

About the European Day of Languages

Languages for life

The European Year of Languages 2001 was successful in involving millions of people across 45 countries in activities to celebrate linguistic diversity and the benefits of being able to speak another language.

Many people young and old were encouraged to take up a language, or take special pride in their existing language skills.

Those responsible for providing access to language learning were encouraged to make it easier for people to learn a range of languages, and to support policy initiatives to promote languages.

The Council of Europe has declared 26 September an annual European Day of Languages.



Why do we need a European Day of Languages?

While many people agree that everyone should be able to speak another language, in many countries only about half can do so.

There have never been more opportunities to work or study in a different European country - but lack of language competence prevents many people from taking advantage of them.

Globalisation and patterns of business ownership mean that citizens increasingly need foreign language skills to work effectively within their own countries.

Europe is rich in languages - there are over 200 European languages and many more spoken by citizens whose family origin is from other continents. This is an important resource to be recognised, used and cherished.

Language learning brings benefits to young and old - you are never too old to learn a language and to enjoy the opportunities it opens up.

Learning other peoples' languages is a way of helping us to understand each other better and overcome our cultural differences.

What are the aims of the European Day of Languages?

- To alert the public to the importance of language learning
- To increase awareness and appreciation of ALL the languages spoken in Europe
- To encourage lifelong language learning

How can I get involved?

- Spread the word
Contribute to inform as many people as possible about the Day, by publicising it to friends and colleagues, in newsletters, on websites, at meetings and to contacts in the media. Ideas are available at the website below.
The experience of the European Year of Languages 2001 shows we can achieve much more in partnership than alone. The Day provides an opportunity to continue to strengthen partnerships developed during the year at local, regional, national and international levels.
- Organise events
Partners in the European Year of Languages organised many thousands of successful events, ranging from talks to activities involving whole towns and cities. A selection of practical ideas applicable to any situation and further information can be found on the Council of Europe website for the Day at www.coe.int/EDL

The European Day of Languages: frequently asked questions:

How can we celebrate 'lifelong language learning'?

Lifelong language learning means language learning at all stages of life both within and outside of the education system. We can always improve our skills or take up a new language.

How can we celebrate the European Day of Languages?

It could be celebrated in schools, in workplaces or in any public place, with activities involving old and young; this can involve ALL languages, whether learnt in childhood or taken up at a later age.

Who is responsible for organising the European Day of Languages?

It has been recommended that the Day should be celebrated in a decentralised and flexible way. There are no organisational guidelines at international level, though there are national "relays" / contact persons in most countries. The details of the "relays" are available on the website.

Will the Day have its own logo?

The logo for the Day is the same as that used for the European Year of Languages. It can be obtained from the address below and is downloadable from the website. Organisers of events can use the image alone, or add the words 'European Day of Languages', as they wish, provided the objectives are in keeping with those of the Day.

What support is available?

The Council of Europe web site offers examples, suggestions and a data base to which you can add your events. A poster was produced and made available in electronic form to national authorities and possible partners for adaptation to national, regional or local needs downloadable from this website. Support at national level will vary according to the priorities and resources of each country but financial support will no longer be available in 2003.

Official website:

<http://www.coe.int/edl>

Contact details:

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