

WELCOME TO OUR

# The Nordic-Baltic Region Newsletter



HEY, HOW ARE YOU?

## NBR President's Notes:

**Outi Vilkuna**

Chair

NBR / Suomen kielenopettajien liitto

SUKOL ry

FIPLV-NBR & The Federation of Foreign  
Language Teachers in Finland

**Dear colleagues,**

In an era marked by rapid globalization and technological advancement, the ability to communicate across linguistic and cultural boundaries has become more crucial than ever. As members of the FIPLV's Nordic-Baltic Region, we recognize that foreign language learning is not merely an academic pursuit but a vital skill that empowers individuals and strengthens our collective societies.

Proficiency in multiple languages enhances cognitive abilities, fosters cultural understanding, and opens doors to diverse opportunities. Studies have shown that bilingualism can improve memory, problem-solving

skills, and even delay the onset of dementia. Moreover, learning a new language provides a lifetime of cultural enrichment, allowing individuals to connect deeply with different communities and perspectives. In the professional realm, multilingualism is increasingly valued. Employers seek individuals who can navigate international markets and collaborate effectively across cultures.

Despite these benefits, many regions face challenges in promoting language education. For instance, some schools struggle to provide quality language instruction due to a lack of qualified teachers and resources. On the other hand, the situation might be as described in the thesis of Marika Hall (2020) at the University of Pennsylvania (US) where in the foreword she makes this cutting remark: "While education is controlled by laws and the national curricula, for example, language education in optional languages is ruled by a laissez-faire approach, placing the responsibility of the maintenance of societal language reserve on schools – especially teachers and students, both of whom make agentive choices regarding teaching and learning." <https://catalog.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/32894766>

Addressing these issues requires collaborative efforts to ensure that language learning remains a priority in our educational systems.

As we navigate an interconnected world, embracing foreign language education is essential. It not only enriches our personal lives but also equips us to contribute meaningfully to our communities and the global society.

**Let us continue to advocate for and invest in language learning, recognizing its profound impact on our collective future.**

### **Outi Vilkuna**

puheenjohtaja / ordförande / Chair

Suomen kieltenopettajien liitto SUKOL ry

The Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in Finland SUKOL

[outi.vilkuna@sukol.fi](mailto:outi.vilkuna@sukol.fi)

# Greetings from Estonia

Prepared by **Ene Peterson**

Chair of the Estonian Foreign Language Teachers' Association (EVÕL)



## EXPANDING HORIZONS: ESTONIA'S FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS ON THE GLOBAL STAGE

### 15 Years of the Estonian Association of Foreign Language Teachers

The Estonian Association of Foreign Language Teachers (EVÕL) was founded on December 5, 2009, and celebrates its 15th anniversary this year. Our vision is to foster cooperation among teachers of both widely and less commonly spoken languages in an increasingly multilingual and multicultural world. The association's objectives include promoting linguistic diversity, valuing foreign language proficiency and teaching as a profession, and providing systematic support for the professional development of language teachers.

### A Member of the World Foreign Language Teachers' Network

Since 2013, EVÕL has been a member of the Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes (FIPLV), the world organization for modern (foreign) language teachers. Additionally, since 2012, EVÕL has been part of FIPLV's regional division, the Nordic-Baltic Region (NBR).

In 2013, EVÕL was invited to organize the FIPLV Nordic-Baltic Region Conference in Estonia in 2016. Despite the challenges, we accepted the opportunity, recognizing the benefits of expanding our international collaboration. Membership in this global and regional organization has

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opened new doors for Estonian foreign language teachers, allowing them to share best practices, participate in international conferences and seminars, establish professional networks, and contribute to discussions on key topics in language education.

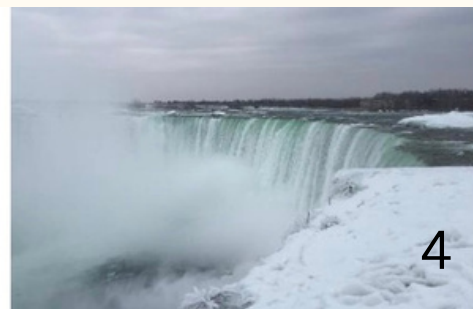
## Showcasing Estonia's Language Policy and Education

Since 2015, EVÕL representatives have presented at world congresses on topics such as Estonian language policy, the importance of teacher networks, and innovative approaches to language education.

One such milestone was the 2015 World Congress of Modern Languages in Niagara Falls, Canada, organized by FIPLV alongside the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT) and the Ontario Modern Language Teachers' Association (OMLTA). Over 1,000 language educators gathered to explore new language technologies, research developments, and educational resources. EVÕL was represented by Ene Peterson and Tõnu Tender, who delivered a joint presentation on Estonia's foreign language teaching policy. Evelin Müüripeal presented on the role of national cultural societies in supporting linguistic and cultural diversity.

Read more: NBR Electronic Newsletter No. 3, May 2015,

World Congress of Modern Languages: My Impressions, pp. 3–9,  
<https://fiplv.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/newsletter-2015-3.pdf>





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## Hosting an International Conference in Estonia

In 2016, EVÕL successfully hosted the NBR Conference in Tallinn under the theme **The Language Teacher and Teaching at Crossroads**. The event brought together 130 foreign language teachers from 20 countries: Austria, Australia, Bulgaria, Brazil, Finland, France, Hungary, Germany, Estonia, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Russia, Slovenia, and Turkey. The conference demonstrated strong international interest in Estonia's language education landscape with 4 plenaries, 33 presentations, 8 poster presentations, and 8 workshops. Organizing such a large-scale conference was both a challenge and a testament to the trust placed in our association. The overwhelmingly positive feedback underscored the event's success:

- *"It has been a very useful and amazing experience for me."*
- *"I sincerely appreciate the impeccable organization. It was clearly a lot of work, but your team made it a success!"*
- *"Thank you for creating a very inspiring atmosphere."*
- *"The conference was a true success—well-organized, insightful presentations, and an excellent networking opportunity."*

Read more: NBR Newsletter No. 2 (June 2016 ), <https://fiplv.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/newsletter-2016-2.pdf>



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## Active Participation in International Conferences

EVÕL has maintained an active presence at global events. Representatives have attended and contributed to numerous international conferences, including:

- **FIPLV/Nordic-Baltic Region Conference *Teaching and Learning Languages in the 21st Century: Linguistic, Educational, and Cultural Aspects* in Vilnius (2018):**
- Presentations covered diverse topics, from high-stakes language testing to using board games and mobile devices in language teaching.
- Ene Alas and Kristel Kriisa: *Teachers as Interviewers in High-Stakes Language Testing: Triumphs and Challenges* (presentation)
- Ene Peterson: *The journey into the world of words* (workshop)
- Karola Velberg: *Using Board Games to Motivate your Classroom* (workshop)
- Evelin Müüripeal: *Mobile Devices as Partners in Language Teaching* (workshop)

Read more: NBR Electronic Newsletter No. 2, June 2018.

E. Peterson, K. Velberg, E. Müüripeal: *Unforgettabele Days in Vilnius*, pp. 16–20,  
<https://fiplv.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/newsletter-2018-2.pdf>



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- **FIPLV/NBR Congress „Language education in the times of global change: The need for collaboration and new perspectives” in Warsaw (2022):**

A platform for discussing global changes in language education and the significance of teacher associations.

