



WELCOME TO OUR

The Nordic-Baltic Region Newsletter



HEY, HOW ARE YOU?

NBR President's Notes:

Dear colleagues,

The 2025 NBR - SUKOL conference in Helsinki powerfully underscored the multifaceted value of language learning in a world facing rapid technological change, political complexity, and social uncertainty. Multilingualism fosters critical thinking, cultural empathy, and human connection—qualities that no AI can replace.

Educators are at the forefront of this vital work, empowered by new tools and approaches, and tasked with cultivating hope and understanding through language. As we move forward, embracing the full spectrum of learners' linguistic identities will be key to building bridges in our diverse, interconnected world.

Wishing You all a relaxing summer time,

Outi Vilkkuna

puheenjohtaja / ordförande / Chair

Suomen kieltenopettajien liitto SUKOL ry

The Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in Finland SUKOL

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Greetings from Estonia



Prepared by **Gertrud Mets**,
a member of the Board of the Estonian Association of Foreign Language Teachers,
a teacher of French



SUPPORTING THE SUPPORTERS: TEACHER WELL-BEING IN FOCUS AT THE EVÕL'S TRAINING DAY

On Saturday, May 31, 65 foreign language teachers and language enthusiasts gathered at the Pärnu Strand Spa and Conference Hotel to focus on self-care and mental sustainability during the Estonian Association of Foreign Language Teachers' (EVÕL) training day and language fair "Cared for Through and Through!". The day emphasized an essential truth: teachers must first take care of themselves in order to have the strength to support others. A key part of the event was also the language fair, where teachers could learn from one another's experiences and insights.

The day opened with a presentation titled "**Balance is Key: Committed to Both Work and Rest**" by **Marit Kannelmäe-Geerts**, a mental health instructor from NGO Peasjad (Head Matters in English). Kannelmäe-Geerts addressed the necessity of self-care, building resilience and supporting mental health. The session featured hands-on reflection tasks, such as expressing gratitude and evaluating one's contentment in various life areas. A key takeaway from the presentation was that rest is not something to be earned – it is a human need and right.

The second presentation "A Desired Life (Rhythm) Through Conscious Choices" was delivered by inspirational speaker and performance coach **Liisi Toom**. Her presentation encouraged participants to reflect on their career

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journeys and past decisions while analyzing their strengths and skills. Participants engaged in group tasks exchanging thoughts and insights about their personal dreams and capabilities. At the heart of the session was the idea **“Be so good they can’t ignore you”**, encompassing both professional mastery and human warmth.

Then came lunchtime, offering participants the chance to continue inspiring conversations with colleagues. At the same time, participants could purchase useful materials from the book sale.



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After lunch, a panel discussion was held, moderated by EVÕL board member **Kati Bakradze-Pank**. The panel featured contributions from **Svetlana Jürisaar**, **Ly Leedu**, **Matthias Vanamb**, and **Karola Velberg**. The panel focused on three real-life examples and cases, with an emphasis on finding solutions. The discussion was thought-provoking, encouraging the exploration of different perspectives and the adoption of a solution-oriented mindset.



Greetings from Estonia



EVÕL
Esti Võõrkeeleõpetajate Liit

Prepared by **Gertrud Mets**,
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a teacher of French

Next came the language fair, where attendees explored nine unique learning stations offering innovative approaches to language teaching. The topics covered a wide range – from learner engagement, gamification, and community projects to AI integration in language teaching. Attendees exchanged experiences and gained fresh ideas to enrich their teaching practices. We sincerely thank everyone who organized and conducted the learning centers: thank you **Merike Saar, Ülle Türk, Ly Leedu, Hannela Tamagno, Valentina Limonova, Diana Kollin-Poom, Jelena Panfilova, Lilia Bulai, Viktoria Alekseeva, Milana Alekseeva, Kärt Tomp, and Kristina Roosiväli.**



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Following the language fair, the eagerly anticipated surprise guest took the stage. None other than the beloved Estonian actor and director Andrus Vaarik delivered a humorous and heartfelt talk about the importance of teachers and their work. His speech ended the event on a truly positive note, reminding everyone of the healing power of laughter.

