

WELCOME TO OUR

The Nordic-Baltic Region Newsletter

HEY, HOW ARE YOU?

NBR President's Notes

**Dear colleagues,**

Each of us wants to do meaningful work. Those who find their work meaningful are more efficient, committed and creative, also healthier and happier. Several factors are involved in the creation of the experience of meaning, but at least the following three: the work must be rewarding in itself, it must serve a greater purpose or common good, and it must be possible to fulfill oneself.

Rewarding in a teacher's work comes from the success and enthusiasm of pupils and students for the subject being taught - of course also from the positive feedback received from colleagues, guardians and supervisors. The experience of serving some greater purpose or common good is based on the same elements. Teachers can be the most meaningful people for the learners they meet - so let's remember that we do important work and deserve respect.

Have a lovely and inspiring spring,

Outi Vilkuna

WELCOME TO OUR

The Nordic-Baltic Region Newsletter

Greetings from Finland

Prepared by **Outi Vilkuna**
chairman of the Finnish language teachers'
association SUKOL ry



Outi Vilkuna, chairman of the Finnish language teachers' association SUKOL ry, and **Anna Halme**, executive director, met Lisa Palm, special assistant to the Minister of Education, on March 13, 2024. They discussed and handed over a statement on current topics in foreign language teaching in Finland. The topics highlighted and discussed were as follows:

1. Diversification of the A1 language choices in basic education and the supply of A2 languages

A wider selection of foreign languages in basic education is the best guarantee that languages are studied in a sufficiently versatile manner. The decrease in language skills weakens critical national infrastructure.

The study of foreign languages at school has decreased radically in the last 20–30 years. If the course of development is not changed, there will be no language experts in the future. The shrinking of the language reserve is a threat to our society's security of supply of information.

The strong narrowing of language learning and the weakening of the curriculum-based language reserve has effects on equal placement in working life, the availability of language-proficient and competent workforce, the competitiveness of companies and, more broadly, society's cultural awareness, tolerance and global citizenship. The keys to the solution to increasing the versatility of language skills are precisely in the versatile choices of the starting phase.

Greetings from Finland



SUOMEN KIELTENOPETTAJIEN LIITTO | SPRÅKLÄRARFÖRBUNDET | FINLAND

2. Who teaches languages in primary school grades 1–6?

Decisions about who teaches languages are often made in municipalities from a financial perspective and not so much based on the teacher's substantive expertise. Language teaching has been transferred from language teachers to classroom teachers in primary schools, even though the organizer of the teaching might have several school grades in the same area that could employ a language teacher. Classroom teachers usually do not have training in language teaching, and they do not necessarily feel that they know or want to teach a foreign language. The teacher's language relationship must be positive in order to be able to inspire students to learn languages at work.

3. The situation of teacher education

It is already noticeable that the narrowed language study in general education schools has an effect on applying for university studies. Very few students apply for languages other than English – even so that there is a threat that study places will not be filled, even though the number of starting places has been reduced considerably in recent years. How to guarantee an adequate society language reserve in the future, if language experts and language teachers are not trained?

4. Composition of the working group of the elementary school's Future work project (ongoing from February 1st, 2024 until December 31st 2025)

Futures work in Comprehensive schools



The working group does not include a language teaching expert. The dwindling language reserve of Finland is also truly relevant in terms of our strategic infrastructure, and the accessibility of a wider range of language skills should be every citizen's right. As a state, Finland should have a strategy to maintain and strengthen citizens' broader language skills.

Greetings from Finland



SUKOL hopes that the importance and implementation of broader language skills in basic education will be taken into account as a valuable part of the work of this project. According to SUKOL's view, the keys to the solution to the diversification of language skills are in the hands of the municipalities: language choices should be diversified already in basic education, and the state should support this through legislation and resources. The implementation of language paths should be secured through the cooperation of the organizers of education from elementary school to the end of secondary school and up to postgraduate studies.

5. Extended compulsory education and securing the continuity of language paths

[Extension of compulsory education in Finland](#)

The continuation of the language paths started in basic education must also be secured for the second level. The problem is particularly great at the vocational second level, where even compulsory language studies have been reduced to a minimum and there is only a small amount of teaching in optional languages. The availability of materials is also weak. The situation is not commendable in high schools either. In SUKOL's high school survey, almost half of the respondents' high schools (46.3%) have fewer short language groups this school year than before. Just over a third (36%) answered that there are as many groups of short languages as before. In a small number of upper secondary schools (3.4%), there are more groups than before; the same number answered that short languages are not taught at all. Upper secondary schools are very unequal among themselves, and principals and education organizers have a lot of power. The survey was sent in November 2023 through SUKOL's membership register to members who teach in upper secondary schools, and the response rate was slightly less than 13 (205 responses).

Greetings from Finland



The Finnish language teachers' association SUKOL ry is looking forward to SUKOL's **annual national training days** which will be held in Oulu on **April 19–20, 2024**. The training days discuss, among other things, 6th grade assessment criteria, learning challenges, artificial intelligence and the competence-based nature of language courses. The well-being of young people can be seen in the opening lecture of the day, given by University of Oulu teacher Heli Kiema-Junes on the topic Mental health of young people and the impact of smart devices on the developing brain. In the final lecture, Paula Rossi, dean of the University of Oulu's Department of Humanities and professor of Nordic philology, talks about textbooks and teachers in a changing world.

On **May 7th 2024** it is time for this year's language skills panel. The topic is: **"How can educational equality be developed in municipalities and in education structures?"** The panel will be held on Zoom and the panelists represent a variety of expertise on the topic.



Greetings from Lithuania

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



Lietuvos kalbų pedagogų
asociacija - LKPA

On the 20th February, Language Teachers' Association of Lithuania (LKPA) invited LKPA members to participate in the 3 ac. h. qualification improvement seminar "**Effective language teaching with minimal preparation**" led by Vytautas Magnus University lecturer Vaida Misevičiūtė. The topics of the workshop were "**Principles of positive teaching**" and "**Language teaching without preparation**". Educators often waste a lot of time preparing for lessons, so the objectives of the seminar were:

- to facilitate the work of the teacher
- to advise on how to create a positive learning environment
- how to quickly prepare and effectively conduct language lessons in which the learners play a greater role.

