

Montreal to host 105th World Esperanto Congress in 2020

MONTREAL, QC - The World Esperanto Association has just announced that Montreal will host the 105th annual World Esperanto Congress in 2020. The announcement was made at this year's Congress in Seoul, South Korea.

The World Esperanto Congress is a week-long cultural event which brings together between 1,000 and 3,000 Esperanto speakers from all parts of the world. It has been held annually since 1905' with two wartime interruptions. 2020 will be the first time the Congress has come to Montreal, and only the second time to Canada (after Vancouver, 1984). The Congress was last held in the eastern portion of North America in 1910, when Washington was the host city.

This announcement comes on the heels of Esperanto Day – July 26th – a date when people across the globe celebrate the language, first published 130 years ago in 1887. Esperanto's inventor, Dr. L.L. Zamenhof, was inspired to create the simple and logical language by his experiences of ethnic conflict growing up in Russian-controlled Poland. Zamenhof wanted his language to bridge ethnic and national differences — not by replacing native languages, but by becoming a universally shared common language for people around the world to use.

Esperanto has not only survived but thrived, and today is spoken by an international community which by some estimates numbers two million people. Many Esperantists open their homes to fellow speakers, and a few even raise multilingual children who speak Esperanto as a native language. Online, today's would-be speakers can study for free with the language-learning app Duolingo, which launched its Esperanto course two years ago. One million people have since used it to start learning the language.

"We are excited to be bringing the World Congress back to North America. Hundreds of thousands of North Americans have studied Esperanto online in recent years, through apps like Duolingo," commented Dr. Mark Fettes, President of the World Esperanto Association and a Canadian, remarking on the significance of this development for the global Esperanto community. *"We hope that the Congress will encourage some of them to come and experience the lively atmosphere of our gatherings, where Esperanto is used for everything from music and theatre to university-style lectures and organizational meetings,"* he added.

"Montreal welcomes the opportunity to host this large international convention," commented Yves Lalumière, President and CEO of Tourisme Montréal, noting the economic importance of the event for Montreal. *"With over a thousand Esperanto speakers coming in 2020 and generating nearly 4,000 room nights, this booking confirms Montreal's position as North America's leading host city for global meetings. I am certain that World Esperanto Congress delegates will enjoy every minute of their stay in our creative and vibrant city."*

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This press release is issued by the Quebec Esperanto Society: <http://www.esperanto.qc.ca>.

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