With that, the traditional event came to a close. “Cared for Through and Through!” proved to be more than just a training day: it was an opportunity to look back on the school year, build new professional relationships, and acknowledge how essential true rest is before entering the new academic season with renewed enthusiasm.

Our heartfelt thanks go to those who made the event possible: thank you **Ene Peterson**, **Kati Bakradze-Pank**, **Karola Velberg** and **Leena Möls** from the board of the Estonian Association of Foreign Language Teachers. Our gratitude also goes to the Ministry of Education and Research of Estonia for their support in making the training day possible. A special thank you goes to all the presenters as well.

With summer ahead to rest and recharge, we look forward to reuniting at EVÕL’s 15th anniversary conference in Tartu this fall.

Photos (Gertrud Mets, Karola Velberg)

Language Fair (video, author Karola Velberg) :
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1047133190190833>

Greetings from Finland

Prepared by **Outi Vilkuna**

Chair, The Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in
Finland SUKOL



Suomen kieltenopettajien liitto ry

Multilingualism in a Changing World: Bridging Cultures, Technology, and Hope

In late April 2025, the Finnish Association of Language Teachers (SUKOL) hosted an important professional development event in Helsinki, bringing together language educators from Nordic, Baltic countries, and beyond. The conference held at Kulosaari Secondary School focused on the evolving role of language skills as vital bridges between cultures and as tools for fostering understanding in an increasingly complex world. Discussions ranged broadly—from the promises and challenges of artificial intelligence in language learning, to the political nuances of language identity, and the critical role of educators in nurturing hope amid global uncertainty.

Language as a Window to the World: Insights from Maxim Fedorov

Ukrainian journalist and language enthusiast Maxim Fedorov opened the event with a compelling keynote on the importance of multilingualism today. Fluent in five languages—Russian, Finnish, German, English, and Ukrainian—Fedorov illustrated how his daily use of multiple tongues not only enriches his cognitive skills but also shapes his worldview.

Fedorov described Ukraine's complex linguistic landscape, emphasizing that concepts such as "mother tongue" are deeply personal and politically charged. He invited participants to reflect on their own language repertoires through "language portraits," visual tools that reveal the unique multilingual identities each person holds.

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Suomen kieltenopettajien liitto ry

In the era of artificial intelligence, Fedorov argued, language skills have not become obsolete; rather, they are more important than ever. While AI tools can assist with routine language tasks and provide learning support, they cannot replace the human capacity for nuanced communication, cultural empathy, and critical evaluation of content. He urged educators to integrate AI thoughtfully, viewing it as a powerful complement—not a substitute—for authentic language learning and intercultural dialogue.

Multilingual Pedagogy and Teacher Training: Perspectives from Sabine Grasz

Building on these ideas, Sabine Grasz, a specialist in language teacher education at the University of Oulu, explored how multilingualism is reshaping foreign language teaching. Her workshop, conducted entirely in German to exemplify multilingual practice, highlighted the European shift toward recognizing multilingual competence as a lifelong learning skill.

Grasz pointed out that although language curricula increasingly endorse multilingual approaches, real-world language instruction often remains limited to a narrow set of languages—commonly English and Swedish in Finland. She stressed the importance of embracing students' full linguistic repertoires as assets in language learning rather than treating languages as isolated subjects.

Practical tools such as the “language portrait” help learners visualize their multilingual identity, fostering metalinguistic awareness and motivation. Grasz also shared digital resources that leverage AI, such as chatbot builders and automated lesson planners, which can support differentiated and engaging teaching.

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However, she acknowledged challenges remain, especially in integrating multilingual didactics into adult education and beginner-level textbooks, where the reliance on translation and rigid grammar drills often neglects learners' prior knowledge and multilingual backgrounds.

The Political and Social Dimensions of Language: Reflections by Riku Savonen

The conference also addressed the often complex relationship between language and politics. Riku Savonen from the Finland–Russia Society discussed the current status of the Russian language in Finland amid geopolitical tensions following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Savonen emphasized that language is not synonymous with state politics. The Russian language continues to be spoken by over 100,000 people in Finland, playing a critical role in healthcare, security, media, and cultural life. Importantly, Russian can serve as a tool for advocating democracy and human rights, not only as an instrument of power or propaganda.