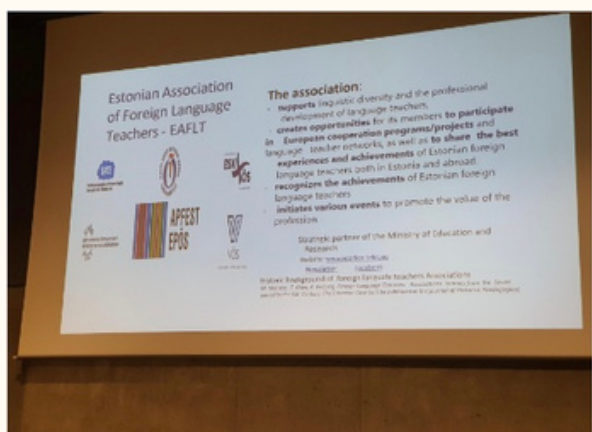


Kati Bakradze-Pank, Ene Peterson:  
*A Key Factor in Successful Teaching is Belonging to Teacher Associations.*

- **The Future of Languages Conference in Reykjavik (2023):**

Ene Peterson represented EVÕL and focused in her presentation on the recent changes in the society, the roles and status of the teacher, and policy recommendations for the professional development of teachers in Estonia.

Read here: NBR Newsletter No. 2 (June 2023), pp. 9-14. E. Peterson. Exploring the Wonders of Iceland: My Impressions of the Conference “Future of languages,” <https://fiplv.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/newsletter-2023-2.pdf>



E. Peterson:

*How to make teacher professional development (TPD) effective and engaging*

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### Looking Ahead: Embracing AI in Language Education

This year, five representatives of EVÕL will participate in the FIPLV/NBR Conference in Helsinki (April 25–26, 2025). Two members make presentations where the focus will be on the impact of artificial intelligence on language teaching. AI is set to transform education, and language teachers must be prepared for these changes.

- Ene Peterson will explore the evolving landscape of language teaching in Estonia and discuss AI-related initiatives at the national and institutional levels in her presentation “Teaching in the Age of AI: Shaping the Future of Teaching Languages”,
- Karola Velberg will present on *AI and Homework*, examining how AI can support both teachers and students while maintaining academic integrity.

### A Strong Network for the Future

To be more visible EVÕL members have also contributed extensively to FIPLV and NBR newsletters, sharing their insights and experiences with a global audience.

Years of active collaboration with Estonian and international language teacher associations have helped EVÕL build a broad professional network, offering valuable opportunities for knowledge exchange, joint problem-solving, and shared achievements. As we look ahead, new challenges await, but so do exciting opportunities for growth and innovation in foreign language education.

**The future is shaped today!**



# Greetings from Estonia

Prepared by **Ene Peterson**

Chair of the Estonian Foreign Language Teachers' Association (EVÕL)



# EVÕL

Eesti Võõrkeeleõpetajate Liit



## EVÕL Management Board at the autumn conference in November 2024

From left to right: Kati Bakradze-Pank, Ingrid Prees, Leena Möls, Ene Peterson, Pille Toompere, Gertrud Mets, Karola Velberg)

**The future is shaped today!**

# Greetings from Estonia

Préparé par **Irina Rayner**, membre du bureau de l'Association des Professeurs de Français en Estonie (APFEST)

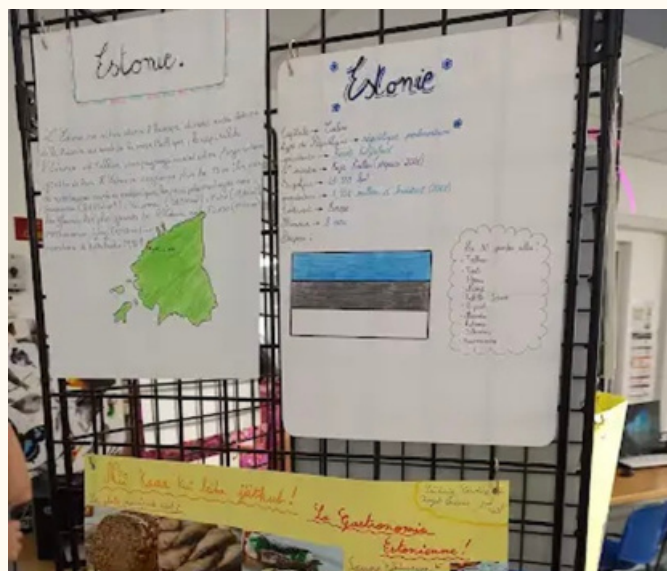


## Mobilité Erasmus+ de l'Association des Professeurs de Français en Estonie à La Réunion

Dans le cadre de notre projet Erasmus+ 2023-2025, la dernière mobilité de l'Association des professeurs de français en Estonie (APFEST) s'est déroulée du 15 au 26 février en France, sur l'île de La Réunion, plus précisément dans la ville de Vincendo, située dans un département et région d'outre-mer (DROM).

Six membres de l'APFEST ont eu l'opportunité de visiter le Lycée polyvalent de Vincendo, au sud de l'île. Nous y avons été chaleureusement accueillis par M. Jean-Hugues Arthemise, proviseur de l'établissement, Mme Sophie Chain-Hime, responsable des échanges Erasmus, ainsi que par les lycéens.

Durant notre séjour, nous avons assisté à divers cours : langues (français, anglais, latin), culture générale, spécialité Arts du Cirque, sciences de la Terre, chimie et biologie. Ces observations ont été enrichies par des échanges avec les enseignants et les élèves, abordant des thématiques variées telles que l'histoire de La Réunion dans le contexte de l'histoire de France, la comparaison des systèmes éducatifs français et estonien, ainsi que la culture locale (langue créole, musique, traditions et gastronomie).





## Greetings from Estonia

Préparé par **Irina Rayner**, membre du bureau de l'Association  
des Professeurs de Français en Estonie (APFEST)



Au-delà de cette immersion pédagogique, nous avons eu la chance de découvrir le riche patrimoine naturel et culturel de l'île : les plantations de vanille et de canne à sucre, la biodiversité tropicale foisonnante et les spécialités culinaires locales.

Nous aurons le plaisir de partager cette expérience avec nos membres lors des journées d'été de l'APFEST, en août 2025.



# Greetings from **Latvia**

Prepared by **Inga Linde**, the president of Latvian Association of Teachers of English, **Inta Agustāne**, **Rita Skara-Mincāne**, **Robert Buckmaster**

## **Empowering English Teachers: 21st Century Skills and Media Literacy in Focus**

In the 2024/2025 academic year, the Latvian Association of Teachers of English (LATE) offered Latvian teachers of English the opportunity to attend a Teacher Professional Development course focused on **"21st Century Skills and Media Literacy."** The project was implemented with the support of the British Council in Latvia, and 242 teachers took the opportunity to complete the course and develop their competences in using 21st Century skills in their classrooms and raise their awareness of media literacy, so that it could be further developed in their students all around Latvia.

Seven 4-hour online workshops were conducted in the first phase of the project. The speakers covered a wide range of topics which were aimed at enhancing the teachers' ability to incorporate 21st-century skills and media literacy into their teaching practices. Joe Horgan looked at **Practical Methods to Develop Media Literacy in the EFL Classroom, Using Authentic Text to Improve and Evaluate EFL Students' Media Literacy and Language Skills** and **Cultivating Creativity by Turning EFL Students into Media Content Producers**. Nora Jurjāne suggested that **Human Intelligence + AI was a 21st Century Classroom Match Made in Heaven for Skill Building**. Ingūna Melne suggested ways of **Mastering AI Tools for the Classroom**. Ivars Domeniks Zeps focused on **Navigating Age of Information: 21st Century Critical Thinking Skills**. Robert Buckmaster explored **Materials and Methods for Developing Communication Skills**. Anna Bejska examined **Digital Literacy**. Andrew Doxsey talked about **Integrating AI in EFL Teaching: Enhancing 21st Century Skills and Feedback Practices**.



