



**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Passing of the torch from Lahti (Finland) to Montreal
for the World Esperanto Congress in 2020**

MONTREAL (QC), July 22, 2019 – On July 26, 2019, at the 104th World Esperanto Congress, the symbolic flag of the World Esperanto Congress will be passed from Lahti, Finland to Montreal. The city in Quebec will host the 105th World Esperanto Congress from August 1 to August 8, 2020 at Centre Sheraton. At least one thousand people are expected in attendance in Montreal. The Congress, organized by the World Esperanto Association, is a week-long social and cultural event. It attracts between 1,000 and 3,000 Esperanto speakers from around the world for activities entirely conducted in Esperanto, eliminating language barriers between participants. This will be the first time that the event will be hosted in Montreal and only the second time in Canada.

“It is a tremendous honour for the Esperanto speakers of Montreal, of Quebec, and of Canada to host this exceptional event,” states Normand Fleury, president of the local organizing committee of the Congress. “The organization of this Congress is a testament to the vitality of the language here. Montreal, a unique place within North America in cultural and linguistic terms, was a logical choice for the return of the Congress to our continent.”

The theme of the Congress will be “The UN at 75: Dialogue and understanding in a changing world.” It aims to highlight the contribution of the United Nations to peace and development since its foundation. “Esperanto is also a means of bringing the whole world to Montreal, and providing a glimpse of what a fairer and more inclusive globalization could mean for its peoples. Linguistic democracy needs to be an integral part of our understanding of sustainable development,” says Mark Fettes, a Canadian, president of the World Esperanto Association.

The Congress will consist of conferences on a variety of subjects, ranging from history to languages and politics, but will also feature visits to local landmarks as well as excursions outside the city to acquaint participants with the region. Notably, participants will have the opportunity to discover Ontario as well as eastern Quebec through trips organized specifically for them.

Esperanto, with a rich tradition spanning 132 years, is a language developed to foster mutual understanding between peoples and respect for linguistic and cultural diversity. It does not belong to any people or country in particular. July 26 marks the anniversary of the language’s original publication by its initiator, L. L. Zamenhof, a native of Białystok in modern-day Poland.

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***This press release is issued by the local organizational committee for the 105th World Esperanto Congress: www.espeanto2020.ca
For more information or interviews: info@esperanto2020.ca***