He noted a decline in Russian language learners within Finnish schools, but argued that Russian remains valuable for connecting with Russian-speaking migrant communities and understanding broader linguistic and cultural ties across Europe. Savonen's reflections highlighted the need to separate political conflicts from linguistic diversity and to sustain support for minority language communities.

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Language as a Source of Hope: Closing Remarks by Petri Rajaniemi

The conference concluded with an inspiring keynote from Petri Rajaniemi, a speaker on social change and hope in turbulent times. Rajaniemi addressed the emotional toll of global crises—war, climate change, social polarization—and the pervasive uncertainty faced by educators and learners alike.

Despite widespread fear and anxiety, Rajaniemi urged participants to view language learning as an act of resilience and hope. Teachers, he said, play a crucial role in maintaining trust and building community by fostering dialogue and empathy through language.

He warned against over-reliance on technology and automation, which risk isolating individuals, and instead called for renewed emphasis on human connection. Every language learned is a bridge that counters fear and misunderstanding, promoting peace and cooperation in an uncertain world.

Practical Resources and Future Directions

The conference provided numerous tools and resources for educators eager to embrace multilingualism and modern technology in their classrooms, including:

- Multilingual teaching materials and pedagogical guides from the European Centre for Modern Languages.
- AI-supported tools like Suno for music creation, Curipod for lesson planning, and chatbot builders for student interaction.
- Guidance on creating language portraits to support students' metalinguistic awareness.

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- The overarching message was clear: multilingualism is not just a personal asset but a societal necessity, crucial for cultural exchange, democracy, and hope in the 21st century.

Other current issues in Finland

Children and Youth Have a Positive Attitude Towards Language Learning in Schools

Children and young people in Finland generally have a positive attitude towards learning languages. According to a survey conducted by the Youth Academy in autumn 2024 and winter 2025, nearly 300 Finnish- and Swedish-speaking students from grades 3 to 9 considered school the best place to learn languages. Digital environments, such as social media and games, were seen as the second most important learning environment. Particularly Swedish-speaking students emphasized the intrinsic value of language skills as important and desirable.

Motivating Factors and Wishes for Teaching

The main motivations for language learning are the current and future need for language skills, a desire to learn new things, and the experience of personal progress. Young people expressed a wish for more opportunities to practice oral language skills and to work in pairs or small groups. They felt the best language lesson is one where the language is actively heard and used. A calm and pleasant learning environment was also seen as important. Challenges identified include the workload of language learning, the time spent studying, and the timing of elective language classes within the school timetable.

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Expanding the Language Options

Young people dream of studying a wide variety of languages. The most popular languages studied in schools were English, Spanish, German, and French, but there is also interest in languages such as Japanese, Chinese, and Korean. Many young people also wanted to improve their skills in languages they already know. However, the reduction in language options and practical barriers—such as early or late class times and oversized groups—have limited opportunities for language learning. For example, a survey by SUKOL among basic education language teachers highlighted concerns about the narrowing of language choices and structural obstacles in language education.

The Role of Schools in Language Learning

School is seen by many young people as the best place to learn languages. Videos and educational games used in schools were considered helpful for language learning. However, school structures, such as schedules and group sizes, can pose obstacles. Students feel that the workload related to language study and the time required can be burdensome.

The Role of Municipal Decision-Makers in Language Education

Municipal decision-makers play a crucial role in enabling diverse language education. In municipalities that support language growth, language learning can begin as early as daycare, and pupils and parents can influence which languages are taught in primary schools. More options for the first foreign language (A1 language) should be available in the first

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grade to allow pupils to choose a language meaningful to them. Decision-makers should also ensure that language teaching is sufficiently resourced and that pupils have the opportunity to study multiple languages without practical obstacles.

