

How can we help you?

the *Dutch Language Union* in brief

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The Dutch Language Union

The Dutch Language Union is an organization in which The Netherlands, Flanders and Suriname combine their strengths to serve the Dutch language, the teaching of it and its literature.

Ministers stipulate policy; members of parliament monitor it and a council of specialists gives advice. Policies are prepared and implemented by a general secretariat which works closely together with various commissions and working parties.

The aim of the Language Union is to support users of Dutch around the world so that the language can continue to be as dynamic and vigorous as it is today.

It's the language users who make the language

The Dutch language belongs to its users. They inherited Dutch from previous generations and they are the ones now responsible for this legacy. The way they speak and write Dutch has led to a standard which is constantly moving. The Dutch Language Union lays down this standard in grammar rules and dictionaries. Language advisors help language users who want to apply the standard. Only in the case of spelling does the Language Union set up the rules. And even these are based mainly on tradition and the solutions spontaneously discovered by language users when a new spelling problem arises. The rules apply to government and in education in the Dutch speaking part of Belgium, the Netherlands and in Suriname, but are also used elsewhere.

Dutch is used in every walk of life

Dutch is a language not only for use in and around the home, Dutch speakers want to use their native tongue in all aspects of their daily lives: for example socially, in politics and in science, to learn how to cook or play chess or write poetry. They go to school in Dutch; they read Dutch newspapers and magazines and ideally prefer to consult the Internet in their own language. As long as Dutch remains accessible in all of these fields, it will continue to enhance itself through its use, as it adapts to the changing world. This is particularly the case with literature, where the boundaries of Dutch are being constantly sounded out, leading to the recreation of Dutch over and over again.

Dutch has many voices

'A bird is recognized by its song, and a man by his language,' is the loose translation of a Dutch saying. Someone from Flanders sounds different to a Dutchman. The accent of a person from Suriname is different to that of a native of the Antilles. An office worker uses different words to a surgeon, as a child does compared to his grandparents. A man speaks differently than a woman. The richness of language is found in its variation. Every language user puts something of himself into how he uses Dutch. But the essential characteristics of Dutch spoken by all of these people are the same. They read the same newspapers and books; use the same dictionaries and grammar rules. They can also understand each other, albeit occasionally with some difficulty and a degree of goodwill.

Dutch and other European languages

To be a fully-fledged European citizen we need more than one language. The Dutch Language Union supports the ideal of a multilingual Europe, with multilingual Europeans. This ideal holds not only the key to economic success, but also has an important cultural value.

At the same time the voice of the Dutch language must be clearly heard in the multilingual concert given by Europe. It is important for democracy that the citizen is heard by the European government in his own language and that European legislation and documents remain available in Dutch.

Dutch is our cultural home

Language is not only a means of communication; it is also part of our cultural heritage. Through language we are able to learn, and what we learn is inevitably coloured by the language in which this learning occurs.

Language gives us contact with our contemporaries, but also with our past. Our use of language and even our spelling carry the mark of previous generations. Through the traditions embedded in our language, we still hear the voices today of writers and speakers from bygone centuries.

Dutch is our cultural home, with many rooms and windows to the outside world, and this is what we are preserving for future generations.

Dutch is going strong

Millions of Dutch speakers all over the world use the Dutch language every day. That is why our language remains so vibrant. And yet support and direction are also needed from time to time. This is where the Dutch Language Union has an important role to play.

Dutch is a living language, whose 22 million or more users are shaping it every day as they speak and write Dutch in their daily lives and pass it on to their children. Some use the language in publications: Dutch literature is blooming; journalism and science in our language are flourishing. Dutch more than holds its own on the Internet. Millions of children go to a school where Dutch is spoken and where they learn the rudiments of our language. This is how a Dutch-speaking culture evolves. Non-native speakers are also interested in Dutch. In our own language regions and far beyond, at any given moment tens of thousands of students are learning and studying Dutch.

Dutch is constantly evolving and in so doing, remains suited to the demands of our times. This is, to a great extent, an automatic process. However, every now and again, there is a need to coordinate the efforts of the various parties who are striving to maintain Dutch as a living language. It is also useful to preserve the achievements made by our language. This is best done by recording them, for example in an official history of our literature; a description of our grammar rules; an inventory of our vocabulary. The Dutch Language Union was established in 1980 in order to make this all possible across the Dutch-speaking regions, with as its motto *Nederlands zonder drempels* (Dutch without barriers). This means that each language user should receive the support he or she needs, whenever and however they want to use Dutch. In offering this support, the Language Union respects each individual's style of speech and writing.