During the seminar, lecturer Vaida reminded of good and effective activities for effective language teaching without preparation, offered ready-made good quality material for language teaching, introduced and invited to try out the principles of positive learning in language learning in practice.

27 February 2024 The Public Service Language Centre invited pedagogues to participate in the remote 8 ac. h. professional development seminar. The seminar was led by lecturer Irena Vysockaja, lecturer at the European Humanitarian University and Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, German language teacher and methodologist. The remote seminar presented **the advantages and disadvantages of artificial intelligence tools**. Using specific examples, the participants of the seminar got acquainted with various scenarios of the application of artificial intelligence in foreign language classes. During the workshop, the participants were able to see that the use of artificial intelligence tools can help save time in preparing lessons and creating interesting listening, reading, speaking and writing tasks. During the workshop, much attention was paid to the practical testing of the tools.

Greetings from **Lithuania**

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



Lietuvos kalbų pedagogų
asociacija - LKPA

On February 21, **the International Mother language Day** was celebrated at Vytautas Magnus University. The international students presented their mother languages: Albanian, Bulgarian, Esperanto, Japanese, Yoruba, Cantonese, Kartvelian, Montenegrin and Bosnian, Turkish and Ukrainian. Lithuanian also received attention.

Overview of upcoming events

We invite students and lecturers interested in languages to participate in **“Language Tasters”**.

The event is free and open to everyone! Indicated time is EET. More information in the attachment.

Login here: <https://rb.gy/2ubail>



LANGUAGE TASTER

	HINDI April 5, 11:30-12:30 Prof. Dr. Shilpa Khatri Babbar
	CANTONESE April 10, 16:00-17:00 Jiabin Song
	ICELANDIC April 17, 15:00-16:00 Dr. Renata Emilsson Peskova
	YORUBA April 22, 17:00-18:00 Adetula Bolanle

Greetings from **Lithuania**

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



Lietuvos kalbų pedagogų
asociacija - LKPA

Calls to conferences

We would also like to invite your students to participate in **the third annual Student Language Conference** at VMU. The conference is meant for students studying languages at a B2-C2 level. The purpose of this plurilingual conference is to improve language skills, share professional knowledge, and promote multiculturalism and multilingualism. The information and registration is below.



 VYTAUTAS
MAGNUS
UNIVERSITY
Institute of
Foreign Languages

Student Language Conference

Let's Grow Together. Future university in the next century!
April 12th online CET (7:30-10:30)
Submissions are accepted until March 31 at 11 p.m.

EXPERIENCED (B2-C2)

Dear Vytautas Magnus University partners and friends, we would like to invite you to participate in the third annual student language conference at VMU. Our conference is meant for students studying languages at a B2-C2 level. **The purpose** of this plurilingual conference is to **improve** language skills, **share** professional knowledge, and **promote** multiculturalism and multilingualism. Global collaboration partnership helps us to be more multilingual, so we encourage you to participate not only as listeners, but also as presenters.

Submit papers in any (non native) language that you are studying on any topic in your major. If you present in a language that is not a major world language, please prepare your slides in English so that participants could enjoy the sound of the language, yet be able to follow your presentation in English.

Presentation length - 5-10 minutes.

Presentations should contain:
introduction, body, and conclusion (APA or MLA citations).
Consult your language instructor on how to prepare an academic presentation.

For questions:
studentukonferencija1@gmail.com

REGISTRATION
[REGISTRATION](#)

Greetings from **Lithuania**

Prepared by **Prof. dr. Roma Kriaučiūnienė**
Director of the Institute of Foreign Languages



Lietuvos kalbų pedagogų
asociacija - LKPA

1



Vilnius
University



UNIVERSITY OF
WESTERN MACEDONIA

The Institute of Foreign Languages
Faculty of Philology
Vilnius University (Lithuania)
and Department of Primary Education
Department of Psychology
University of Western Macedonia (Greece)

invites you to the

INTERNATIONAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE

Nurturing Critical Minds: Interdisciplinary Perspectives in Education and the Workforce

June 27-28, 2024

The conference will be held in **hybrid mode**

CONFERENCE CALL

We are delighted to invite you to our upcoming international conference on “**Nurturing Critical Minds: Interdisciplinary Perspectives in Education and the Workforce**” which will take place at **Vilnius university, Lithuania**, as well as online.

The conference is interdisciplinary, it will cover a diverse range of fields and perspectives on the development of critical thinking skills in different academic fields at universities and labour market institutions. Showcasing the holistic approach, the conference aims to explore the vital role of critical thinking in diverse academic disciplines and its significance in the ever-evolving landscape of labour market institutions. The conference aims to bridge the gap between universities and labour market institutions, fostering a culture of critical thinking that thrives in the classroom and enhances professional growth in the workplace. This conference will serve as a platform for educators, researchers, and labour market professionals from diverse fields to explore innovative strategies, share best practices, and collaborate on integrating critical thinking skills into educational curricula.

Key Conference Highlights:

- **Interdisciplinary Approach:** Engage in enriching evidence-based dialogues that bridge the gaps between different academic domains and connect to diverse workplace environments.
- **Educational Innovation:** Explore methodologies, approaches, and techniques aimed at nurturing critical thinking skills among students in various educational settings.
- **Best Practice Sharing:** Learn from experts in the field about successful initiatives and best practices that have effectively developed critical thinking in students.
- **Research Presentations:** Access the latest research findings related to the development of critical thinking skills of students across different academic disciplines, fostering a deeper understanding of the subject and its relevance to labour market institutions.

