

WELCOME TO OUR

The Nordic-Baltic Region Newsletter



HEY, HOW ARE YOU?

NBR President's Notes

Dear colleagues,

A new academic year has started in our respective countries and I am sure we are all very much involved in many things, be it planning and updating courses, daily teaching activity, different projects and so on. In this issue of the NBR Newsletter You get updates on how and what your colleagues are doing in our respective countries which is always so interesting! We do share some same concerns and it is also important to learn how maybe they have been tackled by a fellow organisation. I hope that You also find time to enjoy the autumn colours, your favourite leisure activity and the company of good friends!

Best wishes,

Outi Vilkuna

NBR President

puheenjohtaja / ordförande / Chair

Suomen kielenopettajien liitto SUKOL ry

The Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in
Finland SUKOL

FAWERELL TO NBR

Special Note from the former NBR secretary Egle Sleinotienė



I would like to thank the colleagues from the FIPLV - Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes and its Nordic and Baltic Region (NBR) for long lasting partnership. My special thanks to the presidents of FIPLV Denis Cunningham and Terry Lamb, the leaders of the language teachers' associations in various countries, teachers, researchers and linguists for their long-term co-operation, trust and encouragement to perform in the position of NBR secretary. Thank you for the fellowship, sincere, memorable and professional discussions, important work in coordinating and organising the activities, recognition and appreciation of my modest participation in NBR activities.

Special thanks to Sigurborg Jónsdóttir, Hólmfríður Garðarsdóttir, Petrína Rós Karlsdóttir from Iceland, Ene Peterson, Evelin Müüripeal and Kati Bakradze from Estonia, Outi Vilkuna and Kari Jukarainen from Finland, Raija Airio and Helena von Schankz from Sweden, Diana Rumpite, Silvia Karklina and Iveta Vitola from Latvia, LKPA colleagues Nemira Macianskienė, Nijolė Bražėnienė, Ilona Rinkevičienė, Violeta Navickienė, Roma Kriaučiūnienė, Jūratė Patackaitė, Irena Navickienė, Evelina Jalenauskiene, Audronė Auškelienė, Almantė Meškauskienė, Olga Medvedeva, Loreta Chodzkiene and other leaders, members and supporters of the LKPA (especially Daiva Vaišnienė, Vilma Bačkiūtė and Stasė Skapienė, Ina Dągytė-Mituzienė, Marytė Dominaitė) for their support, training programs, projects, organization of events and articles promoting Lithuanian achievements in the world sent. I do hope that the most vivid moments of our partnership in the photos will remind you of our conferences, meetings and results achieved.

Very talented linguists Outi Vilkuna and Kari Jukarainen (representatives of Finland) and Asterija Rudienė, a professional teacher delegated by the LKPA, will successfully lead the NBR in the future.

I wish colleagues from FIPLV and NBR success in the future in promoting professionalism, dedication to students, tolerance and innovation, the ability to communicate with dignity, evaluate, influence language policy in their countries, express your opinion and take risks so that native and other languages flourish.






Greetings from Finland

Prepared by Outi Vilkkuna,
Chair of The Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in Finland SUKOL

CELEBRATING THE EUROPEAN DAY OF LANGUAGES AND SOME OTHER CURRENT ISSUES

On September 26th–27th the Finnish representation of the European Commission organised European Day of Languages events in cooperation with the embassies and language institutes of various EU countries, as well as Helsinki's central library Oodi, the Svenska nu network, SUKOL, the Finnish Translators' and Interpreters' Union SKTL and the Nordic Culture Center. The events were free of charge but required advance registration. Have a look at Reels 



[Press to read more](#)

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HERE IS THE DESCRIPTION OF SOME OF THE EVENTS:

Language Café

at the Helsinki Central Library Oodi on September 26th. At the tables of the language cafe you could get to know several European languages and countries in a playful way and you could test simultaneous interpretation in a real interpretation booth with professional interpreters. The event was intended for 7th–9th graders and high school students.

Multilingual language day concert

It was held at the Hanasaari Conference Center on September 26th in the evening. The concert presented music from different parts of Europe. The concert accommodated both jazz and traditional vocal music. Among the performers were an Irish band and a Czech youth choir with bagpipes, as well as several other music professionals and enthusiasts.