Language development transcends borders and it is therefore advantageous for countries with a common language to work together, so that each country can then benefit from insights gained by the others. Initially the Dutch Language Union comprised of only the Netherlands and Flanders; Suriname has been an associated member since 2004. The Language Union also works closely with the Dutch Antilles and Aruba. Together we are investing in the future of our language. After all, cooperation can help us achieve so much more.

The Language Union's most important tasks are the language itself, Dutch in digital applications, the teaching in and of Dutch, literature and encouraging reading, and the position of Dutch in Europe and around the world.

The Dutch Language Union operates as follows:

- Policy is determined by the *Comité van Ministers*: a commission comprising the Dutch and Flemish ministers for education and culture, who are joined by a representative from Suriname.
- The *Interparlementaire Commissie*: an inter-parliamentary commission comprising Dutch and Flemish representatives who oversees the policy.
- The *Raad voor de Nederlandse Taal en Letteren*: the Council for Dutch Language and Literature, comprising experts and prominent language users who advise the policy makers.
- The *Algemeen Secretariaat*: the General Secretariat which prepares and implements policy, working closely with individuals and organizations from the language regions and beyond.

This brochure aims to give the user of Dutch an impression of what the Language Union can do for them, as well as provide the general reader with an introduction to the vast range of activities and services of this unique organization.

1. Language is a tool

For anyone using Dutch regularly, whether as their native or second language, or possibly as a foreign language; for all those who speak and write Dutch, in their personal life or for their work, the Language Union has developed tools which can help.

Answering linguistic questions

However good someone's Dutch may be, they will inevitably have the occasional doubt: a sentence which doesn't sound right; a phrase or expression which could cause a misunderstanding; the spelling of an unusual word or a foreign place name. The Language Union website and language advisory service provide a quick and reliable answer to such questions.

Language advice

The Language Union regularly invites experienced language advisors from the Netherlands and Flanders to jointly consider questions generated by language users. During these meetings the experts attempt to draw up unanimous advice, based on practical language usage and existing reference sources. The results are collated in a clear reference file which is available free of charge to all users. It is possible to search in the subject content list or via the useful search engine.

taaladvies.net

Linguistic questions

If the answer to any given linguistic problem cannot be found, the Language Union will still help. Questions can be sent via the *Taaladviesoverleg* (Language Advisory Panel) website and our language advisors will provide an answer within five working days.

taaladvies.net/vraag

Wordlist

One of the responsibilities of the Dutch Language Union is to record the correct spelling of words for use by government and in education. This official spelling, which is recorded in the *Leidraad* (Guidelines) and *Woordenlijst van de Nederlandse Taal* (Wordlist of the Dutch Language), is applied by most language users. This spelling has also found its place in business, for example in publishing, resulting in valuable uniformity in publications.

Spelling is no simple matter. Words which we deal with on a daily basis present few problems. However, as our language is constantly evolving, there are always words where even experienced writers struggle. The Language Union ensures that such words are collated for inclusion in the following edition of the Wordlist, which is published every ten years, not because the spelling is changing, but simply to show how new words should be spelt.

The Dutch Language Union works together with the makers of dictionaries and producers of software for automatic spellchecking. Once their products have been checked, they can receive a spelling hallmark, so that users know they can rely on these tools as far as the official spelling is concerned.

The Guidelines and Wordlist can be accessed easily and free of charge online via the Language Union site. There is also a useful tool available to enable users to look up a word in the official spelling from their Internet browser.

woordenlijst.org

Geographical names

Most geographical names are not difficult to write, even foreign ones. Users tend to know when to use the foreign name (Mont Blanc, Calais) or a Dutch version (*Parijs*, *Oostenrijk* for Paris and Austria). But if you don't use a word regularly you might well doubt whether the Philippines is spelt

Filipijnen or *Filippijnen*, and should it be *Kenia* or *Kenya*. The names of places in regions with a different alphabet are the most difficult of all to write: Is it *Kabul*, *Kaboul* or *Kaboe*? *Qatar* or *Quatar*?

