

European Day of Languages - 26 September 2014



European Day of Languages: challenging mindsets and embracing diversity

Strasbourg, 26.09.2014 – To mark the European Day of Languages, Secretary General Jagland made the following statement:

“On 26 September we celebrate Europe’s rich linguistic diversity. Let us take a moment to remember the words of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry – that language is often the source of misunderstandings. Language can be used as a weapon, as an excuse to discriminate and humiliate.

Together we can ensure that languages, rather than being the source of misunderstanding, become the key to intercultural dialogue and mutual respect. To do this, we must challenge existing mindsets and embrace diversity.

The Council of Europe demonstrates a strong commitment to all of Europe’s languages: through its work on the protection of regional or minority languages, in developing common standards for teaching and measuring linguistic competence, and in supporting states to implement inclusive approaches to language education.

So while we celebrate the Day of Languages today, in Strasbourg, in Graz together with the European Centre for Modern Languages, and through the many innovative events taking place all around Europe, let us recognise the powerful role languages play in helping to build and maintain tolerant, peaceful and inclusive societies.”

Find out more about the European Day of Languages and the hundreds of events taking place around the continent at: www.coe.int/edl.

Background information on the Day

The European Day of Languages is a day to encourage language learning across Europe.

At the initiative of the Council of Europe, the European Day of Languages has been celebrated every year, on 26 September, since the European Year of Languages in 2001.

The specific aims of the Day are to:

- alert the public to the importance of language learning in order to increase plurilingualism and intercultural understanding;
- promote the rich linguistic and cultural diversity of Europe;
- encourage lifelong language learning in and out of school.

The dedicated website for the Day is available in 28 languages and in 2013 over 620 events were registered in the events' calendar of the site. This figure represents only a small proportion of the activities taking place in Europe and beyond around 26 September, which are organised mainly by schools, universities, language and cultural institutes and associations.