Greetings from Lithuania

Prepared by **Prof. dr. Roma Kriaučiūnienė**
Director of the Institute of Foreign Languages



Lietuvos kalbų pedagogų
asociacija - LKPA

2

PANEL SESSIONS

The conference will focus on (but not limit itself to) the discussion of the development of critical thinking in the discipline areas dealt with in the Erasmus+ *Think4Jobs* (<https://think4jobs.uowm.gr/>) project (teacher education, foreign language teaching, the studies of economics, IT and medicine). The following Panel sessions are already open for registration:

- Panel session: CT development in Teacher training programmes
- Panel session: CT development in Foreign language teaching
- Panel session: CT development in Literary and Intercultural studies
- Panel session: CT development in Mathematics and IT studies
- Panel session: CT development in the studies of Economics
- Panel session: CT development in the studies of Medicine

Proposals for Panel Sessions (moderator and 3-4 panel experts) to discuss the development of critical thinking in other discipline areas are also welcome. Proposals for Panel sessions could be sent to the conference contact person at: agne.vaidakaviciute@flf.vu.lt

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

- **Dimitris Pnevmatikos** (University of Western Macedonia, Greece) “*Creating Critical Thinking Professionals: Challenges for Higher Education and Strategies for Enhancing Critical Thinking*”
- **Luis Sebastião** (University of Evora, Portugal) “*How critical is critical thinking*”
- **Alistair Starling** (Co-Founder and Managing Director, European Diplomats, Germany) “*Business Diplomacy: A Symphony of Critical Thinking, Business Acumen, and AI Readiness in the Global Landscape*”
- **Erika Vaiginienė** (Vilnius University, Lithuania) “*Critical thinking in the context of Socio-Technical Revolution: risks and opportunities*”

CONFERENCE LANGUAGE

- The main language of the conference is English.

CONFERENCE FORMATS

- Plenary speeches (45 minutes)
- Presentations (15 minutes + 5 minutes for discussion)
- Panel sessions
- Round table discussions (45 minutes)

THE CONFERENCE is hosted by

VILNIUS UNIVERSITY
Faculty of Philology
Institute of Foreign Languages
(<https://www.flf.vu.lt/institutai/uki>)
Universiteto St. 5
Vilnius LT – 01513
Lithuania

Greetings from Lithuania

Prepared by **Prof. dr. Roma Kriaučiūnienė**
Director of the Institute of Foreign Languages



Lietuvos kalbų pedagogų
asociacija - LKPA

3

THE CONFERENCE is coorganized by

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN MACEDONIA
Department of Primary Education
<https://eled.uowm.gr/en/>
Department of Psychology
<https://psy.uowm.gr/en/>
3rd km National Road Florina-Niki, 53100, Florina
Greece

REGISTRATION FEES

- | | | |
|--|------|----------------------------|
| ○ REGISTRATION FEE for participation in person | €100 | (payment by 1 June, 2024) |
| ○ REGISTRATION FEE for online presentations | €50 | (payment by 1 June, 2024) |
| ○ NON PRESENTER'S FEE | €10 | (payment by 20 June, 2024) |
| ○ RECEPTION DINNER FEE (optional) | €30 | (payment by 1 June, 2024) |

The participant's registration fee covers

- Conference programme and abstracts (electronic format). All abstracts must be submitted and presented in **English**.
- Publication of selected articles in a separate book to be published with one of the highest-ranking Publishing Houses Brill, Palgrave Macmillan, etc.
- Certificate of attendance.
- Coffee during the breaks
- Excursions around Vilnius University and the Old Town of Vilnius.

IMPORTANT DATES

- Submission of abstracts (~ 250 words): by **April 25, 2024**.
- Notification of accepted abstracts: by **May 10, 2024**.
- Submission of articles: by **May 25, 2024**.
- Notification of article acceptance: by **June 21, 2024**.

CONTACTS

Institute of Foreign Languages
Faculty of Philology
Vilnius University
Universiteto St. 5
LT-01513 Vilnius
Lithuania
Tel.: +370 5 2687272; + 370 5 268 7268

Please mark your calendars and join us for this enriching discussion on fostering critical thinking skills in education and their impact on the labor market. Your insights and perspectives are invaluable as we collectively work towards a future where critical thinking is a cornerstone of education and professional success.

We look forward to your participation and meaningful contributions to this significant event.

For more details and submission guidelines, please visit our conference website:

www.criticalminds.flf.vu.lt

Thank you, and we anticipate fruitful discussions during the conference!

Greetings from **Lithuania**

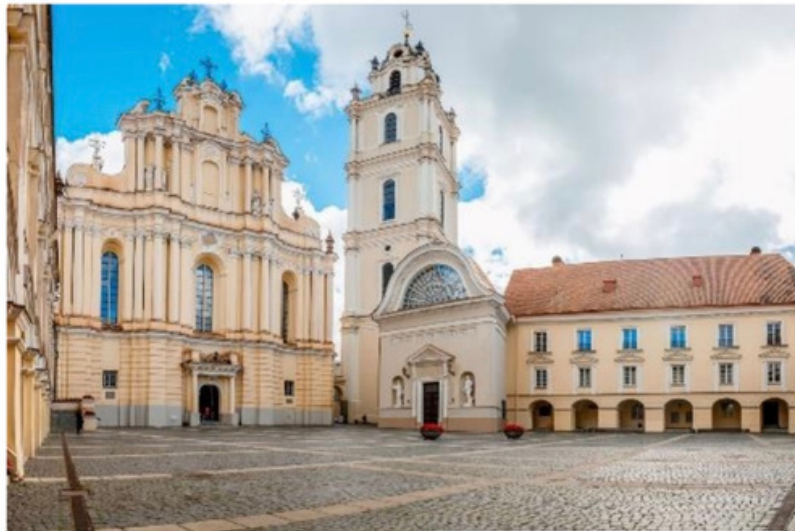
Prepared by **Prof. dr. Roma Kriaučiūnienė**
Director of the Institute of Foreign Languages



Lietuvos kalbų pedagogų
asociacija - LKPA

4

VILNIUS UNIVERSITY



Greetings from Lithuania

Prepared by **Jūratė Patackaitė**
Director of VIKO Foreign Language Centre



Lietuvos kalbų pedagogų
asociacija - LKPA

LANGUAGE STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS 2024: REALITIES OF MULTILINGUALISM

VIKO Foreign Language Centre - 10!

