



Eurolang

## Minority daily newspapers form association

*Palma de Mallorca 23/4/01*, by **Johan Häggman**

Newspapers representing ten linguistic minority communities in Europe have agreed to form an association to co-operate over publishing, funding and marketing.

The European Association of Daily Newspapers in Minority and Regional Languages (MIDAS) was formally established at the weekend at a meeting in Palma de Mallorca in the Balearic Islands.

The aims of the association are to co-ordinate strategies and increase co-operation in publishing, marketing and obtaining funding.

'We should focus on three main topics: lobbying in Brussels, exchanging ideas and mutual assistance and solidarity', said the association's president, Toni Ebner of Dolomiten, the German minority newspaper in Bozen/Bolzano in South Tyrol.

According to the statute, MIDAS will be based in Bozen/Bolzano and will be a non-profit organisation based on the principles of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

A board was also elected comprising newspaper editors representing the Slovene minority in Italy, the Catalans, Swedish-speaking Finns, Danish speakers in northern Germany, Hungarian speakers in Slovakia and the Basques.

'Linguistic minorities have enormous opportunities since they know at least two languages and cultures and can thus easily adapt to others', Toni Ebner said.

'We should develop and use this knowledge. On our own, we're weak, but together we represent over 40 million readers'.

Carla Rotta from La voce del popolo, the Italian minority newspaper in Croatia, said: 'I hope the association will make us more independent, both politically and educationally. Most of the other newspapers are looking for improvements: we're fighting for survival'.

Rotta adds that the association should also help to develop new technology. Edita Slezakova, editor of the Hungarian minority paper in Slovakia, Új Szó, agrees, referring to IT programmes such as eContent.

'I also hope the association can help us with EU funding. This has been a problem for us so far since Slovakia is not a member', she said. (EL)

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