



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

The Nordic-Baltic Region

Electronic Newsletter No.1 (April 2016)

PRESIDENT's Note



Sigurborg Jónsdóttir

The first signs of Spring are starting to show themselves up here in the North. The yellow heads of the daffodiles and birds singing happily as they build their nests. The school year is once more rapidly coming to an end and our students will be sitting their exams in May or June. For many of them this is a chance to show what they have

learned, for others it is a time of great anxiety. A lot can depend on the outcome of exams. It can mean the entrance to higher education.

How do we assess our students, do we look at the four competences reading, writing, listening and speaking or is it mainly vocabulary and grammar? Are we assessing them regularly during the school year or is there just a big exam at the end? The concept of ongoing evaluation with regular feedback from the teacher has been gaining ground. It allows both teachers and students to keep track of the students' progress and focus on success rather than deficiencies. Learning a new language has often been compared to long distance running. It takes time until one is comfortable with a new language.

Languages are often amongst the first subjects in the curriculum to be reduced. We therefore need school levels from at least primary school up to universities to develop an ongoing discourse and collaboration in order to support language teaching and learning.

A platform, where we might start practicing this discourse and exchanging ideas for action is at the NBR Conference in Tallinn.

Languages open doors to all kinds of wonderful things. Lets do our best to keep them open!



Terry Lamb. Professor of Languages and Pedagogy, Senate Award Fellow for Sustained Excellence in Learning and Teaching, Director of Learning and Teaching, Director, iPGCE, Director, MA in Languages, Education and Research (Malta), Member, Migration Research Network <http://mrg.group.shef.ac.uk/> , Associate Fellow, Crick Centre for the Public Understanding of Politics <http://www.crickcentre.org/about/> , Secretary General and former President, FIPLV (Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes), Chief Editor, International Journal of Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching.

FIPLV News – New Executive Committee meeting in Venice

The start of 2016 brought a significant change to FIPLV. We finally had to say goodbye to two longstanding members of Executive Committee, though the 'goodbye' relates of course to membership of that committee only and not in relation to other kinds of involvement with FIPLV. After many years as an FIPLV officer, former FIPLV President Denis Cunningham from Australia stood down from his position of Secretary General. However, the good news is that World Assembly last year agreed to my nomination of Denis as an Honorary Counsellor, a position he was delighted to accept. Denis kindly provided us with a paper containing his reflections on FIPLV involvement over the years and this was posted on the FIPLV News on 9th December last year and can, of course, still be found there. The other person who left the Executive Committee as part of her 'retirement' plan is Kirsti Santaholma, our Honorary Treasurer from Finland. Kirsti has done a wonderful job steering us through some challenging financial times and we are extremely grateful to her for all of her commitment to FIPLV and to language teaching. I placed 'retirement' in speech marks as there is as yet little evidence of retirement in any traditional sense of the word, as she continues to contribute her skills and wisdom to many enterprises.

We had of course planned a first meeting of the new Executive Committee for January so that we could begin the process of renewal that such changes bring. Unfortunately, thanks to a fractured ankle that I sustained on my visit to the ACTFL Congress in San Diego in November, I was unable to leave the house let alone travel anywhere. We finally met in March in Venice and had an extremely refreshing meeting in which we firstly helped our new members to get to know FIPLV and secondly considered a number of exciting opportunities for our future. The meeting was kindly hosted by our new President, Paolo Balboni, in his amazing apartment in the centre of Venice. This provided a highly conducive environment for discussing the ways in which FIPLV can develop in order to support its member associations and their members as effectively as we can, and the atmosphere was greatly enhanced by the delicious range of Venetian cuisine prepared for us very generously by Paolo's wife. You will. Of course, all know Paolo as he has been Vice President for some years now and also actively involved in FIPLV for several decades. We are very grateful to him for accepting this position and contributing his invigorating ideas for the development of the Federation.