VILNIAUS KOLEGIJA / HIGHER EDUCATION
INSTITUTION

Foreign Language Centre, Faculty of Pedagogy

LITHUANIAN UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES
Faculty of Medicine, Department of Languages and Education

MASARYK UNIVERSITY, BRNO, CZECH REPUBLIC
Faculty of Medicine, Language Centre

LINCOLN UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI
USA, School of Business

November 29

Vilniaus kolegija, 39, Studentų st., Vilnius

INVITATION International scientific-practical conference

FIELDS OF CONFERENCE THEMES

- Peculiarities of teaching and learning professional foreign languages while working with students from different cultures
- Peculiarities of teaching and learning the Lithuanian language while working with native and foreign students
- Professional terminology, language theory, and practice
- Culture of organizing language studies in higher education institutions
- Application of information technologies and other forms of learning in language teaching
- Development of multilingual competence in the context of lifelong learning: challenges and opportunities
- The impact of factors of the changing environment on the activities of language teachers at a higher education institution
- Practical interdisciplinary aspects of teaching specialty language (Lithuanian or foreign)

THE WORKING LANGUAGES OF THE CONFERENCE – Lithuanian and English.

THE LANGUAGES OF THE CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS – Lithuanian, English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, etc.
WAYS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CONFERENCE: presentation, remote (synchronous) presentation, poster presentation, e-publication paper.

CONFERENCE FEES

Participant (presenter and/or paper author) fee:

- In-person participation – 35 euros,
- Remote participation – 25 euros,

Participant (Attendee-Co-Author) Fee – 20 euros,

Participant (Attendee) Fee – 30 euros.

The deadline to register and submit the presentation / paper topic is 30 September 2024 [PARTICIPANT REGISTRATION](#)

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

The papers will be published in the conference e-publication. The papers should be submitted according to the requirements by 31 October 2024 to ukc@viko.lt

Please refer for details here <https://ukc.viko.lt/>

For information, please contact us by email ukc@viko.lt

Conference Patrons

Language Teachers' Association of Lithuania
Lithuanian Educational Research Association
The Public Service Language Centre

Centre of Lithuanian Studies and Foreign Languages
The Journal "RES RES HUMANITARIAE" (KU)
The Journal of Medical and Health Sciences Education for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (LSMU)

Greetings from **Lithuania**

Prepared by **Jūratė Patackaitė**
Director of VIKO Foreign Language Centre



Lietuvos kalbų pedagogų
asociacija - LKPA

LANGUAGE STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS 2024: REALITIES OF MULTILINGUALISM

VIKO Foreign Language Centre - 10!

November 29

Vilniaus kolegija, 39, Studentų st., Vilnius

SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZING COMMITTEE:

Chairperson - Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nijolė Zinkevičienė
(VIKO, Lithuania)
Deputy Chairperson - Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alina Katunian
(VIKO Lithuania)
Responsible secretary - lect. Jūratė Patackaitė
(VIKO, Lithuania)

Members:

Prof. Dr. Libor Švanda (MU, Czech Republic)
Prof. Dr. Natalie Solveig Mikhaylov (LUM, USA)
Prof. Dr. Liudmila Dulksnienė (LSMU)
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Edita Butrimė (LSMU, Lithuania)
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Silvija Rakutienė (LSMU, Lithuania)
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kristina Blockytė-Naujokė
(KU, Lithuania)
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dalia Kačinė-Vrubliauskienė
(VIKO, Lithuania)
Dr. lect. Vaiva Juškienė (VIKO, MRU, Lithuania)

TECHNICAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE:

Chairperson - Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lina Bivainienė
(VIKO, Lithuania)
Deputy Chairperson - Lina Kapušinskienė
(VIKO, Lithuania)
Secretary - lect. Violeta Žemaitienė
(VIKO, Lithuania)

Members:

Prof. Dr. Dalija Gudaitytė (LSMU, Lithuania)
Lect. Beata Gervickaitė (VIKO, Lithuania)
Lect. Virginija Andriusevičienė (VIKO, Lithuania)
Lect. Danutė Belazarienė (VIKO, Lithuania)
Lect. Halina Klupšienė (VIKO, Lithuania)
Lect. Jūratė Helšvig (VIKO, Lithuania)
Lect. Deputy Head of IT Centre, Darius Lokutijevskis
(VIKO, Lithuania)



Greetings from Lithuania

Prepared by **Audronė Auškeliene**
Director of Public Service Language Centre



Lietuvos kalbų pedagogų
asociacija - LKPA

Public Service Language Centre team in Intercultural Exchange Erasmus+ Mobility Training:

"Stress and Conflict Management: The Way to Resilience and Satisfaction"

Since June 2023 Public Service Language Centre team has been 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 participated in a teacher training course in Gateway English School in Malta about cross-cultural education with active learning: discussions, reflection, group work. In March 2024 three professionals from the PSLC – Daiva Stasiulioniene, Rita Samukiene and Audrone Auskeliene – took part in Erasmus learning academy training **"Stress and Conflict Management: The Way to Resilience and Satisfaction"**.

This course provided its members with theoretical insights and practical exercises aimed at equipping them with tools so as to effectively manage and surmount stress and conflict. The course "Stress and conflict management: the way to resilience and satisfaction" was held in Tenerife from 10/03/2024 to 16/03/2024. The participants came from all across Europe – Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Germany, Greece, Kroatia and Portugal.

At the beginning participants engaged in group brainstorming sessions in order to contemplate the concept of stress: in point of fact stress can stem from an array of stressors, spanning physical, environmental, familial or occupational factors. During these first days the members of the course learned to discern between distress, which is negative, and eustress, which is positive: as a matter of fact moderate stress levels can lead to positive outcomes, motivating us to achieve goals or meet deadlines, for instance.

Greetings from Lithuania

Prepared by **Audronė Auškeliėnė**
Director of Public Service Language Centre



Lietuvos kalbų pedagogų
asociacija - LKPA

Subsequently participants delved into an array of cognitive and behavioural strategies tailored to deal with workplace stressors: so group activities facilitated the enhancement of planning and time management proficiencies and in the meantime teachers practiced breathing techniques, muscle relaxation and visualisation exercises in order to master emotional balance. Throughout the course empathy emerged as pivotal for stress and conflict resolution: there is no doubt that demonstrating empathetic responses can be challenging, especially when one has not experienced the same emotions as the individual they are engaging with. However, participants acquired techniques in order to cultivate empathy and distinguish it from other response types.

Given the diverse cultural backgrounds of its members, the course fostered intercultural exchange and mutual learning and, equally importantly, attendees realised that not only do they possess the tools to handle stressful situations, but that conflicts can also yield positive outcomes!



