

Esperanto and the UN

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Universala Esperanto-Asocio

Togo: Minister accepts patronage of 9th African Esperanto Congress



By an official letter dated 18 February 2026, Togo's Minister of Tourism, Culture and Arts, Mr. Isaac Tchiapke, accepted the invitation to become Patron of the Ninth African Congress of Esperanto (AKE), a continent-wide event. Minister Tchiapke's support will not only give the congress diplomatic recognition but also serves to confirm the openness of Togo's government to current ways of promoting the integration of culture and tourism.

The 9th AKE will take place from 26 to 31 December 2026 in the picturesque town of Kpalime. Known for its verdant mountains, lively arts scene and friendly residents, Kpalime is well suited to host participants from across the African continent and other parts of the world. With the topic "Esperanto: Linguistic Bridge for an Open Africa," the 9th AKE aims to explore how the international language can: a) facilitate communication among Africans of various language backgrounds; b) foster knowledge and respect for Togo's culture and tourism among an international public, and c) support the vision of a united, borderless and cooperative Africa.

In a world where language barriers often hinder economic and cultural exchange, the choice of Togo as host of this all-continent event positions the country as one of the progressive centres in Africa for impartial and egalitarian communication, and aims to honour in-country organizers, highlight Togo's tourist potential and demonstrate the hospitality of its people.

Occurring regularly as a means of strengthening links among members of local clubs and national associations (and also individuals), and presenting the progress of the language in Africa, the African Esperanto Congress is the major meeting-place for the African Esperanto movement. Traditionally, it brings together participants from some twenty countries and from beyond the African continent.

The annual world congress of Esperanto took place in Arusha, Tanzania in 2024. Today, UEA has members in virtually all African countries.

Multilingualism in the United Nations: Core value or core expense?

A meeting on languages and linguistics on 24 April brought together some sixty or seventy participants, mostly members of the UN language services and other professionals, to discuss the current state of multilingualism at the United Nations.

Convened by the Organization of La Francophonie and the NGO Committee on Language and Languages, the meeting was chaired by Professor Francis M. Hult and closing remarks were offered by Professor Humphrey Tonkin, representatives of the Universal Esperanto Association to the UN. Principal speakers were Ambassador Michel Xavier Biang, of La Francophonie, and Ambassador Joan Forner Rovira, of Andorra, who also chairs the Group of UN Friends of Multilingualism.

Much of the conversation addressed the liquidity crisis at the UN and the consequent threat to language services. Also addressed were the promise and perils of Artificial Intelligence, and the question of language and human rights. A more extensive Symposium on Language and the United Nations is planned for Friday, May 8.

Young Esperanto speakers deliver message on International Education Day

“International Education Day, celebrated annually on January 24, is a precious opportunity to reflect on the fundamental impact that education has on individuals and societies,” declared TEJO, the international organization of young Esperanto speakers, on the occasion of International Education Day, January 24, 2026.

“Education enables emancipation, critical thinking and creativity. It is a cornerstone of development for every community,” the declaration asserted. “It is a cornerstone of development for every community, paving the way to fair markets and peaceful societies. But in this diverse world where more than 7000 languages are spoken, a crucial question arises: how to build bridges for inclusive communication between all people? This is where Esperanto, the most widely spoken constructed language in the world, plays an important role.”

“Esperanto is more than just a simple language; it is a true tool for intercultural education. Through its use, students learn not only linguistic skills, but also values of empathy, solidarity and mutual respect. Learning Esperanto means participating in an inclusive approach that celebrates diversity while at the same time fostering space for dialogue and exchange.

“In classrooms where Esperanto is taught, students have the opportunity to interact with their colleagues from different countries, thus enriching their understanding of the world and global issues. This practice fosters a sense of global community and prepares young people to become cosmopolitan citizens, aware of the richness that cultural diversity represents.

“On this International Day of Education, let us remember that access to high-quality education should be a right for all, regardless of their linguistic or geographical background. By integrating

Esperanto into curricula, we are not simply promoting a language; we are building bridges to mutual understanding and cooperation between nations. Therefore, let us commit to making education accessible and equal for all, using Esperanto as a tool for social change. Together, let us see the challenges of our time as opportunities for learning and exchange, and celebrate the power of education to transform lives and build a better world.”