For more detailed information, see the original article:

Children and Youth Have a Positive Attitude Towards Language Learning in Schools (SUKOL, 2025)

Finland's Language Skills Crisis: A National Concern

While young Finns show enthusiasm for languages, Finland faces a deeper systemic problem: a significant decline in language proficiency among its population. In an opinion piece published in Helsingin Sanomat (April 4, 2025), Teija Kangasvieri raised urgent concerns about weakening language skills that threaten Finland's economy, security, and social well-being.

The network of university language centers (FINELC) and the Finnish Language Teachers' Association (SUKOL) have echoed this alarm, stressing that broad and versatile language skills are not just individual assets but vital national resources.

Why Multilingualism Is a National Necessity

Multilingual skills open doors to international job markets and global companies. Employers increasingly value employees who can operate in multicultural environments, facilitating communication and cooperation with colleagues worldwide. Multilingualism enriches cultural understanding, empathy, critical thinking, and cultural literacy—skills crucial in both professional and social contexts.

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Suomen kieltenopettajien liitto ry

Language is tightly linked to culture. Learning a language means understanding cultural values and social norms, which broadens perspectives and fosters respect for diversity. As Finland deepens its integration within the European Union, languages like German, French, and Spanish become essential tools for diplomatic communication, political engagement, and economic collaboration.

Moreover, declining language proficiency restricts Finland's participation in international research and innovation. The reduction of linguistically skilled applicants to universities has weakened Finnish capacity to engage in top-tier global research networks.

The media also requires language and cultural competencies to identify and resist misinformation and influence campaigns. Relying solely on English-language media narrows our worldview and risks missing vital cultural and political nuances.

Investing in Language Education for the Future

Strengthening language education from early childhood through higher education is a critical investment in Finland's future. Every student must have the opportunity to study multiple languages beyond just English and the second national language. This broad linguistic foundation equips future generations to meet the demands of a globalized world and enhances Finland's international competitiveness.

Municipal decision-makers and education authorities must ensure sufficient resources, flexible timetables, and diverse language offerings at all education levels. Providing early access to a range of languages and enabling pupils and parents to influence language choices are crucial steps.

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Conclusion: Acting on Finland's Language Skills Crisis

Finland urgently needs a linguistically skilled population ready to meet tomorrow's challenges. A broad, versatile command of languages is among the most essential skills schools can impart. Its significance cannot be overstated.

It is time to act decisively to guarantee that all Finns can develop their language skills regardless of background or circumstances. Supporting multilingual education will strengthen Finland's role as an active, capable international player and secure its future prosperity and cultural richness.

For more detailed information, see the original article:

Finland's Silent Crisis (SUKOL, 2025)

Greetings from **Lithuania**

Prepared by **Vigilija Žiūraitė**
Vice-President of the Language Teachers'
Association of Lithuania; photos by Jonas
Petronis (Vytautas Magnus University)



Lietuvos kalbų pedagogų
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**Sustainable Multilingualism conference
focuses on language preservation and
diversity**



On 29–31 May, Vytautas Magnus University (VMU) hosted the 8th International Conference “Sustainable Multilingualism 2025”, organised by the VMU Institute of Foreign Languages and the Language Teachers' Association of Lithuania (LKPA). This scientific event attracted more than one hundred language policy makers, language and multilingual competence researchers, lecturers, and students from Lithuanian and foreign higher education institutions.

Greetings from Lithuania

Prepared by **Vigilija Žiūraitė**
Vice-President of the Language Teachers'
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Petronis (Vytautas Magnus University)



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The conference explored multilingualism from diverse perspectives, featuring plenary presentations by world-renowned scholars from Australia, North America, and Europe. The conference also featured parallel sessions on topics such as language policy implementation, language preservation and revitalisation, multilingual competence, and technology-enhanced language teaching. Traditionally, presentations at the Sustainable Multilingualism 2025 conference were given in a variety of languages. They were delivered in English, French, Latvian, Lithuanian, Spanish, Ukrainian and German by researchers from Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Spain, Italy, France, Sweden, Germany, Ukraine and other countries. In a dynamic roundtable discussion on “From Policy to Practice: University Alliances and Multilingualism”, participants shared their thoughts on the experiences and challenges of developing multilingualism and discussed perspectives for the development of multilingual education across Europe.