On the initiative of the Dutch Language Union a commission of specialists draws up suggestions, so that foreign geographical names are spelt uniformly. This list is used in several atlases, maps, and also by the media and is available free of charge via the Internet.

taaladvies.net/taal/aardrijkskundige_namen

Grammar

With support from the Dutch Language Union the extensive grammar rules of modern-day Dutch have been laid down in the *Algemene Nederlandse Spraakkunst (ANS)*, (General Dutch Grammar). ANS has been drawn up by specialists in their field, making it the definitive reference work on Dutch grammar.

The electronic version of this printed grammar book is available free of charge via the Internet, with a comprehensive index of terms, as well as words and expressions covered.

www.let.ru.nl/ans

Terminology

Most terms in daily use have more than one word or expression, and the majority of language users understand what these words mean. Things are different in the case of professional terms. In numerous fields every tool, every action has its own particular name. The *NedTerm* website is an invaluable tool for anyone who uses terminology, providing useful information and documentation. The *Steunpunt Nederlandstalige Terminologie* (Dutch Terminology Helpdesk) is the main port of call for users with questions or requests regarding terminology, offering general advice as well as a tailor-made service for companies and organizations, translators, terminologists, teachers and experts in various fields.

nedterm.org

Dutch dictionaries

The *Instituut voor Nederlands Lexicologie (INL)* (Institute for Dutch Lexicography) in Leiden and Antwerp collates and studies Dutch words, enhances them with various additional information and saves them in databanks which can be used to make dictionaries. INL is an independent foundation under the auspices of the Dutch Language Union. The jewel in the INL crown is the *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal*, WNT, (Dictionary of the Dutch Language). This largest dictionary in the world describes the vocabulary from 1500 to 1976. In addition to the WNT the *Vroegmiddele Nederlands woordenboek*, covering the early Middle Ages, is also available for use and will soon be joined by the *Oudnederlands woordenboek* and the *MiddelNederlands woordenboek*, which deal with Old and Middle Dutch respectively. Work is currently underway on the *Algemeen Nederlands Woordenboek*, (General Dutch Dictionary) of modern-day Dutch. This will be a digital dictionary to be published on the Internet in installments, the last of which will be completed in 2019.

All major historical dictionaries produced by the INL can be accessed free of charge via the INL website.

www.inl.nl/

Translation dictionaries

Whilst the Language Union doesn't publish dictionaries itself, it has supported the publication of bilingual dictionaries for languages which are of less commercial interest, such as Dutch-Arabic and Dutch-Norwegian. On the Language Union website you will find a list of translations of the word Dutch, behind which is a list of the translation dictionaries available.

taalunieversum.org/taal/nederlands

Did you know ...?

Dutch is spoken by over 15 million people in the Netherlands, 6 million in Flanders and 400,000 in Suriname, making it the European Union's seventh most widely-spoken language. With 22 million speakers, Dutch is larger than for example Swedish (9 million speakers) or Greek (15 million speakers).

On a worldwide scale Dutch ranks a long way behind Chinese (with 870 million native speakers), Spanish (322 million) and English (309 million). And yet on the list of some 6,000 languages spoken around the world Dutch ranks somewhere between 45th and 50th place.

2. Dutch on your PC

We may not realize it, but it once looked as though computers would only be able to communicate in English. These days lots of software is also available in Dutch and there are even programs which can help you to read, write, summarize or even translate Dutch texts.

Dutch is going digital

Digital tools are becoming increasingly important in our everyday lives: we surf the World Wide Web with the help of intelligent search engines; read texts produced by translation programs; listen to automatically generated speech from telephone information lines; follow instructions spoken to us by our navigation system in the car or on the bike; have our emails read out on our mobile phone by a computer.

Essential Resources for Language and Speech Technology (*STEVIN*)

Companies involved in developing new applications, or looking to improve the old ones, need new language resources: enormous collections of spoken and written Dutch with linguistic information regarding meaning and usage. Here too the Language Union plays an important role in stimulating and supporting the creation of essential resources. Via the Language Union the Dutch and Flemish governments are currently investing in the *STEVIN (Spraak- en Taaltechnologische Essentiële Voorzieningen in het Nederlands)* grants programme, aimed at producing Essential Resources for Language and Speech Technology. The Language Union is making these new digital language resources available via the *Centrale voor Taal- and Spraaktechnologie (TST-Centrale)* (Dutch HLT Agency).

stevin-tst.org

TST-Centrale (The Dutch HLT Agency)

The Dutch HLT Agency is part of the Institute for Dutch Lexicology (*INL*) and gives researchers and companies access to a complete range of digital resources for Dutch, including written and spoken corpora (bodies of texts in which the researcher can look up individual words), lists of Belgian-Dutch words, spelling lists, Dutch language software and so much more. Take a look for yourself at the range of products available for education, research and development purposes.

tst-centrale.org

Did you know ...?

