

Newsletter for November 2014

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Esperanto Named Part of Poland's Intangible Cultural Heritage

Nov. 20. The Polish Minister of Culture and National Heritage, Prof. Małgorzata Omilanowska, today approved the addition of the Esperanto language to the Polish list of intangible cultural heritage. The Intangible Cultural Heritage program is sponsored by UNESCO:

<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00002>

The addition results from efforts initiated by Edmund Wittbrodt, a member of the Polish Senate, and Kazimierz Krzyżak, board member of the Polish association Europe-Democracy-Esperanto (EDE-PL), along with other Polish Esperanto organizations and the Polish Institute for the National Cultural Heritage.

Esperanto saw its beginnings in Warsaw in 1887, when Dr. L. L. Zamenhof published the first textbook in the language. Since that time, it has played a significant role in the cultural life of Poland.

The decision by the Polish minister opens up the possibility of proposing the inclusion of Esperanto in UNESCO's "Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humankind."

Esperanto in the News: The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times

Nov. 12. An extensive article in the *Wall Street Journal* features the Esperanto lodging service Pasporta Servo, offering free short stays in people's homes across the world for speakers of Esperanto. This service has recently expanded greatly, as WSJ reporter Charlie Wells explains: "Produced by an Esperanto youth organization in the Netherlands, Pasporta Servo was first printed in 1974, listing 39 hosts. The latest book, published in 2011, is filled with 1,087. An updated edition is due early next year, with a revamped website expected this month." The article goes on to interview some of the American users of the worldwide service, among them Amanda Higley and Steve Brewer (a member of the committee responsible for the Universal Esperanto Association's relations with the UN in New York). As the article explains, "Esperanto was created in the late 19th century by Ludwik Lazarus Zamenhof, who lived in Poland under the Russian Empire and believed that a universal means of communication might be the key to world peace. The estimates of the number of speakers of the language vary widely—from as low as 100,000 to as many as 2 million." The *Wall Street Journal* website features, in addition to the story itself, a brief video tour of New York City in Esperanto by Neil Blonstein, director of the Universal Esperanto Association's New York office, and a WSJ Radio interview on Esperanto with the author of the article, Charlie Wells.

http://online.wsj.com/articles/one-of-the-perks-of-speaking-esperanto-free-lodging-around-the-world-1415754748?mod=WSJ_LatestHeadlines

The *New York Times Magazine* Section on November 16 also featured Esperanto in its annual Innovations Issue – as a project for world peace that had fallen short of achieving that objective. "By that measure, we might label the United Nations, most of the religions of the world, and thousands of NGO's as projects that have fallen short of world harmony," suggested Dr. Humphrey Tonkin, representative of the UEA at the United Nations. "Esperanto is a widely used and successful international language, with a long and successful history, and an expanding speaker base," he added, "even if it is not spoken by everyone in the world."

UEA's Youth Section Recognized as a Major Player in International Youth Affairs

Nov. 10. TEJO, the World Esperanto Youth Organization, was recently elected to the Task Force of the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organizations. According to the ICMYO website,

"At the Annual Meeting in 2014 the new Task Force of the ICMYO network was elected. With three members remaining from the 2013 Task Force (YFJ: European Youth Forum, IMCS-Pax Romana, IFMSA: The Medical Students), two members returning from the 2012 task force (YMCA: Young Mens Christian Association and WAGGGS: Girl Guides and Girl Scouts) and two new members [joining] the task force (AIESEC: Student Leadership and Exchange Association and TEJO: The Esperanto Youth)."

The ICMYO coordinates youth NGOs internationally. According to TEJO officials, ICMYO "participates positively and constructively in events around the world." In recent years, TEJO was represented several times in official youth meetings in Europe, America, Africa, and Asia. This new recognition represents a significant strengthening of TEJO's links with other youth organizations.

Russian University Launches Esperanto Courses

Nov. 19. Following a trend evident in a number of universities in several countries, the People's Friendship University of Russia, in Moscow, has today approved two new programs of study in the teaching of Esperanto. The approval follows a decision by the university's Scientific Council on November 14. According to its website (<http://www.rudn.ru/en/>) the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia "is one of the leading state higher educational institutions of Russia. It is the only university in the world every year uniting students from 145-150 countries. The University has a multiprofile structure of faculties and majors, typical for classical universities of the world. More than 77 thousand graduates of the University work in 170 countries, among them more than 5500 holders of PhD and Doctorate degrees. Specialists are prepared in 62 majors and lines of study. More than 29 thousand graduate and postgraduate students from 140 countries are currently studying at the university. They represent more than 450 nations and nationalities of the world."

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