

Newsletter for January 2018

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A Message to Esperanto speakers on the International Day for Tolerance

New York, 16 November 2017. “On the day of its fiftieth anniversary, 16 November 1995, UNESCO’s Member States adopted a Declaration of Principles on Tolerance. Among other things, the Declaration affirms that tolerance is neither indulgence nor indifference. It is respect and appreciation of the rich variety of our world’s cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human. Tolerance recognizes the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms of others. People are naturally diverse; only tolerance can ensure the survival of mixed communities in every region of the globe.



“The Declaration qualifies tolerance not only as a moral duty, but also as a political and legal requirement for individuals, groups and States. It situates tolerance in relation to the international human rights instruments drawn up over the past fifty years and emphasizes that States should draft new legislation when necessary to ensure equality of treatment and of opportunity for all groups and individuals in society.

“Along with outright injustice and violence, discrimination and marginalization are common forms of intolerance. Education for tolerance should aim at countering influences that lead to fear and exclusion of others, and should help young people develop capacities for independent judgement, critical thinking and ethical reasoning. The diversity of our world’s many religions, languages, cultures and ethnicities is not a pretext for conflict, but is a treasure that enriches us all.”

Such are the words of the United Nations concerning tolerance and the International Day for Tolerance, annually celebrated on November 16. How are you practising tolerance in your Esperanto activities? How do you express tolerance in everyday life?

We invite you, on this Day for Tolerance, to dedicate yourself to personal and collective tolerance in the spirit of our Esperanto language!

Paris: UNESCO remembers Zamenhof Year 2017

Paris, 12 December 2017. Over 150 people gathered in the ‘city of light’ to participate in a conference in the context of UNESCO to mark the completion of Zamenhof Year. The founder of Esperanto, Dr L.L. Zamenhof, died exactly a century ago, in 1917, and UNESCO took the occasion of the centennial to recognize officially his contributions to worldwide understanding. The conference was only one of several events in Paris and elsewhere. In Paris it was preceded by a seminar to train Esperanto activists in the work of UNESCO. The seminar consisted of four presentations – on the operations of UNESCO, on Esperanto and UNESCO, on intangible world heritage (a UNESCO cultural programme), and on the UNESCO Courier.

A particularly productive meeting with the editor-in-chief of the UNESCO Courier (see the item below) followed the conference.

Among the conference participants was a young Romanian, Nicoleta Enache, currently participating in a one-year volunteer programme at UEA’s headquarters in Rotterdam. She reported as follows:

“On December 11 I had the chance to take part in a memorial conference on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the passing of L.L. Zamenhof. The conference Globalization, Internet and the UNESCO Courier took place in a meeting room at UNESCO headquarters and brought together over 100 people from several countries. Among the participants were many Esperantists, representatives of member states and UNESCO officials

“The conference was divided into three parts. The opening session began with an address by Krystyna Zurek, permanent delegate of Poland to UNESCO, who drew the attention of participants to the principal theme of the conference and underlined its importance. We also had the opportunity to hear from Maryse Wanda Zaleski-Zamenhof, the great-granddaughter of L.L. Zamenhof, and to listen to the views of Stefan MacGill, vice-president of the Universal Esperanto Association. The Assistant Director for Communication and Information, Frank La Rue, addressed the conference on behalf of UNESCO.”

There followed a series of presentations, in two further sessions, on aspects of the conference topic. They touched on the present state of Esperanto and the Esperanto movement, the role of modern media in the spread of Esperanto, and the role of Esperanto in disseminating the aims of UNESCO – by, among other means – the newly launched Esperanto edition of the official UNESCO journal, UNESCO Courier.

Esperanto UNESCO Courier welcomed

Paris, 12 December 2017. In a meeting at UNESCO headquarters in Paris on December 12, the editor-in-chief of the journal UNESCO Courier welcomed the addition of the Esperanto-language version to the existing family – editions in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. Although intended as a brief introduction, the meeting lasted some seventy minutes, addressing and resolving a range of practical questions. Editor-in-chief Jasmina Shipova, hosted the meeting, accompanied by a newly appointed assistant editor, Xiaorong Chen. Representing the Esperantists were Trezoro Huang Yinbao, his daughter Huang Xiaojuan, and, on behalf

of UEA, François Lo Jacomo and Stefan MacGill. Among the topics dealt with were contractual arrangements with the agent producing the Esperanto edition, the Chinese firm Ora Ponto (Golden Bridge), arrangements for transferring copy speedily, advertising, and website cooperation. Mrs. Shipova praised the initiative that led to the publication of the journal in Esperanto, and particularly the prime mover in this initiative, Trezoro Huang Yinbao.