Each year more than 350,000 users access *taaladvies.net*, the Dutch Language Union website, which provides free advice on a whole range of linguistic topics. The site answers more than 16,000 language-related questions annually.

The most comprehensive dictionary in the world is the *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* (Dictionary of the Dutch Language), published in instalments between 1864 and 1998. It consists of forty large volumes with a total of 91,610 columns on 45,805 pages. In it 400,000 words are discussed. The definitions are illustrated by 1.7 million quotations. The dictionary contains approximately 50 million words. These are all record-breaking figures. The WNT is available online free of charge.

3. Education: the future of the Dutch language

Whether Dutch remains an effective means of communication will depend to a great extent on education. The Language Union not only provides help for native speakers, students of Dutch and their teachers at home and abroad, anyone learning Dutch as a second language can access the numerous services for advice and support.

Sharing best practices

Although the Netherlands, Flanders and Suriname each has their own education policy, there is a great deal of common ground and mutual interest, in particular as far as teaching in Dutch is concerned, as well as of course the teaching of Dutch itself. This is why it's important for policy makers and teachers, teacher trainers, education inspectors and advisors to be able to look at each other's work and share best practices on a regular basis.

Education terminology

The education structures of the Netherlands, Flanders and Suriname differ from one another and consequently so does the terminology used. Where the education systems do however share common ground, different terms are often used for more or less the same concept. Moreover, the same term could well have different meanings.

The *Taalunieversum* website provides a list of comparable terms. It gives not only a list of the most important words used in education in the Netherlands, Flanders and Suriname; it also explains any possible differences.

taalunieversum.org/onderwijs/termen

List of journals

Every month there is a considerable amount of reading material published on language education. It's almost impossible to follow it all. To help the reader, the *Taalunieversum* site also includes summaries of the key language and teaching publications. Anyone who wants to, can receive a monthly email covering the latest articles on teaching Dutch. It's then a simple step to order the complete article or publication.

taalunieversum.org/onderwijs/tijdschriften

Evolution in language education

Which language skills does a teacher need in order to be able to stand in front the class? How widespread is the problem of illiteracy and what can be done to prevent it? What impact are new teaching methods having on language education? Is tailor-made education the way forward for anyone learning Dutch as a second language from scratch? What role can language and speech technology play in teaching language? These and numerous other subjects are addressed in forums, convened regularly by the Language Union, for experts from the Netherlands and Flanders, to encourage an exchange of ideas and stimulate cooperation. The results of these discussions are published in reports and on web pages, and are often presented at conferences organized by the Language Union. More information can be found on the *Taalunieversum* site.

taalunieversum.org/onderwijs/publicaties

Educational research databank

Research into language education is being carried out at numerous institutions across our language region. The results are published in books and journals, however these are not always available to people in the field. The *Taalunieversum* site includes a databank of summaries and the results of research projects carried out since 1969. It's possible to search by subject, author or title.

taalunieversum.org/onderwijs/onderzoek

Language forum

How can we improve the language skills of pupils with learning difficulties, so that the chance of them succeeding at school is increased? This is just one of the major issues considered in the *Taalforum* (Language Forum), together with a whole range of related topics, by experts and people involved in education.

Here, information on language and learning difficulties is collated into concise answers to simple, but salient questions. Each question is linked to related subjects, providing a comprehensive and accessible database on this important topic. The Language Forum not only places the issue of how we can help anyone with language and learning difficulties firmly on the public agenda, it is also sets this challenge in a broader perspective.

taalforum.org

Did you know ...?

Around 10,000 foreign students are studying Dutch at 220 universities in 40 different countries across the globe. In the area around the border with Germany over 20,000 pupils are being taught Dutch at school. In northern France this is 8,000 and in southern and eastern Belgium, hundreds of thousands of Walloons are learning Dutch as part of their regular schooling.

