



Universala Esperanto-Asocio

Russian Language Day, 6 June 2021

The Russian Esperantist Union (REU), which is a member association of the Universal Esperanto Association (UEA: an organization in consultative relationship with the United Nations), greets the United Nations and all Russian speakers on the occasion of Russian Language Day (День русского языка), 6 June 2021. This day is celebrated in Russia as the anniversary of the birth of the famous Russian-language poet Aleksandr Pushkin, many of whose works have been translated into Esperanto.

The Russian language is the most widely spoken Slavic language and the eighth most spoken language in the world, according to ethnologue.com. It is also the second most widely used content language in the Internet, according to w3techs.com. Russian is one of the official languages of the United Nations and is widely used as an auxiliary language in international relations.

However, we emphasize the fact that, among the countries where Russian is an official language, there exist at least 200 other languages, many of them unofficial or [endangered](#). Language rights are essential for all peoples, independently of the number of speakers, and this right must be protected, particularly for smaller groups. For this reason REU, and, through it, UEA, invites everyone to an awareness of the importance of linguistic and cultural diversity.

Ludwik Lazar Zamenhof (1859-1917), the initiator of Esperanto, was born in Białystok (in today's Poland) under Russian rule, and the first Esperanto book, *Internacia lingvo — Antaŭparolo kaj plena lernolibro* (Международный языкъ — Предисловіе и полный учебникъ), was published in the Russian language in 1887. After Zamenhof, many speakers of Russian helped, and continue to help, the progress of Esperanto, down to today. Also in the name of two active Esperanto publishers in Russia, Impeto (<http://impeto.trovu.com/>) and Sezonoj (<https://esperanto-ondo.ru/>), we greet all Russian speakers who make use of Esperanto for intercultural understanding and dialogue.