European Day of Languages seminar for language teachers

It was held at the Hanasaari Conference Center on September 27th. The bilingual seminar was aimed at middle school and high school language teachers. In the seminar you could get to know the grey of the day pedagogy under the leadership of Swedish Micke Hermansson and hear e.g. high school students' thoughts about studying foreign languages under the supervision of doctoral researcher Karoliina Inha. Hermansson's lecture was in Swedish and Inha's lectures in Finnish

Greetings from Finland

Visiting Europe Direct points or inviting a Language Specialist ambassador to your school!

There are eight EU contact points or Europe Direct points in different parts of Finland: in Oulu, Kajaani, Kuopio, Seinäjoki, Kankaanpää, Valkeakoski, Mikkeli and Hamina. Kieliasiantuntijat ry is a professional organization for experts in multilingual communication, languages, translation or interpretation, or those who aspire to become such. In the fall of 2023, educational institutions can invite members of the Language Experts Network as guests to talk about the work of language professionals.

The Day of Languages event cannot go to every corner of Finland but each educational institution or teacher can organize their own event according to their abilities and was encouraged to do so.

The entrance models in education

The entrance models that have attracted criticism for **university entrance selections** will be renewed in 2026. In the future, the mother tongue will be the subject that produces the most points instead of the previous long mathematics. In addition, the aim is to eliminate the differences in points between subjects and raise the scoring of languages. The entrance selection in this form is only used in universities but its ripple effects are also felt in universities of applied sciences. From the point of view of higher education institutions, it seems that the previous course of development continues: optional languages have to be started from the beginning at university level and students do not manage to reach such a level of language skills as is expected of them. There is great concern raised about how we will get language teachers who know more than one language in the future and what is and will be the status of our national language reserve.

Politics

A new government has started its work in Finland this autumn. This entry in the government's program raises hopes but also causes confusion: "The government makes it possible to advance, expand and diversify language teaching and learning. Let's make sure that enough lesson resources are reserved for language teaching." Early onset foreign language education has already been done in Finland and it cannot be earlier than it already is when it comes to basic education. The goal should be a wider range of languages, for example, the obligation brought up again by SUKOL for municipalities with more than 30,000 inhabitants to offer languages other than English as an A1 language. This would expand and diversify language learning as well as securing language paths until the end of extended compulsory education. In particular, the mention of lesson resources for language teaching arises interest. How does the government try to ensure sufficient hourly resources? And what degree of education does this refer to? The curricula for basic education and upper secondary school are almost freshly printed, the lesson resources at other levels have been reduced, and the number of hours included in the credits varies according to the organizers of the education. However, it can be considered positive that language teaching and the importance of versatile language skills are mentioned in the government program.

Greetings from Lithuania

Prepared by **Almantė Meškauskienė**
President of Language Teachers' Association of Lithuania



Lietuvos kalbų pedagogų
asociacija - LKPA

The European Day of Languages at Vytautas Magnus University



It has become a long-standing tradition that every year on September 26 the European Day of Languages is celebrated at the Institute of Foreign Languages (IFL) at Vytautas Magnus University (VMU). Giving a speech of welcome, the director of IFL, Dr Teresė Ringailienė invited the audience to think about what languages mean in the lives of each of us, why it is worth celebrating this day and learning languages.

A very large group of students, schoolchildren, teachers and lecturers first listened to the presentation of the representative of Alliance for Recruitment about the need for languages in the modern labour market. The speaker emphasized that currently English is an inseparable necessity and all other languages create added value. Their payment can even acquire a very material expression: the salary of those who learn another foreign language at the B2 level and higher is at least 150 euros higher. Currently, in Lithuania there is a very high demand for German and French-speaking employees on the labour market. As it was stated, knowledge of a foreign language is enough for a person to be offered a job as companies can easily teach other skills themselves.

The round table discussion "Student success stories: why it was worth learning languages"

At the the round table discussion "Student success stories: why it was worth learning languages" VMU students spoke about the great benefits and importance of languages in life. Although the interviewees had different opinions about learning languages, everyone admitted that the benefits of languages are huge as they allow people to get information from original sources, make travelling easier, encourage communication, allow people to feel free and independent in a foreign country.

Greetings from Lithuania

The orientation game "Mosaic of Languages and Cultures in Kaunas"

The highly anticipated part of the celebration was the orientation game "Mosaic of Languages and Cultures in Kaunas", in which teams of 8 schoolchildren and 9 students participated. Within a limited time they had to guess which place related to languages or cultures the clue was talking about, travel to it and take a picture. While the orientation game was taking place, pupils from various schools in Kaunas listened to international VMU students' stories about their home countries (Spain, Kazakhstan and Kenya) and learned words and phrases in Spanish, Kazakh and Swahili.

