



**CEATL**  
European Council of Literary  
Translators' Associations



Parlement européen



**Rencontres  
européennes de la  
traduction littéraire**

**Strasbourg**

**2-4 October 2024**

*European  
Conference on  
Literary Translation*

**Report**





*Organised by CEATL from October 2 to 4, 2024 in Strasbourg, the first European Conference on Literary Translation was hosted by the European Parliament as part of the programme of Strasbourg UNESCO World Book Capital.*

The aim of the conference was to build on the valuable European report *Translators on the Cover* (2022), to share its findings and recommendations, and to extend the work of reflection and data collection on the profession of literary translator and on ways to improve the circulation of works in Europe.

As the report states: “Everyone has the right to discover literature and create stories. [...] It is a collective responsibility for the entire book chain, from creator to reader.” It was in this collective spirit that we decided to organise this event, in partnership with a dozen organisations representing all those involved in translation in Europe and beyond: translators, but also writers, publishers, booksellers, translation support organisations, trainers, book fairs. We would like to thank them all for their help, as well as all the institutional and financial partners who have made this event possible.

Over three days, plenary sessions (videos of which are available online), workshops and more festive moments provided an opportunity to strengthen existing networks and forge new links, share best practices and exchange views on all the issues essential to the present and future of our trade: working conditions, support for linguistic and editorial diversity, artificial intelligence, freedom of expression.

This brochure provides an overview of this unique event, which brought together nearly 80 speakers from some 30 European countries, 350 on-site participants and 1,500 professionals via videoconference.

It reflects the richness of the exchanges and testifies to the expertise and commitment of those involved in literary translation.

A useful guide for the translator community, this brochure provides a *tour d’horizon* of the current landscape, and contains a wealth of resources. It is also a tool for reflection and communication for all our partners who play a role in promoting the profession and the circulation of books in Europe and around the world.

The conference once again demonstrated the irreplaceable value of human exchanges “in the flesh”, and the power of sharing experiences in the face of the challenges of our times. Let us hope it can be the first in a happy series of regular events in the European cultural calendar, and a driving force for many individual and collective initiatives.

Francesca Novajra  
CEATL President

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## On CEATL's website you will find:

Video of the plenary sessions in the language of your choice  
(German, English, French)

Slideshows accompanying the workshops and panels

Programme and report in .pdf format

Speakers' biographies

[www.ceatl.eu/achievements/strasbourg-conference](http://www.ceatl.eu/achievements/strasbourg-conference)

*The Pavillon Joséphine, in Strasbourg's Parc de l'Orangerie near the European Parliament, provided a beautiful setting for the opening of the conference. Francesca Novajra, President of CEATL, Anne Mistler, Deputy Mayor of Strasbourg, in charge of Arts and Culture, and Nicolas Georges, Director of the Department for Books and Reading at the French Ministry of Culture, welcomed participants.*

"A year ago, this conference was just an ambitious project," says **Francesca Novajra**, delighted that this utopia has become a reality in the polyglot border city of Strasbourg. She recalls the fundamental role of literary translators, "defenders of equality and ambassadors of cultural and linguistic diversity", but also "bulwarks against fear, violence and prejudice born of ignorance of the other". Welcoming the progress made by European policies to protect creators' rights, she points to the need to "give dignity to these professions and safeguard them as a heritage of humanity, defending them against the usurpation of AI", and calls for better cooperation between the various players in the publishing industry and national and European institutions to ensure "a fair and balanced, rich and diversified publishing ecosystem, human-centric and of high quality".

**Anne Mistler** hails an outstanding programme, and warmly thanks the translators, who are essential to the discovery of other literatures. "You greatly help to us to Read Our World!" she notes, referring to the title of the project that earned Strasbourg the title of UNESCO World Book Capital for 2024. "In our cosmopolitan city, translation has long occupied a central place in our minds", she assures us, recalling the presence of the *D'une Langue Vers l'Autre* festival and evoking the many book-related events that will mark this capital year – "so many essential moments for freedom of thought and expression".

**Nicolas Georges** is happy to open this conference, which is an extension of France's actions in favor of translation: President Macron's speech at Frankfurt Book Fair in 2017, the inauguration of the Cité de la langue française in Villers-Cotterêts, the creation of a Grand Prix de la Traduction, and more. The Ministry intends to provide a national framework conducive to the circulation of literature, both in terms of imports and exports. But France is also taking action at the European level, and Nicolas Georges is delighted to see the *Translators on the Cover* report discussed. France has worked hard to ensure that the issue of translation, multilingualism and cultural diversity appears on the agenda of the Council of the European Union. May the report's recommendations be translated into concrete action to gain recognition for the beautiful and essential profession of translator; for, as José Saramago once said, "writers make national literature, while translators make universal literature".

**“Writers make national literature, while translators make universal literature.”**

**José Saramago**



# Translation – Towards the Shore of Yet Another Tomorrow

With writer **Georgi Gospodinov** and his translators from Bulgarian **Magdalena Pytlak** (Polish), **Milena Selimi** (Albanian), **Angela Rodel** (English), **María Vútova** (Spanish) and **Marie Vrinat-Nikolov** (French), who orchestrated the inaugural night.



Georgi Gospodinov, winner of the 2023 International Booker Prize for *Time Shelter* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson), gives a reading of an unpublished text, “Translation – Towards the Shore of Yet Another Tomorrow”, before a joyous exchange in Bulgarian with his translators and a memorable polyphonic reading that gives voice to the diversity of European languages.

“You go ahead and translate, I’ll write it afterwards”, jokes Georgi Gospodinov in a text in which he reflects on translation, drawing on his experience with his translators and the friendship that binds them. He returns to the etymology of the word *translation* (*translatus*, the act of carrying from one place to another, of transferring), which gives the profession an aura of contraband. Going back to the beginnings of his writing, he confides how, as a child, transcribing a dream, “translating” it from the depths of the night onto a blank sheet of paper, enabled him to chase away a recurring nightmare. “I’ve always believed that literature can do simple yet vitally important things” – like taming the beasts of fear or putting off death for one more night.

And this power comes through emotion, through empathy, which must unite writer and translator, Gospodinov emphasizes, thanking all translators for their mastery of the art of empathy, an art that is imperative for our shared survival: “We cannot close our eyes to the times we live in – a time of war, populism and aggression. A time of false narratives about humanity and the world... The world today has many throbbing points of pain and cataclysm, thus translation of the voices from those places, the translation of stories from those places is vitally important, I daresay even life-saving.”<sup>1</sup>



1 - Full text in French (translated by Marie-Vrinat Nikolov) and English (translated by Angela Rodel) on CEATL’s website.

**“ You go ahead and translate, I’ll write it afterwards.”**

**Georgi Gospodinov**

“He’s the ideal writer,” says Marie Vrinat-Nikolov, his long-time French translator. “A writer who doesn’t just answer questions, but asks for them. And who sometimes even makes his translators his creative accomplices! For *Time Shelter*, a masterpiece of humour and inventiveness in which each European nation is invited by referendum to choose its happiest decade, the author polled his translators to elect these idealized eras, and each conducted her own investigation. Translated into over 40 languages, the novel has won several international prizes, including the International Booker Prize, shared between Georgi Gospodinov and his English translator, Angela Rodel.

**The International Booker Prize is awarded equally to the writer and to the translator in English - an example to be followed by all foreign literature prizes!**

Each of the translators recalls anecdotes associated with translating the novelist’s works. The conversation flows with ease, the warmth of the exchange is palpable, and everyone in the room has a smile on their face. Small pleasures along the way, but also mistakes, difficulties linked to the transition from one culture to another: everything can be overcome with talent and a great deal of humility and humour. Sometimes the untranslatable can be found in a small word, for example ‘тъга’, pronounced ‘teuga’, or, according to the chorus of translators, an emotion “kept in the throat”, “different from Portuguese *saudade*”, “lighter than German *Schmerz*”, “a bit like Italian *melanconia*”, but “far from French *tristesse*, which implies a reason to be sad whereas ‘melancholy doesn’t need a reason to be’”. To be sure, a dive into *The Physics of Sorrow* is highly recommended!



**Georg Häusler**, *Director of Culture, Creativity and Sport at the European Commission (DG EAC)*, hails the participants to the Conference from Brussels at the opening of the first day's work.

"I wanted to send a strong message of support from the European Commission for your exchanges, because literary translation is a key element in the Creative Europe program. 8% of the budget of the Culture strand supports the book industry (publishers, translators and writers), and some of the projects supported will be presented to you during the conference."

"The growing precarity of workers in the cultural sector (an issue with which literary translators are very familiar) has been of concern to European authorities for some time, and examining their working conditions is one of the tasks entrusted by President Ursula von der Leyen to the new Commissioner for Culture."

"The *Translators on the Cover* report clearly shows that cooperation at European level is essential and vital when it comes to the circulation of literary works. There are many challenges ahead of us, but I have no doubt that during this new term of office you will find spokespeople in the Commission who are keen to defend the interests of the book sector, and in particular of translators."

## The journey of a translated book



As a translator of English literature into Polish (works by Angela Carter, Joseph Conrad, T.S. Eliot, Seamus Heaney, Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf, among others), General Secretary of PEN Poland, Director of the Translation Research Centre at Jagiellonian University, and curator of the Found in Translation festival in Gdańsk, **Magda Heydel** is familiar with every stage in the journey of a translated book, from the writing of the original work to the hands of the reader of the translation – a journey in which everyone has their part to play. In her keynote address, she recalls a striking episode in her research into the archives of the great writer Stanisław Barańczak.

While working on the archives of poet and translator Stanisław Barańczak, Madgda Heydel was entrusted with a box by his widow, because it "may also be of interest". Inside, she discovered correspondence between Stanisław Barańczak and Irish writer and Nobel Prize winner Seamus Heaney, whom Barańczak translated into Polish. In 1993, their friendship had given rise to the project of translating together into English the *Laments* of Jan Kochanowski, the founding father of Polish poetry in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It had "never crossed my mind that a record of this joint venture existed", admits Madga Heydel, who was amazed to discover the wealth of their fax exchanges – the materialization of this collaboration, a detailed account of the interpretation process, all the stages of publication, from the initial phase to the reception of this landmark translation. "The becoming of a translation, something that is normally invisible or hidden was there, re-enacted before my eyes."

***"Perhaps, more often than not, translators work as soloists, but they never work in a void."***

**Magda Heydel**

Madga Heydel's immersion in the correspondence allowed her to "witness the meeting of two creative minds, their mutual inspiration" and led to a sensitive reflection on the fragility of translation work, which is doomed to disappear, for "systemic and ideological" reasons, since "translators are supposed to be neutral go-betweens, 'invisible' mediators who ideally should leave no traces". And who would be interested in a translator's archives? Yet in fact these documents are a mine of information, as they "give us access to the inner structures of literary culture". By documenting the entire journey of the translated text from the writer's table to the reader's hands, the archives enable us to measure the contribution of each and every one: graphic designers, proofreaders and editors, whose expertise is invaluable. They also reveal the political underbelly of translation, the power relationships and the commercial aspect. But what they bring to light above all is the human factor, the place of emotions in this collaborative or solitary work, that they bring to light. "Emotions usually vanish from historical or critical discourse, and it is not often that they are taken into consideration in the description of the literary field, either. Here they were central. The translation of the *Laments* by Jan Kochanowski would not have happened, this book's journey would never even have started, without the friendship that united its creators."

# Being translated: the writer's perspective

Melinda Nadj Abonji, writer  
Interviewed by Tanja Petrič, translator

Born in Vojvodina (former Yugoslavia), writer and musician Melinda Nadj Abonji grew up in German-speaking Switzerland with Hungarian as her mother tongue. Tanja Petrič, who shares with her the facts that she comes from the former Yugoslavia and speaks a language labelled “small” or “minority” (Slovene), asks her about the influence of this multilingual and multicultural environment on her work.

Melinda Nadj Abonji replies that her childhood, involving silence and careful listening to understand and be understood, gave her wings. “My literature was born out of being mute for a while”, she says, and she grew up with the need to have “big ears, the most intelligent organ that exists”. This original multilingualism is the source of her curiosity about languages and the impossibility of translation.

## Finding the right word: a political issue

“How do your novels *Fly Away*, *Pigeon*<sup>1</sup> and *Schildkrötensoldat*, which are set at the end of the 20th century and evoke the themes of integration and war in the former Yugoslavia, speak to us about our present times?” asks Tanja Petrič.

“My books are always political, literature as I understand it is always political, because there is no such thing as neutral language or terms”, explains Melinda Nadj Abonji, who insists on her determination not to leave the field of terminology to politicians.

So, when a war is described as “surgical”, it is the duty of the author and the translator, as wordsmiths, to oppose and reject such inaccuracies, ambiguities or linguistic simplifications used deliberately to sow confusion.

She talks about the work she and her translators do in schools to introduce young people to the pleasure of reading, and to the importance of using precise terms to establish a good quality dialogue. Sharing the same definitions and concepts is a prerequisite for mutual comprehension, but immediate understanding between two speakers of the same language is far from self-evident! Finding the right term, being inventive and creating the right metaphors is the challenge facing the writer, and then the translator.

