

Celebration of the World Day of the Portuguese Language at the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology

The Days of Lusophony, traditionally held in May at the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology, opened with a celebration of World Day of Portuguese Language.

The cycle of international scientific, educational and cultural events is organised by the Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies and the Chair "José Saramago", established at the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology (FCMP) in 2019, with a cooperation agreement between Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" and Camões - Institute for Cooperation and Language, I.P, at Portugal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The results of the student translation competition in honour of the World Day of Portuguese Language were announced during an online event. The Dean of the Faculty of Classical and New Philology Prof. Dr. Madeleine Danova was present, as well as Portugal's Ambassador H. Exc. Ms Ana Maria Ribeiro da Silva, Brazil's Ambassador H. Exc. Ms Maria Edileuza Fontenele Reis, students, PhD students, post-doctoral students and lecturers from the speciality of Portuguese Philology. The moderator was Prof. Dr. Yana Andreeva, Head of the Portuguese Philology and Coordinator of the Chair "José Saramago" at the FCMP.

In her greeting to the participants and guests the Dean of the Faculty Prof. Dr. Madeleine Danova expressed her satisfaction for the fact that the long-standing tradition of holding the Days of Lusophony in the faculty is celebrated once again and that this year it opens for the first time with a celebration of the World Day of Portuguese Language, established by decision of UNESCO's General Assembly in November 2019. Prof. Danova noted the achievements of the students and the teaching college of the Program "Portuguese Philology" and thanked all those who make such events possible, working hard over the years for the spread of portuguese language and culture. After graduating, the students of Portuguese Philology become very successful ambassadors of Portuguese language and culture, Prof. Danova added, stressing the importance of the support of the ambassadors of the Portuguese-speaking countries in Sofia and the Camões Institute.

At the end of her welcome speech, the Dean Prof. Danova stated: "I will refer to the words of UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Culture, according to which Portuguese is a language of meetings, both on land and in the ocean. Whether it is face-to-face meetings or online, as we have gotten used to lately, it is always a real pleasure to learn a new language, try to understand a new culture or many cultures that are expressed in that language, and become part of them. And the fact that Portuguese is the language of the

Discoveries is another thing that has always attracted me to the cultures that use this beautiful language in all its variants. Therefore, I am happy to be with you today on this solemn occasion to commemorate the global importance of the Portuguese language, as well as the achievements of our students and lecturers from the program "Portuguese Philology" in our faculty."

In her greeting to the participants and organisers of the celebration, Portugal's Ambassador H. Exc. Ms Ana Maria Ribeiro da Silva, highlighted the global role in Portuguese language today and briefly presented the process of establishing the date 5 May as World Day of the Portuguese Language: "As early as 2009, the Community of Portuguese-speaking countries chose 5 May as Portuguese Language and Culture Day. Ten years later, in 2019, at the joint initiative of UNESCO's Portuguese Ambassador Antonio Sampaio da Nóvoa and his Portuguese-speaking counterparts, UNESCO declares 5 May as the World Day of the Portuguese Language. Portuguese is the official language of 9 countries and the Macao special area. It has international status and is striving to become one of the official languages of the United Nations, along with English, Arabic, Spanish, Chinese, Russian and French. Today we note first and foremost the importance and global recognition of the Portuguese language spoken on all continents by more than 265 million people, which is why we appreciate it as a common good. It belongs to everyone who speaks it – at home, at school, at work, in business, in the media, in institutions, in science, in the public space, in literature and in the arts. It belongs to everyone – without advantages and hierarchies. Today we celebrate the diversity of a pluricentric language, with multiple variants. Entering into a dialogue with Fernando Pessoa, Mia Couto argues that anyone can say "my fatherland is the Portuguese language" – both Africans and Brazilians and Timorese, because they all speak the same language differently, and its wealth derives precisely from this diversity."

In his speech, Portugal's Ambassador noted that the celebration of the World Day of Portuguese Language also pays tribute to the various language practices that transform and strengthen it, above all Portuguese-speaking literatures, but also to other types of arts that draw from it, such as cinema or theatre, as well as Portuguese connoisseurs, Portuguese language and Portuguese-speaking cultures within and outside the lusophony space. Highlighting the value of Portuguese language as a means of communication, mutual understanding and mutual respect, Portugal's Ambassador Ribeiro da Silva pointed out in her closing words the importance of this celebration around the world: " In these days, numerous events are held in 45 countries in which friends of the Portuguese language salute it. Many are encouraged or supported by the Camões - Institute for Cooperation and Language, I.P, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, Portuguese embassies and other Portuguese-speaking embassies. With this we breathe life into the World Day of Portuguese Language".

Brazil's Ambassador H. Exc. Ms Maria Edileuza Fontenele Reis also welcomed the participants and shared her personal memories of her participation in the procedure for announcing the World Day of Portuguese Language: "In 2019, I had the honour and privilege of participating as Brazil's representative to UNESCO, together with the ambassadors of all Portuguese-speaking countries, in discussing the proposal to include the date 5 May in UNESCO's calendar as the World Day of Portuguese Language. This proposal was successful and was adopted during UNESCO General Assembly's 40th session in November 2019. I note this fact because over the course of my long career as a diplomat I have had the opportunity to participate in various important moments for our countries, but this particular event fills me with particular pride." H. Exc. Ms Reis took note of the international status of the Portuguese language and outlined the efforts of the Portuguese-speaking countries to soon become an official language of the United Nations. Referring to a number of initiatives celebrating the World Day of the Portuguese Language, Ms Reis expressed her joy for attending the celebration at Sofia University, along with students, PhD students and post-doctoral students studying Portuguese language and Portuguese-speaking literatures and cultures: "You are the true ambassadors of the Portuguese language in Bulgaria. I hope one day you will become one for other parts of the world. I would like to note the pride I feel that Portuguese is the official language of all 215 million Brazilians, that it is a language that is not only widespread, but also reveals exceptional cultural diversity. I thank Sofia University for the organisation of this special event and would like to congratulate the Portuguese students and teachers again".

The results of the student translation competition dedicated to the World Day of Portuguese Language, organised by the Chair "José Saramago" at the FCMP were announced at the celebration. Prof. Dr. Vesela Chergova presented on behalf of the jury the way the competition proceeded and thanked all the participants, noting the merits of the presented competition, prepared carefully and with a flair for the language of the original and the language of translation – Portuguese and Bulgarian. Translations were assessed on the basis of four criteria: linguistic culture and portuguese perception; language culture in the Bulgarian language; social, historical and cultural parameters of translation; aesthetics and originality of translation solutions.

Teresa Vasileva's translation was awarded first prize. A second prize was awarded to Joanna Atanasova. The jury also awarded a Special Award for Original Translation, which awarded Dimitar Atanasov.

The diplomas of the awarded students were awarded virtually by the Dean of the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology, Prof. Dr. Madeleine Danova, who congratulated the finalists, organisers and all participants in the

competition and noted her satisfaction with the enthusiasm with which the students have participated in this interesting initiative of the Chair “José Saramago” at the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology at Sofia University.