



International Federation of Language Teacher Associations  
Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes

# The Nordic-Baltic Region

## Electronic Newsletter No.3

### (October 2017)

### PRESIDENT's Note



Sigurborg Jónsdóttir, Iceland

Looking out of my window I can see the first snow on the mountain tops. It's really that time again. Nature is sporting all kinds of colours and it's harvest time, a happy time to publish our Newsletter.

The Associations have been busy during the summer and on the European Day of Languages, spreading the importance of language learning and teaching and supporting

their members by inviting them to interesting seminars and conferences. Amazingly, we are still discovering all kinds of new things to use in the classroom and other work. You only need to look at our facebook site : NBR, Nordic Baltic Region of FIPLV.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/677820838960243/>

These new ideas are a welcome addition to what we have already learned and tried out. We have to be on our guard and continue to improve our teaching so that language learning does not become just something for the exams, soon to be forgotten but a sustainable asset, something that our students can use in the real world.

The European Day of Languages gives us the chance to take a good look at our work and see where we are doing well and where there is room for improvement, chances of promoting languages all around us in our every day work and life and in discussions with the authorities. Teachers are constantly being confronted by new laws and regulations effecting their work for the better but also possibly for the worse as we can read about in the contribution from our Finnish colleagues.

So enjoy our Newsletter full of interesting contributions on the activities and development in our different countries.





Dr. Roma Kriaučiūnienė, President of LKPA

## **The FIPLV Nordic-Baltic Region (NBR) Conference 2018**

**“Teaching and Learning Languages in the 21st  
Century: Linguistic, Educational and Cultural  
Aspects”**

**7 - 8 June, 2018. Vilnius, Lithuania**

**Conference organizers:**

**NBR, Nordic Baltic Region of FIPLV,  
Language Teachers' Association of Lithuania (LKPA)  
and  
Institute of Foreign Languages of Vilnius University**



### **The conference will take place at:**

On 7 June at the premises of LR Seimas /Lithuanian Parliament Building III,  
Constitution Hall, 53 Gediminas Ave., Vilnius

On 8 June at the premises of Institute of Foreign Languages of the Faculty of  
Philology Vilnius University

## **CONFERENCE THEMES**

Language Policy and Language Education Policy

Multilingualism and Intercultural Research

Learning and Teaching Less Widely Taught Languages

Teacher Training and Development of Teachers' Competences (general, professional,  
intercultural, moral)

Teachers' Profession: reality and future challenges

Teaching New Generation

Language Learning and Teaching ( Language Acquisition, Language Testing and  
Assessment, CLIL, ESP )

Linguistic Research ( Cognitive Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, Pragmatics, Corpus  
Linguistics, etc. )

Literary and Linguistic Analysis of Media, Academic, and other Types of Discourse.

## **CONFERENCE LANGUAGES**

**English, French, German, Lithuanian and Russian**

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

Three keynote speakers have confirmed their participation:

**Terry Lamb** - Professor of Languages and Interdisciplinary Pedagogy, Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques, Head of the Westminster Centre for Teaching Innovation, University of Westminster (UK)

**Georg Lind** - Professor Emeritus, University of Konstanz (Germany).

**Iveta Vitola** - Pearson Central Europe Representative Office in the Baltics, Regional Manager for the Baltics (Latvia)

## CONFERENCE FORMATS

PLENARY SPEECHES (45 MINUTES)

PRESENTATIONS (20 MINUTES + 10 MINUTES FOR DISCUSSION)

WORKSHOPS (30 minutes)

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS (45 minutes)

POSTER PRESENTATIONS (Authors of poster presentations are expected to participate in poster sessions according to the timetable of the Conference programme )

## CONTACTS:

Institute of Foreign Languages, Vilnius University, Universiteto St. 5LT-01513  
Vilnius, Lithuania

Tel.: +370 5 2687266; +370 5 2687264

Fax: +370 5 2687265

E-mail: [www@uki.vu.lt](mailto:www@uki.vu.lt)

**Detailed conference information is available on:**

<http://www.lkpa.vdu.lt/category/conferences/>

<http://www.uki.vu.lt/en/research/conferences-and-seminars>



## European Languages Day in Vilnius



Gražina Taurantienė, Deputy Director of VIKC, a founding organization of LKPA Valstybės institucijų kalbų centras (PSLC) started hosting European Languages day events back in 2010 together with LKPA, Embassies from the EU countries in

Lithuania and some international organizations. It is an excellent tradition as people - old & young get the chance to get acquainted with different languages.

PSLC has strong traditions of organizing it, but each year new points appear. This year we had "Poetry in Different Languages" which took place in different towns of Lithuania - Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda and Alytus. The idea came from Egidijus Zaikauskas - Language Officer at EU Commission Representation in LT - poets and musicians took part. Many participants came.