New York: Brooklyn Celebrates Zamenhof Year

Brooklyn, 11 December 2017. On Sunday, December 10, the Brooklyn Public Library hosted Bridge of Words: 130 Years of Esperanto, an event marking the 100th anniversary of the death of L.L. Zamenhof, the creator of the 130-year old international language Esperanto. Sponsored by the Polish Cultural Institute and the Esperantic Studies Foundation, the event featured Esther Schor, a scholar and poet based at Princeton University, who spoke in depth about Zamenhof's life and philosophy, and provided an overview of Esperanto history and culture. Of particular note was her analysis of Zamenhof's importance as a thinker and innovator, and his struggle to reconcile his particular concerns as a Jewish intellectual with the universalist impulse that the idea of an international language seemed to contain. After her talk, Schor was joined by Humphrey Tonkin, the former president of the Universal Esperanto Association (UEA) and its representative at the UN, and Sebastian Schulman, a translator of Esperanto literature, for a broad-ranging discussion on Esperanto culture today. Topics discussed included the place of Esperanto today vis-à-vis global English, the disparate ways one can belong to and participate in the Esperanto community, and the shape of contemporary Esperanto culture. The audience, mix of long-time Esperantists and the culturally curious, participated enthusiastically.

Rome: Exhibition and Colloquium Honour Zamenhof

Rome, 11 December 2017. The Polish Academy in Rome was the venue for a colloquium marking the completion of the Zamenhof Year under the direction of professor Piotr Salwa, director of the Academy. Among the speakers were four professors from Italian universities, Fabrizio Pennacchietti, Davide Astori, Carlo Minnaja, and Nicola Reggiani. The director of the Esperanto Museum at the Austrian National Library in Vienna, Bernhard Tuidler, addressed the history and diffusion of Esperanto, and Dr Javier Alcalde, of Barcelona, discussed political aspects of the language. The speakers also included three visitors from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland, Prof. Ilona Koutny, Dr Ida Stria, and Prof. Alicja Sakaguchi. Finally, Prof. Federico Gobbo, professor of interlinguistics and Esperanto at the University of Amsterdam, examined the role of Zamenhof as thinker and philosopher. The event followed an earlier gathering at the Italian Parliament to mark the opening of a special exhibition on Zamenhof in the parliament building – an event attended by numbers of parliamentarians, representatives of the Italian Esperanto Federation, and other local dignitaries. The Polish Academy plans to publish the ten papers presented at the colloquium. Completing the programme was a presentation of the monologue Dottor Esperanto by the actor Mario Migliucci, and presentation of the newly published Italian translation of Aleksander Korzhenkov's biography of Zamenhof, in an abridged version.

Physicians' oath now in Esperanto

Trier, Germany, November 2017. The World Medical Association (WMA), at its most recent international meeting in October revised and expanded its "Physicians' Oath," first published in the context of the Declaration of Geneva in 1948. Important additions to the document are stress on the physician's need to safeguard his or her own health, and emphasis on patient autonomy. The Esperanto version of the updated document is now available on the website of the association of Esperanto-speaking medical workers, UMEA: <http://umea.fontoj.net/deklaracio-de-gxenevo>.

UEA representative addresses 39th UNESCO General Conference

Paris, 6 November 2017. A representative of the Universal Esperanto Association today addressed over two thousand diplomats, activists, and officials from throughout the world in the Plenary Session of the 39th General Conference of UNESCO, at the organization's headquarters in Paris.

The voice and face of the Association were those of Rakoen Maertens, a young activist from Belgium and also the representative of the Esperantist youth organization, TEJO, at UNESCO. Maertens has represented TEJO at numbers of meetings, including a UNESCO NGO Forum in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in May. Supporting him at the General Conference was a team consisting of Renée Triolle, François Lo Jacomo, Barbara Despinye, Didier Loison and Gilles Tabard.

In his brief intervention, Maertens stressed the essential importance of communication in UNESCO's work. In his view, understanding, identifying common interests, partnering and cooperation are the very foundation of UNESCO's work. But, in international settings, "communication is not always what it ought to be. There are barriers." Among the barriers, he stressed "inequality in self-expression, because a given language may not be recognized, while other languages are. The use of a specific language linked to a specific culture creates inequality of communication."

Emphasizing the Association's long collaboration with UNESCO, Maertens drew attention to UEA's active engagement on behalf of "in-depth communication, linguistic and cultural equality, linguistic diversity, and intercultural exchange." He also took the opportunity to mention the hundredth anniversary of the passing of Lazar Ludvik Zamenhof, whose contributions were formally recognized by UNESCO during 2017, and the recent launch of the Esperanto edition of the UNESCO Courier, a copy of which he held in his hand.

The address concluded with inspiring words and good wishes for "a profound, significant and constructive dialogue in a spirit of open understanding." Maertens also invited participants to the December 11 celebration (see above) organized by the Association's representatives at UNESCO in co-operation with the Polish Delegation.

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