“In organising the conference, we try to look at the phenomenon of multilingualism from different perspectives. I believe that the conference was not only a time of sharing new research insights, having a meaningful and enjoyable time, but also of making new contacts for research and further collegial collaboration.” – says **Prof. Nemira Mačianskienė**, Chair of the Conference Scientific Committee, and the member of the Language Teachers’ Association of Lithuania.

Greetings from Lithuania

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Vice-President of the Language Teachers'
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Petronis (Vytautas Magnus University)



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“It is a great pleasure to welcome both old-timers and new participants at the Sustainable Multilingualism Conference. For all of us, languages are not only an area of research but also an expression of friendship. And sustainable multilingualism comes first and foremost from people’s communion and understanding of each other. So, the discussions and sharing of experiences continued not only during the



conference, but also informally or during the excursion to Dzūkija.” – **Dr. Teresė Ringailienė**, Chair of the Conference Organising Committee, and member of the Board of the Language Teachers’ Association of Lithuania.

The international conference “Sustainable Multilingualism” was launched at Vytautas Magnus University more than a decade ago. The biennial scientific event brings together like-minded researchers, teachers, students, and all those interested in multilingualism issues.



Greetings from Lithuania

Prepared by members of the Language Teachers' Association of Lithuania: **Vilija Kraujalienė**, Lecturer at the Department of Languages and Education, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, and **Danutė Belazarienė**, Lecturer at the Centre of Foreign Languages, Vilniaus Kolegija



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VILNIAUS KOLEGIJA | 25



New International Opportunities with the Erasmus+ Programme for Lithuanian students, language educators, and researchers

Erasmus+ is a European Union-funded education, training, youth, and sport programme that promotes internationalization, cooperation, and innovation. It supports exchanges, partnerships, and joint initiatives between educational institutions across Europe and beyond. Lithuanian higher education institutions and vocational education and training (VET) institutions actively participate in the programme – each year, thousands of students, lecturers, teachers, and youth workers take part in exchanges, internships, and projects. Erasmus+ covers not only student mobility but also work placements, teacher and lecturer training, youth projects, and strategic partnerships.

Since 2014, more than 50,000 people from Lithuania have taken advantage of Erasmus+ opportunities, making Lithuania one of the most active countries in terms of participation. Lithuanian linguists and language educators actively engage in teaching mobility and internships abroad. For example, Vilija Kraujalienė from the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences visited Albania, sharing experiences and presenting innovative teaching methods. Danutė Belazarienė, a lecturer from Vilniaus Kolegija / University of Applied Sciences, participated in a teaching visit in Poland, where discussions focused on artificial intelligence and its impact on the economy and ethics.

Greetings from Lithuania

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Lithuanian higher education institutions are joining European university alliances funded by the Erasmus+ programme. One of the newest is the HEROES alliance, which includes Vilniaus Kolegija / University of Applied Sciences. It brings together nine vocational higher education institutions from various European countries and aims to strengthen regional resilience and sustainability. Another alliance, Arqus, involving Vilnius University, focuses on creating joint international study programmes and promoting research.

International cooperation through Erasmus+ enhances the quality, resilience, and internationalization of European higher education, offering new opportunities for Lithuanian students, language educators, and researchers.

Greetings from Lithuania

Prepared by **Jūratė Patackaitė**, President of the Language Teachers' Association of Lithuania, and **Danutė Belazarienė**, Lecturer at the Faculty of Business Management, Vilniaus Kolegija



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The Year 2025 Marks a Jubilee for the Centre of Foreign Languages at Vilniaus Kolegija / University of Applied Sciences

"Everything comes in time to those who know how to wait."

Honoré de Balzac

The Centre of Foreign Languages at Vilniaus Kolegija, one of the seven founding members of the Language Teachers' Association of Lithuania, is celebrating the 25th anniversary of its founding – the same age as Vilniaus Kolegija itself.

The Centre's mission is to provide high-quality language education, foster internationalization, and support the professional development of the academic staff. Its lecturers are committed to innovation, continuously improving teaching methods, and helping students develop language skills alongside cultural awareness.