Our two new members of FIPLV Executive Committee are the Vice President, Judith Richters from the Netherlands, and the Honorary Treasurer, Sylvia Velikova from Bulgaria. Both of these colleagues have longstanding commitment to language teaching

and teachers: Judith is currently also President of our Dutch member association, Levende Talen and Sylvia is former President and current Editor of Publications of BETA, the Bulgarian English Teachers' Association and she was also responsible for bringing her association into FIPLV as a member several years ago. I very much look forward to working with them in the coming years and to enabling them to take forward their ideas for renewal of FIPLV.

In my new role as Secretary General, I am currently working on the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting, though we took a different approach this time by organising a flexible meeting, which enabled us to cover the necessary business but also to have time and space to explore new possibilities for FIPLV. We will be meeting next at the NBR Conference in Tallinn (9-11 June) and look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible. We will also be holding a meeting of the FIPLV World Council in Tallinn, on the afternoon of Thursday 9th June, and will open this to any association representatives present rather than just the official World Council members, as we would like to consult them on a number of possible future directions for FIPLV to inform the development of our new Strategic Plan.

I hope to see many of you in Tallinn, which promises to be an exciting and very international conference. I'd like to thank the organiser, Ene Peterson, conference organiser and Chair of the Estonian Association of Foreign Language Teachers, for the enormous amount of effort she has put into this enterprise over the last couple of years in order to offer language teachers the possibility of sharing their experience and expertise. I'd also like to thank all of the people who have worked with her on this. Without such people our language teacher associations would not exist.

Finally, a huge thank you to all who read this: either those of you actively involved in language teacher associations for your support for language teaching and teachers and for the hard work you engage in mostly voluntarily; or to all of you language teachers for your commitment to this complex, challenging, but hugely important and rewarding responsibility to encourage the learning of a wide range of languages.





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.

**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)**

http://www.voorkeelteliit.eu/index.php?lang=en-GB&option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=7&Itemid=40



STIL, Samtök tungumálakennara á Íslandi.

Language Teacher Association in Iceland



Petrína Rós

STIL will organize in June the last of four courses relating to the Common European Framework of Reference, on receptive skills: assessing L2 reading and listening tasks across CEFR proficiency levels. The other courses were on the tasks , Writing and Talking. We have been organizing the courses with Sylvie LEPAGE , lecturer from the Department evaluation et certifications at the Centre international d'études pédagogiques since 2003. She has been responsible for the harmonization of the DELF DALF on the Common European Framework of Reference. She has also developed the French test for the European Survey on Language competences in collaboration with Survey Lang partners. This course is open to all foreign language teachers in Iceland.

As there are some changes in the curriculum in Iceland, STIL is organizing a plenum and workshops in the autumn focusing on the dialogue between levels of education in terms of curriculum changes. The biggest change is, that our gymnasium will be three instead of four years. As you cannot squeeze a years' syllabus of all subjects in to the other three years, something will have to be left out, in this case foreign languages. Teachers and other specialists in Education are protesting, against this, the latest being a strongly worded article in the media from Geir Sigurdsson, the Head of School of Humanities at the University of Iceland. We still have not reached the ears of the decision makers, but will continue to do try. Reaching the ears and eyes of the media would help our cause. So we need to lobby a lot this year. The event planned for the

autumn will include representatives from the primary, secondary and university level and STIL will of course invite the ministry to send their representatives as well.

STIL celebrated its 30th anniversary with several events, with one of the highlights when presenting Prof. Hafdís Ingvarsdóttir with FIPLVs' Honorary Award for all her devoted and innovative work in teacher education. She is an inspiration to us all to continue campaigning for languages.



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.



Språk så in i Norden 17 - 19 april 2016

Languages Go Far in the North, the Nordic language conference that took place in Stockholm from the 17th to the 19th of April was a success in many ways. We had many participants, a great program, and we have only heard appreciative comments. Those of us who met in Stockholm were all inspired, enriched with new thoughts, with new material and with new friends.

