



Declaration nr. 1 **Unanimously approved** by the EFA GA on 17 April 2015.

Name of the person introducing the declaration: Hannes-Wilhelm KELL

On behalf of the party: Lausitzer Allianz

**Declaration:** Declaration of support for a "Lusatia Sejm"

#### **Initiation**

Taking into account the common aims of EFA to:

- promote environmental and cultural sustainability,
- support the economic resilience and strength of regions,
- foster subsidiarity and federalism,
- respect traditional settlement areas,
- strengthen regional self-determination as a political tool of Regions and, consequently, foster implementation of regional parliaments.

#### **The General Assembly of EFA adopts the following Declaration:**

The Sorbs\*, a West Slavic people that has been settled in eastern Germany since the 6th century strove for self-determination for more than 1,000 years. Since 1992 they are recognised as a people in the constitutions and by legislation of the states of Saxony and Brandenburg. Accordingly, they should have all rights to act as a political entity under both German and European laws. However, for lack of a democratically elected representation the cultural, including the linguistic situation deteriorated dramatically in the last 20 years. There are efforts meant to protect and stabilise the Sorbian languages and cultural identity. That though needs an adequate political framework and specific legislation to empower the Sorbian\* community to participate appropriately in the development and reformation of the society, thereby promoting their own culture. In order to secure a good life of their children in the spirit of 'Buen Vivir' they need self-determination. This will only come true when the Sorbs\* elect their own Parliament 'Serbski Sejmik' freely and following democratic rules.

With this declaration the EFA supports and promotes the creation of a regional Sorbian\* Community Parliament. EFA is committed to ensure that this claim will be heard at the appropriate political levels of the states of Saxony and Brandenburg, the Federal Republic of Germany and the European Union.

#### **Explanatory note**

The Sorbs were subjected throughout their history to repressive assimilation. The current structures within the people are characterized by different institutions, tendencies and idiosyncrasies. The settlement area is acutely threatened by massive coal mining activities (lignite mines), huge landfill including special waste, and a kaolin extraction program. A 'Serbski Sejmik' will give the approximately 700 thousand people of Sorbian affiliation, according to ethnological typology, a common voice and identity. For the first time in history self-determination will be implemented all across the different parts of the Sorbian settlement area.

\* Two groups of folk live in the geographic region of Lusatia, they call themselves, in their slightly different languages 'Serbja' and 'Serby'. In German they are traditionally called Sorben and Wenden in southern and northern Lusatia respectively. Following their own common denomination it is reasonable to call them Serbs in English. To avoid mix-up with the southern European Serbs, however, they should each have their own identity and can therefore be called Sorbs or Wends in English.