Offering courses in English, German, and Italian since 2015, the Centre promotes multilingualism through various language programs and events, enriching both the Kolegija community and society at large. Since 2021, it has also supported Ukrainian integration by teaching Lithuanian language and culture, developing online modules, and organizing activities for refugees.

Annual traditions include celebrating the European Day of Languages on September 26, featuring competitions and lectures. The Centre's efforts in promoting multilingualism earned it the "For Multilingual Vilniaus Kolegija – 15!" award from the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport. In 2017, the German Language Days "Ö, How Do You Say It in German?" were launched to

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encourage learning and promoting interest in the language and culture of German-speaking countries.

International activities, including internships, conferences, and projects across Europe and beyond, allow lecturers to enhance their professional skills and bring fresh ideas to their teaching. Supported by the ERASMUS+ program, these opportunities foster both professional and personal growth, while trips and excursions within Lithuania strengthen teamwork and mutual understanding among staff.

As Albert Einstein once said, ***“There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.”*** At the Centre of Foreign Languages, we still choose to live as though everything is a miracle. We believe in the power of language, connection, and growth – and we dare to hope that the journey ahead will be just as meaningful as the years behind us.



Greetings from Lithuania

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



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News from Lithuania HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

- In the QS* World University Rankings 2026, five Lithuanian universities are ranked among the best universities globally:
 - Vilnius University
 - Kaunas University of Technology
 - Vytautas Magnus University
 - Vilnius Gediminas Technical University
 - Mykolas Romeris University
- Representatives—including linguists, researchers, and lecturers—from all five universities are also active members of the Language Teachers' Association of Lithuania.

* QS - Quacquarelli Symonds



News from Lithuania HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

- Main topic discussed among lecturers:
The impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on research and exams.
- Higher education institutions face new challenges and form alliances for international cooperation. Examples include:
 - **Arqus** European Universities Alliance – 9 universities, including Vilnius University (Lithuania), <https://arqus-alliance.eu/>;
 - **HEROES** Alliance – 9 professional higher education institutions, including Vilniaus Kolegija / University of Applied Sciences (Lithuania), <https://www.heroesuniversity.eu/>.
- **Their goal:**
To build resilient European regions by enhancing adaptability of people, businesses, and nature. They align policies and actions to create sustainable, long-term cooperation in studies, research, and social partnerships.

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Prepared by **Jūratė Patackaitė**, President of
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News from Lithuania GENERAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS

- **Inclusive education**
 - Much attention is given to inclusive education: free consultations and training sessions are organized, and best practices from successful schools are shared.
- The **Lithuanian Centre for Educational Inclusion** regularly organizes public online consultations on learning difficulties.
- **Use of smart devices at school**
 - The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport has developed recommendations regarding the use of mobile phones and other smart devices by students.
 - Schools are encouraged to restrict their use not only during lessons, but also during breaks, in after-school programs, and during other educational activities outside the school premises.



News from Lithuania GENERAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS

- **State foreign language examination**
 - On April 23–25, more than 19,000 graduates took the speaking part of the state foreign language examination (in English, French, or German).
- **Since last year, the examination is conducted in two stages:**
 - In one year: **interim assessment** (listening and reading);
 - The following year: **main part** (speaking and writing);
- **Goals of the updated curriculum**

With the updated foreign language curriculum:

 - The **first foreign language** should reach **B2+** proficiency level.
 - The **second foreign language** is expected to reach **A2+** proficiency level.
- **New opportunity – Spanish language**
 - Starting in **September 2026**, students will be able to choose **Spanish** as their first foreign language alongside English, French, and German, as announced by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of Lithuania.

Greetings from Lithuania

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



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**Wishing You a beautiful and fulfilling summer
- from the members of the Association of Language
Teachers of Lithuania!**



Greetings from Sweden



The Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

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

Board Trip to Finland: Conference, Culture, and Connection



To make the most of synergies, our board decided to relocate this year's annual in-person meeting from Stockholm to Helsinki, where the **FIPLV-NBR Conference "Languages Mediating Culture and Mutual Understanding"** took place on April 25–26. This gave us the chance not

only to participate in the conference, but also to strengthen our connections as a team. For some of us, it was a first-time visit to our neighboring country that offered fascinating insights into a culture that feels both familiar and refreshingly different.