# Greetings from **Latvia**

Prepared by **Inga Linde**, the president of Latvian Association of Teachers of English, **Inta Agustāne**, **Rita Skara-Mincāne**, **Robert Buckmaster**

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, as evidenced by quotes from the participants:

- "There were a lot of great resources and materials to use with my students. A deeper insight into how to teach about media literacy in English lessons."
- "What I really noticed was just how important effective questioning is in showing children how they should be questioning the things around them. It also helps us check learning and deepen learning, but overall, it teaches them this life skill which is becoming more and more essential to living in the modern world."
- "There were good examples how to use ChatGPT mindfully, meaningfully and responsibly."
- "It was practical, useful both for us – teachers ourselves and for the classes with our students, and it was exciting to try it all out practically."
- "I gained an insight into ICT tools such as Menti.com, Kialo-edu.com, Gimkit.com. I also learnt how to use Padlet wall. It was fun to create my own avatar."
- "I really appreciate the demonstration of practical activities with ChatGPT– 3 essay writing, conversation and interview practice, voice extension."
- "I found out more about the multiple possibilities to use Chat GPT in EFL classroom."
- "A lot of food for thought about the role of AI in the teaching/learning process and a lot of great practical ideas to try in the classroom."

On March 14, 2025, the second and final phase of the project, a face-to-face meeting of project participants and trainers, was held at Riga Teika Secondary School. The event commenced with a warm welcome from Inga Linde, President of LATE.

# Greetings from **Latvia**

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Teachers then had the opportunity to choose two interactive hands-on workshops from the five workshops offered. These were:

The workshop **Use It or Lose It – Vocabulary Learning Strategies** run by Rita Skara-Mincāne & Inta Augustāne encouraged participants to explore the Lexical Approach and media texts to enhance students' vocabulary retention and production. Participants explored the choice of vocabulary collocations in media texts thus addressing students' media literacy skills.



Photograph by Inese Kalniņa 2025

# Greetings from **Latvia**

Prepared by **Inga Linde**, the president of Latvian Association of Teachers of English, **Inta Agustāne**, **Rita Skara-Mincāne**, **Robert Buckmaster**



Photograph by Inese Kalniņa 2025

In **Guidelines and Practice in Creating Posters** Robert Buckmaster offered practical methods for designing effective educational posters.



Photograph by Inese Kalniņa 2025



# Greetings from **Latvia**

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In her workshop entitled **From Idea to Assessment: Leveraging AI for Project-Based Learning**, Inguna Melne did a deep dive into AI tools for lesson planning, assessments, and rubric creation. Hands-on activities demonstrated how to generate assessments, saving time and enhancing student learning outcomes.



Photograph by Inese Kalniņa 2025

Joseph Jack Horgan demonstrated hands-on techniques to improve students' reading comprehension and analytical skills at primary and secondary level in his **Text Literacy Strategies for EFL Students** workshop.



Photograph by Inese Kalniņa 2025



## Greetings from **Latvia**

Prepared by **Inga Linde**, the president of Latvian Association of Teachers of English, **Inta Agustāne**, **Rita Skara-Mincāne**, **Robert Buckmaster**

Finally, Andrew Doxsey shared his experience of **Using AI to Enable Self-Guided Learning**, exploring how AI can empower students to take ownership of their learning journeys and improve self-guided learning skills.



Photograph by Inese Kalniņa 2025

Following the workshops, participants were grouped by different grade levels (1-3, 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12) and engaged in practical collaborative group work, developing lesson plans, posters, and projects tailored to the different grade levels. These resources, emphasizing media literacy and 21st-century skills, were uploaded to a shared Resource Bank, and these, after they are reviewed, will be made available online so that EFL teachers across Latvia can benefit from the event's outcomes.



Photograph by Inese Kalniņa 2025

# Greetings from **Latvia**

Prepared by **Inga Linde**, the president of Latvian Association of Teachers of English, **Inta Agustāne**, **Rita Skara-Mincāne**, **Robert Buckmaster**

## A Commitment to Ongoing Professional Growth

The day concluded with a closing session, marking not just the end of a successful event but also the beginning of a continued journey toward integrating innovative teaching strategies in English language classrooms. The British Ambassador to Latvia Mr. Paul Brummell CMG attended and made his appreciation for the dedication of English language teachers in equipping students with essential 21st-century competencies clear in his speech. He emphasized the vital role of educators in promoting media literacy and critical thinking, highlighting the British Council's ongoing commitment to supporting innovative teaching practices in Latvia.



Photograph by Inese Kalniņa 2025



# Greetings from **Latvia**

Prepared by **Inga Linde**, the president of Latvian Association of Teachers of English, **Inta Agustāne**, **Rita Skara-Mincāne**, **Robert Buckmaster**

He stated that LATE and the British Council in Latvia deserve special recognition for their commitment to supporting English teachers in developing the skills necessary to prepare students for an increasingly digital and interconnected world, and that such impactful professional development initiatives, Latvian educators will be well-equipped to foster critical thinking, creativity, and media literacy in the next generation of learners.



Photograph by Inese Kalniņa 2025

The event was also attended by Zane Matesoviča, Country Director at the British Council in Latvia, who thanked LATE President Inga Linde for the tremendous work in organizing the project.

# Greetings from **Latvia**

Prepared by **Inga Linde**, the president of Latvian Association of Teachers of English, **Inta Agustāne**, **Rita Skara-Mincāne**, **Robert Buckmaster**



Photograph by Inese Kalniņa 2025

We would like to express our gratitude to the British Council in Latvia especially Zane Matesoviča, Anete Blūma and Laura Kristapsone for supporting the implementation of this important project for teachers of English in Latvia, and to Riga Teika Secondary School for their hospitality and for supporting the activities of the Latvian Association of Teachers of English.



# Greetings from Sweden



The Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

Prepared by **Mia Smith**

President of the Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

## 2025 – a year in motion

For many years the lack of regulation has led to problems for teachers' working environment and stress, but the government has listened and a number of reports and investigations have been released that will hopefully deal with the issues, so that we can finally focus on the most important part of our job: teaching! To add to a tumultuous situation, teachers across the country have been preparing for digitised national tests, only to find out that the digital exam platform the ministry of education had created turned out to be dysfunctional and unsafe to use. These are trying times for teachers in Sweden.

## Music for Motivation – Once More

Once more we start the year off with our music contests. This year we offer our members music contests in three languages: Spanish, German, and French: *Torneo de Música*, *Der Superhit*, and *La Coupe des chansons*.



Once more, teaching materials are provided along with a choice of songs that the students listen to, before passing a vote on their choice of the week. Soon we will find this year's winners.

The playlists can be found here:

[Torneo de Música – Der Superhit – La Coupe des chansons](#)

# Greetings from Sweden



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

The Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

## French Teachers' Conference

On the 1st of March, the 32nd annual French teachers' conferences took place in Göteborg. Four members from the national board of our organisation participated, happy to meet French teachers from primarily the Western parts of the country.



The programme presented lectures on motivation among L3 learners and grammar education, as well as presentations on current affairs and literature. A musical highlight served as a nice addition.

# Greetings from Sweden



The Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

Prepared by **Mia Smith**

President of the Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

## Heading to Helsinki

As many others, we conduct most of our board meetings online. However, we try to meet at least once a year for the sake of more effective meetings as well as getting to know each other. This year we have chosen to conduct this meeting in Helsinki, in connection to the **FIPLV NBR conference Languages Mediating Culture and Mutual Understanding** arranged by SUKOL in Helsinki in April. We look forward to not only working together as a board, but also making connections with other teachers in the Nordic-Baltic region. We hope to see you there!