**“There is no such thing as neutral language or terms.”**

**Melinda Nadj Abonji**

## A dialogue between the writer and her translators

Recounting her close working relationship with her translators, Melinda says she is “impressed by their creativity” and “grateful for everything they teach her”. Tanja teases her, projecting a cartoon by Sven Nordqvist, in which writer and translator both claim to have written the text praised by the journalist.

But Melinda rejects any idea of hierarchy between translator and author, both of whom are writers and engage in dialogue. There is no doubt in her mind that the work of translation must be respected, and therefore duly remunerated and mentioned on the cover.

To the question of whether AI has affected her writing, she counters with the consideration that “literature begins where language ends”. How could AI be more creative than those who try to “say what is not yet expressible, what is not yet there?” While AI is certainly a challenge, she points once again to the greater challenge represented by the multiplicity of languages within a single language. All attention should be focused on how words are used. As language professionals, “we have to react to what’s being said right now. This is where we, writers and translators, all together, can greatly contribute”.



Who wrote that beautiful text? I did! I did!

1 - Translated from German into English by Tess Lewis (Seagull Books).

# Translators

## on the cover

### A European report to reinforce the translation sector

**Xavier North**, Chair of the OMC group of experts on 'multilingualism and translation'

**Arnaud Pasquali**, policy officer, European Commission (DG-EAC, Creative Europe)

**Jürgen Jakob Becker**, Executive Director, Deutscher Übersetzerfonds

**Juliane Wammen**, Chair of the Danish Translators Association (DOF)

**Renate Punka**, President of the Latvian Publishers Association (LGA)

**Xavier North**, who chaired the group of experts responsible for drawing up a report on multilingualism and translation in Europe, states in his preamble that one of the objectives was to put translators in the spotlight and find ways of improving their status, given the essential role these authors play in the circulation of works. But the best practices and recommendations put forward are, in the strongest sense of the word, of interest to the entire book chain (writers, publishers, distributors, etc.), as all its players "have a concrete benefit to derive from them". "The work carried out by the group of experts has brought to light **a set of shared concerns** that fully legitimize a European framework," points out Xavier North, before proposing an idea that is close to his heart: that of an Erasmus for translation, which would be the equivalent of Erasmus for personal mobility to the circulation of ideas and works. **Supporting translation is one of Europe's major responsibilities**, "which is symbolized by having these meetings at the European Parliament".

**Arnaud Pasquali** is also happy that this presentation is taking place in "this place of democracy and dialogue" and with three experts from the OMC (see box). After briefly outlining the background to the report, he goes on to explain the method used and invites everyone to read the document. Published in 2022, the report is available in all languages. The translation projects supported by Creative Europe involve 40 source languages and 30 target languages: "Europe, with its multiple language combinations, needs a large number of skilled translators, which presupposes better training and recognition", summarises Arnaud Pasquali. These issues were the first focus of the report, the second being the role of public aid in supporting the circulation of works, and in particular the work of publishers.

#### Training and working conditions: how to make the profession attractive to young people and viable for professional translators?

**Jürgen Jakob Becker**, Director of the Deutscher Übersetzerfonds, stresses the importance of talking to children about translation in school, and the need to maintain language teaching in all its diversity. At university level, there is a decline in the number of students in linguistic and literary courses and a drop in vocations, but the PETRA-e network of translation training courses is proving dynamic. The report calls for greater interaction between academia and the book trade, following the example of the programme of talks given by translators in German universities.

The need for continuing education is no less acute: translators are eager to learn and exchange ideas with colleagues. The report highlights successful schemes that need to be strengthened, such as those implemented by the RECIT network of residencies (see Panel 1. Networks on the move and Workshop 3. Training).

When it comes to working conditions, Danish translator and CEATL delegate **Juliane Wammen** tackles painful subjects without concealing anything about the precarious nature of the profession: low incomes; absence of minimum wages; absence or inadequacy of social protection (retirement, health insurance, sickness or maternity leave...). To remedy this situation, the report points to the need for all countries to apply the European DMS directive on copyright (2019), which lays down principles of fair remuneration and transparency, and opens the way to collective bargaining. Another major challenge is to strengthen professional organisations, which help individual translators and represent them in discussions with public authorities and publishers. Finally, increased financial support and simplified access to grants for translators themselves and for publishers would make it easier for these players to work together in a market which, apart from bestsellers, is often risky.





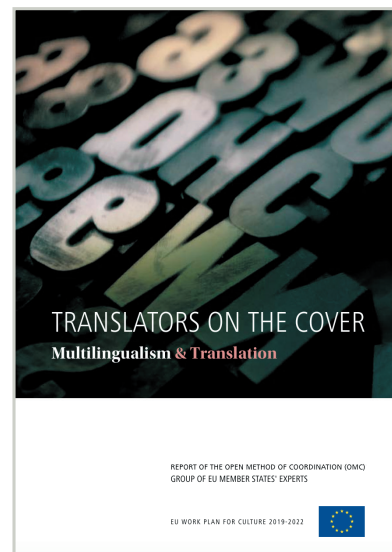
### Towards more dialogue and better data collection?

Latvian publisher and translator **Renate Punka** regrets in retrospect that the OMC's work was carried out in sub-groups, which did not allow for in-depth discussion of questions of remuneration, even though major disparities emerged between countries, both in terms of support policies and translation markets (even if the overwhelming weight of English is a constant). She also notes that only twenty or so countries have commissioned an expert, and that the lack of statistical data is glaring. Nonetheless, the report is "a good basis on which to work", and she invites everyone to make use of this document, which aims to improve the situation of the entire industry and is a mine of information (on training courses, translation awards, support schemes, etc.). **Juliane Wammen** likewise encourages everyone to "spread the good word" on every occasion (festivals, professional meetings) and to pass on the report to political decision-makers.

Questioning what has changed since the report was published, **Xavier North** notes that the status of translators remains precarious, but that awareness of the need to avoid setting the different links in the book chain against each other has grown. He insists on the importance of networks: "The presence of their representatives here is already the beginning of a response!"

**Arnaud Pasquali** draws attention to the substantial increase in the Creative Europe budget for literary translation (from 3.7 million to 5 million euros). He assures us of the "friendly pressure" exerted on publishers to give translators visibility, as well as of the attention paid to their fair remuneration when

a project is aided. New initiatives have been taken to support the entire book chain: another OMC for libraries; promotion of reading and the diversity of European literature among young people; and the Culture Moves Europe programme, which offers individual mobility grants ("little used by translators", he notes). Support for residencies has also been increased. If he had one wish? To further strengthen dialogue with and between translation support organisations (ENLIT network) and to collect and share data from each country, so as to better understand where national translation policies are heading.



### The Open Method of Coordination (OMC)

Given that the Council of the EU's 2019-2022 work plan included multilingualism and translation among the priorities for collaboration between Member States (at the request of France in particular), an Open Method of Coordination (OMC) was set up, with the Commission coordinating the work of a group of 26 experts mandated by the Member States. Among them, a large majority of representatives of institutions (ministries, book agencies) or organisations (foundations) supporting literary translation.

In June 2020, the group began its discussions, enriched by consultation with professional organisations (including CEATL) and other stakeholders, as well as by gathering available data. The 70-page report, published in January 2022, combines an overview of the current situation with recommendations at both national and transnational levels.

# Panel 1

## Networks in motion

### Encouraging diversity and the circulation of literary works

Joris Smeets, Flanders Literature, RECIT network

Andrej Lovšin, TRADUKI network

Alexandra Büchler, Literature Across Frontiers, ENLIT network

Simina Popa, CELA project - Connecting Emerging Literary Artists

Jörn Cambreleng, ATLAS, Archipelagos project

Moderator: Yana Genova, deputy to the mayor of Sofia, former chair of RECIT

The first round table broaches the central subject of support networks for literary translation, setting out their activities to encourage diversity and the circulation of literary works in Europe. Very different from one another, these programmes and organisations provide access to a variety of experience and expertise, and are a source of inspiration and good practices, not least in terms of regional cooperation and life-long learning. Notably, they have demonstrated their capacity for mobilization in response to the Covid crisis and the war in Ukraine.

#### RECIT, European Network of Literary Translation Centres

[www.re-cit.org](http://www.re-cit.org)



Joris Smeets, strategic advisor to Flanders Literature, begins his presentation with a few words about this 'small' member of RECIT which supports stakeholders in Flemish literature in Belgium and promotes it abroad by taking part in book fairs and festivals. The organisation provides financial support for translation, and has for ten years run a residence programme in Antwerp.

Vice-President of RECIT, Joris Smeets returns to the history of this network of residences based at Straelen (Germany), a pioneering institution that serves as a model since the late 1970s. RECIT now has 17 members from 15 countries. Their common goal is to host translators and events around translation, but each centre is unique in terms of its location, its size, its admission criteria, etc, in line with the linguistic and cultural diversity of the continent.

The network has numerous advantages. It helps with the organisational work of each residence and acts as a marvellous peer-to-peer exchange tool. At its AGM, a visit to one of the centres gives the opportunity to assess the place where the meeting is held. During times of crisis (pandemic and the

war in Ukraine), the network has demonstrated its efficiency and adaptability by organising on-line meetings to help professionals. The network benefits its members above all, but is also a valuable interlocutor for public authorities.

Supported by the Creative Europe programme, the **Translation in Motion** project has enabled the network to get stronger. The idea of translators' residencies in 8 countries, 5 in the region of the Western Balkans, quickly went into action thanks to the pre-existence of the network. The project has also led to the creation of **an interactive map of 51 residencies existing in Europe** (which can be consulted on the site, with a typological study and detailed information on each one), and the writing of **a practical manual for the organisation of translation workshops** with a view to training (finance, conception, implementation, communication etc.).

#### TRADUKI

[www.traduki.eu](http://www.traduki.eu)

Andrej Lovšin recalls the historical and political context in 2008 which led to the creation of the Traduki network (the word means 'translate' in Esperanto), which supports translation between German-speaking countries and the countries of South East Europe (ex-Yugoslavia, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania); its intention was to stress the literary tradition of the region and re-establish the cooperative connections that existed before the armed conflicts of the 1990s.

Translations are carried out between all the languages represented in the fields of fiction, non-fiction and children's literature. Traduki has thus already supported the translation of 1,700 titles in 105 linguistic combinations (50% from German, 35% between languages of Southeast Europe and 10% into German). To ensure that these translated books find their audience, every year Traduki has a stand at Leipzig Book Fair, where between 20 and 40 authors are presented.

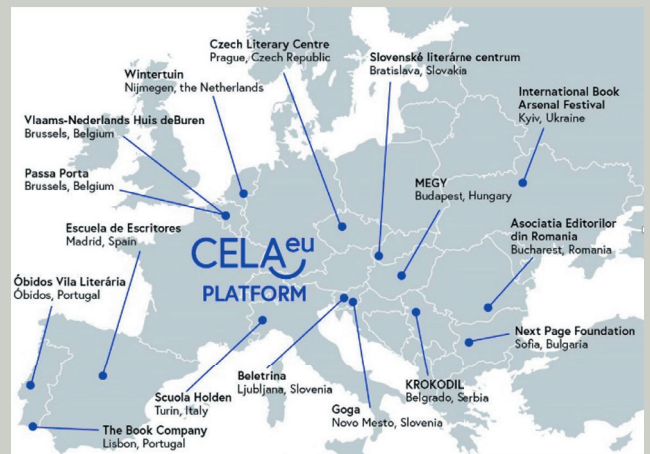
The network also supports critics, publishers and bookshops, encouraging the exchange of information, and offers a database of translators in the Balkan countries.

Over 16 years, the network has expanded. It now includes 18 members in 14 countries. It has become sustainable and financially independent because its members fund its activities. Summing up, **Andrej Lovšin** stresses the flexibility of the network, which allows it to respond to last-minute demands, case by case, more quickly than some national support organisations. There is also a high level of trust that has built up between its members over time. He concludes by recalling the high principles behind the creation of the network: *solidarity, diversity, intercultural dialogue* and most of all *reconciliation*, “words which would be vain without those great cultural mediators, translators”.

**ENLIT,**  
**European Network for Literary Translation**  
[www.enlitnetwork.eu](http://www.enlitnetwork.eu)

**Alexandra Büchler**, Director of Literature Across Frontiers, starts by reminding the audience that LAF, a platform which supports literary translation, was founded in the early 2000s with European funding, and that it is based in Wales, an officially bilingual country – “hence an enhanced sensitivity towards bilingualism, multilingualism, language equality”. LAF played an important role in the creation of ENLIT, as it was during a lunch with European partners at the London Fair in 2012 that the idea for the network was born. Officially launched at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2016, ENLIT now brings together 29 non-profit organisations (mostly foundations and national book centres) involved in supporting literary translation and promoting European literatures. These members, based in 22 sovereign states, support translation from 34 European languages (outbound translation), most often through grants; some members also fund translation into local languages (inbound translation). They play a role in shaping and implementing public policies towards the book sector at national level, and contribute to the circulation of works through participation in book fairs or support for the mobility of writers and translators. Two yearly meetings (in the spring and at the Frankfurt Book Fair) and thematic meetings give members an opportunity to share their knowledge and good practice, improving everyone’s effectiveness. Data collection enables an overview to be drawn of the different types of support offered (see ‘members’ section on the website), for the benefit of all. “Translation moves Europe, and ENLIT moves translation. We contribute to literary diversity and we have a lot to offer with our comprehensive collective knowledge!” Alexandra Büchler concludes.

