R4new Indigenous rights are human rights!

Proposers:

Agenda item: 4. Resolutions

Motion text

Indigenous knowledge is critical in solving the climate crisis. That’s why it’s a bit ironic that the livelihoods of indigenous peoples have been under pressure for centuries, and still are under pressure today.

There is only one indigenous people officially recognized in the European Union - The Sami people - that traditionally resides in the Sapmi area in the north of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Even though this is the only indigenous people residing in Europe, there are many indigenous peoples being affected by our continent; the actions of the EU and European countries in the global market have a huge impact on the lives of indigenous peoples across the globe.

Therefore, a;

Europe that is in line with indeginous rights across the globe should ensure that

- All trade agreements by the EU and by European countries must respect the rights of the the indigenous communities directly or indirectly affected in the counterpart and possibly in neighbouring states. This must entail respect for ILO Convention 169 alongside core human rights conventions. Furthermore, these indigenous communities must be consulted and represented in the discussions and evaluation of the agreement either by a representative or, where possible, a collective or council representing them

- All foreign investments in industries by European countries and the EU must respect the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (ILO Convention 169)

- Indigenous peoples are an important group for funding in international development policies and should be promoted

- Non-Self-Governing Territories' right to Independence referendums worldwide should be supported

Europe is to ensure the rights of its indigenous populations by

- Ensuring that the EU and its member states ratify the ILO Convention 169
- Prohibiting contruction in indigenous lands if it would damage or restrict access to lands culturally or religiously important to indigenous communities, or negatively affect their environment, health, livelihood or other rights in any way. The evaluation of any project should be done in consultation with possibly affected indigenous communities either by a representative or, where possible, a collective or council representing them
- Supporting the dissemination of indigenous knowledge, culture and history in Europe and areas that are colonized by Europe
- Funding projects by the state or civil society organisations that increase the knowledge of- and usage of indigenous languages. This includes the teaching of indigenous languages as part of school curriculum.
- Allowing The Sami People to freely migrate within the Sapmi area, regardless of the official country borders
- Supporting the Nordic Sami-council and encouraging all countries with indigenous land to create an indigenous council
- Increasing funding for research on indigenous language, culture and history
- Depositing EU grants earmarked to strengthen national and ethnic minorities directly to minority organizations instead of through the Member States

Reason

Background for sending in the resolution

Indigenous knowledge is critical in solving the climate crisis. That’s why it’s a bit ironic that the livelihoods of indigenous peoples have been under pressure for centuries, and still are under pressure today.

There is only one indigenous people officially recognized in the European Union - The Sami people - that traditionally resides in the Sapmi area in the north of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Even though this is the only indigenous people residing in Europe, there are many indigenous peoples being affected by our continent. The actions of the EU and European countries in the global market have a huge impact on the lives of indigenous peoples across the globe.

There are also several countries currently colonized by European nations, such as Greenland that is colonized by Denmark and French Guiana. The climate crisis and destruction of nature in indigenous areas are endangering the lives of indigenous peoples, and Green Parties should therefore be at the forefront as allies for indigenous peoples in the whole world.

Discussion

Europe and the rest of the world
The EU and European countries must ensure that the rights of indigenous peoples are preserved within its own territory, but also when interacting with indigenous peoples and territories through trade and foreign aid policies. Indigenous policies by European countries should therefore have a global and regional perspective.

Indigenous rights
Indigenous peoples have a lot of strengths and diverse culture, but they are also oppressed by their colonizers. That’s why they should have the same right to an adapted protection such as other vulnerable groups. The UN adopted a resolution on indigenous human rights in 2007 called the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It has been ratified by most countries in south america, but only four European countries had ratified it in 2017. This is far from enough, since most countries have some form of interaction that affects the lives of indigenous peoples. It is therefore proposed that the EU and all European countries should ratify the UN Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples, and respect the law in national and foreign policies.

Trade and destruction of livelihood
The Sapmi area has on multiple occasions been threatened by construction in nature that has a negative impact on the traditional livelihood of the Sami people living in the area. Most recently in the mining project by the Repparfjord in Norway, and by the proposed mining in Gállok in Sweden. It is clear that the national governments in Europe don’t respect the territories and the protection of the livelihood in Europe, which the Greens should strongly oppose as allies of oppressed peoples.

Indigenous peoples have been threatened by a loss in their livelihood across the globe for centuries, and it’s time to respect their wishes for a protection of their land and nature. That’s why we propose to not allow construction in nature that indeginous people see negatively affects their livelihoods.

All European member states interact with the lands of indigenous peoples when they trade with countries that have an indigenous population. It is therefore likely that all European countries have power, and an impact over the lives of indigenous people in some form. Attempts to improve the lives and livelihoods of indigenous peoples should therefore not only affect the European countries and its colonies, but all counterparts in trade agreements, as is proposed in this resolution.

Referendums
Some peoples have an official status as indigenous peoples, whereas others do not. Regardless of a population's official status, they should be granted the right to be free from their colonizers if they wish to do so, and the colonizer should help their colonies transit to self-govern for the period of time it takes for the colony to build strong institutions. This is why we propose that referendums must be supported so that the people in colonies can cast a voice to say whether or not they want to be independent. This is also in line with the rule of law, as defined by the European Council.

Strengthening indigenous peoples

Much of indigenous culture is endangered because of colonization. That's why we should not just protect, but also strengthen the indigenous languages, culture and knowledge of their history through grants. It should be the responsibility of the governments to ensure basic rights such as teaching indigenous languages at schools. That's why we propose that grants earmarked to strengthen the practice of indigenous cultures should go directly to the indigenous councils and/or NGOs working for indigenous rights.

Migration

In Europe, most people are able to travel freely within the Schengen-area with their passport, and most people are able to travel freely within their national borders. This is not, however, the case for the Sami people. Sapmi (the land of the Sami people) spans across Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Since Russia is not a part of the Schengen area, many Samy people can not travel freely within their land. The Norwegian Sami-president has called for free migration for the Sami people within their land. Since this was possible for the Sami people before migration policies were implemented as part of the colonization process, we propose that they should get the right to travel freely within Sapmi across the Schengen area, and Russian Sapmi area. This could be possible through (for example) the creation of a Sami passport.

Indigenous councils

Many countries have national and international councils for the indigenous peoples to voice their opinions together. Most countries with a Sami-population already have this. It can be a good way for the indigenous people to find together and organize in favor of their interests. Such councils must not only be protected from harassment, but actively supported through funding to ensure they have enough resources to complete their work. We therefore propose that the EU and the European member states should strengthen the councils that already exist, as well as creating indigenous councils in the areas they are absent.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, we propose the resolution.