urgent declaration on the full disarmament of ETA was also approved.
- 7) EFA started to prepare its electoral manifesto for the EP elections 2019. Some topical discussions were held on: The Future of Europe, Refugees, poverty and social agenda, the rise of extreme right, energy sovereignty, the evolutions in the implementation of the right to self-determination.
- 8) EFA takes note of the EFAY activities 2016 and 2017 and of the refusal of the European Commission to finance our youth branch. Apart from the political support, the EFAY also requires to make an extra financial effort to reach a better balance and EFA continues its support to EFAY.
- 9) EFA takes note of the activity plan of CMC of 2016 and 2017 and prepares a special publication for 35 years of EFA and 10 years of CMC. The book *imagination: "100 years of political visual communication on self-determination will soon be printed and delegates with enthusiasm started reserving their copies."* EFA congratulates its foundation with the positive growth path it has shown in the past ten years. Especially the Coppieters Award 2016, handed over to Alex Salmond was a milestone in our foundation's history. The EFA Bureau has nominated Carme Forcadell for the 2017 Coppieters Awards. The CMC Scientific Advisory Council will soon make public the nominee of the next Coppieters Award.
- 10) EFA awards the title of EFA honorary members to Ernest Maragall and Jordi Sebastia.
- 11) The next General Assembly will be organised in Bavaria and will be framed in the electoral campaign of the EFA member party Bayernpartei to re-enter the Bavarian Landtag. The General Assembly of 2020 will be organised in Grenzland a hundred years after the referendum in which German and Danish citizens decided upon their own future. end