

Arbëresh survival in the 21st theme – *forum among stakeholders*

Following the First Conference on Arbëresh Studies in 2021, a series of events on rather special themes, as well as research into more specific topics, including fieldtrips in South Italy, the Center for Research and Publication on Arberesh (CRPA) organizes the 2nd Conference of Arbëresh Studies, which will be held on 4-5 September 2023, in Tirana. The conference aims to discuss and evaluate the following:

- i) The concerns of linguists in Europe and beyond, regarding the minority and regional languages;*
- ii) the actual trends of the Arberesh language, especially in the last decades;*
- iii) an open discussion with all stakeholders, to share and evaluate the experience and expertise so far;*
- iv) cooperation with European and international institutions, centers regarding the language policies for the preservation, support and revitalization of Arberesh.*

In the early 1990s, linguists found accelerated rates of loss of minority languages, which they then defined as a linguistic disaster. By the year 2100, it is believed that 50 to 80 percent of the world's languages will be extinct. This tendency continued to be confirmed, with minor changes, even in the years that followed. But in the meantime, organized efforts have begun to face this threat. Internationally, there are a large number of institutions, linguists and researchers involved in this new subfield of linguistics, there are international scientific networks and regular conference groups. UNESCO has also shown its commitment through several documents, and continued efforts. In the Atlas of Endangered Languages, Arberish appears as 'definitely endangered'. The recent decades have seen increasing interest, studies and special attention. In the course of these efforts, the Council of Europe approved the European Charter of Minority and Regional Languages, and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

It has become clearer that time is passing quickly and the chances to build strategies and efforts for the survival of the language are narrowing. There has been but little research into Arberesh, and discussions among the community, policy-makers, researchers, activists, in the host and kin country, have become a necessity. This conference aims to encourage broad discussion, evaluation of the challenge of language survival, the relevance of the world's crisis regarding the endangered languages, the approaches adopted and applied in Europe and elsewhere to take the necessary steps. In view of the obvious emergency regarding the time for action, considering the present findings and research approaches, *this conference invites local and international researchers who have done research into the general framework of endangered languages, and more specifically into the present use of Arberesh, important policy-makers, researchers in specialized institutions or local researchers and activists, stakeholders within the Arberesh community: local government representatives, teachers and activists.*

The intended impact is that the stakeholders mainly among the Arber community, Italian institutions, local and foreign researchers, Albanian institutions in the policy-making or academic sphere, avail the data and evaluations from studies so far, from the examples of good practice and the models that the scientific world has conceived, so that efforts can be initiated - starting from the development of the language policies for the support of Arbërishte (and variants of Albanian that are threatened. More specifically, we hope that such commitment may lead to, or provide for

actions and concrete steps for education of and in Arbëresh, protection and then expanding the spheres of language use, encouraging initiatives, and especially through new technologies, guaranteeing space in media and mass communication, social networks, etc.