

# Newsletter for January 2013

Issue 2, January 2013

## Vienna: Esperanto Discussed by the NGO Peace Committee

Under the chairmanship of Dr. Hans Michael Maitzen, representative of the Universal Esperanto Association at UN-Vienna, the NGO Peace Committee met on November 28 to hear a presentation by Bernhard Tuider on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the International Language Esperanto. Tuider emphasized Esperanto's emergence in the international peace movement in the years before World War I and its continued relevance in today's world. He paid particular attention to the role of the Austrian Nobel laureate Bertha von Suttner (1905) and her successor and assistant Alfred Hermann Fried. The presentation resulted in a lively discussion among the participants. Bernhard Tuider's talk was preceded by a presentation on the work of the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA). Hans Michael Maitzen, emeritus professor of astronomy at the University of Vienna, has headed the NGO Peace Committee for the past two years.

## New Lernu services aimed at traditional Esperanto movement as well

The online Esperanto learning site Lernu is seeking ways to strengthen its ties with the "traditional" Esperanto movement and serve a wider range of users. For some time now Lernu has a the "Word of the Day" service which sends subscribers an Esperanto word every day, along with definitions and examples of usage. Although Lernu itself is very multilingual, those messages are available only in Esperanto, because this service is aimed at more experienced (non-beginner) Esperanto speakers wishing to expand their vocabulary. At the request of users, the Lernu team is working with former president of UEA (Universal Esperanto Association) Renato Corsetti and an international team of volunteers to create a similar service for beginners, "Easy Word of the Day". The new service will not replace the current word of the day, as users will be able to subscribe to the two services separately. The new words will be easy fundamental words with example sentences and translations in the most used languages of Lernu.

"Many Esperanto speakers should be able to benefit from the service", remarked Erin Piatetski, who heads development of Lernu on behalf of Esperantic Studies Foundation, which financially supports Lernu. "Lernu is not intended only for beginners, but would like to contribute to the linguistic and cultural knowledge of the Esperanto movement in general."

The Lernu team is also discussing with SAT (Sennacieca Asocio Tutmonda – World Non-National Association) the possibility of offering the contents of the Plena Vortaro de Esperanto (PIV – Comprehensive Esperanto Dictionary) through [lernu.net](http://lernu.net) in order to facilitate access to this resource for our users. SAT and Lernu already share a common system of user accounts – you can use your Lernu account to access PIV for free at [www.vortaro.net](http://www.vortaro.net), and if you create an account for [www.vortaro.net](http://www.vortaro.net), you can use the same account with Lernu.

**After its launch in early 2013, according to Piatetski, the new version of Lernu will include a common interface for several different websites. "Our intent is to add more and more services that will be useful for the traditional Esperanto movement," she explains. "Those services will be accessible through one user account, instead of having to remember various usernames and passwords for several different websites."**

## Geneva: UEA plays role in UN meeting on indigenous peoples

From July 9 to 13, 2012, at UN-Geneva, the fifth session of the expert meeting on the global situation of indigenous rights took place under the title "Expert Mechanisms on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP). Representatives of the Universal Esperanto Association Verena Graf, Cesco Reale and Stefano Keller participated in the event, which was attended by delegations of indigenous peoples from all continents and NGOs defending indigenous peoples. The results of the EMRIP meeting, which takes place annually, will be further addressed by the UN Council on Human Rights

The one-week session, whose principal topic was "Languages and Cultures," provided a good opportunity for UEA to make new connections and alliances, because practically every intervention involved mention of the language situation of the people in question and intersected with UEA's own major concerns: language rights and the use of a non-partisan means of communication.

Stefano Keller, UEA board member and chief representative in Geneva, addressed the meeting in a short, five-minute speech. He underlined the disadvantaged situation of indigenous peoples in part because of language and he drew attention to scientific studies on the necessity of enabling the use of mother tongues, citing the viewpoints of linguists and other specialists, and the existence of UNESCO declarations and conventions. He drew attention to the rapid impoverishment of the linguistic and cultural diversity of the world, reminding his audience of the work of UEA to defend linguistic rights and its struggle to achieve reciprocal understanding and cooperation among the peoples through the use of the inter-ethnic, neutral, and easily learned language Esperanto, a truly international means of communication.

In conclusion, Keller informed his listeners about the "Indigenous Dialogues" project, which trained representatives of indigenous peoples from 27 ethnic groups in the use of computers and the application of Esperanto as a mode of communication allowing indigenous peoples on various continents to discuss their common problems among themselves on the basis of linguistic equality. After his intervention, numbers of representatives of NGOs and indigenous peoples approached him to exchange documents and discuss cooperation.

Participation in parallel noontime events and informal conversations allowed the UEA representatives to make further contacts. Among them, perhaps the most significant were meetings with former participants in the Indigenous Dialogues project, several of whom are now important members of EMRIP, at least one of whom suggested the development of a further Esperanto project to assist indigenous peoples.

Stefano Keller's address to the meeting: <http://alturl.com/oohce>

Session documents: <http://www.linguistic-rights.org/eventoj/>

212-687-7041

[www.esperantoporun.org](http://www.esperantoporun.org)

Office of the Universal Esperanto Association at the United Nations  
777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017.  
212-687-7041