



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

## The Nordic-Baltic Region

### Electronic Newsletter No.2 ( March 2015)

#### PRESIDENT's Note



**Sigurborg Jónsdóttir**

The phrase „Languages are the key to all learning“ is so very appropriate and apt. It all begins by learning the language or languages used in the home. The language of schooling may not be the first language of some of our pupils. The world is steadily growing smaller and borders are disappearing. We need to promote quality language education and learning, starting at an early age in school and continuing throughout life. Through languages we learn about new and different cultures, which opens up a wealth of new possibilities.

The European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) recently launched the call for submission for the 2016-2019 programme, with the heading „Languages at the heart of all learning“. In the Introduction to the programme it says : „lifelong, quality language education supports not only education and professional success, but personal development and a sense of self-worth, all of which help foster economic growth, democratic citizenship and social cohesion.“ (page 12)

Is it enough to learn two foreign languages or to be proficient in two foreign languages as stated by the European Commission? What is the situation of languages in the NBR member states? Are languages being promoted by policy makers and interest groups such as parents and the economy? Not in all of them. Some of us are struggling, as authorities propose a cut in language education or make it non compulsory. Quite often it makes much more sense to pupils and / or parents to concentrate on what is compulsory in order to finish school. Language teachers and others working in the fields of language education know the need for languages, but how do we reach the attention of the policy makers and the broader public and get them

to take our arguments seriously? The situation is grave. What can we do about it? How can we best share our experience and support each other?

## NEWS from LANGUAGE ASSOCIATIONS AND COLLABORATIVE SUPPORT (LACS) project



May 22 – 23, 2015, LACS Workshop took place at the ECML in Graz in a very friendly and stimulating atmosphere with 17 participants representing the UK, Iceland, Canada, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Ireland, Netherlands and Malta.

Terry Lamb, project coordinator and FIPLV president, reported on LACS project implementation and its results. Project team members Sigurborg Jonsdottir (Iceland), Daniel Xerri (Malta) and Nadezhda Doychinova (Bulgaria) moderated the activities of the working groups and introduced their reports. Wendy Carr (Canada) presented rich and stimulating experience of language teaching and learning best practices in Canada. All the participants shared their expertise in the creation of networks through common projects. LACS project was analysed in detail. Activities offered to develop the tool (a template) for enabling teachers/associations in different countries to identify how ECML projects are relevant in their contexts and how they may be adapted. Case studies were analysed, research of various project websites done. Participants shared their experience on local/national work with teachers related to ECML projects.

The Call for proposals for the next ECML Programme 2016-2019 „Languages at the Heart of Learning“ was introduced by Susanna Slivensky (<http://www.ecml.at/>).

The detailed information about the workshop is available on LACS web site:

<http://lacs.ecml.at/M1/News/tabid/2950/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>



# **NEWS from ASSOCIATIONS-**

## **the NORDIC-BALTIC REGION MEMBERS**

*This Newsletter presents the associations from Finland, Estonia and Iceland, the associations from Sweden, Latvia and Lithuania will be featured in the Newsletter in May.*

### **Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in Finland SUKOL**



**Kari Jukarainen, President**

SUKOL consists of eight national language associations and 30 districts. In 2014 the slightly declining trend in the number of SUKOL's members continued as many Finnish language teachers are reaching the retirement age and the present age groups of children are smaller than before. At the end of 2014 SUKOL had 4 847 members.

The executive board of SUKOL met 6 times in 2014. On top of that there were committees working on special topics between the meetings. The council of SUKOL, totaling 68 representatives from all over the country, had its meetings in November and April.

SUKOL traditionally arranges two national in-service training seminars for its members every year. Additionally, SUKOL is a partner in organizing the large educational fair EDUCA which is held yearly in January in Helsinki. Winter in-service training seminar was arranged in Kauninainen in February. SUKOL's traditional autumn seminar was arranged in Joensuu in October. In March 2014, an in-service training seminar was successfully arranged in Tampere for teachers working in adult education centres. In 2014 SUKOL actively continued on numerous occasions to spread information about the benefits of SUKOL's membership to teacher trainees. In these activities SUKOL cooperated e.g. with publishing houses and the University of Helsinki. SUKOL also encouraged the members to arrange activities in schools on the European Day of Languages.

In 2014 SUKOL continued activities in FIPLV and NBR. SUKOL's Vice-President Kirsti Santaholma acted as FIPLV's Treasurer-General.