As the tradition dates back to 2007, we started the day at the Seimas (The Parliament of Lithuania) where winners of drawing competition were rewarded. Chairman of the Committee of Culture Ramūnas Karbauskis and Minister of Education Jurgita Petrauskienė took part and handed the awards.

In the afternoon the PSLC premises were filled with those interested in Language Workshops. Embassies always help to have somebody to present their language. It is always such success! This year was no exception - many people lining in to get to workshops!

The final part took place at Vilnius Town Hall. Brain Battle took place. The winning team's price was a trip to Strasbourg, which is offered by Lithuanian member of EP Petras Auštrevičius.

We are now looking for new ideas that will be implemented 26th September, 2018.

Photos below are from the European Languages Day events in Vilnius, Lithuania. Detailed information is available here: [www.vikc.lt](http://www.vikc.lt)







# Some Insights to the Future of Foreign Languages Teaching in Finland



Outi VILKUNA, The Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in Finland SUKOL, Member of the Board  
[https://www.sukol.fi/in\\_english](https://www.sukol.fi/in_english), Photo by A. Halme / SUKOL.

As the new national curricula

[http://www.oph.fi/english/education\\_development/current\\_reforms/curriculum\\_reform\\_2016](http://www.oph.fi/english/education_development/current_reforms/curriculum_reform_2016) came to force from autumn 2016, it marked both a beginning and an end.

The beginning of a more uncertain future for the foreign language teachers and the options students are offered nation wide as to studying languages or in a foreign language (CLIL). Also the new curricula emphasized more individual approach and the use of ICT technologies in all subjects as well as acquiring skills rather than piling knowledge and understanding phenomena from an intersubject perspective (combining skills and content from different subjects).

We are all still little a float on how these changes are going to affect and add to the competences of our students. Foreign language teachers are however very worried that in the transition period those students who started their A1/2-language (advanced) or B1- (mainly Swedish) studies in the old curricula are not going to get the full amount of teaching and lesson time that they are entitled to according to their study plan. The dilemma comes from altering the amount of compulsory courses

in the foreign languages and shifting some courses from upper classes to lower classes in primary school.

It is quite obvious that not all municipalities and districts have been aware of their responsibility to guarantee the allocated hours and are now referring to other pedagogical measures as resource to guarantee the amount of teaching hours but no one seems to know how this is actually done. Some parents and parents' associations have raised their concern on this issue and we are looking forward to a resolution to this. An issue related to this also the non-choice to 'study any other foreign language than English. With reducing economy and its' challenges also to educational system many districts have opted to cut down the selection of foreign languages offered as A1- or A2- language (advanced) and B2- languages together with pushing the required minimum number of students to set up a teaching group of a foreign language so high that in many parts of our country there is no true choice, there is only English as foreign language. This is a short term aid to municipal economy but long term mischief to pupils, students and entrepreneurs who lack language skilled workforce already as it is and it is being aggravated by the simultaneous reform in Vocational Education where foreign language learning is no more supported nor not always in the hands of trained professionals.

This also places pupils and students in unequal situations due to their geographical location in Finland, not forgetting social status as we know that from higher income social classes (especially mother's education is important) families most likely live in urban areas which offer more choice in this aspect too, they also have more possibilities to eg. travel and be in contact with authentic foreign language environments. We witness a kind of geopolitical border, a demarcation line, going at the level of maiden Finland's waistline, that is above the city of Tampere there is considerably less choice to study a selection of foreign languages (same applies to non-urban areas in Southern Finland too). We should not be content with the present situation or the future perspectives below that line either as it is predicted that the same scenario will appear first by B2- language selection dying out followed by A2 selection being narrowed down to non-existent including solely English. We can also see this drastic trend in the diminishing amounts of students taking their matriculation examination in other foreign languages than English

[https://www.ylioppilastutkinto.fi/images/sivuston\\_tiedostot/stat/FS2016A2007T2010.pdf](https://www.ylioppilastutkinto.fi/images/sivuston_tiedostot/stat/FS2016A2007T2010.pdf)

Only this week we could read in national media a statement by professor Richard Baldwin (author of: *The Great Convergence* - information technology and the new globalization, and the head of CEPR Economical Research institute based in London) state that foreign language skills will become trivial in the future as ICT evolves at a faster and faster pace and translation programmes become more and more efficient [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/telerobotics\\_us\\_5873bb48e4b02b5f858a1579](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/telerobotics_us_5873bb48e4b02b5f858a1579). Statements like these are the windmills we language teachers must oppose to as foreign language competence is not merely the language but also a set of mind and cultural approach. We, as language teachers, should emphasize the power of words in a society that more and more only values numbers. Personal experiences can not be transmitted solely through numerical categories, classifications or generalisations.

