

IT WAS PRESENTED THE CONFERENCE “LANGUAGES AND CULTURES OF THE ROUTE OF SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA: PRESENT AND FUTURE ”

- *The conference will take place in Santiago from the 21st to the 22nd of October. It intends to be a reflection forum about the challenges that the European minority languages face every day*
- *Being today September the 26th, the European Day of Languages, the General Secretary just made the conference objectives and agenda public*
- *“Europe claims today its language diversity, and so does Galicia by praising its own language”, stated Anxo Lorenzo*

Anxo Lorenzo, General Secretary of Language Policy, presented the conference Languages and Cultures on the Route of Santiago de Compostela to the media. This conference will take place in the capital city of Galicia from the 21st to the 22nd of October. The General Secretary intentionally made this announcement to coincide with the day dedicated to the European Languages every year since it was instituted 10 years ago. According to Anxo Lorenzo, the conference is a part of a wider project that the General Secretariat, together with other Spanish and European institutions, is organizing within the European Union “Culture 2007-2013” Programme. This programme is the frame for a conference that intends to relate multilingualism and cultural diversity throughout one of the main European cohesion vehicles: the route to Santiago de Compostela.

The European Day of Languages: a date to reinforce the value of the Galician language

The Conference, that will take place at the Pedagogical Museum of Galicia, intends to be a forum for reflection and for the exhibition of the challenges that minority languages face every day in Europe. Therefore, the General Secretary reminded that “Europe claims today its language diversity, and Galicia, as one of its territories, also contributes to the rich cultural variety and wants to make the most of this day to reinforce the value of its language”.

Anxo Lorenzo explained that the Committee of Ministers of the European Council decided in 2001 to institute the 26th of September as the European Day of Languages. And this year, the General Secretariat wanted to join the commemoration of this date and the objectives engendered around it in the European context.

For this reason, the General Secretariat wanted to remind that “nowadays it is absolutely necessary to learn new languages, and besides, it is advisable to diversify the range of languages we learn, paying special attention to Galicia’s own language”. This way, Anxo Lorenzo stated that “language diversity is a feature of cultural richness that we must foster and value as a part of the European society” and that “we must work in order to progress when it comes to permanent learning of languages, in and out of our education centres”.

INFORMATION TO THE MEDIA

The conference will bring together experts in several languages

The opening speech of the conference “Languages and Cultures of the Route of Santiago de Compostela” will deal with the present and future of the Galician language and will be delivered by the professor and academician of the Galician language Xesús Alonso Montero.

On the first day several round tables will also be held. At the first one representatives of institutions devoted to the promotion of the Basque, Breton, Galician or Aragonese languages which make up the project will take part to present the model of this project of cultures and languages aimed at promoting language diversity. The professor at the University of Navarre Asier Barandiaran Amarika will give a speech on the circumstances of Basque within the European context.

On the second day the professor at the Pompeu Fabra University Vicent Climent will present the state of the art of the language diversity in the world. A round table on the promotion of minority languages by European regional institutions, with the participation of several representatives of such institutions, will also be held.

During the rest of the day, experts in several languages will present the special features of their situations. In particular, Joelle Ginestet (University of Toulouse-Le Mirail) will talk about Occitan, Alstair Walker (University of Kiel) will present Germany’s language diversity, Lena Louarn (Regional Council of Brittany) will deal with the challenges the Breton language faces and Juan José Segura Malagón (Academy of the Aragonese Language) will focus on the spelling proposal for this language. The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) will also be present as an organization for the promotion of the European language and cultural diversity.

European languages in the literature around the Route of Santiago

The closing speech will be delivered by Javier Gómez Montero (University of Kiel), who will talk about European languages in the literature around the Route of Santiago in Europe. Finally, the conference will be closed with a multilingual poetry reading of the song of Meendiño in 12 languages.

The conference will be recognized by the University of Santiago de Compostela with 1 free-choice credit and by the Galician Ministry of Education and Universities as a training activity for teachers.