The Dutch Language Union is an intergovernmental organization set up in 1980 under a treaty between the Netherlands and Belgium. Suriname has been an associate member since 2004. The original aim of the Language Union was 'integration of the Netherlands and the Flemish community in Belgium in the field of Dutch language and literature'. Nowadays the emphasis is less on integration, and increasingly on cooperation for the benefit of the language user, as well as on the preservation of the linguistic and literary heritage.

4. Dutch: a world language

Whether you live in Georgia, Namibia or the United States, Dutch offers a window into another world. It's possible to study Dutch either as a major or minor subject in over forty countries, and thousands of students across the globe enjoy the challenge.

Dutch as a second, or foreign language

There are many ways for foreigners to learn Dutch. Anyone with native language other than Dutch who settles in our language region learns the language as their 'second language'. In the majority of cases the teacher is Dutch, as is the environment. Students who are learning or studying Dutch outside of the language region are referred to as learning Dutch as a 'foreign language'. The teacher is often someone who is not a native Dutch speaker, and students are less immersed in the material.

Taaluniecentrum NVT (The Language Union Centre for Dutch as a Foreign Language)

This centre contains information for teachers on methods for teaching Dutch as a foreign language. Here they can access details of teaching materials and consult the materials for themselves; they can get advice, take top-up courses or attend conferences. Promotional events are organized and tools are available for testing students and presenting them with a certificate on completion of their course. The centre is based in Brussels (above the Kaai Theater, Sainctelettesquare 20, 1000 Brussels)

taaluniecentrum-nvt.org

Support for Dutch Studies abroad

The Language Union provides grants to foreign universities offering studies in Dutch. Financial support is available to set up a course, buy books and journals, as well as to equip classrooms. The Language Union also gives additional support to help improve the quality of courses offered, by for example providing extra training for teachers. The website page *Neerlandistiek Wereldwijd* (Dutch Studies Around the World) shows the latest picture, with a list of Dutch specialists in various fields attached to academic establishments around the world.

taalunieversum.org/neerlandistiek

Dutch summer courses

Anyone learning Dutch abroad should take a walk round Amsterdam or Antwerp and visit the Rijksmuseum or Rubenshuis at least once during their studies. For many students the Language Union makes this possible through the Dutch Language and Culture summer courses it organizes every year in the Netherlands and Flanders. For three weeks students are immersed in the Dutch language and everything that goes with it. These courses attract over three hundred students to the Low Countries each summer.

taalunieversum.org/taalunie/zomercursus_voor_studenten

Dutch in Europe

The Language Union is committed to promoting the use of Dutch in European institutions. In 2002 the Dutch Language Union's *Comité van Ministers* (ministerial commission) drew up a declaration regarding Dutch as a working language in the European institutions. As the use of the languages of all the member states for every meeting would lead to huge costs, it is important that language use within the European institutions be handled pragmatically. The languages used should depend on the needs of a particular meeting.

It may for example be more beneficial to use all the languages in a general council of ministers than in the European Parliament or in technical working groups considering specific issues. For example

the need to interpret a meeting from and into Dutch on the length of fishing nets in the Mediterranean is less evident than would be the case for a meeting on fishing quotas in the North Sea.

There is also a difference between oral and written communication. It is for example logical for European Union legislation and guidelines to be available in all the official languages, as all European citizens need to be able to read and understand them.

EFNIL

The Dutch Language Union is one of the driving forces behind the European Federation of National Language Institutions (EFNIL), an organization of 'Language Unions' from various European countries. Within EFNIL members exchange information about languages and language policy, and draw up recommendations for European language politics. EFNIL has also set up its own projects: a databank of information on the status and use of the various European languages, and a new method for producing bilingual dictionaries.

efnil.org

Did you know ...?

Dutch dialects are sometimes classified into groups: *Hollands* (High Dutch), West-Flemish/Zeeuws (Zeeland), East-Flemish, Brabants, Limburgs and Saxon. Within these groups many of the towns and villages have their own dialect. Friesian is not a Dutch dialect but is considered to be a separate language.

It's hard to tell how many words make up the Dutch language. Some experts estimate the number to be more than 1 million; others go as high as 5 million. The *Taalbank* (Language bank) collects all the words and word forms - *zijn: ben, bent, is, was, waren...* (to be: am, are, is, was, were...) - found in new texts. The collection already includes more than 60 million different forms.