## European Languages Day in Helsinki

The event is European Languages Day, Sept. 26th, 2017; The event was held at the Helsinki City Main Library. Photos by Annukka KOSONEN.



# DENMARK: Using the Internet at the Exams

In Denmark we have had an ongoing discussion about the use of the internet at the exams. We have conducted various trials during the years 2013-16.

In Folkeskolen (comprehensive school) we have final examinations after year 9 and 10. After year 9 the oral exam in English is mandatory. The Ministry of Education choose by lot if there will be an exam in written English, or a written or oral exam in German/French. In the following I will focus on the written exam in English after year 9, because I for one am an external examiner here.

The written exam consists of four parts:

- listening comprehension (25 minutes) where the students listen to four texts and make multiple choice exercises to show their comprehension
- reading comprehension (35 minutes) where the students read four very different texts and make exercises to show their understanding
- language use (about 30 minutes) where the students show their knowledge of grammar in context (functional grammar), e.g. put in the right form of the verb, choose the right word among four or more possibilities, find 10 mistakes in a text and correct them
- free writing (about 90 minutes) where the students get one topic, on which they must write 350-450 words about

Trials have been conducted in free writing where the students had access to the internet. It was voluntary for the schools to participate in this experiment. As an example of free writing I can tell that in 2016 the topic was: Young Person of the Year. Two young persons were mentioned with a short text and some photos. There was an internet address where the students could read more about them and other nominated persons. The task was then to write an article (350-450 words) for a youth magazine about a young person who had been nominated or won an award.

So far so good. Most students did so, but some misunderstood the task and thought they could write about anyone - famous persons, made-up persons etc.

The real problem occurred when students copy/pasted from the internet. As an external examiner it was quite often difficult to see, if it was a clever student or

someone who had cheated. Others used Google Translate which was also difficult to detect. It was very time consuming to determine and prove when it was cheating. Students who cheat are expelled from the exam and must repeat it six months later.

The students and most teachers liked the possibility of using the internet. But because of the problems with cheating in the languages and in other subjects, too, the Minister of Education has banned the use of the internet at the exams in Folkeskolen and in Gymnasiet. This has caused lots of discussions among teachers, students, and politicians. The students are used to using the internet daily in school, and the opponents think it old-fashioned to ban it at the exams.

It will be interesting to follow the developments over the coming months/years. What do you do in your countries?

(The article is by Rita Mogensen, chairperson of Sproglærerforeningen in Denmark)



# FINNISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION IN ESTONIA



Karola Velberg, Finnish Language Teachers' Association, Chairperson.

Finnish Language Teachers' Association had a three - day long summer seminar in South - Estonia, Võrumaa in August 2017. A magical witch's Country welcomed teachers of Finnish with their family.

While children had lots of activities organized for children, adults had their meetings and workshops. Ilona Säälük introduced active learning as a form of learning including engagement of students with low motivation. Another important issue e-Koolikott (e-schoolbag) was also touched upon during the first day of our meeting. In the evening everybody enjoyed barbeque and local sauna.

Juha Mäkirinta from Vanajavede school started the second day of the seminar. He introduced most practical tasks and implications in the language learning and teaching. For developing students' speaking skills, lots of good practice was shared by Kaisa Johanna Häkkinen. The final part of the day was dedicated to entertainment: tossing the boot and playing Mõlkky.

The third day focused on compiling and understanding a written text. The workshop was led by Juha Mäkirinta. Finally, a new board was elected, including the chair. New

board members are Ilona Säälük, Marina Kopajev, Piret Meresma, Kristel Kotta and Karola Velberg.

Finnish Language Teachers' Association in Estonia is a member of Estonian Association of Foreign Language Teachers and is involved in preparing for and participating in autumn seminar in Tartu which is organised by Finnish Institute in Estonia.

A lot of work is awaiting us, including e-koolikott project and the organization of the summer seminar. We are getting ready for a variety of events for „Finland 100 “. All challenges are accepted!

## **Estonian Association of Teachers of English (EATE)**



Kati Bakradze, Estonian Association of Teachers of English, member of the board.  
Estonian Association of Foreign Language Teachers, member of the board.

### **EATE Summer Seminar**

EATE joined Estonian Association of Foreign Language Teachers in 2015. A traditional two-day summer seminar Lifelong learning and Sustainable Teacher was held at University of Tartu Pärnu College in Pärnu on 22 and 23 August 2017. Two

days were full of workshops, lectures, and seminars on hot topics including methodology, new waves in the language teaching practise, and reflection.