Esperanto recognized as part of Austria’s intangible cultural heritage

By official announcement on April 16, the Austrian UNESCO Commission formally recognised Esperanto as part of Austria’s intangible cultural heritage:

<https://www.unesco.at/presse/artikel/article/vier-neue-eintragungen-im-nationalen-verzeichnis-des-immateriellen-kulturerbes>

UEA Vice President Seán Ó Riain, responsible for the Association’s external relations, described the announcement as “brilliant news that fits perfectly with UEA’s strategy for the Esperanto movement – and just a few months before the 111th World Congress of Esperanto in Graz, Austria.” Austria is the third country, following Poland (2014) and Croatia (2019), to take this step. “One of the principal prejudices against Esperanto is that it ‘lacks culture,’” Ó Riain commented. “This formal recognition of the cultural value of Esperanto by three countries negates such prejudice. The European Commission has recognized as much, with practical results. It will now support Esperanto in the same way as it supports other unofficial languages, like Catalan, Basque, Breton and others.”

UEA thanked all Austrian and non-Austrian Esperanto speakers who contributed to this success, which UEA has followed and supported throughout the process. UEA’s Executive Board hopes that it will stimulate Esperanto speakers in other countries to achieve similar national recognition, particularly in neighbouring countries such as Lithuania, Hungary and Italy, but also on other continents.

A special moment to take note of this recognition and stimulate similar steps in other countries will be included in the programme of the 111th World Congress Of Esperanto (1-8 August 2026).(<https://uk.esperanto.net>.)

Esperanto as an international literary language: Remembering two outstanding figures

2026 marks, respectively, fifty and twenty years since the passing of Hungary’s **Kálmán Kalocsay** (1891–1976) and Scotland’s **William Auld** (1924–2006), two of the most influential poets, translators and cultural figures in Esperanto’s history. To mark this anniversary, the Universal Esperanto Association has launched the initiatives **#Kalocsay50** and **#Auld20** to promote a series of cultural activities throughout the year to celebrate these poets, their works and their heritage.



The International Language Esperanto has a rich original and translated literature by authors of every continent. Thousands of books and hundreds of literary journals have been published. Zamenhof himself, the creator of the language, translated, among others, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and the entire Old Testament. He wrote original poetry in Esperanto. Such works are not only valuable in themselves but also helped to shape and amplify the language itself.

Both an outstanding poet and an arbiter of style, Kalocsay's editing of the journal *Literatura Mondo* in the inter-war period in Hungary marked an epoch in the development of Esperanto literature. His translations of world literary classics and his own original poetry revealed Esperanto's powers of expression at the highest artistic level. At the same time he worked to promote other writers and to construct in Esperanto a broad panorama of cultural life (as also did Auld).

February 2026 marked 50 years since Kalocsay's passing. In the course of the month, UEA President Fernando Maia presented a special programme on Kalocsay and Auld at the 10th Cuban Esperanto Conference, in Havana; the Esperanto Club of Debrecen, Hungary, met at the Meliusz Library for a special programme, and, in Budapest, representatives of Hungarian Esperanto organizations, along with UEA, paid tribute to Kalocsay in a public ceremony at the memorial plaque on his former home at 4, Nyúl Street.



UEA is calling on all Esperanto groups and individuals to organise meetings and other events during the year to remember, honour and, above all, study Kalocsay's life and works. "Kalocsay is known as a poet and translator," commented Zdravka Boytcheva, UEA board member for cultural activities, "but his talent was even greater: he was also interested in music and even composed settings for some of his poems and translations. In 2026 we want to present Kalocsay not just as an important historical figure, but as a living source of inspiration for creativity and education, that continues to give voice to Esperanto culture for present and future generations."

Events planned for #Kalocsay50 and #Auld20 include presentations at the 111th World Congress of Esperanto in Graz, Austria (1-8 August). The journal *Literatura Vivo*, in collaboration with UEA, has launched a special Kalocsay Literary Competition. Activities for #Auld20 will begin soon and continue into the coming year. As with Kalocsay, Auld is known as a major figure in Esperanto poetry and also as an outstanding writer on the Esperanto language. His epic work *La infana raso* is a classic of Esperanto and his *Esperanta antologio* (Esperanto Anthology) provides a panorama of poetry in Esperanto. He is known as a translator of Shakespeare, of Tolkien, and numerous others. He was several times proposed as a candidate for the Nobel Prize for Literature.

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