After a short flight from Sweden, those who arrived early on Friday were able to join school visits – a rare opportunity to gain first-hand impressions of the internationally acclaimed Finnish school system. Others who arrived later in the day enjoyed a sightseeing stroll through Helsinki, complete with Finnish treats and a dose of



contemporary art. The evening brought some of us together for a cultural program at Kulosaari Secondary School, alongside participants from other Baltic countries. A definite highlight was the performance by the school choir – and not to forget the laughter and joy we shared while learning the choreography to Sweden's Eurovision hit "Bara bada bastu"!

Greetings from Sweden

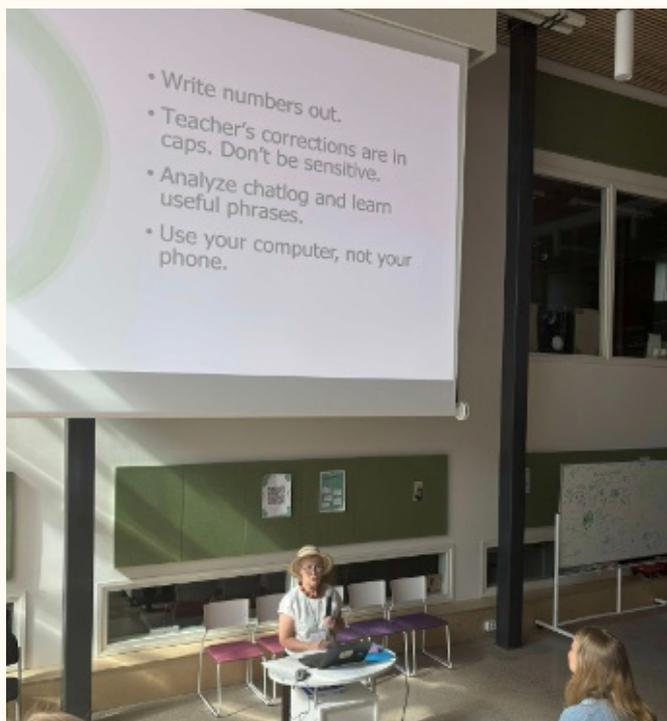


The Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

Prepared by **Mia Smith**

President of the Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

Saturday was dedicated to the conference itself, held at the same school. We were inspired by keynote speaker Maxim Fedorov – a journalist and foreign correspondent for Yle with a Master's in Finnish language and culture – who spoke powerfully about the role of languages in mediating culture. The variety of the parallel sessions was equally impressive. Two of our board members also contributed as speakers: Adriana Stuesson



presented El Torneo de Música, one of our organization's flagship initiatives, showing how music can foster both language learning and cultural understanding.



I shared a motivational project in German language education that connects students' dreams for the future with the use of social media.

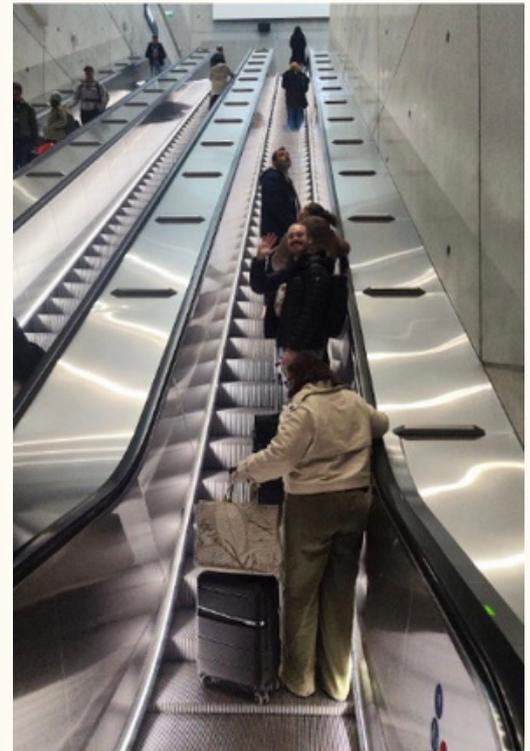
Greetings from Sweden



The Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

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

On Sunday, before heading home, we held our official board meeting at Oodi, Helsinki's new and architecturally stunning central library – an inspiring venue and vibrant public space in the heart of the city. (If you ever find yourself in Helsinki, don't miss it!) Energized by the experiences, deeper team bonds, and new perspectives, we flew home that evening full of ideas and appreciation – and with a few Moomin souvenirs tucked in our bags.