Greetings from Iceland

Prepared by **Þorbjörg Halldórsdóttir**
the president of the Association of Language Teachers in
Iceland (STÍL)



In this report there is news from two STÍL workshops as well as news in French about the 50th anniversary celebrations of the French Teachers Association in Iceland. Finally there is an article from the English Teachers Association in Iceland about hosting an annual short story competition in the age of AI.

STÍL has so far offered two workshops for their members in 2024. The one in January was about language learning and positive psychology. We have a detailed report on this workshop below. The other workshop took place in February and was about the ECML conference in December 2023.

The president of STÍL, Þorbjörg Halldórsdóttir, gave an insight into what took place at the conference. At the workshop there was also given a general introduction to what ECML is about by Eyjólfur Már Sigurðsson as well as two introductions to ECML projects in which there were participants from Iceland. Brynhildur Ragnarsdóttir told us all about the Action research project that she took part in, and Catarina Poggi described the project she participated in which is called CLIL in other languages than English. CLIL is not used widely in Iceland but Catarina Poggi has explored the possibility of using this method in upper secondary schools in Iceland. Further information on these interesting projects can be found on the [ECML website](#).

Greetings from **Iceland**

Prepared by **Þorbjörg Halldórsdóttir**
the president of the Association of Language Teachers in
Iceland (STÍL)



Language Learning and Positive Psychology workshop



Anna Pála Stefánsdóttir

On the 19th of January Anna Pála Stefánsdóttir had a workshop for language teachers on Language Learning and Positive Psychology. Anna Pála has taught Spanish on a secondary school level for over 20 years and graduated with a diploma master's degree in Positive Psychology last year. She wanted to connect her final project to her work as a language teacher, so she decided to create a database of ideas to show language teachers how to easily use positive psychology in their everyday teaching.

The main source for the website is **Circle Solutions for Student Wellbeing** by Sue Roffey, and the workshop "class" was conducted according to the methods presented there. The database is made up of approximately 50 assignments or methods which are divided into 4 chapters:

- Happiness and gratitude
- Character strengths
- Mindfulness
- Feelings and interaction

Anna started the workshop by asking the participants to take a seat on one of the chairs arranged in a circle and thereafter ensued a "class" with various assignments from the positive website. Firstly, the participants got an assignment from the happiness chapter. They were

Greetings from Iceland

Prepared by **Þorbjörg Halldórsdóttir**
the president of the Association of Language Teachers in
Iceland (STÍL)



asked to present themselves and finish the sentences "...makes me happy". For example: "My name is Anna and cooking makes me happy." After everyone in the circle had finished their positive presentations, everyone had a smile on their face.

The next assignment was from the character strengths chapter. Each person had to guess what the person on their left-hand side was good at. Example: "I think that you are good at sports." "I think you are a good listener." The subject of the speculation would then say either "Yes I am..." or if the guess was not correct, they would say so and go on with mentioning a character strength they did have: "No I am not very good at sports, but I am really creative" "No I am not a very good listener, but I do have a really good sense of humour".

The next 2 assignments were from the feelings chapter, where the participants were divided into groups of 3 and given a piece of paper with a certain feeling. These were such as love, surprise, anger, sadness or other. The group members then needed to decide on a colour, food, animal, and item of clothing that they connected with their allotted feeling. After around five minutes the groups all returned to the circle, shared their 4 words with the group which then guessed which feeling the group got.

In the second activity from the feelings chapter the teachers were split into different groups and got a photo of a person. The group got a few minutes to decide how the person was feeling and what had happened to make the person feel that way, and then showed the photo to everyone in the circle sharing their connection to it.

The last activity to finish the class was a mindfulness meditation focusing on breathing, counting and a full body scan. This is ideal to do

Greetings from Iceland

Prepared by **Þorbjörg Halldórsdóttir**
the president of the Association of Language Teachers in
Iceland (STÍL)



with students when they have learned the names of the body parts. After the class Anna presented her positive language learning database to the teachers and answered questions on the subject resulting in a lively and interesting conversation. The webpage is in Icelandic, but if you want to take a look, here it is: <https://sway.office.com/pfbohulPi7ep2aW0?ref=Link>



- Roffey, S. (2020). Circle Solutions for Student Wellbeing: Relatio
resili

Prepared by **Sigurbjörg Gylfadóttir**
Professeure de français au lycée MR et membre du comité de
l'APFI

Célébration du cinquantième anniversaire de l'Association des Professeurs de Français en Islande

L'Association des professeurs de français en Islande a été fondée en mars 1974 par un groupe de professeurs de français qui avaient le désir de se réunir sur une base professionnelle.

Or, le début de l'enseignement du français au lycée en Islande remonte au XIXe siècle, plus précisément à l'an 1847. Et, c'est en 1911, avec la fondation de deux institutions importantes pour l'enseignement du français en Islande, l'Alliance française de Reykjavík et l'Université d'Islande et plus tard la fondation de nouveaux lycées en Islande, à partir de 1930, que l'enseignement du français devient de plus en plus important.

Greetings from Iceland

Prepared by **Sigurbjörg Gylfadóttir**

Professeure de français au lycée MR et membre du comité de l'APFI



Aujourd'hui l'association compte environ 25 membres qui se réunissent au moins deux fois par semestre. Les activités de l'association sont variées, tout d'abord la formation continue des enseignants, avec des stages en Islande et à l'étranger, et le concours des lycéens qui a lieu chaque année à l'occasion de la semaine de la francophonie en mars. D'autres activités sont importantes aussi, à savoir par exemple un travail sur le programme au lycée, l'évaluation, les méthodes, les livres, la didactique en générale, la promotion de la langue française en Islande et la relation avec d'autres associations de professeurs de langues à l'étranger. Sur ces missions, le comité de l'Association des professeurs de français travaille étroitement avec l'Ambassade de France en Islande et l'Alliance française de Reykjavík.

Pour fêter ses 50 ans l'Association des Professeurs de français en Islande, en partenariat avec le département de français à l'Université d'Islande, l'Ambassade de France en Islande et l'Alliance française, a organisé un festival de la langue française, le 20 mars dernier, à Veröld, la maison de Vigdís Finnbogadóttir (à l'Université d'Islande).