"Garden of Cultures 2023"



On September 16 the lecturers and students of the Institute of Foreign Languages of VMU invited everyone who wanted to learn the basic phrases of up to 8 languages at the "Garden of Cultures 2023" event. Kaunas residents and city guests had the opportunity to get to know different languages: Arabic, Chinese, Italian, French, German, Esperanto, Danish and Armenian.

[WATCH A VIDEO](#)



Greetings from Lithuania

Prepared by Audronė Auškelienė
Director of the Public Service Language Centre



The European Day of Languages in Lithuania 2023

The European Day of Languages in Lithuania is a chain of events organised by the Public Service Language Centre. Traditionally, since 2001 when it was proclaimed by the Council of Europe, 26th September has been celebrated as the European Day of Languages. It is the day when all Europeans remember how multilingual Europe is and aim to promote multilingualism as one of the major values and uniqueness of the European Union, nourish tolerance among cultures and encourage learning languages at school, university and lifelong. Every year in Lithuania a chain of events take place in different venues in the capital of Vilnius.

The Exhibition of Children's Illustrations of European Songs

The Exhibition of Children's Illustrations of European Songs was opened at the Visitors Centre of the Lithuanian Parliament where the children were welcomed by the Parliament Speaker Viktorija Čmilytė Nilsen and the authors of the best works were awarded with certificates of recognition and Seimas souvenirs.

Photos

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/97441645@N08/albums/72177720311466407>

MORE PHOTOS



Greetings from **Lithuania**

“Dating with languages”



Another exciting experience is **Workshops of Languages** where schoolchildren are invited “on a date” with less widely used languages. This year the participants were “dating” with Croatian, Czech, Danish, Latvian, Kartveli, Finnish, Irish, Greek, Hungarian, Turkish, not to mention English, French, Italian or Spanish. Due to the pandemics, a couple of years ago, the Workshops of Languages run by the Foreign Diplomatic Missions residing in Lithuania took place online. This year we went “on a live date with languages” in classrooms equipped with technologies at the Salomeya Neris Gymnasium in Vilnius.

European Language Maze

Public Service Language Centre in partnership with the Directorate-General for Translation of the Council of Europe organizes an online final of the Battle of Brains “European Language Maze” run by a professional master of Brain Battles with the participation of teams of sixteen-year-old students from different towns of Lithuania. These sixteen-year-olds compete for the grand prix of the contest - a trip to the European Parliament. This year the high school of Adolfas Ramanauskas Vanagas from Alytus won the contest and were awarded a trip to the European Parliament by the European Parliament member Juozas Olekas.

Photos

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/97441645@N08/albums/72177720311494516>



[MORE PHOTOS](#)



Greetings from Lithuania

PHOTO GALLERY



Public Service Language Centre in partnership with the Directorate-General for Translation of the Council of Europe and Association of Lithuanian Language Teachers have been organizing the events of the European Day of Languages since 2009. We do hope the events of the European Day of Languages contribute to intercultural dialogue and help to promote peace in the world. We wish all the students and teachers never stop learning languages. Languages help us discover new horizons and cultures, meet new people and make friends for life. Never stop learning!

Sincerely
AUDRONĖ AUŠKELIENĖ
Director
PUBLIC SERVICE LANGUAGE CENTRE

Greetings from Lithuania

PUBLIC SERVICE LANGUAGE CENTRE IN THE CONTEXT OF WAR IN UKRAINE

Public Service Language Centre (PSLC) is a lifelong learning in-service language teaching provider not only to Lithuanian citizens but to all who are in need of it. Today our focus of concern and attention is Ukrainians who have escaped from the war zones in Ukraine and are seeking refuge, shelter, and jobs elsewhere as well as in Lithuania. PSLC teachers of the Lithuanian language are offering their services to Ukrainian refugees who are learning the Lithuanian language to integrate better in the Lithuanian community, find jobs here and send their children to Lithuanian schools. Many of the learners already have jobs as they work as shop assistants, waiters, cosmetologists, taxi, and truck drivers, etc.