A thank-you to **Outi Vilkuna** and **Anna Halme** from the *Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in Finland* for organizing such a thought-provoking conference, and for warmly welcoming us to Helsinki.

FIPLV-NBR board members: Kari Jukarainen (treasurer, Finland); Mia Smith (Sweden); Ene Peterson (Estonia); Outi Vilkuna (President of NBR, Finland); Asterija Rudienė (secretary of NBR, Lithuania)



Greetings from Sweden



The Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

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



Stronger Political Voice in National Education Policy

This spring, the association submitted five official policy responses (remissvar) to various national education reforms proposed by the Swedish government and the Swedish National Agency for Education. These responses signal a growing role for the association in shaping language policy and defending the professional conditions of language teachers.

Key themes include:

- The call for **a national language strategy** that supports multilingualism and aligns with EU targets for language proficiency.
- Strong criticism of **the removal of merit points** (bonus credits previously awarded for continued language study in upper secondary school), which risks reducing student motivation and weakening the position of modern languages.
- A proposal to **make modern languages compulsory** in lower



Greetings from Sweden



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secondary school, to ensure equal access and support continued study at higher levels.

- Advocacy for **regulated class sizes**, especially in oral-based subjects like languages, with a proposed maximum of 24 students per group.
- A firm stance against the **removal of speaking components** from national English exams, due to concerns about reliability and pedagogical consequences.
- Repeated calls for **adequate planning and assessment time** for language teachers, whose workload is often heavier than that of colleagues in other subjects.
- Support for **Sámi language instruction** in special education, reaffirming the association's commitment to minority language rights and inclusive education.

These efforts reflect a strategic shift toward greater visibility and influence in education policy. The association now plays an increasingly central role in national debates on quality, equity, and the future of language education in Sweden.

Greetings from Sweden



Språklärarnas
Riksförbund

The Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

Prepared by **Mia Smith**

President of the Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

New Summer Issue of Lingua

In parallel with its policy work, Språklärarnas riksförbund continues to promote professional development and language awareness through its quarterly magazine Lingua. The latest issue, published in June 2025, features contributions from both language researchers and practising teachers, written in Swedish as well as in English, French, Spanish, and German.

The issue explores a wide range of topics, including oral language teaching, reading strategies, and pronunciation. Of particular note is a feature article by linguist and journalist Patrik Hadenius, who now leads the development of Sweden's upcoming national language museum – Språkmuseet.

Set to open in Stockholm in 2027, the museum will combine interactive exhibits, soundscapes, artistic installations, and research-based content to explore how language shapes our personal identities and shared societies. Hadenius emphasises that the museum will

combine interactive exhibits, soundscapes, artistic installations, and



Greetings from Sweden



The Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

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research-based content to explore how language shapes our personal identities and shared societies. Hadenius emphasises that the museum will focus not only on Swedish, but also on Sweden's linguistic diversity – including national minority languages, immigrant languages, endangered languages, and the global role of English.

Hadenius outlines a clear vision: a museum where teachers, students, and the general public can engage with language as a social, cultural, and cognitive force.

Language teachers in Finland are warmly invited to read *Lingua*. Access is now available digitally through a dedicated service ePress Finland. For more information, visit <https://emagz.fi/catalog>.

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://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

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 Võõrkeeleõpetajate Liit (EVOL) (Estonian
Association of Foreign Language Teachers)
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 SUMMER holidays!

**The Newsletter #2 June 2025 is issued by:
Outi Vilkuna, NBR President, Finland
NBR Secretary Asterija Rudienė, Lithuania**

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

 Follow

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 join us

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