The keynote-speakers were everything we had hoped for. Professor Hans-Jürgen Krumm made us realize how random and unfair the idea of one nation – one language really is. When we neglect or downplay a language, we neglect or discriminate against the people who speak it. Professor Emanuel Bylund talked about the connection between language and thought. In Swedish we primarily think about time in terms of length. In Spanish time is measured in quantity.

Brain researcher Johan Mårtensson taught us that language learning makes the brain grow only when there's intensity and regularity in the learning. The students who benefit the most are those who have to struggle to learn a new language.

... So, he told us what we already knew – everybody should learn languages, AND multilinguals are smarter.

Finally professor Siv Björklund revealed that students in language immersion programs do better in all school subjects except in maths (where their performance is on level with that of other students). Not a surprising disclosure since we had learned how good language learning is for the brain from the previous keynote speaker.

However, to many in the audience the discussion about the importance of multilingualism was the best part of the conference. To me it was heartwarming and inspiring to listen to my Scandinavian counterparts Kari Jukarainen, Steinar Nybole, Rita Mogensen and Brynhildur Ragnarsdottir talk about their languages, concerns and suggestions. Afterwards it became apparent that the whole audience appreciated this width of perspective, this Nordic cooperation. Steinar suggested more educational cooperation between our Nordic countries. This Norwegian suggestion was greeted with enthusiasm both by the rest of the panel and by the audience.

Sadly our conference wasn't as successful as we had hoped in terms of media coverage and public attention – our main objective and the reason we invested so much of our capital in this conference. Everything looked good Sunday evening. The education minister Gustav Fridolin was scheduled to take part in our panel discussion. One of our biggest TV-chains was going to cover the event. I was invited to talk about languages in a radio morning show. What happened was that Mehmet Kaplan, our minister of housing, was forced to leave his post after a number of questionable statements and calls on the very day of our conference. As a consequence the education minister cancelled his participation along with all his other appointments that day. Naturally, the TV-chain and the radio-chain cancelled their coverage as well.

This, however, is the way of the world - and very much the way of the media. All of us who participated in "Språk så in i Norden" have gained a new confidence in the importance of our work. We have also gathered new and strong arguments to use in our battle against the devaluation of languages - a battle for diversity, democracy, sharpened minds, widened thoughts - for freedom. So let us man the barricades! The global one, the one in Europe, the ones in our countries, in our schools and in our classrooms.

In the words of Ovid: "Gutta cavat lapidem, non vi, sed saepe cadendo".



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NEWS from LIETUVOS KALBŲ PEDAGOGŲ ASOCIACIJA



Roma Kriaučiūnienė (left) and Eglė Šleinitienė

Assoc. Prof. dr. Roma Kriaučiūnienė, the director of the Institute of Foreign Languages of Vilnius University, was elected the president of Language Teachers Association of Lithuania (KLPA). Former president, NBR secretary Eglė Šleinitienė became Honorary President of the Association.

Roma Kriaučiūnienė graduated in the English Language philology from the University of Vilnius in 1985 and she has been teaching at Vilnius University since 1989. In 2004-2008 she was a doctoral student at Klaipėda University (Lithuania) and in 2009 was awarded a doctor's degree in Social Sciences (Education) (07 S).

Her professional interests include foreign language didactics, foreign language teaching theories; personality development in teaching/ learning process at universities; the development of future foreign language teachers' value attitudes; the development of teachers' competences (intercultural, general, linguistic, pedagogical); social responsibility, intercultural communication, development of New Generation of students.

Assoc. Prof. dr. Roma Kriaučiūnienė disseminated her research data at various international conferences in Lithuania and abroad (Latvia, Estonia, Germany, Austria, Turkey, Italy, Spain) as well as had her research papers published in Lithuania, Latvia, Russia, Turkey, Slovenia, Check Republic, India, UK, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Spain.