The oldest known Dutch word is *vadam* ('*wad*') meaning mudflat. It originates from approximately 100 AD. The oldest known Dutch sentence is a construction which, according to 6th century Salic Law, had to be spoken in order to free a slave: *maltho thi afrio lito* ('*ik zeg je: ik maak je vrij, halfvrije*'), which can be translated as 'I tell you: I free you, half free'. The famous short sentence *hebban olla vogala nestas hagunnan hinase hic enda thu wat unbidan we nu* ('*Alle vogels zijn nesten begonnen behalve jij and ik; waar wachten we nog op*'), or in English: 'all the birds have started building their nests except for you and I; what are we still waiting for' could be Old Dutch, but it is perhaps more likely to be Old English. The writer wrote it around 1100 on a piece of parchment to try out his goose quill.

As the Netherlands and Belgium form part of the European Union, Dutch is one of the 23 official languages of the EU. Dutch is for example spoken in the European Parliament. In its day-to-day business the European Commission uses only three working languages - English, French and German. Policy documents and legislation are drafted in one or more of these languages. It is only at a later stage that the texts are translated into the other official languages.

Dutch is also one of the four official languages of the Union of South American States, Unasur, which includes Suriname.

5. Literature knows no borders

Dutch-language literature is becoming increasingly accessible to readers throughout the world, as works by more and more Dutch and Flemish authors are made available in other languages. Here too the Language Union is playing its part. And of course we're not forgetting readers in our own language region either.

For the reader and the author

Reading is the prerequisite for a flourishing literary and linguistic culture. In its literature policy the Language Union aims to include initiatives which are of interest to reader and author, translator and publisher. The *Inktaap*, for example, encourages young readers to pick up new works of literature, discuss them and judge them. The *Inktaap* award is then presented to the author whose work the readers prefer.

Language Union literature and reading policy is complementary to national policy, and focuses on cooperation between the Netherlands and Flanders and, where appropriate, also with Suriname.

Boekenzoeker (Book Finder)

There is a book to match every emotion: happy or sad; angry or excited. Every book is looking for a reader. The *Boekenzoeker* (Book Finder) is where books and readers meet. Young people from 8 to 18 get 'made-to-measure' reading tips. The Book Finder is much more than just a catalogue of books; it is the website when it comes to providing readers with advice on what to read. Just like you would expect from a teacher or a librarian, only with knowledge of so many more books than your teacher or librarian could ever hope to read.

The Book Finder is a joint project of the Language Union and the Dutch and Flemish *Stichting Lezen* (Reading Foundation) and the *Vereniging van Openbare Bibliotheken* (Association of Public Libraries).

taalunieversum.org/literatuur/boekenzoeker

Digitale bibliotheek der Nederlandse letteren (Digital library of Dutch literature)

The dbnl foundation has been making literature and books available via the Internet free of charge since 1999, thanks to support from the Dutch Language Union. The range includes complete works of literature as well as textbooks, reference books and periodicals. One of its more significant projects has been the publication of old versions of the Bible on the Internet.

www.dbnl.org

The history of Dutch literature

Under a Language Union initiative nine writers are compiling a comprehensive history of Dutch literature. The first volumes appeared in 2006 and the series will be completed in 2010. We will then have a complete new reference work on our literature for the first time in fifty years. This seven-volume work brings together knowledge of our literary history and enhances this with new insights.

taalunieversum.org/literatuur/literatuurgeschiedenis/

Inktaap children's literary prize for authors

The *Inktaap* is a literary prize awarded by pupils in their final years of secondary education. The project is aimed at young people all across the Dutch language region: the Netherlands, Flanders and Suriname. Pupils read the winning books of three major literary prizes and choose their favourite. They give the reasons for their choice to other readers in their school and present their opinion on an Internet forum and during a final ceremony. At the awards ceremony the pupils from

the Netherlands and Flanders meet each other and the nominated authors, and the *Inktaap* is presented to the winner. A separate ceremony is held in Suriname for pupils there.

