Esperanto and the UN

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Universala Esperanto-Asocio

UEA marks Mother Language Day with Worldwide Celebration

On 21 February, the United Nations and UNESCO celebrated International Mother Language Day. The Universal Esperanto Association contributed to the celebrations in a range of activities.

A special celebration of International Mother Language Day took place at the United Nations and was addressed by the President of the UN General Assembly Mr. Csaba Körösi. As the speaker designated to address the celebration on behalf of NGOs, Prof. Francis M. Hult, representative of UEA to the United Nations, brought greetings on behalf of all civil society organizations in his role as chair of the NGO Committee on Language and Languages.

The Association sent a special message to the UN celebrating the Day – delivered by way of the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which recognizes the Association as an organization in formal consultative status with the UN. This message was published by UEA as a press release: https://uea.org/aktuale/komunikoj/2023/Mesagxo-de-UEA-okaze-de-la-Internacia-Tago-de-la-Gepatra-Lingvo-21-februaro-2023 and is also available on line at www.esperantoporun.org.

Numerous activities were organized by Esperanto organizations and local clubs in countries across the world.

UEA published a special poster for the day which was widely translated and circulated. At last count, translations of the poster or message (generally both) were available in 24 languages: Ainu, Bangla, Chinese, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Gujarati, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Kannada, Odia, Okinawan, Portuguese, Punjabi, Serbian, Spanish, Swahili, Tamil, and Telugu.

Official Footballs for the World Cup in Qatar Deliver their Message in Esperanto

“FUTBALO ESTAS – PASIO – RESPEKTO – TEAMLABORO – HONESTECO – KOLEKTIVA – RESPONDECO” proclaimed the message written in Esperanto on the official “Al Rihla” footballs used at the Qatar World Cup: “Football is – passion – respect – teamwork – integrity – collective responsibility.” One of six languages chosen (the other five were Arabic, Chinese, English, French and Spanish), Esperanto was selected by the director of design at Adidas, Franziska Löffelmann, to signify the worldwide power of soccer to bring the nations together in community. “Al Rihla” means “the journey” in Arabic. For the semifinals and final a different ball, Al Hilm, was used, with the same six languages.

Sustainability, Migration will be the Themes of 108th World Congress of Esperanto

The 108th World Congress of Esperanto, to take place in Torino, Italy, from 29 July to 5 August, will have as its main theme the issue of migration – a worldwide phenomenon that is both a source of strength and a cause of friction. A century ago, the city of Torino, at the time a manufacturing hub, benefited enormously from the inflow of workers from other parts of the world and continues to benefit from the relatively open borders of the European Union. Italians can be found in every country in the EU and all across the world. On the other hand, resistance to the inflow of migrants is today both an understandable response and one that must be mitigated by sensible legislation and a better-informed public. Can the speakers and users of Esperanto help in this process? Can they help find the right balance between open borders and exclusion and can they find ways of ameliorating forced migration caused by war and violence on the one hand and climate change on the other?

Sustainability will also be a watchword of the congress. The topic will be approached through lectures and seminars – and by environmentally friendly efforts by the congress organizers to use local products and recyclable materials.

Over a thousand participants from across the world are expected at the congress, which will be followed by the annual congress of ILEI, the international league of teachers of Esperanto, to take place in the Italian seaside town of Lignano Sabbiadoro, midway between Venice and Trieste.

In ECOSOC Consultation, UEA Stresses Language Issues

Speaking at a consultation with civil society organizations arranged by the Third Committee of ECOSOC, the UN Economic and Social Council, UEA representative Francis M. Hult stressed the importance of an affirmative approach to issues of language by the United Nations and civil society. “The Universal Esperanto Association, an organization that promotes peace through intercultural understanding,” Prof. Hult pointed out, “encourages work that will promote linguistic diversity and linguistic democracy, and supports indigenous peoples, whose languages, cultures, traditions and world views bring virtually unending riches to the world’s heritage.”

“Inclusive and equitable participation in social, economic, and political life,” he added,“requires the cultivation of the world’s multilingual resources, including mother tongues, major world languages, and

international languages like Esperanto." He pointed to the importance of conserving languages in the context of the current International Decade of Indigenous Languages.