**CELA, Connecting Emerging Literary Artists**  
[www.cela-europe.com](http://www.cela-europe.com)

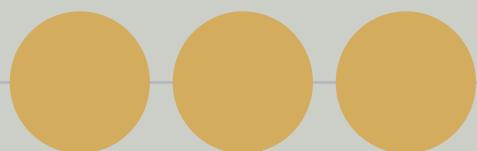


A European project with modest beginnings, CELA was founded in 2013 and is now an important platform that aims to develop emerging talents in the book sector. The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (2024-2027) involves 11 countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain and Ukraine. The principle is as follows: each country selects three emerging writers and translators working in all of the project’s languages. The programme unfolds over two years and in two parts, the first devoted to training, the second to promotion. During the first year, each country draws up its own programme of training and workshops. These highly diverse and varied programmes are accessible to all participants. During the second year, each country organises a promotional tour for the writers and translators involved along with the publishers, as well as a public event.

**The CELA-EU platform**

Conceived as an extension of the project, the platform is also co-financed by the partners. One page presents each of the participants, with a brief biography, a text, personal details and a photograph. It has been richly supplemented over seven years, and now includes 165 authors (66 writers and 199 translators).

Once a book has found a publisher and been translated, it is a matter of reaching the reader by allowing new voices to be heard, and extracts are placed on-line in all the languages on the platform. **Simina Popa**, translator from Portuguese to Romanian and head of the project for Romania for this edition, stresses the need for the project to keep going for a long time, because all effects will not be immediately quantifiable. The emphasis placed on combinations of rare languages aims “to reassure translators about the efforts that they invest in the long term”.





## Archipelagos

[www.archipelagos-eu.org](http://www.archipelagos-eu.org)



**Jörn Cambreleng**, director of the ATLAS association, presents the triennial Archipelagos project, with ATLAS at its head, bringing together a dozen European partners. The intention behind the programme, launched in 2024 with the help of Creative Europe, is to shine a light on the linguistic diversity of European literature while relying on the expertise of translators and reinforcing that of other book professionals. Archipelagos highlights the activity of literary translators in discovering texts and running projects, as practised over a long time by literary translators, particularly in so-called minority languages – “but in a totally invisible and non-remunerated way”, Jörn Cambreleng stresses, when in fact it should complement their income.

More than 270 weeks of residency with **exploration grants** and ten peer-to-peer workshops will thus be offered to over 150 translators between now and 2026. To take two examples of research projects: a translator from Polish wished to research French-language literatures at Paris Book Festival, while a translator from Arabic wanted to explore the catalogue of an Italian publishing house in Milan. Portfolios with the portraits and biographies of the translators are put on line on the website; last year, 212 applications were received and 50 accepted.

The project is also aimed at booksellers, librarians and publishers through different meeting formats. Today saw the beginning of a series of seven webinars presenting literatures in “lesser-used languages”: Arabic, Bulgarian, Catalan, Czech, Lithuanian, Polish, Ukrainian and so on. On 2-3 July 2025, a summer school organised in partnership with the “École de la librairie” and the Regional Book Agency of Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur will also be devoted to the presentation of foreign literatures. An initiative that is already successful, involving between 150 and 200 bookshops.

Finally, the project includes **public meetings** and podcasts, always with a view to expanding the circulation of European literary creation in all its diversity, bringing literary translators to the fore.

**Yana Genova** concludes by applauding a “network of networks, CEATL, which has contributed to a change in the way we talk about translation”, not least by collecting data, and emphasises the idea that the time and energy necessary for the networking tasks must be acknowledged and supported in the long term so that they can bear fruit.



# Organising the Conference

## Three questions to Cécile Deniard, coordinator

### How long did it take to organise the event?

Let's say a bit over two years, since the late spring of 2022, when, following the publication of the *Translators on the Cover* report and as the end of the Covid crisis loomed on the horizon, CEATL came up with the idea of an event that would enable the European book sector to come together for the first time and discuss the issues of translation and the circulation of works.

The first year was spent developing the project: contacts were made to ensure inclusion of the event in the Strasbourg UNESCO World Book Capital programme and the moral support of the first partners was sought (European Commission, French Ministry of Culture, writers' and publishers' federations), and a first version of the project presentation was drawn up.

In the autumn of 2023, work became very intense with the formation of the CEATL taskforce, which met every two weeks, and of the steering committee<sup>1</sup>, which met every month, as well as confirmation of the venues (Josephine Pavilion, European Parliament); then, during the winter, the building of the programme; and in the spring and summer, the logistics (registrations, hotels, travel, etc.) – with budget at the top of agendas and on our minds at all times

Of course, after the conference, work is not over, as we need to assess results and follow up on progress.

### What was the most difficult part?

The most challenging part of the project was undoubtedly the multiple dimensions it entailed. From the outset, we imagined that these meetings would have to be built around a professional backbone, but also address politicians and include a general public component. In addition, we had to bring the various levels of partnership to life, from the local (D'une langue vers l'autre festival, for example) to the international; and seek funding from all directions (in the end, some twenty organisations from a dozen countries contributed).

With an ambitious program of 80 speakers and complex logistics (130 participants were funded, to ensure that as many European countries as possible could attend), this translated into thousands and thousands of e-mails over the course of the year!

What's more, thanks to the European Parliament, we were able to stream the conference in three languages (French, English, German – all videos are now online), but this meant that we had to draw up a very precise script of the conference for the technicians and interpreters<sup>2</sup>, and the speakers can testify to the fact that I had to call on them a lot in the last days before the conference...

### And what was the easiest part?

Three major assets made this organisation possible. Firstly, the fact that we could count on the support of a very solid network, CEATL, its member associations and their competent, committed delegates – although we did push the capacities of these volunteers to their limits, and CEATL will need more funding in the future. Secondly, the fact that the main issues to tackle were easy to identify, based on previous works, such as the *Translators on the Cover* report, and current evolutions (AI, threats to freedom of expression). Finally, this project must have answered a necessity and a desire at this point in history, as all the professional, institutional or financial partners gave the initiative a very warm welcome and supported it with great conviction.

People working in the field of literary translation are generally passionate about the cause, and they possess expertise and a willingness to engage in dialogue. The palpable joy of the Rencontres and the quality of the presentations exemplify that.



### CEATL

The European Council of Literary Translators' Associations is an international non-profit association based at the Maison Européenne des Auteurs et des Autrices in Brussels. CEATL was officially set up in 1993 and now brings together 36 associations from 28 European countries, representing some 10,000 literary translators.

### Our activities:

- gathering information on the situation of literary translation and translators in the member countries and sharing examples of good practice.
- Defending the legal, social and economic interests of literary translators in a European context, which includes EU lobbying and reacting publicly to trends or events impacting our profession and the quality of literary translation.
- Promoting greater visibility for translation and translators among a wider public and professionals in the book trade.

1 - The following organisations helped us put together the programme and mobilise people around the event: PETRA-E, FIT, EWC, PEN, FEP, EIBF, RECIT, ENLIT, TRADUKI, BCBF. Huge thanks to them and to their representatives.

2 - Thanks also to the valiant team of interpreters: Helmut Neusser, Martine Muller-Lombard, Angela Brewer, Clarissa Worsdale, Gwenn Charrière, Sylvie Stellmacher (Calliope Interpreters).

# Creative Europe: supporting the book sector and literary translation

A presentation by **Arnaud Pasquali** (DG EAC) and **Corinne Rigaud** (European Education and Culture Executive Agency)

**Creative Europe** is the European Commission flagship programme to support the cultural and creative sectors through 3 different strands: Culture, MEDIA, and Cross-sectoral.

It has two main **objectives**: safeguarding, developing, and promoting European cultural and linguistic diversity and heritage; and increasing the competitiveness and economic potential of the cultural and creative sectors.

It covers **40 countries**: 27 member states of the European Union + neighbouring countries (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Balkan countries, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Tunisia).

It has an **overall budget of 2.4 billion euros for the period 2021-2027** (80% increase over the previous period), including **5 million euros per year for literary translation**.

## The “Circulation of European Literary Works” programme

As part of the Culture strand, this programme supports projects that translate, publish, distribute, and promote literary works of fiction. Every year, the action supports around 40 projects, implemented either by a single entity or by a consortium and including at least 5 eligible works of fiction.

Its priorities:

- to promote the diversity of literature in the target country (or countries) by including works of fiction from countries that are under-represented, and in particular, works written in lesser used languages;
- to help promote the profession of literary translator, to respect and apply the principle of fair remuneration;
- to encourage collaboration between different actors of the book sector: authors, translators, publishers, distributors, booksellers, libraries, literary events, or festivals.

## Special initiatives for the book sector

The European Commission itself has taken initiatives to promote books and reading:

- **The Day of European Authors** celebrates European literature and encourages interest in reading (2,000 events in 2024).
- **Culture Moves Europe** provides mobility grants for artists and cultural professionals (including translators).
- **European Union Prize for Literature, EUPL**: an annual initiative to recognise the emerging authors in Europe and beyond (implemented by FEP and EIBF).

## Other funding opportunities for the book sector

The Culture strands offer other funding schemes that players in the book sector can apply to:

- **European cooperation projects**: projects must be multi-country and contribute to the transnational creation and circulation of European works and artists or to innovation. *Example*: project OLL LE, publishing 48 coeditions through partnerships between 7 EU publishers and organising 36 literary tours in Croatia, Estonia, Greece, Italy, North Macedonia, Poland.
- **European networks**: This scheme supports projects implemented by highly representative, multicountry networks of European cultural and creative organisations. *Example*: RISE PLUS, coordinated by EIBF (European and International Booksellers Federation).
- **European platforms for the promotion of emerging artists** *Example*: CELA project, promoting emerging European literary writers and translators (see Panel 1 on European networks and projects).

### Useful link

[www.culture.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe](http://www.culture.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe)

For questions, assistance related to the programme or help cooperating with other organisations in other countries, Creative Europe desks are in place in every participating country.

### Online publications

2021-2023, Creative Europe's support to the book and publishing sector

2021, Literary translations playbook

2014-2020, Creative Europe's support to the book sector

2014-2020, The playbook of literary translation projects

# Workshop 1

## Dialogue with Creative Europe

**Corinne Rigaud**, European Education and Culture Executive Agency  
**Victoire Feuillebois**, Strasbourg University  
**María Afonso**, Antígona – Editores Refractarios

*The workshop follows a general presentation of Creative Europe funding opportunities for the book sector. It aims to be a space for sharing experiences and tips, with a focus on the programme “Circulation of European Literary Works”, and an opportunity to answer the 30 participants’ questions.*

**María Afonso** shares her experience as an applicant – and a successful one, since her project Seeds of Dissent was funded by the programme in 2023. She insists that the application form might seem rather technical, but it allows any publishing structure, be it small or large, to display their strengths and singularities. She demonstrates how her publishing house has used the programme to consolidate their editorial identity and values, but also to develop new actions and tools and hence to go to the next step of their development. It has been an invaluable opportunity for Antígona. Her main tip for new applicants is to contact a local Creative Europe desk with any questions they might have: the service is extremely helpful, especially with smaller structures.

**Victoire Feuillebois** has worked for several years as an assessor of applications. She describes the process in detail: an individual evaluation, followed by a consensus meeting and a report made with another assessor, before final assessment by the executive agency. Each assessor is trained and briefed, and assessments are checked for quality at every step. This fully guarantees objective and thorough examination of each proposal.

Victoire Feuillebois shares a few dos and don'ts on the basis of mistakes that she often encounters in applications. She reminds potential applicants that the programme is about “Circulation of European Literary Works”, not only about translation. Hence, what is assessed are not the translations, nor the translators, nor the books themselves, but the project as a whole: applicants cannot rely on the reputation of the authors or translators involved in the project, but must demonstrate precisely that the books will contribute concretely to the diversity of European literature. A frequent mistake is to focus solely on quality of the translation package and to overlook questions wrongly assessed as “technical”, such as distribution, promotion or impact: they are in fact key to a programmed focused on the circulation of literary works in Europe. The same can be said for cross-cutting issues such as gender or eco-friendliness, which elicit standard answers: it is important to demonstrate that the project is in line with European values.

In short, there are no ‘unimportant questions’: for each section of the application form, the applicant has to provide a consistent answer, tailored to the project, and showing that the programme is an opportunity for them to develop new skills and grow. It means that they have to understand the questions well. There are often misunderstandings surrounding the difference between “promotion” and “impact”, or “promotion” and “dissemination” for example. Any doubts can be cleared up by contacting a Creative Europe desk or the book sector team at the Agency.

A discussion with the public follows, with **Corinne Rigaud** as moderator. Participants raise questions about how the fair remuneration of the translators is assessed in the application, considering that rates are very different throughout Europe and that the real remuneration can be different from the one mentioned in the contract. The question of AI also comes up frequently.

