

100th Anniversary of the Congress of European Nationalities

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 **SQN** Sine Qua Non
Building Capacities
for Peace & Human Rights

100th anniversary of the Congress of European Nationalities

Geneva

University of Geneva, Salle 1, 66 Boulevard Carl-Vogt

This experts' meeting will commemorate the centenary of one of the early meetings of the Congress of European Nationalities that brought together representatives of national minorities and peoples without states to advance collective rights, dialogue, and conflict prevention.

A century later, while some legal protections exist, these have not provided the degree of legal protection expected. In addition, a significant gap between legal safeguards and political representation also remains. This event will revisit the legacy of the 1926 Congress and open a discussion on collective rights and self-determination in today's multilateral landscape.

SPEAKERS



Prof. Nicolas Levrat (Switzerland) was appointed **United Nations Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues** by the Human Rights Council and assumed his functions on 1 November 2023. Levrat is a French speaking Swiss, born in 1964. As such, he is a member of a linguistic minority in Switzerland and has been dedicating his academic research and teaching focus on Peoples and minorities rights, Federalism, and on relationships between legal systems. Holding a PhD in International Law, he has been a **Professor of International and European Law at the University of Geneva** since 2001 and Director of the **Global Studies Institute** of the University of Geneva. He started his professional career as a European civil servant at the Council of Europe (1991-1994), and then joined the Université libre de Bruxelles. In 2022, he was elected **2nd Vice-President of the Advisory Committee** on the Framework Convention for the protection of national minorities of the Council of Europe.



Xosé M. Núñez Seixas (PhD EUI Florence) is **Professor of Modern and Contemporary History** at the University of **Santiago de Compostela**; he also taught at LMU Munich between 2012 and 2017, and has been visiting professor at Stanford University, City University of New York, Turin University and Paris X university, among others. His research interests include the comparative history of **national movements and territorial identities**, the cultural history of war and violence, the relationship between fascism and territorial identities, and the memory of the dictatorships. He wrote his PhD on the history of the **Congress of European Nationalities**, published as *Entre Ginebra y Berlín. La cuestión de las minorías nacionales y la política internacional en Europa, 1914-1939* (Madrid, 2001). Among his latest books are *Beyond Folklore. The Franco regime and Spain's territorial plurality* (London, 2023) and *The Eastern Front in European Memory. On Victims and Heroes, 1945-2024* (London, 2025).



Dr. Kas Swerts is a researcher at the **ADVN | Archive for National Movements**, and as a postdoctoral researcher affiliated with the Center for Political History at the **University of Antwerp** and the Research Group on Cultural History since 1750 at **KU Leuven**. Their research focuses on the study of **nationalism and national movements** from an international-comparative perspective, the history of tourism, and 20th-century historiography and historical theory.



In November 2020, **Peggy Eriksson** (Bureau member of Coppieters Foundation) was unanimously elected **chairperson of Ålands Framtid** ("Future of Åland") being re-elected in 2022 and continued to represent the party in political and public affairs. Bureau member of **EFA**, she has also represented the party in **European minority-rights and self-determination discussions** as well as in matters related to the protection of **Åland's autonomy**, the promotion of Åland's interests internationally and the support of the rights of linguistic and regional minorities in Europe.



Dr. Fernand de Varennes is Australian-Canadian human rights academic, author and advocate. A leading expert on **human rights and international law**, he has occupied high-profile roles within **international organisations such as the United Nations (Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, August 2017-November 2023)** and the OSCE, engaged frequently with human and minority rights mechanisms such as the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. He has some **300 publications in 30 languages** on international law, the prevention of violent conflicts, the rights of minorities, language rights, human rights and democracy.



Professor Anwen Elias is a political scientist based at **Aberystwyth University** (Wales, UK). Her research has focused on the comparative politics of **stateless nations in Europe**, dynamics of **decentralisation**, and the electoral and party politics of **pluri-national states**. She has served as advisor to the Welsh Government on constitutional change, and participatory and deliberative democracy.



Sandrina Antunes is an **Assistant Professor** in the Department of Political Science at the **University of Minho**, Portugal, and a **Scientific Fellow** in the Department of Political Science at the **Université libre de Bruxelles**, Belgium. She is also an integrated member of the Research Centre in Political Science (CICP). She holds a bachelor's degree in international relations from the University of Minho and a PhD in Political Science from the Université libre de Bruxelles. Her research focuses on **regionalism, nationalism, and populism in Europe**, with particular attention to the paradiplomatic activities of regionalist and nationalist political parties.