The February 21 civil society consultation was the second convened by ECOSOC in recent months. UEA also addressed the previous consultation on December 12, when UEA representative Humphrey Tonkin outlined UEA's position: "Central to our mission is our belief that sustainable development depends on an ability of all parties to communicate and to understand. That means more attention to authentic multilingualism, to dialogue with civil society, and to the engagement of all humankind, not just governments, in addressing world problems."

From the Hungarian Language to Maltese, by Way of Esperanto

There are probably not very many speakers of Hungarian in Vallettaand even fewer speakers of Maltese in Budapest – but that did not stop the translation of Imre Madách's *Tragedy of Man* from Hungarian to Maltese. The well-known Maltese Esperanto poet Carmel Mallia, working from the Esperanto translation of Madách's tragedy by Kálmán Kalocsay (1891-1976), has recently published this major work of Hungarian literature translated into Maltese – just one of many literary works whose translators have, over the years, used Esperanto as a bridge language.

UEA's African Commission Meets in Senegal

Thiès, Senegal, was host city for the 8th African Congress of Esperanto, in the final week of 2022. All members of UEA's Africa Commission (from Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Tanzania and Togo) attended in person, along with Esperanto speakers from Congo-Brazzaville, Senegal, Belgium, Germany, Russia, USA, Mexico, Spain, Iceland, France, Brazil, and Italy. UEA's board member for external relations, François Lo Jacomo (who also serves as UEA's representative to UNESCO), was among the attendees. On the agenda: nurturing fledgling Esperanto organizations in a number of African countries, developing teaching materials, Esperanto and the situation of women in Africa, and planning for a possible World Esperanto Congress in Africa in the near future.

The Esperanto Movement Mourns One of its Most Venerable Figures: Andrea Chiti-Batelli

Andrea Chiti-Batelli, an advocate for European federalism and for the international language Esperanto, has died in Italy at the age of 102. A prolific writer of pamphlets and articles on Esperanto and on linguistic diversity, he urged the European Union and the United Nations to engage more actively in the promotion of mutlilingualism on the one hand and in the search for means of bridging language differences on the other, particularly through Esperanto. He strongly opposed what he regarded as the hegemony of English, which, he argued, put other languages at risk. Mr. Chiti-Batelli was a parliamentary adviser to the Italian Senate and secretary of Italian parliamentary delegations to the European Parliament. In the Italian Senate he also served as director of the European Office. No stranger to

controversy, he took public stances on a range of legal and political issues, including drug policy, the death penalty, and the problem of child abuse, in addition to his pronouncements on language policy.

Universal Esperanto Association Hails Women's Day

The UEA's message on International Women's Day, March 8, 2023, pledges that the Association will continue to work with civil society organizations to advance "work for women's rights and for the situation of women and girls across the world."

"Gender equality and the full participation of women in all spheres of life are essential. We must advance that equality everywhere," the message states, adding that "This year's theme for the observance day – Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality – draws attention to the effects of the 'digital divide' on economic and social inequalities."

With its worldwide network of speakers, the International Language Esperanto "provides an opportunity for truly international communication and comparison concerning the situation of women everywhere in the world. We particularly value those who use Esperanto as a voice for worldwide civil society."

"For the full inclusion of women, linguistic justice is a necessity,"says the message, "so that women can:

- **participate equally in society**
- **serve in leadership positions in all spheres and settings**
- **enjoy social security, decent work and economic freedom**
- **have full and equal access to education**
- **be free of all violence, and**
- **help in the creation of a better world for all."**

On Education Day 2023, UEA calls for educational opportunity and multilingualism

UEA's message for International Education Day, January 24, called especially for investment in education:"In the face of a worldwide economic crisis, of the growth of inequalities, and of climate change, education is a means of accelerating progress and problem-solving. 'To invest in people, prioritize education' – this is the theme of this year's Education Day."

"Last year, in 2022, during the Transforming Education Summit," the message continued,"member-states of the UN decided to invest more strongly and more effectively in advancing education. Currently… more than half of the children in the world cannot read well or understand a simple story, and more than 240 million children and young people are not attending classes."

"Among the barriers to a full education for all are language problems. Language discrimination prevents many people from receiving education in their native languages or even in languages that they understand. It also prevents the spread of knowledge accumulated by indigenous peoples and

traditional communities. Equality in education must recognize all forms of knowledge and all languages.”

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