**Participants are reminded that one of the programme's priorities is to support the profession of literary translator in line with the principles of good working conditions and fair remuneration.** To that end, it is recommended that between 20% and 30% of the total project budget is allocated to the remuneration of translators, and that translators are given recognition and visibility, in particular by naming them, preferably on the cover, and by including biographies of the translators in the published books. Furthermore, to promote the quality of translation, publishers must sign contracts with professional literary translators, and reference them in the Creative Europe database. Publishers should respect national standards and follow best practices, referring to and using the *Translators on the cover* report and, as an example, the *Guidelines for fair translation contracts* drawn up by CEATL. Finally, publishers are required to send the contracts with translators to the agency, as well as proofs of payment and declarations signed by translators.

**The guidelines of the call for proposals advise applicants to exercise caution when considering the use of generative artificial intelligence tools for the preparation of the proposal, and the programme does not support the publication of works translated by artificial intelligence.**

## Workshop 2

### Supporting the translation of foreign literature: benefits for the national and European ecosystems

Camilla Pargentino,  
Dutch Foundation for Literature  
(ENLIT network)  
Angelika Salvisberg,  
TRADUKI network

*In today's politically charged environment, it is more crucial than ever to clearly articulate the value of literature and translation (serving as cultural bridges, fostering understanding and diversity) to both the political authorities and the general public. This workshop seeks to address this need by defining the added value of state support for inbound translation, i.e. the translation of works from foreign languages into a country's national language(s).*

The workshop draws from the report *Translators on the Cover* (which deplored the lack of support for inbound translation in most European countries), on the experiences of the Dutch Foundation for Literature and Traduki network, as well as on the collective insights of the 20 participants: translators, publishers, representatives of organisations in countries that either already provide support for inbound translation (Belgium, France, Germany, Lithuania, Switzerland, the Netherlands) or might begin to do so (Catalonia, Ireland, Italy, Poland, etc.). Together, these resources paint a comprehensive picture of **why inbound translation deserves to be supported**.

First, subsidies help to **ensure fair remuneration for translators**, empowering them to dedicate the necessary time and effort to their craft. **Producing high-quality translations** demands meticulous work, which is often undervalued in the marketplace. Unfortunately, current funding models frequently prioritise publishing houses over individual translators, with financial support rarely supplementing the standard fees translators receive from publishers. Directly funding translators (as the Traduki network does, for instance) could elevate the quality of translations while ensuring these professionals are fairly compensated. The workshop also highlights the many ways in which support can be provided to translators and inbound translation: funding translation samples, residencies, mobility grants, etc.

Inbound translation policies also allow policymakers to actively shape the literary landscape. Through strategic grants, governments can **promote diversity by encouraging translations of lesser-known authors or from underrepresented source languages** (to combat the hegemony of the English language and make room for countries with fewer resources to promote their own literatures). This approach broadens the horizons of readers and enriches the literary ecosystem of the target language by introducing a broader range of voices, genres, and cultural narratives.

Another benefit of supporting inbound translation lies in its **stimulating impact on national languages and literature**. Exposure to influential works from other linguistic and cultural traditions can inspire local authors, enriching their creativity and fostering innovation. Moreover, cultural institutions gain valuable insights into international trends and markets, enabling them to refine their strategies for promoting local works abroad.

While supporting inbound translation has many benefits for the national ecosystems, reciprocal exchange of works and ideas also embodies the European spirit of openness, dialogue and mutual appreciation. Placing this principle at the heart of literary policies can **strengthen cross-border cultural ties and promote a deeper sense of shared identity**. Networks such as Traduki and ENLIT participate in this logic of cooperation and the sharing of knowledge and best practice for the benefit of all.

The workshop also, however, highlighted **pressing challenges** faced by organisations engaged in inbound translation. One significant concern is the declining societal value placed on **language and literature studies**, as evidenced by the disappearance of many language degree programmes. This has made it increasingly difficult to find and retain skilled translators. Additionally, there are the challenges of supporting publishers committed to making translated literature accessible despite **economic pressures** (publishers should therefore be permitted to combine support from several sources) and of stimulating the curiosity of the public as part of **reading promotion policies**.

**In conclusion, inbound translation is not merely a matter of linguistic transfer, but also of fostering cultural enrichment, innovation, and dialogue. Through strategic state support and a collective effort by stakeholders, its transformative potential can be fully realised.**



## Workshop 3

### Initial and continuous training for literary translators: best practices

*The workshop brings together a panel of experts from inside and outside the academy, representing a variety of training initiatives, degree programmes and educator networks, who introduce their activities and discuss ways of meeting the most significant challenges facing literary translation educators.*

After a welcome from workshop chair Duncan Large, **Goedele De Sterck** speaks on behalf of the **Dutch Language Union**, or Taalunie. To promote recruitment of Dutch language professionals and the retention of active translators in the profession, the Taalunie partners on a wide range of initiatives with the Centre of Expertise for Literary Translation, the Dutch Foundation for Literature, the Dutch Language Institute, Flanders Literature, the International Association for Dutch Studies and the PETRA-NED Network. For De Sterck, the rise of AI will not eliminate human translators, but they need training to use it: “It is precisely because of developments in language technology that professionals with in-depth knowledge of languages and translation will continue to be needed to help develop, improve, monitor and evaluate technological applications. Contrary to popular belief, the need for language professionals and translators is not diminishing.”

Next, **Duncan Large** introduces the work of the **British Centre for Literary Translation** at the University of East Anglia, which supports an MA and PhD programme in literary translation and works in close collaboration with UEA’s pioneering MA programme in Creative Writing. Since 2000, BCLT has partnered with the National Centre for Writing to deliver its flagship event: the International Literary Translation and Creative Writing Summer School. BCLT is also a founder member of **PETRA-E**.

**PETRA-E** is a network of 35 organisations across Europe and beyond, which first published its **Framework of Reference for the Education and Training of Literary Translators** in 2016. The Framework (a panorama of the skills of the literary translator) has recently been revised and is now available in 15 languages. Since 2017, PETRA-E has run a *training the trainer* summer school for teachers of literary translation, the European School of Literary Translation, held online in September.

**Françoise Wuilmart**, a literary translator, introduces the **Centre européen de traduction littéraire**, a school founded in the 1980s in Brussels as part of the professionalisation of the field, with the aim of seeing translation taught by practitioners through practice (as opposed to discussing translation

theory in the abstract). Its specificity is offering a correspondence teaching course in a large number of combinations, with students receiving personalised feedback from experienced translators. A key principle of the CETL is that “*a literary translator is a writer in the fullest sense*”.

In a similar vein, **Rosie Pinhas-Delpuech** speaks of the **Ecole de traduction littéraire**, in 2012 at the Centre national du livre in Paris. The ETL is a practical school offering a one-year training for translators with at least one translated book to their name. It runs multilingual workshops on Saturdays for students working from any language into French, with (once again) an emphasis on editing and writing the target language, and on the many stages of producing a translation, from contract to editing, proof correction and final publication. Over its 12 years of operation, it has catered for 195 trainees in 52 languages – one of its goals was to remedy the lack of professionally-trained translators from lesser-translated languages.

The final speaker is **Jürgen Jakob Becker**, Director of the Deutscher Übersetzerfonds. DÜF is funded by the German Federal Government with an annual budget of €2 million, allowing it to make 200-250 grants to individuals and allocate €3-400,000 for training programmes. Through its Academy of the Art of Translation, it offers advanced training courses free of charge, ranging from the *Hieronymus-Programm* for beginners to ViceVersa workshops translating in both directions within a single language pair. DÜF oversees the Toledo Programme, a space for encounters between the German-language and international translation scenes, and has created a digital ‘think-tank’: Babelwerk.de.

**The workshop is now visible online and offers a veritable toolbox. Discussions have highlighted the importance of collaborating among training institutions and with professionals (for peer-learning and liaising with the publishing industry); the development of online activities; the need to regard literary translators as creators; and, last but not least, the inventiveness and passion of those who teach literary translation.**

## Workshop 4 Inclusion and diversity in literary translation: how to progress?

Sawad Hussain,  
Literary translator  
Jan Kärrö,  
Översättarcentrum (Swedish  
Literary Translators Organisation)

*The Translators on the cover report noted that one of the major problems facing the translation sector was the lack of diversity in terms of ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age or religious, cultural or socio-economic background. The workshop, led by Jan Kärrö (Sweden) and Sawad Hussain (UK), brings together some thirty participants from fifteen countries to discuss ways of advancing diversity within the profession.*

In the first part, **Jan Kärrö**, Managing Director of the Swedish Literary Translators Association Översättarcentrum, **presents the *Världens Läsare!* (Readers of the World) project.** This project, inspired by the German programme Junge Weltlesebühne, is **aimed at children aged between 10 and 15 in disadvantaged neighbourhoods who do not (only) speak Swedish at home.** The main aim is to make them see their linguistic skills as a superpower, but the association also hopes to interest them in the industry of translation, since Sweden has a shortage of translators translating from the country's major minority languages (for example, Arabic, which is spoken daily by 400,000 speakers). The multilingual workshops preferably take place in public or school libraries and are run by professional translators who offer participants short activities, such as writing subtitles for a short film or translating a song. The programme was launched in 2021. It has already organised around a hundred workshops and reached a thousand students, but it is still too early to say whether it is encouraging young people to take up translation.

Next, **Sawad Hussain**, an Arabic-to-English translator, introduces the subject with a warm-up quiz. Example: 'What percentage of literary translators currently working in the US are white? (A: 60%, B: 45%, C: 80%)' We know the answer to this question (60%) thanks to a survey carried out in 2022 by the Authors Guild, but in many countries, such as France, the collection of ethnic or religious statistics is prohibited or highly regulated and controversial, which makes it difficult to get a clear picture of the diversity of the profession.

**Sawad Hussain details initiatives taken in the UK and the US to diversify the profiles of people entering the profession.** At an individual level, these include mentoring (voluntary or paid) and co-translations (experienced translators teaming up with emerging translators from diverse backgrounds). Various organisations have also set up special initiatives: PEN England (sample support), the National Centre for Writing (Visible Communities programme, tailored mentorship), the Translators' Association (Access Working Group) or the American association ALTA (BIPOC<sup>1</sup> Slack channel, translators' weekend and mentorship; travel fellowship;

pitching sessions). Some initiatives target specific areas, such as the SALT (South Asian Literature in Translation) programme at the University of Chicago.

Participants are also invited to share initiatives taken in their own countries. It appears that remedying the lack of diversity is rarely stated as an objective as such by training courses and other programmes, either because of a lack of awareness of the issue, or because of wariness towards communitarianism and identity politics. In that regard, cultural differences are tangible from one country to another, and the wealth of initiatives identified in English-speaking countries contrasts with what is observed on the continent (even though a diversity working group was recently set up by Auteursbond in the Netherlands, for example).

However, the issue of non-discriminatory post-colonial translation is discussed in many countries (the example of the German *macht.sprache* platform is mentioned). And **everywhere there is scope for action to promote diversity.** Mentoring systems, financed by the State or foundations, have proved useful; it is also possible to support young translators individually, Sawad Hussain points out (by sharing information with them, reading their translation essays or putting them in touch with publishers). Sometimes, says one participant, there is no shortage of training opportunities, but students in literary translation are warned from the outset that they will not be able to make a living from this activity, which constitutes a barrier to entry, especially for those from modest backgrounds: fighting for better pay and working conditions is therefore a way of enabling a more diverse population to consider a career in the field. Finally, diversifying and rejuvenating the profession means making it more visible so that potential future translators are aware of its existence – which brings us back to the *Världens Läsare!* project.

**The workshop ends with a question to everyone: What can you personally do to contribute to greater inclusion and diversity in literary translation?**

1 - Black, Indigenous, People of Colour

## Workshop 5

### Language equality: translating to and from medium and small-sized languages

**Miquel Cabal Guarro**, literary translator,  
university of Barcelona

**Sabine Kirchmeyer**, EFNIL (European  
Federation of National Institutions  
for Language)

**Bohdana Neborak**, journalist  
(The Ukrainians Media),  
curator of cultural projects

**Miquel Cabal Guarro**, university lecturer, sociolinguist and literary translator, begins by highlighting diversity as one of the focuses of the conference. The aim of the workshop is to explore strategies to promote literary translation into and out of medium and small-sized languages; to share good practices, and to come up with solutions to overcome the specific challenges these languages face.

**Sabine Kirchmeyer**, President of EFNIL (European Federation of National Institutions for Language), introduces the organisation, which has 43 members from 32 countries, including Georgia and Ukraine, and is made up of different types of state language institutions. EFNIL carries out a vast survey every four years on language policy. It is also involved in the European Language Equality (ELE) project now covering 84 languages (in 2014, forerunner META-NET project started with just official languages). EFNIL's surveys show the inequality of languages in terms of the tools and linguistic technologies at the disposal of professionals. For the Strasbourg Conference, ENFIL conducted a specific survey with CEATL and Danish PEN on the support of literary translation in Europe, with a focus on regional and minority languages.