Le festival a commencé par une cérémonie en présence de Mme Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, l'ancienne présidente de la république et membre honoraire de l'APF, de monsieur l'ambassadeur Guillaume Bazard, des professeurs de français et élèves des écoles et des lycées et d'autres amoureux de la langue française.

Greetings from **Iceland**

Prepared by **Sigurbjörg Gylfadóttir**

Professeure de français au lycée MR et membre du comité de l'APFI



Monsieur l'ambassadeur a fait un discours et une chorale de 50 enfants de 8 à 14 ans de l'école Landakotsskóli a chanté trois chansons en français. Ensuite, les vidéos qui ont gagné les trois premières places au Concours des lycéens et des élèves en français ont été projetées, et les prix ont été remis aux lauréats.

La cérémonie a été suivie par un rassemblement convivial avec des grands gâteaux d'anniversaire, des crêpes bretonnes et des présentations de bourses et des études dans des pays francophones. Le groupe Les Métèques jouait de la musique française.



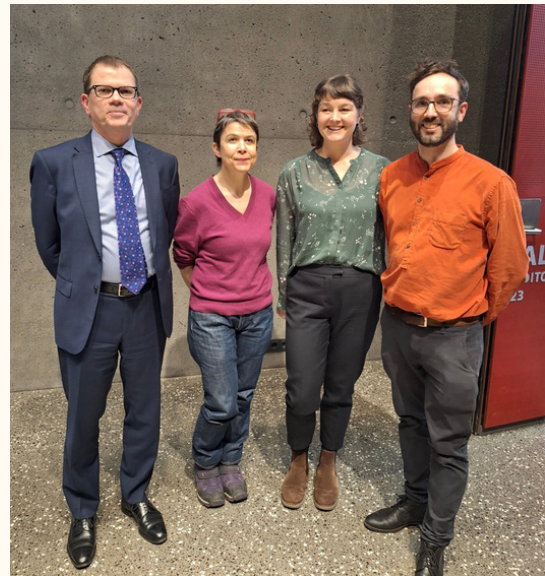
Guillaume Bazard, L'ambassadeur de France en Islande.

Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, L'ancienne Présidente d'Islande,
Ragnhildur Hjaltadóttir, ancienne directrice du cabinet
Gunnar Snorri Gunnarsson, président de l'Alliance française en Islande

Greetings from Iceland

Prepared by **Sigurbjörg Gylfadóttir**

Professeure de français au lycée MR et membre du comité de l'APFI



Guillaume Bazard, L'ambassadeur de France en Islande.
Sólveig Simha, enseignante de français à l'école Landakotsskóli,
Rósa Elín Davíðsdóttir, professeure de français à l'Université d'Islande et au lycée MR
Renaud Durville de l'Ambassade de France.

Hosting a Short Story Writing Competition in the Age of AI: The Annual Short Story Writing Competition by The Association of Teachers of English in Iceland

Every year The Association of Teachers of English in Iceland hosts a short story writing competition for primary and secondary schools in Iceland. This competition, which was established in 2011, aims to encourage creative writing among students of English in Iceland. There are four categories in the competition; 5th grade and under, 6th-7th grade, 8-10th grade in the primary schools, and then one category for students that are in secondary school. Each year the board introduces a theme, typically a single word, which prompts young writers to explore their imagination and storytelling abilities. The theme for last year's competition was 'journey'.

Greetings from Iceland

Prepared by **Guðný Ósk Laxdal**
FEKÍ (The Association of Teachers of English in Iceland)



As we were preparing the competition last year, we had long discussions about whether it was feasible to host an English short story competition when AI so easily accessible, allowing anyone to generate a short story within seconds. Despite these concerns, we decided to create comprehensive guidelines and proceed with the competition. Since the competition began, we have had fantastic young writers submit their stories to the competition and we were unwilling for this tradition to come to an end. Our conclusion was that we need trust the integrity of both the teachers in the school that encourage students to write and submit their stories, and the integrity of the students themselves. We also concluded that we, the judges of the competition, would be able to disqualify any work that we suspected to be written by AI.

The guidelines we created state that each story must be the original work of the student in question. While we prohibited AI generated stories, we permitted the use of AI or other tools to help students with grammar and spelling. Stories were then submitted online, and part of the submission process required confirmation that the story was written by the student themselves.

And in the end, we received a collection of fantastic original stories and announced our winners on the 26th of February 2024. The awards ceremony took place at Bessastaðir, the official residence of the President of Iceland, where Eliza Reid, the First Lady of Iceland, rewarded our winners with a book and a certificate.

During the judging process, we never suspected any story to be written by AI. We believe that the students who submitted stories did so out of genuine enthusiasm for storytelling and had no need for AI assistance. We are glad that we went ahead with the competition, with minor changes, and are excited about future competitions.

Greetings from Iceland

Prepared by **Þorbjörg Halldórsdóttir**

the president of the Association of Language Teachers in
Iceland (STÍL)



Future events

In April, STÍL will be hosting **an online workshop led by the four directors of the global Critical Connections Project** which has been working with schools since 2012. They will be introducing the main principles behind using multilingual digital storytelling and all that it entails to language teachers in Iceland.

In June, STÍL is offering **a whole day summer workshop** onsite with two of the experts from the Critical Connections project: Judith Rifesser and Vicky Macleroy. We will report on these events in the next newsletter.



Greetings from Sweden



The Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

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

Annual Meeting and Webinars

During the winter we have been able to invite our members to three webinars. The topics have varied: Jessica Berggren from Stockholm shared her research about peer response in language education, Marcus Warnby from the University of Gothenburg shared perspectives on vocabulary acquisition based on his thesis, and Joel Rangsjö from Jönköping inspired us about the usage of AI to enhance language learning. We are grateful that teachers and researchers are so generous in sharing their knowledge with our members.

Our annual meeting was also held online, and in addition to the usual tasks a new honorary member was announced. Anita Malmqvist has been a member of our organization for many decades. She has been a board member of our local branch in Västerbotten for about 30 years. As a board member, as well as being a lecturer and, later, a professor at the Institute of German and Language Acquisition at Umeå University, she was an important link between our organisation and the university. This connection was a central partner in organising our annual conference for language teachers.