# Greetings from Finland

Prepared by **Outi Vilkuna**

**Chair, The Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in  
Finland SUKOL**



Suomen kielenopettajien liitto ry

## Current issues in Finland

In February 2025, a report titled "Vieraiden kielten opiskelun ja osaamisen taso Suomessa" ("The Level of Foreign Language Study and Proficiency in Finland") was published, highlighting the critical state of foreign language education in Finnish primary schools. The report underscores a significant decline and homogenization in language instruction over the past two to three decades with English dominating and other languages being marginalized. This trend has led to social and regional disparities in language education.

To address these challenges, the report advocates for diversifying language offerings and introducing multiple foreign languages to students at an early age. It also emphasizes the potential of technological advancements such as artificial intelligence, gamification, and virtual reality to provide personalized and accessible language learning experiences. Additionally, the report highlights the importance of continuous professional development for language teachers to maintain high-quality education that meets the evolving demands of a globalized world.

As Finland continues to internationalize, fostering multilingualism and cultural competence among the youth is deemed essential for their future success in a multicultural environment.

On March 12, 2025, the Finnish Association of Language Teachers (SUKOL) issued a statement regarding the integration of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) into the evaluation of Finnish matriculation examinations for foreign and second national languages. This initiative aims to align exam grades with CEFR proficiency levels, providing a clearer understanding of students' language skills in accordance with international standards.

# Greetings from Finland

Prepared by **Outi Vilkuna**

**Chair, The Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in  
Finland SUKOL**



Suomen kielenopettajien liitto ry

SUKOL supports this development emphasizing that it offers a concrete framework for assessing students' language proficiency uniformly and transparently. The association highlights that such alignment will assist teachers in planning their instruction to meet both national and European standards, thereby, promoting consistent and goal-oriented learning.

However, SUKOL underscores the importance of precisely defining the correlation between exam grades and CEFR levels ensuring this alignment is based on reliable research data. The association recommends ongoing dialogue among teachers, researchers, and the Matriculation Examination Board along with regular monitoring and assessment. Additionally, SUKOL advocates for providing adequate training and resources to teachers to effectively implement this new evaluation system in their teaching practices. By integrating CEFR into matriculation exam evaluations, students will gain a better understanding of their language proficiency relative to international standards, facilitating transitions to higher education and the workforce. Furthermore, higher education institutions and employers will be able to more accurately and comparably assess students' language skills. Teachers can utilize CEFR level descriptors in lesson planning and assessment, enabling more consistent objectives and pedagogical approaches.

The Finnish Association of Language Teachers (SUKOL) is actively participating in shaping the future vision of comprehensive education in Finland and the development of oral tasks in matriculation examinations.

In the Ministry of Education's "Future of Comprehensive School" initiative, aimed at creating a long-term development vision for comprehensive education, SUKOL's chairperson, Outi Vilkuna, is contributing to a working group focused on language education. The initiative addresses rapid changes in work and economy, social and ecological sustainability, and

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Prepared by **Outi Vilkuna**

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Suomen kieltenopettajien liitto ry

technological advancements like artificial intelligence. Concerns about declining learning outcomes and increasing disparities underpin this work, with the goal of producing a written future vision by the end of 2025.

Simultaneously, the Matriculation Examination Board has initiated preparations to incorporate oral language proficiency sections into foreign and second national language exams. The objective is to introduce oral response formats into the Abitti system for practice and trials, though no specific timeline or decisions have been established. SUKOL along with language associations is monitoring this development and providing input to the Board. The first joint meeting of language teacher associations on this topic took place in March with a summary of the discussion submitted to the Matriculation Examination Board.

As Finland approaches the municipal elections, the Finnish Association of Language Teachers (SUKOL) emphasizes the importance of municipalities adopting forward-thinking language education strategies. With the transfer of social and health services to well-being regions, education has become a primary municipal responsibility, and language education reflects the municipality's values and priorities.

SUKOL advocates for municipalities to strengthen their language education programs to meet future demands. Proficiency in multiple languages enhances employability and a diverse educational offering along with a continuous language learning pathway increases the attractiveness and retention of municipalities which is crucial given Finland's declining age cohorts.

SUKOL board member Sari Juvonen highlights the regional disparities in language education opportunities. She urges municipalities to adopt flexible



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Prepared by **Outi Vilkuna**

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Suomen kielenopettajien liitto ry

language strategies and seek collaborative opportunities to ensure all young people have equal access to foreign language learning, regardless of their place of residence.

Concerns are also raised about the scope and availability of language studies in upper secondary education. Ensuring students have equal opportunities to complete comprehensive language studies with high-quality instruction is vital for their progression to higher education and integration into the workforce. SUKOL underscores the need to maintain sufficient resources for language teaching, even amidst educational reforms, to preserve students' linguistic competencies and uphold the status of national languages within the Finnish education system.

In vocational education, the reduction in language instruction poses a risk to students' readiness for further studies and professional life. Budget cuts have significantly impacted education with resources insufficient to provide the language skills necessary for work and continued education. For instance, achieving the required proficiency in the second national language within the limited instructional hours available is challenging.

SUKOL also emphasizes the importance of native language instruction for students from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Mastery of one's native language supports the learning of the school's language of instruction (Finnish or Swedish), facilitates integration, and enhances academic and professional success.

# Greetings from Lithuania

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



Lietuvos kalbų pedagogų  
asociacija - LKPA

Kaunas Juozas Urbšis Progymnasium, in cooperation with the VMU Institute of Foreign Languages and **Language Teachers' Association of Lithuania**, organized the 4th National Conference of Language Teachers of General Education Schools **"Improving Multilingual Competencies: Research and Experiences"**, which was attended by more than 160 educators from various cities in Lithuania.

In the first part of the conference, VMU professor Dr. Jūratė Ruzaitė spoke about hate speech in multilingual contexts. This was followed by practical seminars for teachers, during which specialists in their fields demonstrated to teachers the latest educational trends that can be applied in language classes, integrating languages with other educational subjects.



# Greetings from Lithuania

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



Lietuvos kalbų pedagogų  
asociacija - LKPA

The practical seminars consisted of two sessions – experiences and languages. The experiences session focused on the applicability of ICT and artificial intelligence in education, discussing public speaking tools, language and cultural diversity in classrooms, enabling robotics in language teaching, and strengthening teamwork skills in forming critical thinking. In the language session, teachers of different languages had the opportunity to develop linguistic competences in different groups, during which cultural aspects, the use of artificial intelligence in creating educational content, inclusive education strategies, teaching Lithuanian as a foreign language, mediation activities, creating podcasts, and practical theater workshops were discussed.





# Greetings from Lithuania

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



Lietuvos kalbų pedagogų  
asociacija - LKPA

On February 21, **Mother Language Day** was traditionally celebrated at Vytautas Magnus University (VMU). During language lectures, lecturers from the Institute of Foreign Languages talked about dialects and other varieties of the language they are teaching. In addition, both VMU students and partners of the Transform4Europe university alliance were invited to participate in an interesting and interactive talk show/game "Guess my Language".

The welcoming speech was delivered by VMU Vice-Rector for Communication Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vilma Bijeikienė, who was pleased with the diversity of languages at VMU, and that the T4EU university alliance and cooperation with partners opens up new opportunities. IFL Director Dr. Teresė Ringailienė wished to love and protect the Lithuanian language, which has survived very difficult historical periods, and to appreciate and enjoy other languages, because historically Lithuania is a multilingual and multicultural country, and international students bring their own languages, cultures, and attitudes to our everyday life.



