

Esperanto and the UN

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Universala Esperanto-Asocio

UEA to celebrate 70 years of cooperation with UNESCO

“UNESCO and Esperanto: 70 Years of Collaboration on Linguistic Human Rights” is the title of a commemorative meeting to be held in the parliamentary palace in Montevideo, Uruguay, on December 10, 2024, exactly 70 years, to the day, after the approval of a resolution of the UNESCO General Conference, meeting in that city in 1954. The resolution recognized the results achieved by Esperanto in the field of intellectual exchange and as a means of bringing the peoples of the world closer together, and noted that these results corresponded to the aims and ideals of UNESCO. The resolution led to the establishment of consultative relations between UEA and UNESCO and, shortly thereafter, with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This cooperation continues to this day. Organized by Esperanto speakers in Uruguay and Argentina, with the help of the World Organization of Esperanto-speaking Youth (TEJO), the meeting will feature participation from across the continents of North and South America, and beyond.



The 70th anniversary of the Montevideo resolution is a good opportunity to recall the history and significance of that document, which recognizes the common goals and ideals of UNESCO and Esperanto: to build peace in the world through culture, education and science.

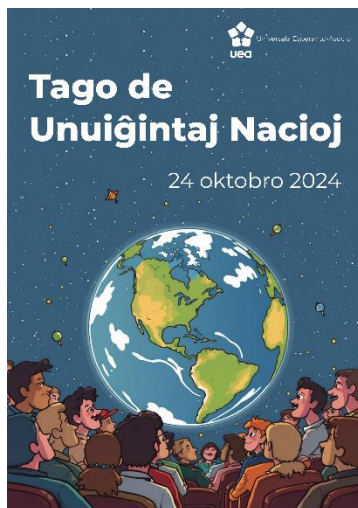
Report highlights recent achievements on language and human rights

In a report to the Esperantic Studies Foundation (USA), the NGO Committee on Language and Languages, a constituent committee of CoNGO (the Conference of NGOs), thanked the Foundation for its practical help in facilitating a series of meetings with UN officials on language issues in the course of 2023, including:

- **A panel discussion on “New Horizons in Translation and Interpreting Technology” (April 2023)** involving representatives from the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) and the European Live Translator project (ELITR).

- **A major Thematic Meeting in June 2023 on “Multilingualism across the UN System”** co-organized by the Permanent Missions of Andorra, Burundi, Canada, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, and Spain), along with the Observer Mission of La Francophonie. The event brought together the President of the General Assembly Amb. Csaba Kőrösi, the Under-Secretary-General (USG) for General Assembly and Conference Management (who also serves as the UN’s Coordinator for Multilingualism), the USG for Legal Affairs, the USG for Policy, and other senior UN leaders, as well as Member States, UN entities, ECOSOC-accredited civil society organizations, and scientific experts. Interpreting was offered in all six official languages of the UN as well as Esperanto.
- **A dialogue forum in December 2023 on Language and Human Rights**, featuring world-leading expert on language rights Professor Robert Phillipson. The dialogue forum marked the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

UN Day message calls for support for the UN in difficult times



“Despite the cynicism of the powerful and the doubts of many ordinary people who are suffering today, the hope of a world without wars, where everyone’s human rights are respected and where all people have a voice in the spirit of justice and democracy, still rings out across the world – 79 years after the UN Charter came into force on 24 October 1945.”

So begins the sharply worded message of the Universal Esperanto Association on United Nations Day 2024. The message goes on to quote UN Secretary-General António Guterres’ comments at the recent 79th UN General Assembly: “The people of the world are looking to us – and succeeding generations will look back on us. Let them find us on the side of the United Nations Charter ... on the side of our shared values and principles ... and on the right

side of history.”

UEA’s message points out that “the UN remains an inclusive and representative body to plan collective action. However, we need the commitments of [the] Member States – both to their own peoples and to the world.”

“We, the peoples, resolutely demand that our countries realise the goals of that hopeful Charter: that they preserve international peace and security, practise tolerance, develop friendly relations, unite to solve international problems, and do so in harmony. There will always be potential causes of conflict, but they should be solved through collaboration in the spirit of the UN Charter.”

