



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

## The Nordic-Baltic Region

### Electronic Newsletter No.4 ( November 2015)

#### **PRESIDENT's Note**



**Sigurborg Jónsdóttir**

Recent events in Paris, Lebanon and other countries have shown us that we are at a crossroad/ at crossroads. At a symposium earlier this month celebrating the 30th anniversary of STIL, the Icelandic Association, we celebrated the multitude and diversity of languages and all that languages imply. Mrs Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, one of UNESCO's Goodwill Ambassador for promotion of linguistic diversity was present, stressing the fact that we are all ambassadors of languages, introducing different cultures to our students and others and working towards understanding between people. This is where our strength lies. Let's continue working towards those goals.

In the media more and more articles are being published on the necessity of language diversity as it increases broadmindedness and cultural literacy. Studying and/or working in another country increases of course language skills, but also independence and initiative. None of the a.m. is one sided. It works both ways. When our students go

abroad, they not only learn the language and the values of their host country, but bring with them their own. When they return, they possess a valuable knowledge of the values and views.

In this Newsletter we want to share with you useful links, hopefully giving you new ideas and arguments for your work.

We would also like to draw your attention to the NBR Conference in Estonia, 9.-11.June 2016 „The Language Teacher and Teaching at Crossroads“, providing us with a platform for discussions, exchanging of ideas and good practice.



Denis Cunningham, FACE Secretary General, Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes (FIPLV), Linguapax Advisory Board Member and Teacher Consultant, Mater Christi College (Belgrave)

The recent events in Paris have shocked us all and, as many have said, the globe will never be the same again. These acts of terrorism have been reflected recently by others in Lebanon and other countries.

As I wrote to you in 2001 on behalf of FIPLV, I must write again to share with you our concern and sorrow and, equally as important, our condolences and comfort to those who have lost loved ones, friends or colleagues.

As partners sharing the same globe, we mourn those who have departed, sympathise with the suffering and enjoy with others the very few happy stories arising from tragedy. We have all lost something as a result of the recent disaster and decry the use of terrorism, irrespective of the target.

Such acts must harden our resolve to pursue the objectives of FIPLV and the majority of the globe's people. Teaching languages, which is our profession, has as its ultimate goals the creation of mutual understanding and fostering of peaceful relations.

Cooperation, collaboration and friendship in the pursuit of peace must remain our priority.



## **Attacks in Paris:**

### **Statement of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe**

[http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/statement-by-council-of-europe-secretary-general-thorbj-rn-jagland?redirect=http://www.coe.int/fr/web/portal/home?p\\_p\\_id=101\\_INSTANCE\\_DibKFqnP518&p\\_p\\_lifecycle=0&p\\_p\\_state=normal&p\\_p\\_mode=view&p\\_p\\_col\\_id=column-1&p\\_p\\_col\\_count=2](http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/statement-by-council-of-europe-secretary-general-thorbj-rn-jagland?redirect=http://www.coe.int/fr/web/portal/home?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_DibKFqnP518&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_p_col_id=column-1&p_p_col_count=2)

### **“Languages at the heart of learning” - European Centre for Modern Languages adopts a new programme**

At its 24th meeting on 23 October the Governing Board of the European Centre for Modern Languages unanimously adopted the Centre’s 2016-19 programme entitled “Languages at the heart of learning” and acknowledged the importance of this new programme in addressing major challenges in language education in member states.

The programme is structured around three key work strands: Development, Training and Consultancy, and Mediation which together form a cohesive, yet dynamic whole.

The development strand encompasses both projects and think tanks

Detailed information is available here:

[http://www.ecml.at/Portals/1/News%20articles/communiqu\\_e\\_EN.pdf](http://www.ecml.at/Portals/1/News%20articles/communiqu_e_EN.pdf)



Ene Peterson, Chair of Estonian Association of Foreign Language Teachers, lecturer of Virumaa College of Tallinn University of Technology, Head of NBR2016 conference organizing committee.

**The FIPLV Nordic-Baltic Region is pleased to announce NBR 2016 conference hosted by Estonian Association of Foreign Language (the EATFL) in Tallinn, Estonia**

**CONFERENCE IN ESTONIA  
THE FIPLV NORDIC-BALTIC REGION (NBR)  
CONFERENCE 2016**

**The Language Teacher and Teaching at Crossroads  
9 June - 11 June 2016, Tallinn (Estonia)**

**Conference venue: Original Sokos Hotel Viru, conference centre  
(Viru väljak 4, Tallinn)**

**You are kindly invited to visit conference web site and participate:**

**[http://www.voorkeelteliit.eu/index.php?lang=en-GB&option=com\\_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=7&Itemid=40](http://www.voorkeelteliit.eu/index.php?lang=en-GB&option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=7&Itemid=40)**