In June 2023 the PSLC started implementing the Erasmus+ project for mobility of learners and staff in adult education project „The New Role of Teacher in the Context of War in Ukraine and Rising Migration“ (2023-1-LT01-KA122-ADU-000128259). In October 2023 four teachers from PSLC are going to participate in a teacher training course in Gateway English School in Malta about cross-cultural education. Active learning will take place – discussions, reflection, group work, etc. The other selected courses – "Intercultural learning" and „Cultural Diversity in Education" are about how to integrate people of different cultures step by step into the life of society, how to learn empathy and how to break stereotypes. Erasmus learning academy training "Stress and Conflict Management: The Way to Resilience and Satisfaction" will focus on how to overcome stressful situations that arise during training and how to help learners – especially war refugees, migrants – to overcome stress and anxiety. The results achieved during the project will enable teachers to have a wider understanding of multiculturalism, to gain more empathy so that the employees of the PSLC who have gained more knowledge and experience during the training of the project will develop specific methods and strategies and foster an environment more favourable to multiculturalism. We hope that during these training sessions abroad language teachers will develop new methods and tools to help teach languages to war refugees and migrants.

Greetings from Lithuania

We do believe that in-service teacher training and continuous lifelong learning is a driving force that enables to provide quality education for all – young learners, adults and senior citizens. In addition to this, today we have no right to think only about our nation education. We need to develop empathy towards those who have lost their homes, their family members and whom Russia's barbaric war has driven away from their country. Thus, we need to understand that currently a pedagogue is not just a teacher but also a moderator and facilitator helping learners – especially war refugees and migrants – overcome all kinds of social problems such as anxiety and stress during training, resolve conflicts that arise and help them gain trust and self-confidence. We are happy that PSLC can contribute in helping integrate migrants and refugees in safer communities where empathy and human dignity is not what we have to fight for but what is taken for granted.

Prepared by Audronė Auškelienė
Director of the Public Service Language Centre



Panel discussion “Language Education: Empowering Minds and Bridging Cultures” marks the European Day of Languages

The Institute of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Philology, Vilnius University, marked the European Day of Languages by the panel discussion “Language Education: Empowering Minds and Bridging Cultures”. The panellists, five invited guests – Senior Researcher Dr. Inna Samoylyukevych from Ukraine, Dr. Ovidiu Ivancu from Romania, Dr. Adam Mastandrea from the USA, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Loreta Chodzkiene, and Lect. Gitana Irnienė from Lithuania shared their insights into the sources of inspirations for their personal decisions to teach foreign languages, debated upon practical benefits of multilingualism for students in various career fields, discussed possible strategies educators could use to encourage creativity in language learning, and addressed the questions asked by the participants of the event or collected via Facebook live streaming. The panel discussion was moderated by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Liudmila Arcimavičienė.

Access to the video from the panel: <https://www.facebook.com/vu.flf.uki>



The event dedicated to the founder of the Institute of Foreign Languages, Vilnius University, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nijolė Bražėnienė

HAPPY
Birthday



On the 6th of September the Institute of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Philology, invited the former and present lecturers of foreign languages to celebrate the anniversary of the founder and former director of the Institute Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nijolė Bražėnienė. Among the distinguished guests, the Dean of the Faculty Prof. Mindaugas Kvietkauskas thanked Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bražėnienė for her tremendous personal input into establishing the policy of teaching foreign languages at Vilnius University, the Chair of the Board of the Faculty Prof. Jurgis Pakerys praised Assoc. Prof. Nijolė's skills of management, the ability to gather people together and inspire them for demanding educational endeavours. The present director of the Institute Prof. Roma Kriaučiūnienė,

continuing the pathway of the former director, highlighted Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bražėnienė's vision of a language as the most precious value as well as a tool empowering people to cross their limits.

There are people whose leadership leaves an evident mark in the history of the institution as well as in the colleagues' memories. Nijolė has been a role model for the staff members able to inspire them through her inquisitive mind, openness to innovations, and a subtle way of problem solving leading towards handling nearly every situation in a positively delicate manner. Even now the memories of those who used to work together with her relate her personality to her favourite phrase **"We will cross the bridge when we come to it"**.

The event was full of reflections on the days of the institute establishment, subject syllabi design, language lecturers' professional development and the strategies for expanding international ties.



Greetings from Sweden

Prepared by Mia Smith
President of the Language Teachers' Association of Sweden



The Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

Magazine "Lingua"

The start of the school year has brought back many routines for our organization. Our magazine Lingua is published four times a year providing our members with inspiration and new research results.