**Bohdana Neborak**, Ukrainian journalist and curator of cultural projects, provides some background to the Ukrainian language: 70 years of Soviet occupation/repression, followed by 33 years of independence. Prior to Perestroika in the 1980s, writing in Ukrainian could lead to imprisonment. From the 1990s on, the language revival led to the establishment of book festivals and language institutions (Ukrainian Book Institute in 2016, Ukrainian Institute in 2018), amongst other initiatives. Ironically, since the full-scale Russian invasion in 2022, there has been an increasing demand for books about Ukraine and a growing interest in Ukrainian literature. At a time when writers such as Serhiy Zhadan are either going to the front or being taken away by the war, Bohdana Neborak stresses the importance of the translation of both classical and contemporary Ukrainian writers' work as 'a part of European discourse'.

**Miquel Cabal Guarro** opens up the discussion by giving an overview of translated literature in Catalonia. Barcelona could be called the publishing capital of Spain, with 50% of books being published there. It is also a bilingual market: 30% of books are published in Catalan, reflecting the percentage of Catalan speakers and readers (which has been declining in the last 20 years, mainly due to massive immigration),

but competition is fierce with books published in Spanish, since all potential readers also speak that language.

Participation really picks up among the 50 attendees and there are contributions about translation into and out of Alsatian, Basque, Belarus, Catalan, Czech, Crimean Tatar, Faroese, Finnish, Greenlandic, Icelandic, Irish, Lithuanian, Romansch, Sami, Slovak, Slovenian, Welsh and others!

Among the many interesting examples is Welsh literature, which also operates in a bilingual market. There is now a young generation who writes in Welsh, with the help of state funding and support. A bridge language is often the only means of access to and from Welsh literature, and some writers in Welsh self-translate into English, which has been a successful way to promote their work.

Participants underline that, in this day and age of global online markets, competition is increasing between local languages (bilingual or multilingual markets), but also with English, even in "big" countries like the Netherlands.

Strategies in the Faroe Islands include the translation of as many children's books as possible into Faroese (45,000 speakers), e.g. Harry Potter, which creates an interest in reading in their own language.

A concern mentioned by almost everyone is the falling numbers of language students, and how universities and state bodies are crucial to the survival of languages. Yet, funding is not enough: there is also a need to foster a desire to learn the language. Of note is the initiative by the Ramon Llull Institute to encourage translators already translating from another Romance language (Spanish, French, Italian, etc.) to also translate from Catalan, giving them all the tools to learn the language, inviting them to meet writers and so forth. The programme has already been implemented with some success with translators into Chinese, Turkish and Hebrew.

Another frequent topic is the importance of ensuring the status and prestige of smaller languages. In that respect, being a language that books are translated *into* is deemed as important as being a source language. Inbound translation also keeps the language living and developing.

**This rich discussion, with contributions from so many people, all of whom were able to inform the audience of their specific language status in their geographical region, is an excellent example of the value of people meeting in person and sharing their experiences, especially on a subject where, as Sabine Kirchmeyer concluded, it is so important to foster interest and engage people into activism.**

## **Workshop 6**

### **Tales and tails: issues and challenges in translating children's and YA books**

*The workshop dedicated to translating children's literature, was hosted by **Simona Mambrini**, a literary translator from English and French and a consultant for the Bologna Children's Book Fair, and **Lara Hölbling Matković**, who translates from English and German and works as an editor for children's and young adult literature. Together, they shared insights from their extensive experience in translation and publishing, focusing on the nuances of children's literature, as well as the rewarding and less rewarding aspects of translating literature for children and young adults. While primarily intended for translators, the topics discussed were formulated in a way which could easily resonate with writers, publishers, and anyone interested in children's literature.*

**Simona Mambrini** began by dispelling the notion of children's literature as a single genre. She emphasized that it is a diverse field, containing various genres and forms, each catering to different age group. Children's literature, she explained, is a significant part of the publishing market and is categorized as 'children's' largely for organisational convenience of librarians and booksellers rather than due to any intrinsic literary qualities.

Attention was drawn to the challenges specific to children's literature translation, such as rhymes and puns. Translators must handle the interplay between text and illustrations skilfully, as the visuals often convey essential story elements. Examples given included canonical works such as *Alice in Wonderland*, but also examples from the series *Stinky Dog* (Colas Gutman, Marc Boutavant) and from Roger McGough's work, where illustrations are adapted or even redesigned to complement the translated text. A recurring theme was the balance of creativity and fidelity: translators must creatively adapt cultural nuances and humour to ensure they resonate with young readers in their native languages.

**Lara Hölbling Matković** delved into practical challenges, providing a categorization of children's literature according to age groups and emphasizing a range of formats beyond traditional fiction, including graphic novels, manga, read-along books, and non-fiction, which all require distinct translation approaches. She structured her part of the presentation around five main challenges in the translation of children's literature.

First and foremost, translators face the unique challenge of fitting text within specific formats, especially in picture books and illustrated books. Translators must navigate these **spatial constraints** carefully, balancing fidelity to the original text with the physical limitations of the page.

Beyond format, translators encounter complex **linguistic and cultural challenges**. Gender issues in different languages are always an issue, as was shown on the example of the picture book *The Last Stardog* by E. K. Mosley.

Another key consideration is the **vocabulary**: translators should constantly evaluate the complexity and adequacy of the language they use, particularly with topics that involve gender, race, and other sensitive areas. This assessment is essential in determining which words, phrases, and nuances are appropriate for young audiences without compromising on clarity or inclusiveness, but also staying true to the original artistic intention, and not sacrificing the art of language to the political correctness.

**Rhythm and rhyme** present further intricacies. Children's books, especially those by authors like Roald Dahl, often incorporate rhyming schemes and nonsensical poetry that are integral to the work's charm and flow. Translating these elements requires creative adaptation to retain both meaning and rhythmic appeal in the target language, an effort that can be particularly demanding in languages with different phonetic structures.

Finally, the presentation emphasized a crucial issue: **the importance of fair contracts for translators. The field of children's literature translation is often undervalued, with many considering it less serious or simpler than other formats and areas of literature.** This misconception can lead to substandard working conditions and lower pay: therefore, ensuring fair compensation and respect for the skill involved in translating for children is essential to supporting translators and the quality of their work.

Participants were then given practical tasks, such as creating translations for a whimsical recipe for Roald Dahl's Wonka-Vite. These exercises allowed them to apply workshop concepts and confront specific translation challenges. The exercises led to lively discussions, with participants sharing their approaches and insights. The collaborative, yet relaxed environment allowed all the participants to share their experiences and learn from each other.

## Workshop 7

# Sensitivity Reading, Self-Censorship, and Inclusivity: Dealing with Offensive Language, Taboos, and Controversial Issues in Translation

*How does a translator balance loyalties to the author, the text and the reader? This question is at the heart of the workshop hosted by Swedish translator Johanna Hedenberg and Polish translator-editor Elżbieta Kalinowska, an event which offered around 40 participants (translators, writers, editors) a space to engage in a lively and experience-based debate about the ethical and practical challenges of translating sensitive material.*

Johanna Hedenberg's hesitations over the translation of the word *negro* when translating Natalia Ginzburg's *Lessico familiare*, and the disagreement she had with her publisher<sup>1</sup>, spark discussion on the translator's loyalties. Participants broadly fall into two camps. One group argues for loyalty to the text and its historical context, suggesting the preservation of offensive terms, perhaps accompanied by explanatory notes or typographic choices (e.g., italics) to add distance. This approach emphasizes critical engagement with the past without altering the original work. Since younger generations are particularly (and rightly) sensitive to these issues, professors of translation are highlighted as crucial in teaching students to respect historical context while being able to offer thoughtful commentary.

The other camp prioritises loyalty to contemporary readers, advocating for changes that avoid perpetuating harmful language or internalized violence, especially in works intended for younger audiences. For example, retaining *negro* in Pippi Longstocking is deemed indefensible today. "Language shapes reality", it is argued, and no reader should feel excluded. However, some caution against overreach, pointing to pitfalls of sensitivity readers. One translator shares a case where even a harmless French verb like *se ruer* as a translation of 'running' was flagged as offensive when referring to Black children. Excessive scrutiny, critics argue, can result in censorship that erases rather than addresses societal issues; removing offensive terms does not suppress the violence they reflect and could paradoxically make us less sensitive to them.

Context is of course paramount and can change the meaning of words, making them offensive or not (even such a charged word as *nigger* is used by Black American people to mean 'person'). And if an author uses a slur to depict a racist or misogynistic character, some argue that such language must be preserved to maintain the narrative's integrity. Others advocate for changes when the author's intent was not to offend. Ultimately, **intentionality** is emphasized as a key criterion in deciding whether to adapt or retain contentious terms.

The workshop also explores gender-inclusive language, a particularly complex issue in grammatically gendered languages like Polish. Elżbieta Kalinowska recounts her experience translating Kim de l'Horizon's *Bloodbook*, written entirely in non-binary language, into Polish. After researching the way non-binary people express themselves in books and on social media, she chose to adopt modified forms for some words, prioritizing the text's intent despite the difficulty for readers ("There are only imperfect choices!" she says). Similarly, neo-pronouns used by queer communities (such as *sier*, a combination of *sie* [she] and *er* [he] in German) are experimented with by translators as the need arises. In other contexts, such as the feminization of professional titles, translators act as agents of societal change, introducing linguistic innovations to challenge conservatism.

Ultimately, there is no universal solution to these challenges. Participants agree that **each case demands careful, context-specific decisions informed by the author's intent, the target audience, and societal realities**. When living authors are involved, translators can collaborate directly with them to find a balance between fidelity to the original and accessibility for readers. For works by deceased authors, translators must rely on their judgment and research.

**Literary translators bear a unique responsibility: to preserve the essence of a text while navigating complex ethical dilemmas and mediating between the past and the present, the author and the audience, the constraints of language, and the demands of inclusivity. To rise to the challenge, they need arenas in which to have serene discussions in an increasingly polarized society, so that they can improve their awareness and knowledge, and ultimately exert critical thinking to make informed choices.**

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1 - An episode which she recounted in *Counterpoint* e-zine (No. 6, 2021) under the provocative title "Changing Words - Changing History".

## #namethetranslator or the rock of Sisyphus

Eva Valvo, coordinator of CEATL's Visibility working group  
Gabriela Stöckli, Managing Director of Looren Translation House

An unavailing, Sisyphian task: the mention of the name of the translator on the cover and its mention by journalists is not something we can always take for granted. But visibility is indispensable when it comes to reinforcing the translator's position in negotiations and creating a virtuous circle; better recognition should lead to better working conditions, producing better books.

Among the actions performed by CEATL to meet different targets, **Eva Valvo** quotes the online journal *Contrepoint/Counterpoint*; #CEATLFriday which has kept people updated about CEATL for two years; the videos on *Ulysses* by James Joyce (2022) and Svetlana Alexievich (2023) conceived for World Translation Day; the #translatingismysuperpower campaign organised for World Book and Copyright Day; or the #WeekInTranslation which has shown the daily life of a translator on CEATL's Instagram account since January 2024.

**Gabriela Stöckli** announces the 20-year anniversary of Looren in 2025, which will be an opportunity to carry out actions in partnership with CEATL. Following the petition started in 2021 by Jennifer Croft and Mark Haddon and signed by many authors to demand the name of the translator on the cover, she plans to relaunch the #namethetranslator and #translatorsonthecover campaign on social networks and give it an international reach. Other ideas are still in the planning stage, including the project *Racontez votre histoire!* to put out good stories and positive experiences. Everyone is invited to contribute. And what if this Sisyphian task was also a happy one?

(Testimonies to be sent to [namethetranslator@looren.net](mailto:namethetranslator@looren.net))

## Panel 2 Putting literary translation and translated literature in the spotlight

María Afonso, Antígona – Editores Refractários  
Oana Doboși, La Două Bufnițe bookshop  
Ina Engelhardt, EuregioKultur e.V.  
Vladimir Arsenijević, KROKODIL association  
Jürgen Boos, Frankfurt Book Fair  
Elena Pasoli, Bologna Children's Book Fair  
Moderator: Lucie Campos, Villa Gillet

How can each link in the book chain arouse the reader's interest in translation?

### The point of view of an independent publisher in Portugal

**María Afonso** draws a portrait of Antígona, based in Lisbon: a small, tightly knit team, a clear editorial line ('a love story with rebellious books since 1979'), a catalogue rich in literature translated from eleven languages, a little bit of provocation and, most importantly, very good practices towards everyone involved in the chain: "It's important to be unique, and establish bonds of trust."

They have been putting translators' names on the cover since 1980, as well as including a translator biography on an inside page. Editing work is carried out collaboratively, so that the translator doesn't lose control of their translation. They are "a soloist within an orchestra", for music without wrong notes.

The publication and promotion of translated works remain a challenge, due to the decline in the number of experienced translators, particularly for lesser-used languages, cautious markets, a lack of grants, a lack of bookshops and libraries in some regions. But Antígona is pulling its sleeves up. The team attends book fairs, stood shoulder to shoulder with booksellers during the pandemic, organises meetings with the press, and runs an annual fair outside the shop. Its efforts extend all the way to the Creative Europe programme, which supports

its *Seeds of Dissent* project: a set of initiatives around five translated books, to help them find readers, not least among an audience not usually given to reading.

