



*Statement by the Universal Esperanto Association
(Universala Esperanto-Asocio, UEA)
during the 8th session of the UN Forum on Minority Issues
Palais des Nations, Geneva, 24-25 November 2015*

*4th item on the agenda:
Difficulties of criminal justice to respond to the needs and requests of
minorities.*

**Speech by M. [Stefano Keller](#),
Head of the UEA delegation to the United Nations in Geneva**

Mr Chairman, Ms Special Rapporteur,

My name is Stefano Keller and, together with my colleagues, I represent the Universala Esperanto-Asocio (UEA), which is the world association of speakers of the international language that is Esperanto. Esperanto has been used in the whole world for 128 years for interethnic communication, allowing for clear mutual understanding while putting everyone on equal footing.

Regarding item 4 of the agenda, our association would like to draw your attention to the fact that language is present everywhere, in all aspects of criminal justice; it is the basis for the fulfillment of all rights as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Our association, together with Esperanto-speakers worldwide, works to support the right of everyone to use their mothertongue in national or local administrations, as well as at school.

Language barriers may prevent members of minorities from expressing themselves adequately and therefore from defending or claiming their right to fair justice.

The UEA, in official partnership with the UN and the UNESCO, works to defend the language rights of minorities and indigenous peoples. We offer an interethnic language that is lively, politically neutral, and easy to learn, namely *Esperanto*. This means of communication is well-functioning and *truly international*.

The theme of the 101st world congress of Esperanto will be "Social Justice – Linguistic Justice" and will be discussed in Esperanto. The congress will take place in Nitra, Slovakia, from 23 to 30 July 2016 and will gather 1000 to 2000 participants coming from 70 to 80 countries.

Regarding this Forum, I would like to warmly thank the interpreters who also enable hearing-impaired participants to follow our discussions.

Using the mothertongue in all spheres of life is fundamental human right, as stated by the UNESCO Convention. Let me add here that UNESCO will be a partner in the commemoration of the centenary of the death of Ludwik Zamenhof, doctor and linguist (1859-1917) and founder of Esperanto.

Finally, we would like to draw your attention to the importance of language for the final version of the recommendations of this Forum as well.

Dankon pro via atento – Thank you for your attention.