# Greetings from Lithuania

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



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The game for all alliance students was led by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jaq Greenspon. We learned a lot of interesting things about their countries and cultures from the international students, and the participants could hear not only the Ukrainian, Portuguese, or Turkish languages that they had definitely heard before, but also really unusual ones – Malayalam, Cornish, Cantonese, Irish... The participants who were able to recognize the languages best were awarded prizes, and everyone undoubtedly enriched their knowledge and had a great time.



VMU also hosted more events: on February 20, an event dedicated to the Ukrainian language was held, and on February 21, teachers of specialized subjects were invited to speak in their own dialect. In the evening, everyone was delighted by the concert.



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President of Language Teachers' Association  
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## The 8th International Conference SUSTAINABLE MULTILINGUALISM 2025

**May 29–31, 2025**

Vytautas Magnus University Institute of Foreign Languages and Language Teachers' Association of Lithuania welcome you to the **SUSTAINABLE MULTILINGUALISM** conference which will be held in Kaunas, Lithuania.

### AIM & THEMES OF THE CONFERENCE

The conference aims to provide a common platform for researchers, language policy makers, language teachers, students, and anyone interested in discussing and sharing their expertise in the key issues of multilingualism, including but not limited to:

- Language Policy Implementation



# Greetings from Lithuania

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President of Language Teachers' Association  
of Lithuania



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- Language Preservation, Revitalization, and Revival
- Plurilingual Competence Development and Assessment
- AI in Applied Linguistics
- Innovative and Technology-based Approaches to Language Education
- Language Teacher Professional Competence Development
- Multilingual Issues in Translation and Interpreting
- Multilingual Issues in Literature
- Contemporary Lithuanian Language Studies

**Link to the conference page:** <https://sites.google.com/view/sm25en/>



**Venue:** Vytautas Magnus University,  
K. Donelaičio str. 52, Kaunas, Lithuania

# Greetings from Lithuania

Prepared by **Jūratė Patackaitė**  
the newly elected President of Language  
Teachers' Association of Lithuania



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## Language Teachers' Association of Lithuania



2025-03-28



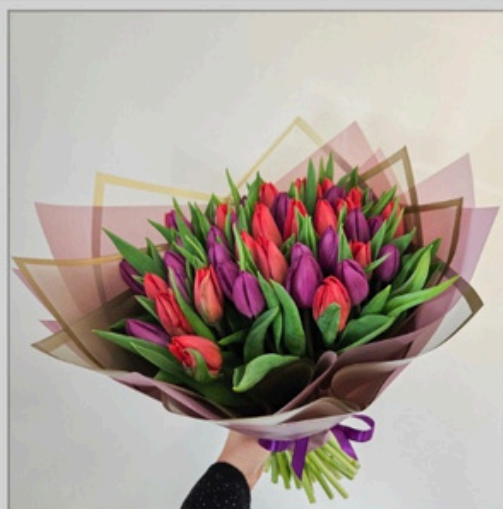
## Gratitude!

Thank you to the 2022-2024 Council:

**Almantė Meškauskienė**, President;

**Audronė Auškelienė**, Vice-president;  
**Assoc. Prof. Loreta Chodzkienė**, Vice-president;  
**Vigilija Žiūraitė**, Vice-president;  
**Assoc. Prof. Jolita Šliogerienė**, Vice-president;  
**Asterija Rudienė**, FIPLV NBR secretary;

**Assoc. Prof. Liudmila Mockienė**, Member;  
**Assoc. Prof. Laimutė Kuprienė**, Member;  
**dr. Teresė Ringailienė**, Member;  
**Ramunė Sarnickienė**, Member;  
**Vytenis Končius**, Member.



# Greetings from Lithuania

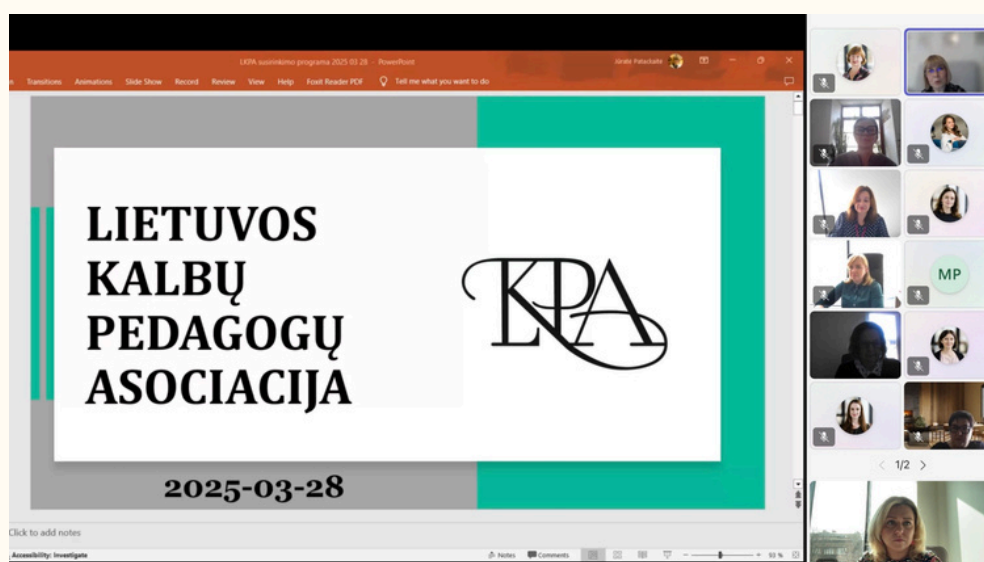
Prepared by **Jūratė Patackaitė**  
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## A new Council of the Language Teachers' Association of Lithuania has been elected for the 2025–2027 term

On March 28, 2025, the elections for the Council and the President of the Language Teachers' Association of Lithuania took place. Jūratė Patackaitė, a long-time member of the Association and the Head of the Foreign Languages Department at Vilniaus Kolegija / Higher Education Institution was elected the new President of the Association. *Audronė Auškelienė* (Director of the Public Service Language Centre), *Assoc. Prof. Loreta Chodzkienė*, (Vilnius University Institute of Foreign Languages), *Assoc. Prof. Jolita Šliogerienė*, (Head of Department at VilniusTech University) and *Vigilija Žiūraitė* (Vytautas Magnus University, Institute of Foreign Languages) became Vice-presidents. The newly elected Council members became: *Donata Berūkštienė*, (Vytautas Magnus University, Institute of Foreign Languages), *Assoc. Prof. Lina Bikilienė* (Vilnius University Institute of Foreign Languages), *Dr. Gintarė Gelūnaitė-Malinauskienė* (Institute of Foreign Languages, Vytautas Magnus University), *Dr. Teresė Ringailienė* (Director of the Institute of Foreign Languages, Vytautas Magnus University), *Asterija Rudienė*, (Director of Aster Language School and NBR Secretary) and *Potestad Tellechea Maria Inmaculada* (Kaunas University of Technology, Kaunas Art Gymnasium).