Greetings from Sweden



The Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

Prepared by **Mia Smith**

President of the Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

Future event

Our **annual conference 2024** will be held online on Saturday, 21st September, and goes by the name **“Languages for the Future”**. Keep an eye out for more information on our social media. You'll find us as Språklärarnas riksförbund on Facebook och @spraklararna on instagram.

Music for Motivation – Once More

Using music to motivate student participation is nothing new, but finding new music and creating tasks to incorporate them into your teaching takes time.

Since 2020, a group of Spanish teachers in Sweden have co-operated to not only find Spanish artists and bands, but they have also provided lesson plans and introduced them in a competition:

Torneo de Música. In 2023 a group of German teachers followed suit, introducing **Der Superhit**, and this year we have included both the French **La Coupe des chansons** and the English **The Great Music Showdown**. Teachers and students from all parts of the country have participated with great joy.



Greetings from Sweden



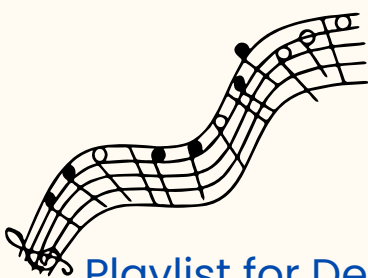
The Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

Prepared by **Mia Smith**

President of the Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

The format: 16 songs are selected, representing various target language countries. Careful consideration is taken regarding gender expression of the artists and various musical genres. Most songs are modern, while a few classics may be introduced as well. Each song is presented with videos as well as various teaching materials.

The materials cover grammar, vocabulary, intercultural aspects, and much more. Support is also available in the form of phrases to express opinions about the songs. Each teacher chooses to what extent the material is used in class before leading the students to a vote. After the quarterfinals and semifinals, we discover the Swedish students' favourite song!



[Playlist for Der Superhit](#)

[Playlist for Torneo de Música](#)

[Playlist for La Coupe des chansons](#)

[Playlist for The Great Music Showdown](#)

Greetings from Sweden



The Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

Prepared by **Mia Smith**

President of the Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

In our **evaluations**, teachers have reported that the students found the inclusion of music engaging and motivating. The joy of this kind of project is not just that it improves the teaching in the classroom, but it is also a way for language teachers in Sweden to come into contact with the target language in a whole new way. The music tournaments have resulted in collegiate cooperation and professional development for the teachers taking part.



Der Superhit 2024
von Daniel Johnson

Glatteis
Nina Chuba

LEICHT

Bilder und Fragen

Die folgenden Bilder sind vom Musikvideo. Was siehst du auf den Bildern?
Die folgende Sätze sind in vier Musikvideos. Was sind die Sätze?
Beantworte die Fragen. Es gibt Tipps zu den schwierigeren Fragen.
Svara på frågorna. Det finns tips för de svårare frågorna.

Bild	Frage
	Wo ist Nina Chuba? Sie ist _____ Tip: enutr ras/Wie (zwei Wörter, alle Buchstaben)
	Was siehst du auf dem Bild? Schreibe zwei Sachen auf Deutsch! Tip: ett bord, stearinljus, mat, en stol, en isbana, kvinnor...
	Welche Farbe hat Ninas Hose?
	Was machen die Frauen hinter Nina Chuba? Wie heißt der Sport? Tip: das Rebus hilft dir:
	Was isst Nina Chuba? Was für Essen gibt es auf dem Tisch? Gib zwei Beispiele!
	Das Haus hinter Nina Chuba sieht aus wie: a. Ein Boot b. Ein UFO c. Ein Krankenhaus
	Wie ist das Wetter hier?

Torneo de música 2024

ELLA BAILA SOLA

MATERIAL ELABORADO POR: SARAH MCOLLIN

Vocabulario: Sinónimos

El español es una de las lenguas más habladas del mundo y por eso hay muchos sinónimos para palabras típicas, por ejemplo para la palabra amigo.

La canción *Ella Baila Sola* empieza con la palabra *Compá* que se usa para decir amigo en México. Mira abajo otras maneras de decir amigo en otros países hispanohablantes y emparejalas con el país correcto. Escribe el nombre del país al lado de la bandera.

Weon	•	•		_____
Parce	•	•		_____
Boludo	•	•		_____
Pana	•	•		_____
Colega	•	•		_____
Pibe	•	•		_____

Torneo de música 2024

ELLA BAILA SOLA

MATERIAL ELABORADO POR: SARAH MCOLLIN

Practica: Ejercicios del Gerundio

-
-
-
-
-
-
-

El señor está _____ (tomar) un café

El hombre está _____ (explicar) algo

El hombre está _____ (traer) una pizza

El chico está _____ (intentar) a estudiar

La pareja está _____ (bailar) tango.

La chica está _____ (estudiar) en casa

Pepito está _____ (nada) en la piscina

Greetings from Estonia



Prepared by **Pille Toompere**,
a member of the Board of the Estonian Association of Foreign Language
Teachers, a teacher of German and Finnish

Estonian Association of Foreign Language Teachers (EVÖL) Hosts Roundtable Discussion on March 20th



On March 20th, the Estonian Association of Foreign Language Teachers (EVÖL) hosted a thought-provoking roundtable discussion with the theme "B-language: Opportunity or Obligation?" The event brought together members of the EVÖL board and affiliated organizations, alongside colleagues from the Ministry of Education and Research, representatives from the Estonian School Leaders' Association, delegates from Tallinn and Tartu Universities, as well as employees from the Erasmus+ agency and the Examination Centre.

In Estonia, English is predominantly taught as the first foreign language, comprising 95% of language instruction. As a second language, or B-language, Russian is most commonly taught, followed by German, French, Spanish, and Finnish. Starting from this academic year, Estonian primary schools are required to offer at least two foreign languages as B-languages. This mandate has already brought significant changes to the selection of languages offered. Russian language instruction has decreased from 78% to 59% within a year, while other languages have gained increased representation. However, this obligation has posed a significant challenge for school leaders: where to find immediately available qualified teachers for various languages?

Greetings from Estonia



Prepared by **Pille Toompere**,
a member of the Board of the Estonian Association of Foreign Language
Teachers, a teacher of German and Finnish

In Estonia, the main providers of foreign language teacher training are the University of Tartu and Tallinn University. Both institutions have responded to the situation by launching micro-degree programs to be flexible in the further training of foreign language teachers. Practicing teachers, as well as students, are encouraged to more boldly utilize the opportunities provided by the Erasmus+ program to participate in further training, shadowing experiences, and internships in other countries.