Podcast Linguapodden

We are also happy to share new episodes of our podcast, Linguapodden, which can be found wherever podcasts are published, as well as our vlog-series "[Språklärarnas riksförbund hälsar på...](#)"



Meeting with the minister of education

The organization also works with influencing public opinion in different ways, writing debate articles, communicating with authorities and talking to politicians. We are also very happy to have been invited to meet with the minister of education, Lotta Edholm, to discuss issues concerning language education. The meeting will take place in October and we hope to convey the importance of language learning and language education.

Greetings from Sweden

Webinars in cooperation with Gothenburg University

Webinars have been a very much appreciated form of inspiration and further education for our members for a few years now, and a great way for researchers to spread the results of their current research. A group of researchers at the Gothenburg University have gifted our association as a part of our 85th anniversary a series of three webinars called "Språk i forskning" or "Language in research". The webinars will have different themes: motivation, assessment and acquisition of vocabulary.

The first of these webinars was held on September 26th. Ingela Finndahl presented the results from her doctoral thesis about motivation among young language learners. In Sweden students are presented with a selection of languages to choose from during their fifth school year, and then start studying the language in year six. The school should offer at least two of the three major foreign languages German, French and Spanish, and many schools offer all three. In some cases other languages are offered as well. Finndahl has interviewed students in year five and followed their journey into year six to look at what motivated them in their choice of language and their studies of the language.

The presentation was followed by discussions in breakout rooms and a general discussion. The webinar was very much appreciated and we look forward to the next two webinars. Finndahl's doctoral thesis can be found here: <https://gupea.ub.gu.se/handle/2077/74850>

European Day of Languages

Along the rest of Europe teachers in Sweden have been celebrating the European Day of Languages on September 26th. Examples can be found in schools around the country as well as online.

On Thursday September 28th teachers gathered in "House of Europe" in Stockholm for a day full of inspiration, organized by Universitets- och Högskolerådet, The Swedish Council of Higher Education, where our organization was represented as well.



Online sources for learning languages

<https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/europeandayoflanguages>

https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/translation/european-day-languages-events-2023_en

<https://edl.ecml.at/>

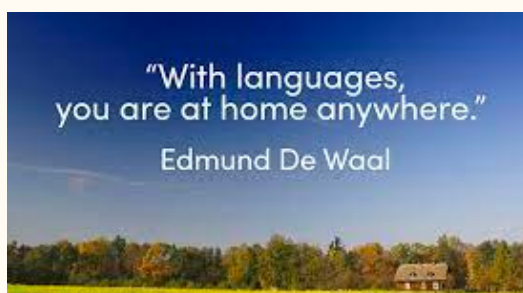
<https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanDayofLanguages/>

<https://www.facebook.com/translationeuropa/>

<https://ihworld.com/news-blog/ih-blog/our-favourite-idioms-from-across-europe/>

<https://europeisnotdead.com/european-nationality-related-idioms/>

<https://www.omniglot.com/language/idioms/index.php>



Language teachers' associations in the Nordic-Baltic region

FINLAND Suomen kieltenopettajien liitto SUKOL RY (SUKOL) www.sukol.fi

ICELAND Association of Foreign Language Teachers in Iceland (STIL) FIPLV
<http://stil-is.weebly.com>

SWEDEN The Language Teachers' Organization of Sweden
<https://spraklararna.se/>

ESTONIA Eesti Võõrkeeleõpetajate Liit (EVOL) (Estonian Association of Foreign
Language Teachers) www.voorkeelteliit.eu

LITHUANIA Language Teachers Association of Lithuania/Lietuvos kalbų
pedagogų asociacija (LTAL/LKPA) <http://www.lkpa.vdu.lt>

LATVIA The Latvian Association of Language Teachers (LALT/LVASA)
www.lvasa.lv
the Latvian Association of Teachers of English (LATE) is: <https://late.lv/>

*Knowledge of languages is the
doorway to wisdom.*

Roger Bacon

“Teaching is more than imparting knowledge; it is inspiring change. Learning is more than absorbing facts; it is acquiring understanding.” - William Arthur Ward



The Newsletter #3 September 2023 is issued by:
Outi Vilkuna, NBR President, Finland
NBR Secretary Asterija Rudienė, Lithuania

Photographs used are from the Associations' archives and free on-line resources.

 Follow

and

 join us

on