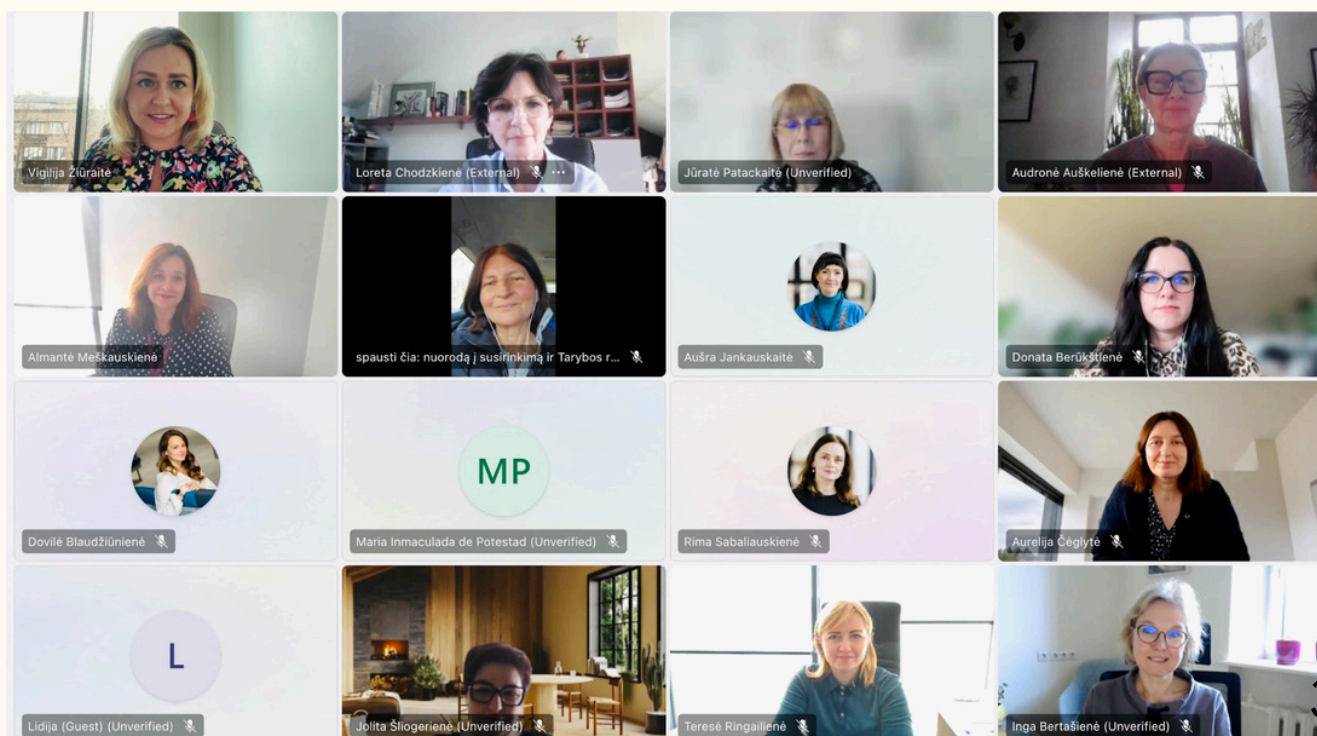
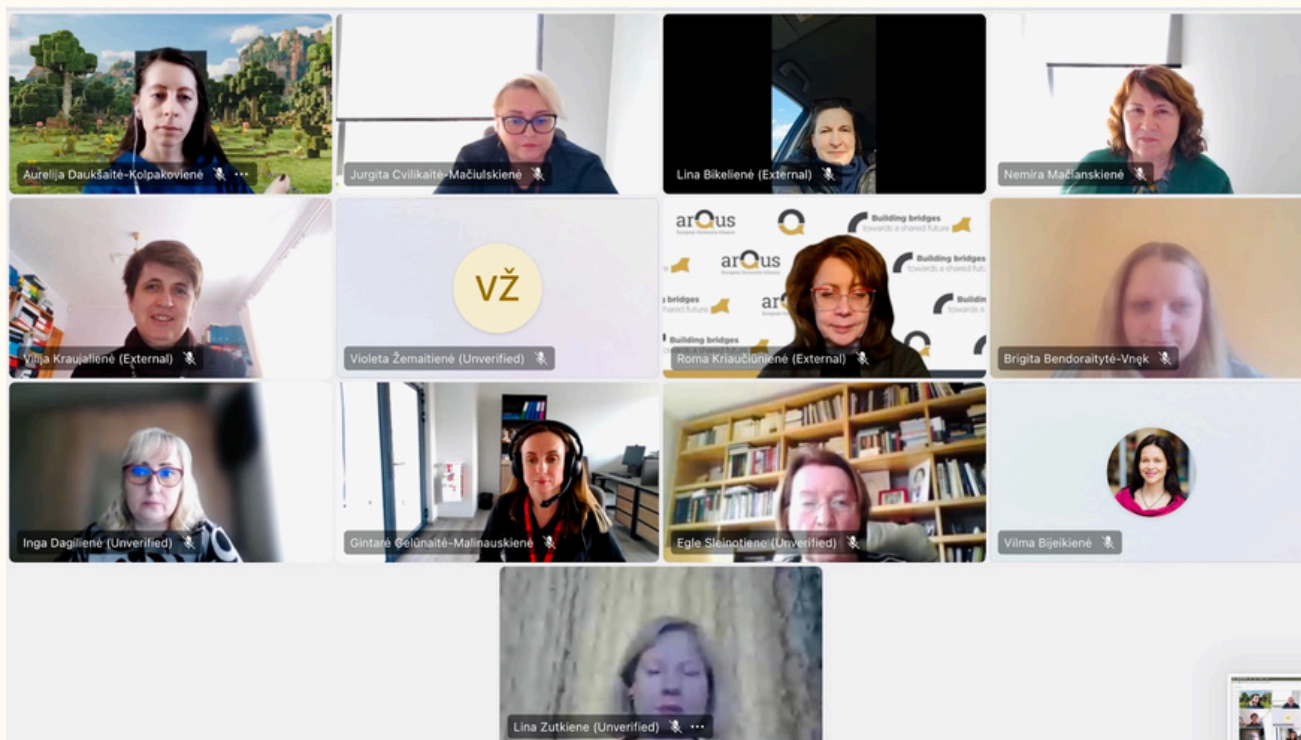


# Greetings from Lithuania

Prepared by **Jūratė Patackaitė**  
the newly elected President of Language  
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# Greetings from Lithuania

Prepared by **Jūratė Patackaitė**  
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The newly elected Council members will begin their 3-year term, aiming to represent the needs and interests of the Association's members and the country's language teachers. The Council is committed to continuing important work to strengthen language education in the country. They will also work to ensure the alignment of language teaching programmes between Lithuania and European countries, considering the interests of the national education community. The Council will continue to strengthen the involvement of language teachers and testers in addressing issues related to language teaching and competency assessment, bringing together language professionals and organizing events and projects. This will contribute to improving the quality of teaching and advancing research in the field of languages. The Council aims to draw valuable experience and best practices by actively collaborating with national and international associations. The Council members, representing various national institutions, intend to actively contribute to the promotion of languages, the improvement of teaching Lithuanian as a foreign language, and to encourage the development of multilingualism in Lithuania by supporting and joining multilingual initiatives.

One of these initiatives will take place from May 29–31, with the international scientific conference **"SUSTAINABLE MULTILINGUALISM 2025"** organized by Vytautas Magnus University Institute of Foreign Languages and the Language Teachers' Association of Lithuania (<https://sites.google.com/view/sm25en/>).