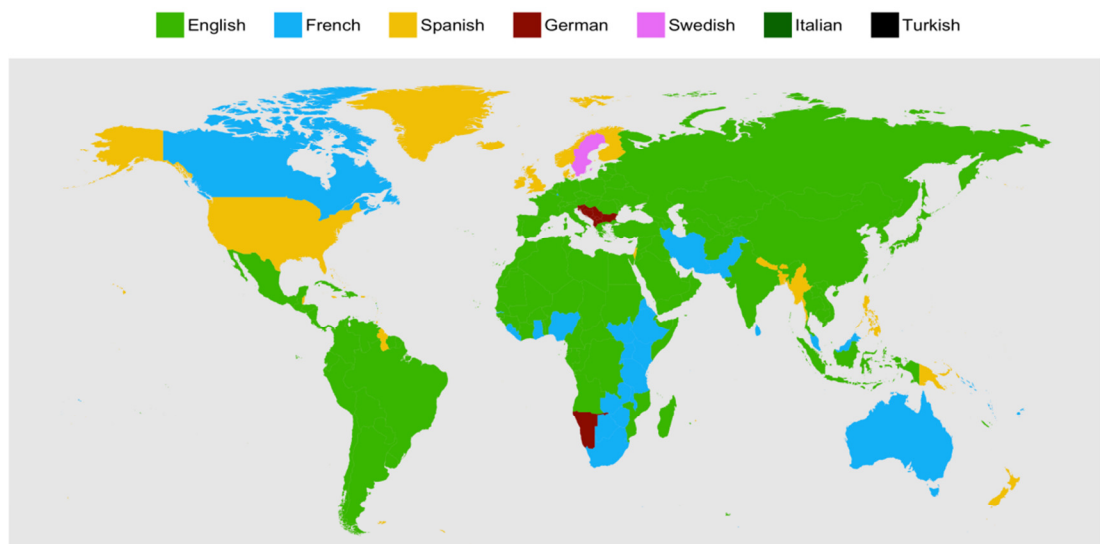
LKPA kindly invite FIPLV NBR members to participate in the 10th international conference "Languages across Schools, Cultures, Borders: Creativity, Entrepreneurship and Social Inclusion" organized 26-27 September, 2016 in Vilnius. More detailed information is available on

www.lkpa.vdu.lt

NEWS from European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML)

Which countries study which languages, and what can we learn from it?

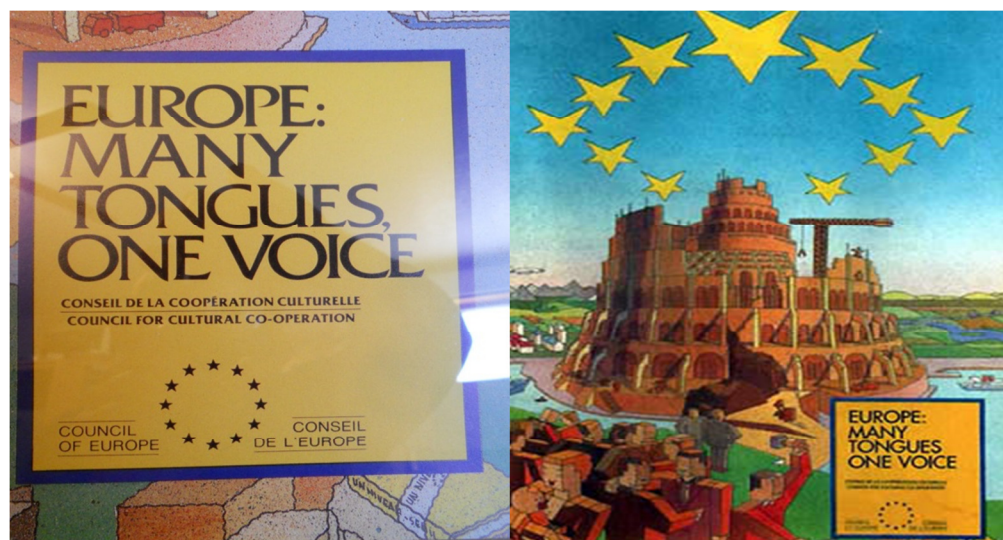
<http://making.duolingo.com/which-countries-study-which-languages-and-what-can-we-learn-from-it>



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