taalunieversum.org/literatuur/de_inktaap

Literary magazines

In cooperation with the foundations for the production of Dutch literature, the Dutch Language Union has decided to set up a web portal to provide an Internet platform for literary magazines in the Netherlands and Flanders. The site will be a showcase for journals and periodicals, and include a list of all titles, with an archive and newsfeed service. It will also serve to encourage debate and stimulate the distribution of the publications. The website is expected to go online in early 2009.

literairetijdschriften.eu

Literary translation

Literary culture is becoming increasingly international. Dutch translations are now the gateway to the world for many readers and, at the same time, translations from Dutch provide foreign readers with access to our language region. However, in order to have accurate translations, we need good translators and, unfortunately, these are in short supply. Working together with the literary foundations in the Netherlands and Flanders, the Dutch Language Union *Expertisecentrum Literair Vertalen* (Centre for Literary Translation) supports the enhancement of expertise in the field of literary translation into and from Dutch.

literairvertalen.org

Prijs der Nederlandse Letteren (Dutch Literature Award)

Every three years the Dutch Language Union's *Comité van Ministers* (ministerial commission) awards the *Prijs der Nederlandse Letteren*. This prize is awarded to authors of major literary works originally written in Dutch. The winning author receives his prize from a member of the Belgian or Dutch royal family. The award can be made for an author's complete works or for an individual work in the genres poetry, narrative prose or drama.

www.prijsderletteren.org/

The Language Union Toneelschrijfprijs (Award for Playwrights)

The Language Union *Toneelschrijfprijs* is awarded each year to a playwright whose work was originally written in Dutch, with the prerequisite that the play was first staged during the previous season. The aim of the award is to encourage Dutch-language drama and playwriting.

taalunieversum.org/literatuur/taalunie_toneelschrijfprijs

Did you know ...?

Dutch has been the official language of government in the Netherlands since 1995, when the *Algemeen Bestuursrecht* (General Administrative Law) was changed. Since then all governmental organizations have to use the Dutch language, unless another language 'is more appropriate and the interests of others are not prejudiced disproportionately'.

In Friesland Friesian is also an official language, alongside Dutch.

Papiamentu and English are also official languages in the Dutch Antilles. On Aruba the official languages are Dutch and English.

Since the language legislation of 1963 there have been three language regions in Belgium, each with its own official language for government, in schools and for the judiciary. These are Dutch in Flanders, French in Wallonia and German in East Cantons. In the fourth region, the capital, Brussels, the government uses both Dutch and French.

6. We will keep in touch

The work of the Dutch Language Union is never over. New initiatives are happening all the time. So that you don't miss anything there's a website, a digital magazine, a newsletter, a newspaper and an annual Language Union debate. The Language Union also attends various conferences, workshops and events organized by others throughout the year.

Taalunieversum

The taalunieversum.org website is the Language Union's principle means of communication with Dutch users across the world. It covers all the activities and gives access to the complete range of information available from the Language Union.

taalunieversum.org

The language magazine Taalschrift

Taalschrift is the monthly digital magazine for the general public, with reports, discussions, web tips and questions on language and language policy. Around 2000 people receive an email telling them about *Taalschrift* every month. The *Taalschrift* site receives between 600 and 700 visitors daily.

taalschrift.org

E-newsletter

The digital newsletter is an ideal way to keep up to date with Language Union activities and projects. Anyone can register to receive the free bi-monthly updates.

taalunieversum.org/nieuwsbrief

Taalpeil

Around 250,000 copies are produced of the Language Union's annual newspaper, *Taalpeil*. Each year the Language Union commissions a survey for the paper on a specific aspect of Dutch. The results are checked against the opinions of scholars and experts and presented in the *Taalpeil* in such a way, that the material not only makes interesting general reading, but is also suitable for classroom use. Previous issues are also available on the Internet.

taalpeil.org

The Language Union debate

The Language Union debate is used to stimulate discussion on a socially-relevant aspect of Dutch. This annual event is organized by the Language Union, with active contributions from the Inter-parliamentary Commission and the Council for Dutch Language and Literature. The debates are held alternately in the DeBuren Dutch-Flemish House in Brussels and at the Flemish Cultural Centre, the Brakke Grond, in Amsterdam.

taalunieversum.org/taalunie/debat

You can find more information on the various activities and projects supported by the Dutch Language Union and order Language Union publications on taalunieversum.org/en. We are constantly increasing the amount of our material available in English; however, if you are unable to find the information you are looking for, please let us know.

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