# Greetings from Lithuania

Prepared by **Jūratė Patackaitė**  
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## LKPA Council 2025-2027



From left to right:

**President** of the Association Jūratė Patackaitė.

**Vice-presidents:** Audronė Auškelienė (Director of the Public Service Language Centre), Assoc. Prof. Loreta Chodzkienė, (Vilnius University Institute of Foreign Languages), Assoc. Prof. Jolita Šliogerienė, (Head of Department at VilniusTech University), Vigilija Žiuraitė (Vytautas Magnus University, Institute of Foreign Languages)

**The newly elected Council members:** Asterija Rudienė, (Director of Aster Language School and NBR Secretary), Dr. Teresė Ringailienė (Director of the Institute of Foreign Languages, Vytautas Magnus University), Donata Berūkštienė, (Vytautas Magnus University, Institute of Foreign Languages), , Dr. Gintarė Gelūnaitė-Malinauskienė (Institute of Foreign Languages, Vytautas Magnus University), Potestad Tellechea Maria Inmaculada (Kaunas University of Technology, Kaunas Art Gymnasium), Assoc. Prof. Lina Bikilienė (Vilnius University Institute of Foreign Languages)



## Congratulations!





# Greetings from Iceland

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

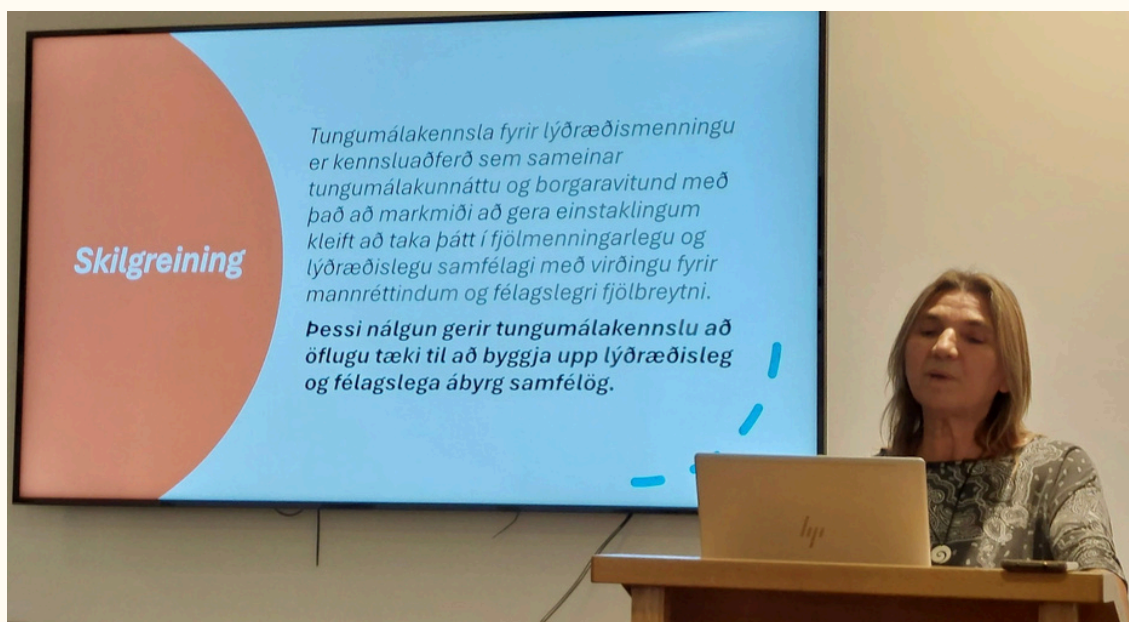


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The Association of Language Teachers in Iceland (STÍL) has been active this spring term. They have hosted four workshops—three in person, all held at Veröld – the House of Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, a facility belonging to the University of Iceland, and one online. Additionally, STÍL has collaborated with other associations and educational institutions on an exciting project to map the number of languages spoken in Icelandic schools, providing valuable insight into the linguistic diversity present in our society. We will report on these initiatives in this newsletter.

## Honouring the past, Embracing the Present, Shaping the Future

The first of the workshops, titled Honouring the Past, Embracing the Present, Shaping the Future, took place on January 17. It shared its name with the Biennial Conference of FIPLV and NZALT, held in New Zealand last summer. Veska Jónsdóttir, a German teacher in Iceland, traveled to New Zealand in July 2024 and in this workshop she presented key highlights from the conference. Following her engaging and insightful lecture, participants engaged in discussions on language teaching, with a particular focus on its status in Iceland.



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One of Veska's key points was the Council of Europe's recommendations on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture. These recommendations address two concerning trends: the belief that proficiency in just one additional language is sufficient, and the misconception that fluency in minority or migrant languages is harmful to societal cohesion (further information can be found on the ECML website).

A significant discussion arose around this topic. The group agreed that in Iceland, there is a strong tendency to view English as the only necessary additional language besides Icelandic. This perception has led to a noticeable decline in the number of students choosing to study other languages in upper secondary schools. Furthermore, there is a growing tendency to use only English when communicating with immigrants who come to Iceland to live, study, and work. This practice makes it difficult for them to learn Icelandic and to be included in the society. In fact, many young Icelanders now prefer to use English in most contexts.

This shift poses a threat to the survival of the Icelandic language, which is spoken by only around 450,000 people. The group unanimously agreed with the Council of Europe that prioritizing language learning is essential—not only to preserve linguistic diversity but also to promote democratic values, respect, freedom, and social responsibility.

## Learning Grammar in Icelandic as a Second Language

The second workshop was held in February and led by Sigríður Þorvaldsdóttir and María Anna Garðarsdóttir, both adjunct lecturers at the University of Iceland specializing in teaching Icelandic as a second language. They introduced effective methods for teaching Icelandic grammar to second-language learners and presented their ongoing

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research. Their study compares the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) with Manfred Pienemann's Processability Theory to determine the optimal sequence for introducing grammatical concepts to adult learners of Icelandic.

In addition, María and Sigríður are collaborating with a team at the university on a project to standardize the assessment of Icelandic language proficiency based on CEFR competence levels. This work is crucial for various aspects of Icelandic language education, including teaching, learning, and evaluation. It will be particularly valuable for educators assessing language proficiency and for authors developing new study materials for Icelandic as a second language.

Their workshop was highly popular, with nearly forty attendees, and was later held online in March 2025, attracting over 100 registered participants. The strong interest reflects the significant increase in Iceland's immigrant population in recent years. Many individuals teaching Icelandic as a second language lack formal training, highlighting the urgent need for Icelandic authorities to improve teacher education and provide more professional development opportunities in this field.





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## Class Act – Engaging Students with Dramatic Techniques

The third workshop was titled **Class Act – Engaging Students with Dramatic Techniques** and was led by Ingibjörg Ásta Tómasdóttir, an English teacher.



Ingibjörg Ásta Tómasdóttir

The workshop centered on how dramatic teaching techniques can be used in language teaching and gave teachers an opportunity to try out the methods and reflect on how they could use them in their own classrooms.

<http://www.classact.is> is a collection of online teaching materials and exercises for the language classroom based on drama techniques, a guide on how to implement such techniques in the classroom, and a theoretical explanation of why these exercises are helpful for students and teachers.

Class Act aims to help language teachers implement creative techniques in their classrooms with an accessible and achievable collection of materials. Drama techniques have significant pedagogical value, and many teachers want to use them in their classrooms, but they are unsure how and where to start. This collection of materials includes a guide on how to start using drama techniques in the classroom and examples of warm-ups and exercises with detailed descriptions.

The workshop was highly interactive, and the participants got the opportunity to try out several exercises that could easily be integrated into their classrooms. The exercises included a name game where we got to

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know each other, a movement-based game called *What are you doing?* where the focus was on movement, but the goal was language production and improvisation scenes where the participants learned the importance of working together and building on top of each other's ideas. At the end of each exercise, we discussed their merits and how we could adapt them for various stages of language learner from beginner to advanced.



The workshop ended with a reflection on the exercises and troubleshooting how teachers might encounter and overcome any issues regarding using these techniques in class. Drama is a fun and motivating way to engage students in their language studies and helps ease the stress of speaking in a language they might not be fluent in.