## TEACHING MATERIALS

<http://edl.ecml.at/Teachers/Teachingmaterials/tabid/3097/Default.aspx>

### Language Trivia

<http://edl.ecml.at/Home/tabid/1455/language/en-GB/LanguageFun/LanguageTrivia/tabid/3129/language/en-FR/Default.aspx>

### ECML publications

<http://www.ecml.at/Resources/ECMLPublications/tabid/277/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>

### Tongue twisters

<http://edl.ecml.at/LanguageFun/Tonguetwisters/tabid/3116/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>

### Idioms of the world

<http://edl.ecml.at/LanguageFun/Idiomsoftheworld/tabid/3117/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>

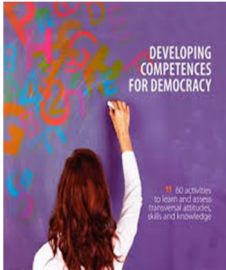
### Language quiz

<http://edl.ecml.at/LanguageFun/LanguageQuiz/tabid/1873/language/en-FR/Default.aspx>

### Euridyce Publications:

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Publications>

## **TASKs for Democracy - 60 activities to learn and assess transversal attitudes, skills and knowledge (TASKs)**



<http://www.coe.int/en/web/pestalozzi/-/-developing-competences-for-democracy-60-activities-to-learn-and-assess-transversal-attitudes-skills-and-knowledge-tasks-?inheritRedirect=true&redirect=%2Fen%2Fweb%2Fpestalozzi%2Fhome>

## **Languages in Secondary Education: An Overview of National Tests in Europe - 2014/15**

This Eurydice report provides a comparative overview of the national tests in Europe assessing the language competences of secondary school students. The analysis covers aspects such as the increasing importance of national tests in languages, the objectives of the tests, the skills tested, as well as the means developed by countries aiming at ensuring consistent and reliable scoring procedures, and the influence of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) on national tests.

[https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Publications:Languages\\_in\\_Secondary\\_Education:\\_An\\_Overview\\_of\\_National\\_Tests\\_in\\_Europe\\_%E2%80%93\\_2014/15](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Publications:Languages_in_Secondary_Education:_An_Overview_of_National_Tests_in_Europe_%E2%80%93_2014/15)







## **STIL, Samtök tungumálakennara á Íslandi.**

### **Language Teacher Association in Iceland**

This year, STIL, Samtök tungumálakennara á Íslandi (Language Teacher Association in Iceland) celebrated their 30th anniversary with several events culminating in a festive symposium. The founders of the Associations were the monolingual Associations of English, Danish, German and French. Now we have many more monolingual Associations and around 900 members. STÍL cooperates with various educational bodies both in Iceland and abroad and is a member of UNESCO and the Nordic Baltic Region, FIPLV (The International Federation of Language Teachers Associations).

At the symposium and the cultural program some of the pioneers in our ranks shared their memories and gave an image of the past while younger teachers reflected on the present. Fewer and fewer students learn foreign languages and it is for this reason that we felt it vital to draw attention to the importance of language teaching and learning. Moreover, in recent years there has been an explosion in tourism in Iceland, with almost one million visitors yearly, so we are more than ever convinced that knowing foreign languages is one of the most important things in today's world. Our guest lecturer was Helena von Schantz, the president of the Swedish Association of Foreign Language Teaching, who gave a lecture on "Multilingualism - rewards and benefits beyond the export and tourism industries". The symposium ended with a celebration of languages through music and songs by a student's choir from one of the upper secondary schools, singing in at least seven different languages.

What struck us most were her conclusion on the PISA Study and that the countries excelling in the study are those, where language learning plays an important role and how languages effect so many parts of the brain and different domains of our lives interfering with all our actions. Multilingualism improves the brain and effects our cognitive function, memory, executive function, concentration, creativity, problem solving, social flexibility, computer gaming speed, entrepreneurmanship, protection for dementia.

Helena has given us permission to share with you an abstract from her lecture and some useful links.



Helena von Schantz is the president of the Swedish Association of Language Teachers. Helena is a lead teacher in English, French and Swedish. She is also a lecturer and an active voice in the Swedish educational debate.



## **Multilingualism - rewards and benefits beyond the export and tourism industries**

**Modern research has revealed a large number of benefits from language study. Despite these new facts language studies are pushed aside in many countries. Subjects like math and science are made the priority, and languages are seen as useful but not strictly necessary, subjects suited only for academically inclined and especially talented students.**

**This trend must be fought, fought with knowledge and determination. Every student deserves the benefits of multilingualism. Every student and every country.**

**In this seminar we will look at PISA from a multilingual perspective. We will discuss the impact of English as a lingua franca. We will briefly examine the benefits of language learning for the mother tongue, for executive function and**



for overall academic achievement. We will also make a quick survey of the studies that show effects on our thinking and perception of the world.

