

# Newsletter for May 2013

Issue 4, May 2013

## Symposium on English-Medium Instruction in Higher Education Shaping Up

As we have already announced, the Center for Research and Documentation on World Language Problems is planning a symposium in Reykjavik, Iceland, July 18-20, on the topic "Languages and Internationalization in Higher Education: Ideologies, Practices, Alternatives." The purpose of the symposium is to address the growing role of English as the medium of instruction in higher education and to analyze both its advantages and its drawbacks in promoting and preserving multilingualism and cultural diversity. The issue has taken on new urgency with the overturning by an Italian court of a proposal to switch to the use of instruction in English at the Milan Polytechnic in Italy, and demonstrations in France against the greater use of English-medium instruction in French universities in place of the French language. While the Nordic Countries will be the main focus of discussion, the varying viewpoints of representatives from a host of countries will be included, among them Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Cyprus, Spain, Mexico, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, China, Japan, Chile, India, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The symposium will take place immediately before the 98th World Congress of Esperanto, due to be held in Reykjavik from July 20 to July 27. The Congress is expected to bring together over a thousand attendees.

## Domo de Eŭropa Historio en Ekzilo

"Do you know which country joined the European Union in 2017 and who was the last President of the European Council?" asks Internal Voices, the online magazine of Brussels-based EU and UN interns. "Questions such as these ... are answered in the current exhibition Domo de Eŭropa Historio en Ekzilo in Brussels, which takes a future perspective looking back at the European Union of the present." Its creator, Thomas Bellinck has recreated "one of those small underfunded museums that deal with fringe issues and are kept alive against the odds ... by the tireless work of some dedicated, almost obsessed collectors" as a vehicle for examining the history and likely prospects of the EU. Many of its exhibits, and indeed the title of the exhibition, are in Esperanto. Asked why, Bellinck replies, "On the one hand it is part of the strange familiarity I was trying to create. The European Union is something we all know but don't quite understand and the use of Esperanto underlines that point. On the other hand, Esperanto is ... a highly symbolic language that was created to facilitate ... understanding among people of different nations.... In the fictional world I wanted to create, it could be possible that Europeans start re-using Esperanto as a weapon in their fight for new unity." While welcoming the use of Esperanto in the exhibition, many Esperanto speakers objected strongly to the notion that Esperanto was a museum-piece, pointing out that, given its increasing use in the internet, there are probably more speakers of Esperanto alive in the world today than ever before.

## Esperanto Speakers Visit UN

One of the many responsibilities of Neil Blonstein, Director of the Universal Esperanto Association's office in New York, is to welcome Esperanto-speaking visitors to the United Nations. A recent report cites examples of dozens of Esperanto speakers who have passed through in 2012-2013, including visitors from China and Japan, a visitor from Switzerland attending a Model UN session, NGO activists on peace and disarmament from Catalonia, and visitors from Brazil. Where possible, Neil puts visitors in contact with Esperanto-speaking staff members at the UN and provides them with guided tours.

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