



Declaration of  
**Universal Esperanto Association**  
(Universala Esperanto-Asocio, [UEA](http://www.uea.org))  
at the  
**8th session of the Forum on Minority Issues:**  
**“Minorities in the Criminal Justice System”**  
Palais des Nations, Geneva, 24-25 November 2015

Agenda Item 4:

*Challenges of criminal justice systems in addressing the needs and demands of minorities.*

**Address by Mr. [Stefano Keller](#),  
Head of UEA Delegation at the United Nations in Geneva.**

*Madam Special Rapporteur, Mr. President,*

My name is *Stefano Keller* and with my colleagues, I represent the *Universal Esperanto Association (UEA)*, the worldwide association of the speakers of the international language, *Esperanto*. Esperanto has been used throughout the world for the past 128 years for interethnic communication, providing a means for clear and mutual understanding, while putting everyone using it on an equal footing.

Regarding item 4 of the agenda, our association would like to draw attention to the fact that language is present everywhere, in all aspects of criminal justice, and is the foundation of exercising all the rights defined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

Our association and the speakers of Esperanto all over the world, are working to support the rights of everyone to use their mother tongue in national or local governments and schools.

Language barriers may prevent minorities from expressing themselves adequately and thereby defending or asserting their rights to a fair trial.

The Universala Esperanto-Asocio, in official relationship with the *UN* and *UNESCO*, works to defend the linguistic rights of minorities and indigenous peoples. We offer *Esperanto*, the living inter-ethnic language, which is politically neutral, powerful, *truly international*, and an easy to learn communication medium.

The theme of the [101th World Esperanto Congress](#), to be held in Nitra, Slovakia, in July 2016, with the participation of 1,000 to 2,000 people from 70 to 80 countries, will be: '[Social Justice - Linguistic Justice](#)', and the discussion will be in Esperanto.

Regarding [this Forum](#), I would like to warmly thank the interpreters for their work, including the interpretation for the deaf, which has allowed all participants to follow our discussions.

Using one's mother tongue in all areas of life is a fundamental human right, as stated in the UNESCO CONVENTION.

UNESCO will be associated in 2017 with the celebration of the centenary of the death of Ludwik Zamenhof (1859-1917), physician and linguist, the founder of Esperanto.

Finally, we draw your attention to the importance of language, in regards to the final version of the *recommendations of this Forum*.

*Dankon pro via atento* - thank you for your attention.

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*Stefano Keller with Nicole Margot and Alain Favre (UEA)*

*English translation: [Scott Turton](#)*