There is so much knowledge about the benefit of learning languages, so much experience, so much evidence. We need to make sure that all of this is spread through every available channel, by each and everyone of us.

Contacts: Helena von Schantz: Berghemsvägen 2, 61531 Valdemarsvik, tel: 0123-29022

## **Multilingualism Iceland**

## **Links**

### **New language, new perception**

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/apr/27/world-view-learn-another-language>

<http://news.sciencemag.org/brain-behavior/2015/03/speaking-second-language-may-change-how-you-see-world>

### **Entrepreneurship**

<http://www.inc.com/adam-fridman/4-reasons-being-multilingual-makes-you-a-better-entrepreneur.html>

<http://ceoworld.biz/2015/07/24/benefits-of-being-a-multilingual-ceo-10-successful-entrepreneurs-who-speak-multiple-languages>

<http://rypeapp.com/blog/language-learning-entrepreneur/>

### **Dementia**

<http://www.nydailynews.com/life-style/health/bilingual-pushes-back-dementia-5-years-study-article-1.1508740>

<http://www.medicaldaily.com/speaking-2-languages-slows-onset-dementia-even-if-you-became-bilingual-adulthood-285820>

### **Executive function - a better brain**

<http://www.spring.org.uk/2013/09/10-superb-psychological-advantages-of-learning-another-language.php>

<http://spraktidningen.se/artiklar/2013/04/extra-allt-darfor-ar-flersprakiga-friskare-och-smartare>

<http://www.medicaldaily.com/bilingual-benefits-how-learning-another-language-keeps-your-mind-sharp-no-matter-your-310308>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cognitive\\_advantages\\_of\\_bilingualism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cognitive_advantages_of_bilingualism)

<https://lexamerica.wordpress.com/2015/05/10/executive-function-and-multilingualism/>

Tolerance and understanding

<http://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/6224/>

## PISA

China

Big language reform in 2001. English from 3rd grade, communication focus

Multilingual society, many students need to use their second language as school language. English language centers everywhere.

Popular languages also Japanese, Korean, French and German.

<http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED530281>

<http://www.lexiophiles.com/english/top-foreign-languages-learnt-in-china>

Singapore

Four official languages (Malay, Tamil, Mandarin, English), bilingual policy with English as first language, home language as second language. Wide variety of other languages offered. Language ideology - internationalization and linguistic pluralism (opposite of assimilation).

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language\\_planning\\_and\\_policy\\_in\\_Singapore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language_planning_and_policy_in_Singapore)

## South Korea

Big language reform in 1997 - English from 3d grade, communication focus, access to more languages, studying several languages more common.

<http://www.languageeducationpolicy.org/lepbyworldregion/asiasouthkorea.html>

## Japan

Several language reforms from 1998 to 2011. English mandatory and lots of students spend lots of time, money and effort on learning English. Chinese, Korean OK, but other European languages - decline.

<http://www.oecd.org/edu/ceri/41521944.pdf>

## Lichtenstein

Liechtenstein and Belgium are mentioned as countries with far-reaching changes in language education policy in the early 2000. Preprimary play activities in a foreign language compulsory, formal language learning from the first year of primary education.

Switzerland                      Multilingual country

<http://prospectjournal.org/2013/07/08/switzerland-a-country-of-multilingualism-3/>

[http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/french-under-fire\\_children-take-two-extra-languages-in-their-stride/40481788](http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/french-under-fire_children-take-two-extra-languages-in-their-stride/40481788)

## Estonia

Plurilingual country, two obligatory foreign languages in school – choice between English, French, German, Russian. Old Estonian proverb: “You can manage with the German language and silver coins everywhere in the world”.

<https://www.hm.ee/en/activities/estonian-and-foreign-languages/foreign-language-learning-estonia>

Finland Three obligatory languages large language barrier, bilingual country

Canada Two obligatory languages, reasonably big language barrier, bilingual country

Poland 3 obligatory languages, second language from 1st year in primary, bilingual schools, many private language after-school programs. Mobile language schools.

Policy – promoting plurilingualism, social inclusion. Language learning high priority, switch from Russian to English.

Many regional languages (16 minority languages).

<http://www.edukwest.com/multilingualism-europe-language-learning-poland/>

Belgium Bilingual country, early start English

Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe 2012

[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/key\\_data\\_series/143en.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/key_data_series/143en.pdf)

Lithuania ( Language Teachers' Association of Lithuania ( LKPA) shares the information)

<http://daugiakalbyste.vdu.lt/en/>

<http://daugiakalbyste.vdu.lt/>

## The multilingualism policy of the European Commission

[https://www.upf.edu/llengues/\\_pdf/2008\\_Teresa\\_Condexo.pdf](https://www.upf.edu/llengues/_pdf/2008_Teresa_Condexo.pdf)

<http://www.edukwest.com/multilingualism-britain-snapshot-trenches/>

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