



Petition to the Brandenburg and Saxon state parliaments, January 2017

### **Self-determination now! - For a Parliament of the Sorbs/Wends**

**Establishment of a democratically legitimised people's representation of the Sorbs/Wends - Serbski Sejm.**

*We request the initiation and implementation of a legislative procedure to create the legal framework for a democratically legitimised people's representation of the Sorbs/Wends "Serbski Sejm".*

Reasons: According to Article 6(1) of the Saxon Constitution and Article 25 of the Brandenburg Constitution, the Länder guarantee the right to preserve the identity and also to maintain and develop the Sorbian ancestral language, culture and tradition. In addition, the German-Sorbian character of the settlement area of the Sorbian people is to be preserved. According to Section 2 (2) of the Saxon Sorbian Act and Section 2 (3) of the Saxon Sorbian Act, not only the Saxon people as a whole, but also each Sorbian individually, has the right to preserve, further develop and express his or her Sorbian identity. The state of Brandenburg has taken on a comparable mandate to promote the Sorbian identity through § 1 para. 2 and para. 3 of the Brandenburg Sorbs/Wends Act.

How is this to be done if the Sorbs/Wends have no possibility to make their voice heard through a democratically legitimised body?

There is a fundamental right under international law to a democratically legitimised representation of the people and the self-determination that goes with it. The Sorbs/Wends are recognised as a people in the constitutions of the Free State of Saxony and the Land of Brandenburg. Thus, in order to implement this fundamental right, a parliament is also an imperative of today. Even in the final report of the working group "Corporation under Public Law" of the Foundation for the Sorbian People, the authors start from the basic assumption "that the representation of the interests of the Sorbian people by the previously existing institutions has not proved sufficiently effective in the past two decades since the reunification of Germany." (cf. Final Report of the WG of the Foundation for the Sorbian People "Corporation under Public Law", p. 6, as of 13 July 2011).

Members of an initiative group have developed and published the attached concept, solicited regional support and initiated a public discussion within the Sorbian people about a Sorbian parliament with territorial reference to the settlement area of the Sorbs/Wends.

The key points anchored in the basic concept are intended to provide the parliamentary groups in the regional parliaments with orientation in shaping the legal basis in connection with the drafting of a bill.

The members of the initiative group and the supporters from all areas of social life listed in the appendix are of course available to you as partners in consultation and proceedings during the development and voting process.