“Collaboration requires reciprocal understanding and reciprocal trust. Trust is a prerequisite for peace, built through listening and acceptance, recognition and respect. In this context, language is the fundamental basis of communication, and multilingualism and equal communication across languages constitutes a fundamental value for the establishment of peace and trust.”

The message ends by pledging the support of UEA for the UN Charter: “The Universal Esperanto Association advances the spirit of the Charter all across the world by means of ... Esperanto. Through multilingual voices, and particularly through the International Language Esperanto, we reassert the principles and goals of the United Nations and reaffirm our promise to work together for a better world for all.”

UEA praises the work of translators



In a recent message on Translation Day, September 30, 2024, UEA lauded the work of translators in overcoming language barriers: “Of all forms of unfair discrimination mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the most underestimated is discrimination on grounds of language. In world affairs, in science, in culture, and in all other forms of human relations, the rich diversity among languages functions at once as a source of knowledge and expression and as a barrier to worldwide communication. Likewise, the relative prestige of certain languages, and their distribution, favours certain languages over others in given circumstances, and, as a result, often produces unfair discrimination.”

“The principal facilitator, and equalizer, of communication among languages, and thus of communication among people, is currently translation. Translation is an essential path for building a fairer world, bringing people together, advancing dialogue, and creating understanding and cooperation.”

The message goes on to point out that “translators and interpreters carry knowledge from one language to another, disseminate science and culture, and, at an individual level, save lives, enable peace, and help our weaker and persecuted brothers and sisters – often under difficult, even life-threatening, circumstances.”

Thus UEA sees translators as engaged in work paralleling its own efforts to overcome language barriers: “The work of the Universal Esperanto Association, which supports the idea of a second, international language for all people, parallels that of translation: UEA consistently reasserts the importance of mother tongues, and reminds the international community that we must also consider the language aspect of the three pillars of the UN: Peace, Development and Human Rights. Much as these three goals come together, languages are an essential element in listening to, and uniting, all humankind.”

“On this day, we again give our support to multilingualism as a core value of the UN, salute the international organizations of translators and interpreters, and reassert our goal of advancing,

particularly through the International Language Esperanto, understanding and esteem among the peoples.”

Esperanto in Higher Education

Courses of study in Esperanto and interlinguistics are offered in universities in many countries. One of the earliest is the chair in Esperanto and interlinguistics at the University of Amsterdam, in the **Netherlands**, founded soon after the Second World War, and currently headed by Professor Federico Gobbo.

Recently in the news have been new courses or programmes in Esperanto and interlinguistics at institutions as diverse as the Federal University of Ceará (**Brazil**), Tianjin University of Science and Technology (**China**), Honder College of Arts and Science (Hohhot, **Inner Mongolia, China**), the University of León (**Spain**), AGH University of Science and Technology and Jagiellonian University, Krakow (**Poland**), Jadavpur University (Calcutta, **India**), University of Tours (**France**), and the University of Costa Rica (**Costa Rica**).

Sadly, the master’s programme at Adam Mickiewicz University, in Poznan, **Poland**, will end, after almost thirty years, with the retirement of the department head, professor of interlinguistics Ilona Koutny, and the closing of the department. A three-person examining committee, consisting of Prof. Sabine Fiedler (Germany) Prof. Gong Xiaofeng (China) and Dr. Markos Cramer (Germany / Argentina), recently awarded master’s diplomas to ten students in the final cohort.

An Interlinguistics Workshop at the 21st International Congress of Linguists, hosted by Adam Mickiewicz University in September, featured papers on Esperanto and related topics by scholars from **Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Czechia, France, Germany, Hungary, Spain, Turkey, and the UK**. Esperanto-speaking scholars were also represented at sessions on language policy, sign language, and historical linguistics.

The Esperanto and interlinguistics programme at Poznan grew out of the former Esperanto programme at ELTE University, Budapest, **Hungary**. ELTE University recently organized a conference, in cooperation with Poznan, to mark the centennial of its founder, István Szerdahelyi.