



Speech by

Vera El Khoury Lacoueilhe  
Chairperson of the Executive Board

at the opening of

Russian Language Day was established in 2010 by the United Nations and the 6<sup>th</sup> June was chosen to coincide with the birthday of Alexander Pushkin, Russia's greatest poet and the father of modern Russian literature.

Language is one of the most inclusive forms of art we know.

The historical significance and rich literary heritage of the Russian language is reflected through the works of iconic writers like Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Boulgakov and others who left an indelible mark on global literature.

But other notable writers have also made significant contributions to literature in Russian.

To cite just a few:

The Armenian writer, **Narine Abgaryan**, famous for an autobiographical novel and named among the brightest authors in Europe.

**Chingiz Abdullayev**, a well-known Azerbaijani author who writes primarily in Russian and is famous for his detective novels, which have gained popularity throughout the Russian-speaking world.

**Olzhas Suleimenov** who I had the honour to work with when he was Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Kazakhstan to UNESCO, is a celebrated Kazakh writer and poet who writes in Russian. His works often explore themes of Kazakh identity and history, blending them with broader Russian contexts.

**Chingiz Aitmatov**, though primarily known for writing in Kyrgyz, also wrote extensively in Russian. His book, "Djamila" was described by Aragon as "the most beautiful love story of the world". DV#V5p