The program, abstracts and presentations are here: <http://www.eate.ee/events>

## **EATE Autumn Event**

EATE 26th Annual Conference 21st Century Skills will take place on Friday 27 October 2017 in Tartu. The topics include effective lesson planning, XYZ generation, the European Framework of Languages, the Year 12 National Examination. Of high importance is a workshop on e- Koolikott, which is e-a single web environment comprising digital learning material arranged by keywords on the basis of the curriculum. The portal allows finding materials for different languages, levels and on a variety of topics.

Both events are also open to non-members and are popular and long-awaited events among teachers of English. The next summer seminar takes place on August 22-23, 2018. Welcome you all!

## **NEWS from STIL, ICELAND**



Petrina Rós Karlsdóttir, President of STÍL

The European Day of Languages was celebrated in cooperation in Veröld - Vigdís' house STIL, the Icelandic Association of Language Teachers in cooperation with The Vigdís Finnbogadóttir Institute of Foreign Languages and with the Ministry of Education and Culture.



This time the focus was on languages teachers in past and in present and their defies. Speakers were various langages teachers in pairs. Madame Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Languages, opened the event.

The training seminar of STIL in took place 9. -10. 8 in Iceland on "Developing theme-based lessons in foreign language teaching and improving students' oral language by Carol NUMRICH, Colombia University.

It was very interesting and around 20 particiants teachers from all over the country.

We are still trying to get the ears of the politicians, as there are once again elections to the Parliament in Iceland, to reconsider the teaching policy and to put more subventions in language teaching.

Some photos from the European Day of Languages. Language opens up the world.



# Changes in LATE

## (Latvian Association of Teachers of English)



Nora Kalnača, Member of the Board

There have been many changes in LATE during the last months. We are still the professional association for English language teachers working in Latvia, with some different Board members and a lot of new ideas for the future.

In August we had our annual conference "LATE 25". To everybody's great regret, Silvija Andernovics decided to step back from the position of LATE President which she had held from the very beginning, for 25 years, and could be literally called the mother of the organisation. Due the workload, she has also left her position as a Board member but kindly agreed to help with any advice when necessary, staying a member. We all believe her input in the organisation is absolutely invaluable, as well as her personal qualities.



We also had new Board elections, after which some members were re-elected, but some new faces joined the Board, as a few members had decided to leave. The members' meeting also decided to have eight Board members, not nine, as before. Later, the new Board had their first meeting, and we are happy to announce the new President of LATE - Inga Linde.



Inga is a CELTA and MSc in TESOL and CALL (University of Stirling, Scotland) qualified English language teacher. She has been teaching for more than 25 years and is a certified mentor.

There have been also some more changes. We have decided to close our resource centre as during the last years not many people were using it. But, if you want to meet us, the LATE office is still at Kurbada iela 2, Riga, Latvia. Also, Latvian Ministry of Education has decided to organize the English language Olympiad (for senior pupils), which we haven't had for many years, and LATE members have been invited to assist in the organization and assessment of this event.

In the first meeting, it was decided to organize more events for the teachers. So, LATE is excited to announce our first ever webinar. James Egerton, a teacher at International House Riga and examiner at the Baltic Council for International Education, will give a webinar on teaching pronunciation on Friday the 27th October 2017 at 15:00. The topic: Pronunciation: Teaching techniques beyond drilling to boost your learners' intelligibility.

Pronunciation is often referred to as the Cinderella of ELT; dominated by its 'ugly sisters' grammar and vocabulary. This webinar will share a variety of activities focusing on sounds, word stress and sentence stress, which will give you the tools to integrate pronunciation into any lesson and improve your learners' intelligibility.

If you are interested to participate, please visit our website [www.late.lv](http://www.late.lv) to sign up. It is a free LATE event, but only 100 places available, so be quick to register.

To finish with, on 24 October, our local event organizer Ilona Ustinova is organizing a local conference in Daugavpils, which is the second largest city in Latvia. This event is particularly of interest for teachers for whom Riga is too far to come, but any teacher is welcome. The event is supported by the British Council.

## Directory of Language Associations

This fully searchable directory is intended to facilitate collaboration between professionals from different language teacher associations and other language organisations as well as across different languages, regions and countries.

<http://www.ecml.at/ECML-Programme/Programme2012-2015/UsingECMLresourcesindifferentcontexts/Languageassociationsdirectory/tabid/3029/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>



## Murphy's Laws:

**An expert is one who knows more and more about less and less until he knows absolutely everything about nothing.**

**All's well that ends.**

**Smile... tomorrow will be worse.**

The Electronic Newsletter is issued by:

NBR President Sigurborg Jónsdóttir , Iceland;

NBR Secretary Eglė Šleinotienė, Lithuania;