### The point of view of an independent bookseller in Romania

Speaking in French, **Oana Doboși** introduces the bookshop *La Două Bufnițe* (Two Owls), in the centre of Timișoara and a member of the International Association of Francophone Bookshops. *La Două Bufnițe* is characterized by its strong inclination towards translated literature – its largest section – offering titles in English and French. In the face of over-production, Oana Doboși insists on the importance of selection on the basis "of personal choices guided by a desire to remain faithful to the books that we love and to the best translators", to create a community of readers (and customers!). For four years, they have showcased a collection of their favourite works of translated literature: 'Anansi – World Fiction'. The team devotes a lot of energy to the promotion of translated literature, paying special attention to neighbouring countries. They invite foreign authors and translators, and have established a writers' residency (for both Romanian and foreign authors) in partnership with the EU Prize for Literature.

## The point of view of a cultural association in the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion

**Ina Engelhardt** speaks about the EuregioKultur association, which aims to build cordial relations between neighbours, and relies on numerous partners, including schools and libraries. Its actions bring together the literatures of the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany. The association wants to make contact with readers outside of the usual audience for bookshop events, and sensitize people to translation.

Arousing curiosity from school onwards helps to educate a new generation of readers who are alert to translation, and since 2012 the association has for that reason organised a Prix littéraire des lycéens (High School Students Literary Prize): books by French-speaking, German-speaking and Dutch-speaking authors and their translators are read by around 300 young people. The prize goes to the author, but translators are involved in the meetings and presented on the website with all the diversity of their various careers, because they too are unique.

## The point of view of an author and festival director in Serbia

**Vladimir Arsenijević** looks back at the political history of the Krokodil festival in Belgrade: it was conceived as a regional event which, after the implosion of the former Yugoslavia, used contemporary literature written in the common language spoken in some of the newly-created countries as the binding element for reconciliation. The question of translation

arose with the invitation of foreign authors. The Association KROKODIL also runs a residency programme for literary creators, translators included. Russian aggression in Ukraine led to the programme being opened up to Ukrainian literary creators in exile. In Serbia's political context, the festival's audience (around a thousand people per evening) is a minority group that shares common values. In conclusion, Vladimir Arsenijević emphasises the translator's status as a co-creator and the question of value-sharing – necessarily less consensual between the different industry stakeholders!



## The point of view of the director of Frankfurt Book Fair

**Jürgen Boos** reminds us that the history of Frankfurt Book Fair is intimately bound up with that of the birth of the printing press in the nearby city of Mainz, followed by the translation of the Bible into German by Martin Luther. It is translators that make such international fairs possible, and their role is essential in terms of the democratisation of literature.

With 5,000 journalists present, the fair is an important opportunity for all-out lobbying. Within the context of the public-private partnership signed with the German government, there are a number of projects concerning translation, notably the Georges-Arthur-Goldschmidt programme (a training programme aimed at German-speaking and French-speaking young literary translators) and the events associated with the "Centre of Words". Particular attention is paid to so-called "lesser-used languages"; since 1984, the Litprom association

has supported translation from the languages of Africa, Asia, Latin America and Arabia into German. Finally, Jürgen Boos emphasises the interest in the Ljubljana Manifesto (2021), which promotes the ability to read longer and complex texts, because "if there are no readers of long texts, there is no point in writing and translation!"

## The point of view of the director of Bologna Children's Book Fair

For **Elena Pasoli**, literature for young readers is an important sector, because "everything starts in childhood". Translating literature for young people is an exercise that is "harder than it looks", as the workshop dedicated to that subject showed, and the translators are also very good at discovering books.

An international professional fair, Bologna encourages good practices all year, through the IBBY association, for example. Among many actions aimed at improving the visibility of translators, she quotes the Premio Strega Ragazze e Ragazzi award, which rewards the writer and the translator equally; the Translators' Café, a place of debates on topical subjects; or *In Altre Parole*, a translation competition for young Italian translators working from various languages, not exclusively European.

The website also offers a world directory of working translators of children's books and a blog (Fairtales) partly dedicated to translation. During the pandemic, the collaborative project *Is There Something In the Air*, carried out with CEATL, FIT

and the Italian associations Strade and AITI, produced over thirty translations of a poem by Roberto Piumini on the coronavirus, thus ensuring that his words could travel at a time when readers could not. In 2023, following the public reading of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by publishers, authors and illustrators, a new unifying project was initiated with CEATL and FIT: the reading of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child by translators. Videos in twenty languages are already available, again with the aim of 'building bridges'.

**Lucie Campos** concludes the exchanges, stressing that beyond the visibility of translation it is plain that the fight goes on to defend the visibility of national and international literatures in all their diversity.

# *In town* Events in the heart of Strasbourg

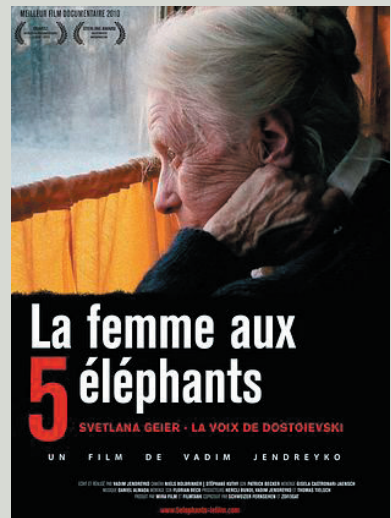
*The Conference was also present in the heart of Strasbourg, with several events organised with local partners and as part of the programme of the D'une Langue Vers l'Autre festival.*



**Librairie Kléber**, an international bookstore, welcomed Belgian novelist **Gaea Schoeters** and her translator from Dutch into French, **Benoît-Thaddée Standaert**, to discuss her noir novel *Trofee* (*Querido*), 2022 winner of the European Union Prize for Literature (EUPL).

The discussion, hosted by **Christophe Lucchese**, a translator from Strasbourg, provided an opportunity to discover this captivating thriller set in an Africa plagued by neo-colonialism. The discussion also focused on the challenges of translating from Dutch into French, and the role played by a prize such as the EUPL in promoting the circulation of works written in less widely spoken languages.

*In partnership with FEP and EIBF, with the presence of **Julie Belgrado**, EIBF Director.*



**Cinéma Le Cosmos** (one of France's oldest cinemas, listed as a historical monument since 1990) screened Vadim Jendreyko's classic film *The Woman with the 5 Elephants*, a film about Svetlana Geier, Dostoyevsky's translator into German.

*Screening organised by the association **Le Lieu Documentaire**.*



What better place than the **Musée Tomi Ungerer**, Centre international de l'illustration, to host a **webtoon translation battle**? Organised by the Association of French Literary Translators (ATLF), the duel over a Korean webtoon (comic strips read on a smartphone) pitted **Pamela Landrevie** against **Lya Mayahi**, with **Marion Gilbert** acting as referee. The audience took an active part in this cheerful brainstorming session on the prologue and episode 1 of *Villain to Kill* by Fupin and Eunji (Kotoon editions), and took up the intellectual and creative challenges that are part of a translator's daily work.



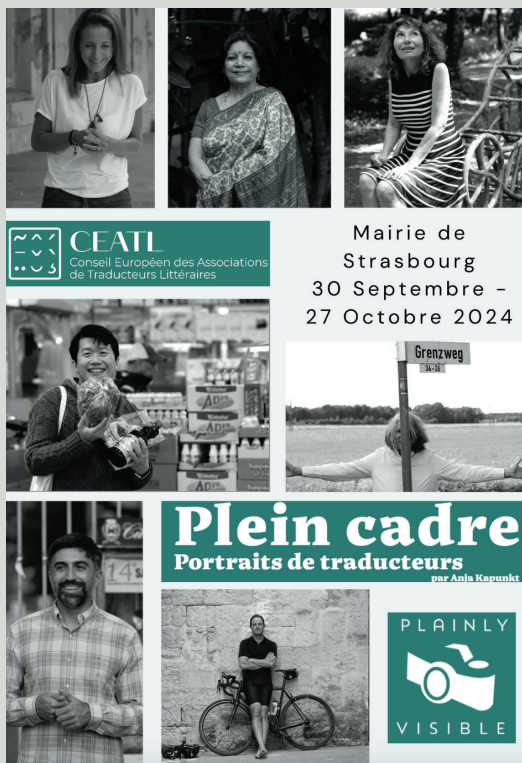
The guided tour of the *Plainly Visible* exhibition, with photographer **Anja Kapunkt** interviewed by **Shaun Whiteside**, provided an opportunity for discussion within the diverse group of attendees, and attracted passers-by, curious to hear the artist's explanations.

*A visit organised in partnership with the **Goethe-Institut**.*



# Plainly Visible Exhibition

From September 30 to October 27, the railings of Strasbourg's town hall hosted the Plainly Visible exhibition: a selection of some twenty portraits of translators from the Plainly Visible series designed by photographer Anja Kapunkt.



Since April 2017, Anja Kapunkt, herself a translator from English, Italian and French into German, has been shooting portraits of her colleagues all over the world and translating countless language combinations. By visiting her website or the Plainly Visible Facebook page, you can follow her peregrinations in Berlin, New York, Budapest or Calcutta, and gauge the infinite richness of the translator community. Each black-and-white portrait is accompanied by a personal text on translation. Together, they form an invaluable collection, a kaleidoscope illustrating the different facets of this art form, from the most prosaic to the most poetic, from playful activity to political stance. It also shows the extent to which this profession, often perceived as solitary, forges links – between people, between texts, between countries.



For the Strasbourg exhibition, the original texts were translated into French. On the website, they are offered in multiple languages, and not systematically transposed into English. You can navigate from one to another, getting to know each translator and their work. The exhibition itself travelled to Berlin, Sofia and Leipzig before arriving in Strasbourg, in collaboration with CEATL, for this first edition of the European Conference on Literary Translation. It remains available for other events and literary venues, always ready to embark, just like its author.



## Anja Kapunkt

Anja took her first portraits of translators during her stays in translators' residences in Arles (France), Looren (Switzerland), Straelen (Germany), Visby (Sweden) and Ventpils (Latvia) – those "magical places where you can meet your colleagues from all over the world". Over time, these personal memories have formed an exceptional series of portraits and texts, first published as a diary on her Facebook page, then collected on the still evolving plainly-visible.org website. It will eventually constitute a unique archive.



# Literary Translation as part of “The Future of the European book sector”

*Diana Riba i Giner, former bookseller, MEP and Vice-Chair of the Committee on Culture and Education, played a very active role in the European Parliament's adoption of the so-called Frankowski report on “the future of the European book sector” (2023), which aims in particular to “improve the circulation, visibility and diversity of translated books” and stresses the need to find viable balances within the book sector value chain.*



She speaks live from Brussels: “Book culture is a shared European heritage, an economic and cultural asset. The sector faces huge challenges, but is also full of potential. The European Parliament's report in 2023 has helped to put the subject on the agenda to respond, in collaboration with the new Commission, to the questions posed by market fragmentation, digitization and artificial intelligence.

Now is the time to confirm our commitment to putting the author at the center of our thinking, and to intensify our efforts to ensure that Europe preserves this heritage in the digital age.”

**“Book culture is a shared European heritage, an economic and cultural asset.” Diana Riba i Giner**

## Presentation: How machine translation works

*Antonio Toral, Associate Professor, coordinator of the Computational Linguistics Research Group, University of Groningen*

When using machine translation (MT), we input a text and receive a translation without knowing the internal workings of the system, seen as a black box. This presentation aims to demystify MT, helping us set realistic expectations, recognize opportunities, and assess risks.

**Neural Machine Translation (NMT)** ‘predicts’ translations based on input text, much like its predecessor, Statistical Machine Translation (SMT). Both rely on parallel data (a text and its translation) to mimic human translations, and can incorporate monolingual data for fluency improvement. However, NMT significantly outperforms SMT due to two key factors. First, words are treated as concepts, represented as numerical vectors in a multi-dimensional space where similar words are positioned closely. Second, NMT connects all words within a sentence. Through multiple layers of processing, words gain contextual representations, allowing the system to consider surrounding words dynamically. The translation process involves an encoder, which transforms the input text into a numerical representation, and a decoder, which generates the translation by referencing both the input text and previously generated words. Unlike SMT, which struggled with long-distance dependencies, NMT effectively captures broader contextual relationships.

The field is evolving further with **Large Language Models (LLMs)**, also known as generative AI. Unlike NMT, which is trained on parallel data, LLMs predict the next word in a text using vast, diverse datasets from the internet without explicit language distinctions. Training occurs in two phases: first, general word prediction, then specialised task learning, which can involve human feedback. LLMs are not necessarily superior to NMT in translation quality but are far more flexible. Users can specify aspects such as tone, conciseness, or creativity in the prompt. LLM-generated translations tend to be less literal and more adaptable.

ChatGPT is an example of LLM; DeepL used to be an example of NMT, but since July 2024 they have two models: «classic» (NMT) and ‘next-gen’ (LLM).

LLMs seem to be already the state-of-the-art for machine translation: the top ranked systems at the 2024 competition at the WMT conference are mostly LLMs, both generic such as Claude-3.5 or GPT-4, and tailored to translation like Tower. This demonstrates the rapid advancements in this field.

What about **post-editing** and/or using MT as a source for inspiration? Recent research shows that post-editing leads to:

- less creative translations
- reduced lexical variety and increased interference from the source language
- loss of the translator's unique voice
- perception of post-editing as less enjoyable and demotivating for translators

However, post-edited translations exhibit a comparable or even lower amount of errors to human translation, and greater consistency, which might pay off for technical translations where uniformity is key.