The membership magazine TEMPUS came out six times in 2014 and was sent to each member. It is a four-colour, 36-page, A4-sized journal with articles written by both national and international experts featuring both theory and practice.

SUKOL's web-pages were developed further and SUKOL was also in Facebook and in Twitter during the year. Thus, the members now have many platforms where to express their opinions, give feedback and ask for help on issues concerning the teaching and learning of languages. The members can also find remarkable special offers on SUKOL's web-pages. SUKOL's publishing company Sukol-Palvelu produced national language tests in English, Swedish, German and French for ninth-graders, providing also translations of the tests for the Swedish speaking students. The national averages of the tests were published in May on SUKOL's web-pages as the teachers had sent in the results of their students to SUKOL.

In 2014, SUKOL continued to work in close cooperation with the National Board of Education, the Ministry of Education, the Matriculation Examination Board and the teachers' trade union OAJ having regular meetings with representatives from each party mentioned. Statements were given to these bodies on upcoming changes and renewals concerning language teaching and language teachers. SUKOL's opinion was also being asked by parliamentary committees on several occasions. Contacts with influential persons representing business life were kept up.

SUKOL has also a lot of cooperation with various publishing houses in Finland. One of these cooperation projects is the annual honorary award The Language Deed of the Year. The Publishing House OTAVA finances this award and the award has been presented yearly ever since 2001. In 2013 this award was granted to Tuomas Sammelvuo who is the head coach of the Finland men's national Volleyball team. Sammelvuo has been the most successful male volleyball player in Finland. During his professional career, Sammelvuo played in many countries. During his stays abroad he learned the language of each country. He speaks English, French, Italian, Russian, Polish and he has also studied Japanese. Sammelvuo has highlighted the importance of languages on several occasions. Almost all interviews have mentioned his language skills. Thanks to him, language learning and skills have been acknowledged in Finnish and international media.

In cooperation with the National Board of Education, SUKOL also yearly selects The Language Teacher of the Year and has a representative in the European Label Jury, which awards projects for promoting multilingualism.

The Finnish National Board of Education has prepared the new national core curriculum for basic and pre-primary education. The new curriculum will be based on the Decree on national objectives and distribution of teaching hours in basic education (422/2012), issued by the Government in June 2012. The renewed core curriculum will be completed by the end of March 2015. Concerning the new national curriculum for primary education SUKOL has issued statements and discussed actively with the authorities.

The National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools was reformed in 2003 and the local curricula based on the new national core curriculum came into effect on 1 August 2005. The core curriculum is being reformed and will be implemented in the schools 2016.



Kari Jukarainen, President

# Estonian Association of Foreign Languages Teachers

[www.voorkeelteliit.eu](http://www.voorkeelteliit.eu)



**Ene Peterson, Chair**

The Estonian Association of Foreign Language Teachers was established on 5 December 2009. Its founding members included the Association of Teachers of Estonian as a Second Language, the Association of Teachers of German and the Association of Teachers of Finnish.

Goals of the association are to support linguistic diversity, popularise language learning, to develop higher esteem for and improve language skills and higher esteem for the profession of foreign language teachers, to support, systematically and continuously, the professional development of language teachers.

The association promotes cooperation between its members and works jointly with Estonian and international networks of language teachers, creates opportunities for its members to participate in European cooperation programmes and projects and networks of language teachers.

We draw attention to the achievements and best practices of foreign language teachers in Estonia as well as abroad, and organise events to enhance teachers' professional development, and training days and courses to support foreign language teachers' professional skills and personal development.

We are privileged to inform you that the FIPLV NORDIC-BALTIC REGION (NBR) CONFERENCE 2016 "The Language Teacher and Teaching at Crossroads" will be organized 9 June – 11 June 2016 in Tallinn, Estonia.  
[www.voorkeelteliit.eu](http://www.voorkeelteliit.eu)

Ene Peterson

# **FIPLV NORDIC-BALTIC REGION (NBR) CONFERENCE 2016**

## **The Language Teacher and Teaching at Crossroads**

9 June - 11 June 2016

Tallinn, Estonia

Nordic Hotel Forum (Viru Square 3)

The FIPLV Nordic-Baltic Region is pleased to announce NBR 2016 conference in Estonia, hosted by the Estonian Association of Foreign Languages (EATFL). EAFLT joined FIPLV the Nordic- Baltic Region (NBR) in 2012, and a year in 2013 EAFLT became the member of the world organization FIPLV (the Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes) <http://fiplv.com/>

The conference aims at providing a platform for the discussion of the changing roles of the teacher, dissemination of good practices of teaching in the 21st century with a special focus on research insights, innovative ideas and hands-on-activities.