Representatives from the Examination Centre suggested various entry-level and proficiency tests in addition to regular exams to motivate learners and provide them with feedback on their skills.

Representatives from the Ministry of Education were very appreciative of EVÕL for convening such a roundtable and hope that such gatherings could become regular occurrences. The roundtable proved to be an invaluable platform for exchanging ideas, addressing challenges, and exploring opportunities in foreign language education in Estonia.



Greetings from Estonia

**EVÕL**
Eesti Vöörkeeleõpetajate Liit

Prepared by **Kati Bakradze-Pank**

Vice president of the Estonian Association of Foreign Language Teachers

Strike Back with Fair Expectations

Throughout history there have not been so many strikes carried out in Estonia among teachers.

The first national teachers' strike took place in March 2012. A total of 17234 teachers in 682 educational establishments took part in the strike, including the warning strike in March 2012. <https://ehl.org.ee/2012/03/26/luhikokkuvote-opetajate-uleriigilisest-streigist-7-9-martsil-2012-a/> During that period of strike a large number of support strikes were organised in support of the teachers' strike, with the active participation of members from health, transport, cultural and, other unions and associations. International support for the strike was coming also from the Nordic Council of Teachers and other education unions from the EU member states.



The legitimate and primary demands of teachers in schools and childcare institutions were about improving their system of pay and working conditions, reducing their workload and making necessary changes in the field of education. The teachers' fair expectations were met only with public understanding and support in Estonia in 2012 as it had been the biggest strike held by the teachers after regaining Estonia's independence in 1991.

12 years later, this year, we were at the same place. Nothing had changed.

Greetings from Estonia



Prepared by **Kati Bakradze-Pank**

Vice president of the Estonian Association of Foreign Language Teachers

The current national strike held by the teachers took place in December 2023 – January 2024. The warning strike was held in December and as the negotiations over the same demands did not reach any agreements, the open-ended strike started on 22nd of January 2024. The teachers were free to choose if the strike lasted for 1, 2, 3 days or until the full agreement was reached. The strike or labour dispute ended on the 30th of January 2024 when the Estonian Educational Personnel Union and the Minister of Education and Research reached an agreement to put an end to the strike determining the following conditions:

- the minimum rate of pay for teachers starting from January 2024 is 1820eur (bruto);
- negotiations over the collective agreement will be signed at the latest 31 December 2024 aiming at reaching:
 - the average estimated teachers' payment of 120% of the average wage by the year 2027;
 - agreement of improving working conditions, including career model, working time calculations etc;
 - the state is continuously giving its monetary wage support to local council to support the pay-rise of the kindergarten teachers;
 - the state and local council are agreeing on additional teaching time for levelling out any possible learning gaps among students and the working hours for teachers will be reimbursed.

More than 22000 teachers took part in the strike this year; where most of the local councils maintained the 3-day strike payment, the rest of the days were unpaid.

Greetings from Estonia



Prepared by **Kati Bakradze-Pank**

Vice president of the Estonian Association of Foreign Language Teachers



I have been a teacher for 23 years, I have graduated from 2 universities and I have a master's degree in English and bachelor's degree in business administration. Currently I am teaching English 24 hours per week, also being the head of humanities and the creative work commission; I am responsible for our school Facebook posts and a class teacher for 32 students. I love my work unconditionally.

In conclusion, the strike ended with a 17-euro pay rise (minus taxes), raised the awareness of the problems and the load of teacher's work in the society generally, reached a written contract of the collective agreement being developed by the end of 2024. Nevertheless, the workload, societal, emotional, and legal expectations of teachers remained the same: a teacher being open-minded, creative, supportive, and understanding human being for each student in our class. I AM that teacher even without the 13-euro pay-rise and a possible agreement on better conditions for the future's sake. I just love what I do and I do have fair expectations to be treated like that.

Keep you updated....

Greetings from **Latvia**

Prepared by **Robert Buckmaster**
Board member of LATE

British Culture and Teaching Roadshow Community of Practice

As part of an ongoing Latvian Association of Teachers of English (LATE) **British Culture and Teaching Roadshow** outreach project, run in collaboration with the British Council in Latvia, 48 English language teachers from the Latgale region joined a Telegram-based Community of Practice group. The group was set up at the end of LATE's British Culture and Teaching Roadshow project, which visited Daugavpils, Rēzekne, Ludza and Balvi during the school holidays in October last year.

Robert Buckmaster, LATE's Vice President, has been supporting the teachers through the Telegram group with materials, teaching ideas and seminars. This phase of the project will be completed at the end of March. There have been 6 seminars held with the teachers – on reading skills, writing skills, modal verbs and presentation skills. Rob has also led online discussions on the requirements of the Year 9, 11 and 12 State School Examinations with a focus on the speaking and writing papers and what students have to do in these parts of the examination. He has also supplied the teachers with methodology articles, and links to specific material from the British Council websites:

Teaching English [<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/resources>],
Learn English Kids [<https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/>] and
Learn English Teens [<https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/>].

This included, for example, material to use at Christmas, Easter, St. David and St. George's Days, as well as articles about teaching reading, writing and listening and examination preparation.

Greetings from **Latvia**

Prepared by by **Robert Buckmaster**
Board member of LATE

The aim of this project was to support English teachers in their daily work over a longer period of the school year. The response of the teachers to the seminars and other group activities has been very positive and encouraging so far, and LATE and the British Council are looking forward to continuing their engagement with these teachers and others in the Latgale region in the future.

In addition, English language teachers in Latvia could attend **LATE's Winter TPD course 2024** (which will be reviewed in the next issue of the NBR Newsletter).

Future events

The **annual conference of the Latvian Association of Teachers of English** will be held on 22nd -23rd August 2024.



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>

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

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 Võõrkeeleeõpetajate 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 Teachers of English (LATE) <https://late.lv/>

The Newsletter #1 March 2024 is issued by:
Outi Viikuna, NBR President, Finland
NBR Secretary Asterija Rudienė, Lithuania

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



and

join us

on