Research is also ongoing regarding MT as a **source for inspiration**. For instance, Kolb and Miller developed PunCAT, a tool for translating puns by exploring multiple meanings and related semantic fields. And while post-editing often limits crea-

tivity, surveys show that the vast majority of translators who report using MT primarily use it to get ideas, with MT appearing as one more tool in the toolbox.

## Panel 3

# Literary translation and 'artificial intelligence' Useful tool or false friend?

James Hadley, researcher and teacher, Trinity Centre for Literary and Cultural Translation

André Hansen, translator, Kollektive Intelligenz project

Ela Varošanec Krsnik, translator, CEATL

Katharine Throssell, translator, Association pour la traduction en sciences sociales

Monika Pfundmeier, writer, EWC

Jesper Monthan, publisher, Bonnier Group

Moderator: Christophe Rioux, journalist and writer

Introducing the panel, **Christophe Rioux** quotes Moravec's paradox that "what is simple for humans is the most difficult for robotics" – so the most common emotions would be difficult for machines to process. He hopes that the debate, which will present points of view from different stakeholders in the book industry, will help dispel fears and grasp the issues as far as literary translation is concerned.

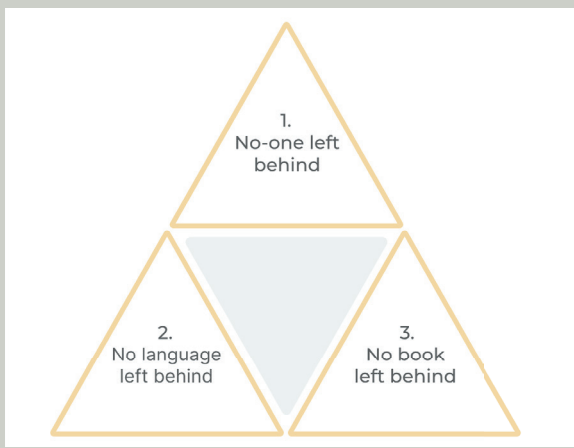
**James Hadley**, director of the Trinity Centre for Literary and Cultural Translation and a researcher in machine translation, notes that the economical balance of literary translation is precarious and that publishers may be tempted to cut costs by relying on technology. It is therefore logical for translators to be wary. If the machine is put at the centre and regarded as the 'translator', while the human is reduced to the role of corrector or post-editor, it generates job dissatisfaction, a loss of quality, as well ethical and legal problems, with risks in terms of remuneration, time pressure and perception of translation by readers.

We need to reverse the perspective and talk about 'computer-assisted literary translation' (CALT). AI can be used to help with terminology, grammar, style, etc. It is interesting, for example, to look at the variants proposed by large language models (LLMs). For the most part, however, these tools have less to offer in terms of efficiency (saving time) than quality. Aware that his approach may not be popular, he urges the profession not to appear dead set against technologies that are likely to continue to develop, and as a teacher of literary translation, he feels it is necessary to train the next generation in these tools.

**André Hansen** is co-director of the German Kollektiv Intelligenz project, which was divided into three parts: in the spring of 2023, 14 translators experimented with translating a romance novel and a non-fiction text using DeepL in different ways (their reports, available online, are fairly harsh on the value of the tool, except as a "super dictionary"); then a tour of German cities supported by VdÜ, the association of German literary translators, provided an opportunity to promote machine translation literacy to translators and get their feedbacks; the cycle will end with a big conference on 22 November 2024 in Berlin ('AI, yes, but how?'). Experiments are continuing to see how AI can be usefully integrated into translation workflows, perhaps taking better account of the tools' functionalities (CAT tools, translation memory), but it is fair to say that with post-editing working conditions and fees are under threat "on the grounds that part of the work is done by the machine" (it is strongly advised to document the work done).

Collectively, ver.di, the creators' union of which the VdÜ is a member, insists on the protection of copyright, the empowerment of a responsible readership and the regulation of the use of AI, including in the collective agreements signed with publishers.

**Ela Varošanec Krsnik**, representing CEATL, advocates for a responsible and fair use of AI. CEATL's Statement is based on three principles: **no translator left behind, no book left behind, no language left behind**. AI must respect the ART criteria (Authorization, Remuneration, Transparency) as set forth by the EWC, and literary translations should remain a human creation to preserve cultural richness: machines are not translators; they generate textual material. As a literary



translator herself, she emphasizes that translators are not against technology but warns about its unregulated impact. While some perceive AI as beneficial for speed, accuracy or creativity, translators' experiences and studies show mixed results. A CEATL survey found that only 10% of translators using AI find it truly useful.

The issues related to AI are numerous: legal (AI models trained on copyrighted data without consent or compensation), professional (imposed post-editing at reduced fees), and linguistic (language impoverishment, text standardization – AI being at its core 'a glorified word predictor'). Post-editing AI-generated texts often requires more time and effort for lower-quality results. Some translators report that it obscures their own sense of language, causing them to second-guess what is correct! Whether AI can be of use to translators remains to be seen, but they already know that AI infringes their rights, threatens their income and working conditions, and negatively impacts language.

**Katharine Throssell**, translator from French into English and co-founder of ATESS, talks about the specificities of translation in the humanities and social sciences. That activity requires high-level qualifications: mastery of the vocabulary and concepts of the field; sensitivity to style. She notes a trend towards self-translation in the research community and a disaffection on the part of specialist translators because of the loss of income (30-50%) and meaning when they are asked to revise a machine-produced text: "People who work in this sector are attracted by the stimulating proximity to the researcher and the intellectual, analytical and creative aspect of the work", which largely disappears with post-editing. It is also a great pity to be deprived of the 'first draft', because "during the act of writing, a process of reflection is already at work". She also notes the paradox of using tools that tend towards a standardisation of language and thought precisely in the field of research, which aims at making a difference and deconstructing categories of thought.

The final consequence of the brain drain of translators is a loss of quality that will be detrimental to the international profile of national research. Until now, post-editing has been carried out by highly qualified people who are able to spot errors. It might not last – 35% are considering a career change.

"Words shape realities: What is going to happen when machines create, interpret, regulate our narratives?" asks **Monika Pfundmeier**, a writer and member of the European Writers Council board. AI, "the new God", multiplies hatred and lies and influences our world extremely quickly; human work and art are used without consent, i.e. *stolen*. The EWC, which brings together 50 national professional writers' and literary translators' organisations in 32 European countries, fights for regulation and has published an "AI Toolkit for the Book Sector", with 10 Recommendations about authorization, remuneration, transparency, freedom, responsibility, etc. AI can be helpful if regulated and used carefully as a tool, but we don't want to lose the human voice, the human perspective and understanding of the consequences. It is our own individual responsibility to train our own skills and be aware, and not mindlessly use AI when it just seems the easier and cheaper way – for which we would pay the price in the long run. "It is not about what we or the machine *could* do, it is a lot about what we *should* do", with courage, to create the future.

**Jesper Monthan**, Director of Business Development for all Bonnier publishers in the Nordic countries, affirms his conviction that translators are and will remain important partners in guaranteeing the quality of texts, but notes that AI is going to change everything. "We haven't seen so much of that yet", he warns. Translation is of course one of the first applications that come to mind (along with audiobook reading). Almost all publishers in the Nordic countries are experimenting; Norway is ahead of Sweden and Denmark, with Finland a little behind – probably because of the peculiarities of the language. One cannot really rely on the machine yet, and the trials involve 'less complicated' non-fiction texts and require post-editing. On literary texts, the results are far from convincing, but the evolution is happening very quickly and everyone thinks it is just a matter of time.

The technology is not yet fully ready for the Nordic languages, but it is clear that it will be a useful tool for publishers in terms of efficiency. Translators will continue to be needed to make texts (especially the more complex literary ones) good enough for publication, but the translation stage could become faster and more cost-efficient with maintained quality. In Northern countries, translated literature (especially non-fiction) is losing ground, while sales of books in English are on the rise (sometimes reaching 20% of the market). Perhaps faster publishing at a lower price point can alleviate that situation and allow books to exist that would not otherwise be published.

#### To follow up

- Dorothy Kenny (ed.), *Machine translation for everyone: Empowering users in the age of artificial intelligence*, 2022, free online access
- *Counterpoint* e-zine, No. 10 on AI and literary translation: [www.ceatl.eu/counterpoint](http://www.ceatl.eu/counterpoint)
- Kollektive Intelligenz project: [www.kollektive-intelligenz.de](http://www.kollektive-intelligenz.de)
- for news, statements and studies, EWC and CEATL websites: [www.europeanwriterscouncil.eu](http://www.europeanwriterscouncil.eu), [www.ceatl.eu](http://www.ceatl.eu)

# Carte blanche to AVTE and FIT

## AVTE

### Translating for the audiovisual sector

**Amalie Foss**, President of AudioVisual Translators Europe

**Estelle Renard**, Co-secretary of AVTE and board member of French association ATAA

In a dynamic and humorous dialogue, **Amalie Foss** and **Estelle Renard** compare the work of the literary translator and that of the audiovisual translator, depending on whether he or she is producing subtitles, dubbing, or voice-overs. Audio-visual translation is “a total art”, requiring creativity and a perfect mastery of “selective betrayals”, according to Estelle Renard. As this undeniable work of authorship is not yet recognized in all EU countries, and is also poorly remunerated and threatened by machine translation and AI, the two activists invite everyone to join representative organisations or to set up their own association, if one does not yet exist in their country, drawing, as they do, on the experience and advice of the two “big sisters”, CEATL and FIT. “We’ve already helped several of these start-ups,” encourages Amalie Foss, “and now we have 23 organisations in 20 countries!”

Founded in London in 2011 by national organisations from Denmark, Poland, France, Norway, Finland, Slovakia and the UK, **AVTE** (AudioVisual Translators Europe) brings together associations of media translators of all kinds: subtitlers, dubbers, game translators and other audiovisual translators, to defend their rights and interests, particularly with European bodies.

Created in France in 2006, the **ATAA** (Association des traducteurs/adaptateurs de l’audiovisuel) brings together more than 620 professionals in dubbing, subtitling, voice-over and video game translation, working for the recognition, development, defense and promotion of their profession.

## FIT

### “Translating the world”

**Sandra Mouton**, Secretary General of FIT Europe

**Jan Næss**, FIT Standing Committee on Translation for Publishing Houses and Copyright

After a brief overview of FIT’s organisation, **Jan Næss** presents the vast Atlas of Translation and Literature project ([atlastranslit.org](http://atlastranslit.org)), an interactive mapping of events of interest to the profession worldwide: awards, conferences, trade fairs, seminars, residencies. Then **Sandra Mouton** offers the opportunity to hear the voices of translators from FIT’s 5 regional centres, thanks to videos recorded for the occasion. A polyglot overview in just a few minutes of the immense wealth of the translation network worldwide!



First destination, **Norway**, with a few words from Are Tjikkom, translator of *The Hobbit* into Lule Sámi (600 to 700 speakers), among other literary works which he hopes will contribute to the preservation of this hitherto mainly oral language. Then off to Buenos Aires, **Argentina**, where Julia Benseñor talks about the Alitral association’s Cantera event for young translators into Spanish, a reminder of the diversity of the Hispanic language, “a real challenge for the translator”. Then it’s on to **Canada**, where Tina Wellman, a member of the Alberta Association of Translators and Interpreters, is developing teaching resources based on the native language Nêhiyawêwin (Plains Cree). The next stop is **Iran**, where Mahbube Najafkhani, translator into Persian and member of the Tehran Association of Translators and Interpreters TIAT, announces the creation of the Joman (pearl) prize for the translation of children’s literature. Last stop is Dakar, where Abdoulaye Gueye, a member of ASTRA (Association of Translators of **Senegal**), is dedicated to translating Arabic literature from Senegal into French.

# Panel 4

## Gathering data on literary translation markets and mapping grant opportunities Challenges and benefits

Enrico Turrin, Federation of European Publishers  
Robert Alagjozovski, Balkan Translation Collider project  
Julià Florit, ENLIT network  
Martin Krafl, Czech Literary Center  
Íñigo Cebollada, Ute Körner Literary Agent  
Nicolas Roche, Bureau international de l'édition française  
Francesca Novajra, CEATL  
Moderator: Sinéad Mac Aodha, Literature Ireland

The experts behind the *Translators on the Cover* report pointed out the difficulty of collecting data to measure the circulation of works in Europe. The final document does contain a brief table of translation markets country by country (languages translated, share of translations in the publishing market), but, by the authors' own admission, that data is incomplete, not very robust and difficult to compare. However, objectively assessing the sector's economic situation is essential to formulating relevant recommendations and targeting aid. Hence this round table, which brings together the various players and potential beneficiaries of data collection, in order to take stock of existing resources and the potential difficulties and benefits accruing from such an exercise.