We have entered a digital age. The field of language education is changing at an ever-increasing rate. The generation of New Students (the so-called the Net generation) has passed and is passing through our classes. Educating the Net Generation is a privilege and a challenge. Twenty-first century students are tech-savvy, worldly and quick to shrug off what cannot be proven. They expect a great deal of us, just as we do of them. But do they always meet our expectations? Do we meet the Net generation expectations? What is the key to being a successful teacher in this century? What are the 21st century skills that language teachers should incorporate?

CONFERENCE THEMES include, but are not limited to:

- Language Policy and Language Education Policy
- Learning and Teaching Less Widely Taught Languages
- Traditional vs. Innovative Teaching Methods
- The Teaching Profession and Teacher Networks: Today's and

Tomorrow's Challenges

- Teaching and Learning in a Digital Age
- Emerging Technologies
- Multilingualism and Employability

Format: plenary speakers (4) presentations/talks, workshops, poster presentations and a roundtable discussion.

Conference language: English

Sessions: English, German, Finnish, Russian, French, Spanish

Cultural programme: 9 June 2016 (from 2 p.m. until 5 p.m.)

11 June 2016 (from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m.)

Reception: 11 June 2016

Accommodation: A detailed information will be available in November 2015

Deadlines:

- agreement with plenary speakers, abstracts, bio - 1 October 2015
- call for papers/submission of abstracts - 1 November 15 - 31 January 2016
- presenters will be notified - 1 March 2016
- registration of participants - 1 December 2015 - 31 January 2016 (early bird); - 1 February 2016 - 25 April 2016 (late owl)

Contacts

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# **STÍL, The Association of Foreign Language Teachers in Iceland**



**Petrina Ros Karlsdottir, President**

STÍL, The Association of Foreign Language Teachers in Iceland, is an umbrella organization of foreign and second language teachers. STIL was founded on the 17 of October 1985 by four associations of language teaching. Today we have Associations of Danish, English, French, German, Norwegian, Spanish and Swedish and Icelandic as a second language in Iceland as members.

STIL has a new President, Brynhildur Anna Ragnarsdottir from the Danish teachers Association was succeeded by Petrina Ros Karlsdottir, from the French teachers Association.

The focus for the last two years has been on testing and was based on the Relang Project from ECML ([relang.ecml.at](http://relang.ecml.at)). Seminars on different aspects of testing have been held. As these were popular by the members, we will continue and offer a seminar this spring on written evaluation with support from CIEP (<http://www.ciep.fr>)

STIL will celebre its 30 anniversary this year with The Vigdis Finnbogadóttir – Institute of Foreign Languages, in September and October. The schedule has not been entirely decided, but there will be lecturers from Iceland and abroad. We will focus on the importance of language teaching in Iceland, a small country with 330.000 people but nearly one million visitors.

It would be a pleasure for STIL if representatives of other Associations could be present.

Three members from Iceland will participate in the World Congress of Modern Language in Niagara Falls on March 26-28, MS. Petrina Rós Karlsdóttir, President of STIL, Svanlaug Pálsdóttir member of the Board of STIL and Sigurborg Jónsdóttir, President of NBR.

Petrina Ros Karlsdottir President of STIL “It is my pleasure to start as president and I hope that the cooperation will be fruitful. From my experience of extracurricular activities, I know that every person matters and good governance is as strong as its weakest link. Here in Iceland, the importance of foreign language knowledge and language teaching has never been more important than now with all the tourists in the country. Therefore we have to keep reminding the authorities of “Languages are, as we know the key to the future.”



The World Conference was held in Niagara Falls. Many interesting presentations on subjects such as the Common European of References, learner autonomy, how to get our students to use the target language, flipped teaching and so much more. Quite a lot of them will be accessible on the CASLT website:

[http://www.caslt.org/conference15/conference2015\\_en.php](http://www.caslt.org/conference15/conference2015_en.php)

## LANGUAGES in EUROPE

### ( AVERAGE NUMBER OF LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY THE EU POPULATION)

