Linguapax

The Linguapax Institute is an international non-government institution based in Barcelona and acting within the framework of the UNESCO Centre of Catalonia. Nevertheless, there are other bodies all over the world who also share in the Linguapax spirit: the UNESCO Centre of the Basque Country, the UNESCO Chair of Linguistic Policy and Language Teaching at the University of Mons-Hainaut (Belgium), the Department of Foreign Languages at the University of Tokyo and the UNESCO Chair in Languages and Education of the Institute of Catalan Studies, set up in February this year.

The objectives of the Linguapax Institute are: to promote information and research into linguistic policies; to advise officials responsible for linguistic policies in state or sub-state governments; to further multilingual education and perfect learning methods; to relate multilingual education and the culture of peace; to provide technical assistance to minority linguistic communities; to defend linguistic rights as individual and collective human rights; to facilitate the administration of linguistic diversity in cities with immigrants speaking several languages; to contribute to the presence of multilingualism in cyberspace; to create new mechanisms for collaboration between specialised NGOs. Miquel Siguan is the honorary president of the Linguapax Institute. The Board of Directors is made up as follows: Félix Martí, president; Isidor Mari and Dolors Reig, vice-presidents; Marie Amélie Ponce, director; Josep Cru, general secretary; Marc Leprêtre and Miquel Martí. The members of the board of the Linguapax Institute met on 3 April, 23 July and 20 October.


As chairman of the Linguapax Committee, Félix Martí is a member of the Committee of Honour of the Mediterranean Council of Languages of the University of Abou-Bekr Belkaid in Tlemcen (Algeria).

The Linguapax Prizes were awarded on International Mother Language Day. At this year’s edition, the prize-winners were Tove Skutnabb Kangas and Aina Moll, two linguists who have stood out in the struggle in favour of the promotion of linguistic diversity and multilingual education. There was information on the Internet portal entitats.info and vilaweb.com on 21 February and in the informative bulletin on the Catalan language Infozèfir on 24 February and in the bulletin of the FOCIR for March. The 2004 Linguapax Prizes were convened in October.

The chairman of the Linguapax Institute took part in the conference convened by UNESCO from 10 to 12 March in Paris on the situation of minority languages in danger of extinction. There was ample information in the newspaper Deia on 17 March. It was reported in Tribuna catalana on 17 March.

During the course of the year the Linguapax Institute prepared the text of eight subjects on linguistic diversity for Enciclopèdia Catalana. Each one is accompanied by a map, for the Atles de la Diversitat
CATALAN SCHOOLS TAKING PART IN THE LINGUAPAX PROGRAMME

A WORLD STUDY OF LANGUAGES

The World Study of Languages has its beginnings in the International Linguapax Seminar on Linguistic Policies held in Leioa (Basque Country) in 1996, at which the Director General of UNESCO, Federico Mayor, pointed out the need for research into the situation of the world’s languages. The UNESCO General Conference in 1996 approved the project. The Basque Government signed a memorandum for agreement with UNESCO in July 1997 and undertook to finance the project. The object of the study is to make known the state of the languages of the world, showing the planet’s linguistic wealth and explaining the problems affecting languages in various parts of the world. At the same time, the study makes a point of promoting awareness of the linguistic heritage, drawing attention to the evolution of this heritage and recommending measures to protect living languages.

On 17 October, Fèlix Martí, along with Itziar Idiabal of UNESCO Etxea, took part in Paris in a meeting with John Daniel, Assistant Director General for Education, Milagros del Corral, Deputy Assistant Director General for Culture, M. Longworth, Director of the Information Society Division, and Mary Joy Pigozzi, Director of the Division for the Promotion of Quality Education. During the course of the meeting, UNESCO confirmed that it would take charge of the publication of the study in four linguistic versions.

DIALOGUE ON LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY, SUSTAINABILITY AND PEACE

The Linguapax Institute began the preparation of one of the 45 Dialogues of the Universal Forum of Cultures Barcelona 2004: ‘Linguistic diversity, sustainability and peace’. It is foreseen that this dialogue will take place from 20 to 23 May 2004, and at the same time is ‘Linguapax X’, the tenth international meeting of experts promoted by Linguapax. This is the list of previous meetings: Linguapax I, Kiev, Ukraine, 1988; Linguapax II, Sitges, 1988; Linguapax III, Saarbrucken, Germany, 1990; Linguapax IV, Barcelona, 1994; Linguapax V, Melbourne, Australia, 1995; Linguapax VI, Ougadougou, Burkina Faso, 1999; Linguapax VII, Cochabamba, Bolivia, 1999; Linguapax VIII, Kiev, Ukraine, 2000; Linguapax IX, Barcelona, 2002.

An organising committee was set up composed of the following people: Aureli Argemí, Andoni Barreña, Susana Cuevas, Denis Cunningham, Ernest Querol, Lachman Khubchandani, Luis Enrique López, Isidor Mari, Fèlix Martí, Juan Carlos Moreno, Irmela Néu, Miguel Siguan, Jean-Jacques Van Masselar and a representative of the Forum Barcelona 2004. The technical secretariat is made up of Josep Cru and Amélie Ponce. Félix Marti is director of the dialogue.

Josep Cru presented the dialogue at the public event which, under the name of ‘The agora: a step forward’, was organised in Barcelona by the Forum Barcelona 2004.
The Linguapax 6 seminar, officially recognised as a teacher training course by the Department of Education of the Generalitat de Catalunya, is directed at teachers of the Catalan schools applying the Linguapax Programme and is intended to improve teaching practice in the fields of foreign languages and social sciences, provide new understanding of the teaching units of the Linguapax Programme, and integrate the programme activities in the transverse axis ‘Education for peace’. Dolors Reig and Miquel Martí coordinated the seminar. The sessions were held on 18 January at the home of the Institute of Catalan Studies, on 10 May in Girona, on 9 September at the premises of the UNESCO Centre of Catalonia and on 24 and 25 October at the home of the Institute of Catalan Studies.

The Centre publishes the Butlletí Linguapax Catalunya, which reports on the activity of the Catalan schools taking part in the Linguapax programme. Number 7 was published in February, number 8 was published in June. A review of number 7 appeared in the magazine Cuadernos de Pedagogía number 235, in June.

Amélie Ponce and Josep Cru prepared the teaching sheet Linguistic diversity in the world, in the framework of the production of teaching material for multilingual education and with the objective of making known linguistic diversity. This sheet has been available since June in pdf format from the Linguapax Institute website.

On 7 February Amparo Vázquez directed three Linguapax workshops at the Virolai school in Barcelona.

On 8 July Miquel Martí presented the Linguapax programme at the Rosa Sensat summer school.

The Linguapax Institute supported the document ‘Enough is enough: manifesto for fair and reasonable treatment’, promoted by Catalonia Open Enterprise and Omnium Cultural, on Catalonia’s fiscal deficit and the economic situation in Catalonia, which was made public on 26 October.

On 24 October, in collaboration with the Institute of Catalan Studies, the Linguapax Institute organised a talk by Isidor Martí on linguistic diversity, which served to present the material for the exhibition ‘Languages, endangered universes: teaching resources’, especially directed at teachers working on linguistic diversity in the classroom. The event took place in Barcelona, at the home of the Institute of Catalan Studies.