



International Day for Tolerance, 16 November 2021

The **Universal Esperanto Association**, on the International Day for Tolerance, **16 November 2021**, calls to mind the goal of the United Nations and UNESCO to advance understanding among cultures and peoples. This goal is the very heart of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: tolerance is the basis of peace, full observance of human rights, and sustainable development for all.

As the UNESCO Declaration of Principles on Tolerance (of 1995) states, “tolerance is respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world’s cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human.” That means that to be truly tolerant, we must relate to one another and work with one another harmoniously, to build open and safe communities for all.

Tolerance is more and more necessary in the face of today’s challenges. Faced with a climate crisis, a health crisis, forced migration, racism, extremism and other challenges, we must all learn about diversity and openness, and discover the cultures and beliefs of others. We need better laws, education, access to information, and awareness.

The United Nations and UNESCO have declared the year 2021 the International Year of Peace and Trust. We today face a crisis of trust, in which the individual states often do not succeed in breaking mutual mistrust to come together to solve world problems. Lacking, among other things, is the tolerance that underlies trust and thus the trust that underlies peace.

To show tolerance, we must understand one another. For this reason our Association advances multilingualism as a way to increase the chances of full understanding. Specifically, we use Esperanto as a bridge between different languages and cultures. We are all creatures of the same world; thus we must strive daily, individually and together, to build needed tolerance and understanding.

Through true tolerance, as the founder of Esperanto, L. L. Zamenhof, said of the speakers of his language in 1905, “we, members of the most diverse peoples, stand beside one another not as foreigners, not as competitors, but as brothers and sisters.”