# Greetings from Iceland

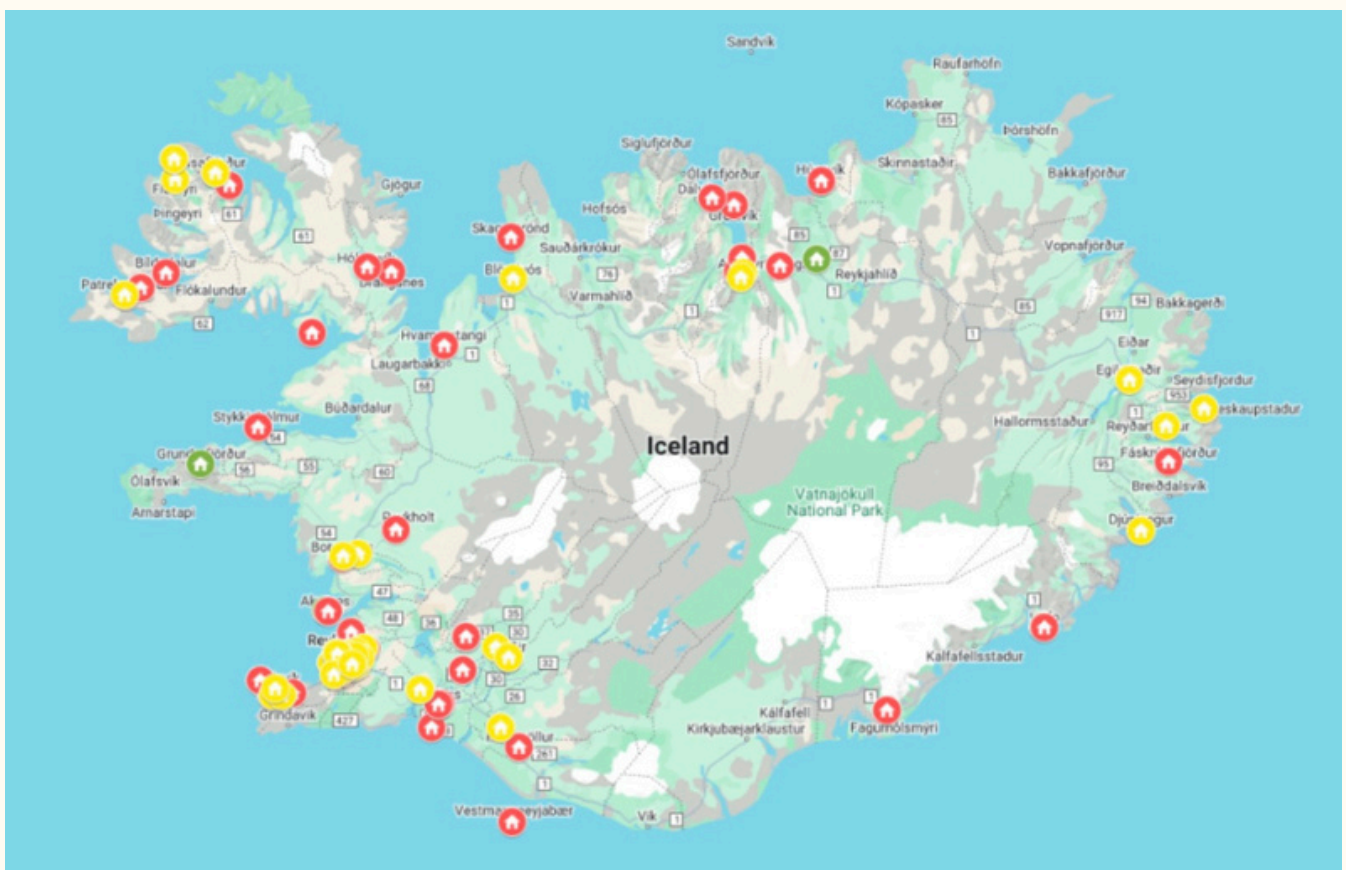
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## Language Map 2025 – The Search for Linguistic Resources in Iceland



The 2025 Language Map initiative in Iceland, launched on International Mother Language Day, aimed to document the linguistic diversity among children in preschools, primary schools, and secondary schools. The project sought to foster positive discussions about multilingualism and its benefits for emotional well-being and academic success. It was a collaboration between the Directorate of Education and School Services, the School of Education at the University of Iceland, the coordination team for Education, Reception, and Culture, Móðurmál – the Association on



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Bilingualism, Menningarmót – Flying Carpet project, and the Association of Language Teachers in Iceland (STÍL). The initiative is rooted, among others, in the speech by Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Languages from 2014.

This year, responses from 242 institutions revealed 102 languages spoken by students in Icelandic schools. While 16 languages recorded in 2014 and 2021 were absent, at least 118 languages have been present in Iceland over the past decade. Notably, children in Iceland communicate using five different sign languages.

The survey found Icelandic to be the most spoken language, followed by Polish, English, Spanish, Russian, Ukrainian, Arabic, Lithuanian, German, and Filipino. Over one-third of all Icelandic schools participated, highlighting the country's growing linguistic diversity. The analysis relied on Ethnologue and input from language users to distinguish dialects from languages.

The findings emphasize the importance of language awareness in education and the inclusion of multilingual students. The initiative, inspired by UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, underscores Iceland's commitment to embracing linguistic diversity and promoting inclusive education policies.

Additionally, the Icelandic Language Map 2025 includes new teaching guidelines for educators, [The Magic Language Toolbox](#), helping them to positively highlight and integrate students' diverse languages into learning and teaching. These teaching guidelines are available on the website of the Center for Education and School Services.

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Languages spoken in Icelandic schools according to the results of the survey:



## What is on the agenda for STÍL?

STÍL has three events planned for this semester. The first is our annual meeting, scheduled for May 14.

The second is a one-day summer workshop on June 11, focusing on *Well-being and Mindfulness in Education* and will be led by an expert in this field, Bryndís Jóna Jónsdóttir. This past winter has been particularly challenging for Icelandic teachers who have had to strike and advocate for better salaries and improved contract terms. The media's portrayal of teachers' work has been largely negative, and there is a general lack of understanding in society about the challenges teachers face. Student groups are becoming larger and more diverse, there has been a rise in

# Greetings from Iceland

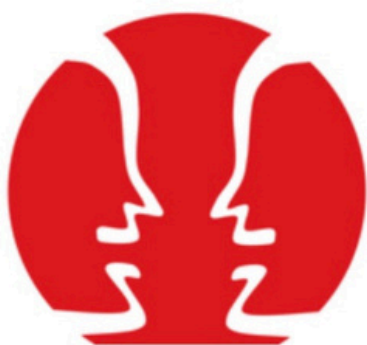
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incidents involving violence and bullying, and many teachers are leaving the profession. As a result, an increasing number of individuals without formal training are taking up teaching positions. In light of these challenges, STÍL felt it was crucial to offer a workshop on Well-being and Mindfulness. The goal is to help teachers build their resilience, regain their energy, and strengthen their ability to continue in the profession despite the many obstacles they face.

The third event is aimed at recognizing a graduate from the upper secondary level who has excelled in language education. The selected student will be awarded a monetary prize to be used for travel or further education that supports their continued pursuit of language learning.



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## Online sources for learning languages

**NBR, Nordic Baltic Region of FIPLV**

**<https://www.facebook.com/groups/677820838960243>**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Language teachers' associations in the Nordic-Baltic region

**FINLAND** Suomen kieltenopettajien liitto SUKOL RY (SUKOL)  
[www.sukol.fi](http://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](http://www.voorkeelteliit.eu)

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

**LATVIA** The Latvian Association of Teachers of English (LATE)  
<https://late.lv/>

**NORWAY** Norwegian Association for Teachers of German



# Happy spring!



**The Newsletter #1 March 2025 is issued by:**  
**Outi Vilkkuna, NBR President, Finland**  
**NBR Secretary Asterija Rudienė, Lithuania**

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