**“Errors using inadequate data are much less than those using no data at all.”**

**Sinéad Mac Aodha, quoting Charles Babbage**

Enrico Turrin, deputy director of the Federation of European Publishers, presents the Aldus Up project, co-funded by Creative Europe and bringing together book fairs. One of the objectives was to carry out a pilot study on the purchase and sale of translation rights by European publishers, a field that is still too little known. Coordinated by the Italian Publishers Association, the aim of the study was to make existing data in France and Germany comparable, and to establish a methodology that could be used by other countries. The 2022 data collected for 8 countries reveal huge discrepancies: thousands of sales of rights for France, Germany and Italy; a handful or a few dozen for Austria, Portugal, Romania, Lithuania and Latvia. The survey also looked at the role of literary agents (two-thirds of publishers rely on them), the genres translated and the geography of rights flows. There is a diversification of markets towards Asia, and a major imbalance with English-speaking markets (10% or less of sales, 50% or more of purchases).

In general, the collection of more accurate and comparable data would provide a better service to publishers and decision-makers in developing strategies, but “even more time-consuming than gathering and analyzing the data is convincing the players to participate!”

Another context, another method: a study published as part of the Balkan Translations Collider project supported by Creative Europe to stimulate the circulation of works from six Western Balkan countries (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Northern Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia). Robert Alagjozovski presents the results of a listing of titles sold abroad between 2015 and 2020 (a few dozen or a few hundred depending on the country). The need had arisen to establish an objective assessment so that the other two aspects of the project (training sessions and study tours for professionals, including translators) could be carried out effectively. The summary sets out the method and sources (which vary from country to country), a detailed table of results country by country (number of sales, most translated authors), makes an analysis and provides very concrete recommendations on the levers to be used to promote these literatures abroad.

Julià Florit, from the Catalan Cultural Institute Ramon Llull, represents ENLIT, a network of organisations supporting literary translation in Europe. With 29 members from 22 countries (national book centres, foundations), the network continues to grow. Following on from the *Translators on the Cover* report, which lists the organisations that support literary translation in each country, as well as the volume and type of support they provide, Julià Florit presents an updated table for ENLIT members. In 2023, they allocated €24 million to translation support programmes: translation grants (27 out of 29 members), residencies (20 members), conferences, participation in book fairs, funding for sample translations and reader reports, travel grants, fellowships and awards. Julià Florit stresses the importance of professional training for translators,

as well as maintaining links with language students. The network's brochure charts the support of ENLIT members to authors, translators and publishers. Some of the member organisations collect data on translated books and make it available on their websites to measure the effectiveness of the support policies.

### Translation grants awarded by ENLIT

(data for 23 members out of 29)

In 2023, the members of the ENLIT network supported 4,000 translations into more than 50 languages for 9.7 million euros. The number of titles supported per organisation ranged from 15 (Wales) to 549 (Norway), and the overall amounts ranged from €32,000 to €1 million. The average grant is €2,400 per title. Grants are awarded on the basis of various criteria (author, title, publisher, translator, language, etc.), and all genres are supported. Almost all organisations accept all languages, but some only support outbound translation. Relay translations are prohibited by some organisations and avoided as far as possible by others.

**Martin Krafl**, Director of the Czech Literary Centre, follows up on Julià Florit's presentation by underlining the enormous work accomplished by all these structures. The Czech Literary Centre has similar programmes to those just described. In addition, it is preparing for the Frankfurt Book Fair 2026, with the Czech Republic as Guest of Honour. The application process has also been an opportunity for work with publishers (big publishers are sometimes less motivated than smaller ones by book fairs) and for a study of the Czech book market. Publishers want financial help, but are not always willing to share their data. Yet it is important to understand the economic realities of all the players involved to take appropriate action. Martin Krafl cites a few figures from a survey on the situation of Czech literary translators: three-quarters are women; half of those who translate more than 40 hours a week earn less than 1,200 euros a month; 80% of translators supplement their income with another activity. Still, when it comes to obtaining increased subsidies from the state, the argument of the cultural influence offered by literary translation is often more effective than sales numbers. Supporting literary translation is also a work of cultural diplomacy that needs showcasing.

**Íñigo Cebollada** regrets that the work of literary agents is often forgotten or misunderstood, even though they play an essential role in foreign rights sales (324 agencies were present at the last Frankfurt Book Fair). Their two main activities are representing publishing houses for specific markets, and representing authors worldwide. Their strong point is their knowledge of catalogues and market trends. When rights are acquired, it's usually the publisher who chooses the translator, but agents maintain good relations with translators, who sometimes bring projects to publishers. Translation grants offered by national book centres make their work much easier, as do grants for the creation of samples in English, which help to promote Spanish authors on the international market.

**Nicolas Roche** heads the *Bureau international de l'édition française*, which provides export tools for the 350 publishers it represents (French is the 2nd most translated language in the world, and rights sales and coeditions add up to 15,000 contracts a year). It runs the French stand at trade fairs, organises professional meetings and training courses (particularly for translators from French), and produces studies on foreign markets and publishing trends. These studies, based on available statistics and interviews, can be general (*Publishing in the Netherlands*) or more targeted (*Children's book publishers in Germany*). Knowledge of the publishing landscape is an essential tool for promoting the circulation of works. In France, the Syndicat national de l'édition publishes detailed annual statistics, but, as the ALDUS study has shown, this is not the case in all countries, and a general effort would be desirable.

**Francesca Novajra**, President of CEATL, introduces the organisation and points out that CEATL is also involved in data collection through its surveys on translators' working conditions and remuneration. She emphasizes that the viability of the book industry depends on a balance between stakeholders. Knowledge of the economic environment in which they operate is very useful to translators: to assert their rights and skills; to find resources (by knowing how to navigate aid systems); and to play their role as scouts to the best possible effect (an activity that should be promoted and supported by mobility grants, as travel to trade fairs is expensive). It is essential for support organisations to work as a network (among themselves and with professional associations) to create a fair, transparent and efficient ecosystem for all, and to ensure that the condition of fair remuneration for the translator is respected.

**Everyone agrees that statistics are an essential tool for designing and evaluating public book policies, and that publishers, agents and translators would benefit from a better knowledge of translation markets. But while the audiovisual sector has the European Audiovisual Observatory, there is no such system for the book sector. What remains to be done, therefore, is to extend and flesh out the studies already carried out, in order to devise a solid system for collecting data on the circulation of books in Europe.**

### Sources on the economics of literary translation in Europe

- *Translators on the Cover* report, Publications Office of the EU
- ALDUS UP pilot survey: *Uncovering the routes of book translations in Europe*
- *Western Balkans study: Mapping translated literatures from the Western Balkans (2015-2020)*
- FEP: [www.fep-fee/-Annual-Publishers-Statistics](http://www.fep-fee/-Annual-Publishers-Statistics)
- ENLIT: [www.entlitnetwork.eu](http://www.entlitnetwork.eu)
- CEATL: [www.ceatl.eu/achievements/surveys](http://www.ceatl.eu/achievements/surveys)

# Panel 5

## Translating and publishing as a political act Europe and freedom of expression in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

Alena Makouskaya, board member of EWC, #freeallwords project

Nadya Kandrusevich, literary translator, publisher (Belarus)

Ágnes Orzóy, foreign rights director, Magvető Editions (Hungary)

Furkan Özkan, literary translator (Turkey)

Julie Belgrado, director, European and International Booksellers' Federation

Jørgen Christian Wind Nielsen, vice president, TLRC-PEN International

Moderator : Justyna Czechowska, vice president of CEATL

Justyna Czechowska begins the meeting by reading the first two points of the PEN International charter:

1. *Literature knows no frontiers and must remain common currency among people in spite of political or international upheavals.*

2. *In all circumstances, and particularly in time of war, works of art, the patrimony of humanity at large, should be left untouched by national or political passion.*

She then sets out a list of many cases of infringements of the free circulation of books or attacks on freedom of expression on the part of authors or book professionals recently observed by PEN in the world and in Europe, before giving the floor to the speakers.

As a preamble to her intervention, Alena Makouskaya says that she is “touched by the atmosphere of trust and friendship”, and “impressed to see so many translators in one room for the first time!” A member of the board of the European Writers' Council (EWC), she had to flee Belarus in 2021 to escape legal action. She helped to reestablish the activities of the International Union of Belarusian Writers in Vilnius, in Lithuania, the Belarusian organisation having been liquidated. She describes the situation in Belarus, where peaceful demonstrations of civil society had been harshly suppressed, forcing half a million people into exile in 2020. Since 2021 she has been responsible for the #freeallwords project.

### #FREEALLWORDS

Launched in 2021 by EWC under the presidency of Nina George to amplify the voices of Belarusian and Ukrainian authors who were persecuted or who had fled the war, #Freeallwords received the support of numerous partners including CEATL. Since 2022, 212 texts in prose and poetry by 46 Ukrainian and Belarusian authors have been collected and translated into 50 languages by 51 translators from 21 countries. Slides show extracts from texts by Natalia Matolinets, Marianna Kijanowska, Andriy Kostynskyi, Nadiya Havryliuk, Natallia Trokhym, Kaciaryna Andrejeva, Hanna Komar and Ales Bialiatski, with their portraits and a brief description of their situation (imprisonment, exile etc.).

Alena Makouskaya sets out the implementation of the project, such as the paradox of being subject to the dictatorship within the country, while at the same time being assimilated to the regime outside it; the search for translators from Belarusian and Ukrainian (without Russian as a relay language); anonymity sometimes needed to protect authors; the specific treatment of prison stories; finally, “the emotional and psychological exhaustion of authors and translators under the bombs or in exile” who are “our heroes”.

Nadya Kandrusevich, a translator of writing for younger readers from Swedish to Belarussian, was forced to leave Belarus after the 2020 demonstrations and the start of the war in Ukraine in 2022. She now lives in Warsaw, where she runs the Koska publishing house. She points out that Russian and Belarussian are her country's two official languages, but that the majority of the population speaks Russian and that Belarussian risks disappearing as Russian books swamp the market. In 2018 she founded the small Koska publishing house in Minsk, with the intention of bringing out good books for young people translated into Belarussian. In five years, she published 50 books, promoting them in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, since 2020, the state has persecuted anyone who has connections with Belarussian; publishers have been put in prison or have left the country; there are hardly any in-





dependent publishing houses left in Belarus. Seeking ways from exile to reach her readers who had stayed in the country or were scattered around Europe, Nadya Kandrushevich turned towards the digital format and now devotes herself to the Koskabooks.com platform. She is worried about her future readership, because children no longer read in Belarusian, and condemns a “state system which is afraid of everything that makes people free: history, music, art and literature – and even children’s books.”

## “Apathy and self-censorship kill creativity.”

Ágnes Orzóy

Ágnes Orzóy recalls the censorship imposed in Hungary during the Communist era, the directives given to publishers and the obligation on authors to fall into line with the ideology. “After Communism we were surprised to find nothing in the writers’ drawers. Apathy and self-censorship kill creativity.” The challenges faced by publishing in Hungary are the same as elsewhere, particularly the hyper-polarization of the readership. From an economic point of view, grants and marketing campaigns sometimes reinforce the chance of reaching readers, but the support system remains unstable and unreliable. And libraries sometimes censor themselves when choosing the authors they invite, for example.

She returns to two recent events: on the one hand, the vote in 2021 for an “anti-LGBTQ law”, which limits the commercialisation of books for young readers on the subject (they must be displayed in cellophane, far from schools and churches, etc.), without banning them. The law as set out is vague, and can involve random sanctions (her own group has been severely condemned). At this stage, few books are involved, but it’s destabilizing; the aim is ultimately political. On the other hand, in 2023 the Libri group, the biggest publisher and distributor in the country, was acquired by the Martin Corvinus Collegium, an educational establishment that trains the conservative elite. Since then, the marketing team has been changed, but the editors have remained autonomous.

In short: “There is freedom of expression, so we can’t say anything!” Ágnes Orzóy concludes, wittily citing the word-play of the poet Dezső Tandori.

A translator from Russian into Turkish, **Furkan Özkan** observes that in Turkey freedom of expression is limited for everyone, including the members of the party in power. The government determines what one is or is not allowed to talk about. Adapting to new technologies, it controls social networks via a ‘law on disinformation’ (2022) and by the use of bots and trolls. But power also uses more classic methods, such as the purchase of a big chain of bookshops by a vassal company, which will showcase pro-government publishers and push the others into the background.

Since the party came to power, over 700 books have already been banned or confiscated (information published by the Association of Turkish Publishers), for justifying terrorism, religious insult or obscenity. Translators can also be attacked as “propaganda agents for obscene books”; in 2021 a

colleague was brought before the criminal court and threatened with three years in prison. She was acquitted, but the fact of being prosecuted for doing her job discouraged her from being a translator.

These practices are old in Turkey, but Furkan Özkan observes that censorship is spreading even within the EU and wonders about the different ways in which it is used. He cites the cancellation of the Palestinian author Adania Shibli’s participation in the Frankfurt Book Fair, while far-right publishers were present; or the lack of condemnation of atrocities perpetrated by Israel, while those committed by Russia are condemned. All of these atrocities should be denounced, wherever they come from. He concludes with the warning of a Turkish citizen to Europe: if you don’t want the situation to get worse, criticize the parties in power who tell you what to talk about, because “while the limits of freedom of expression are defined by the ideological positions of a government, there will be problems.”

**Julie Belgrado** runs the European and International Booksellers’ Federation (EIBF), based in Brussels. As an international organisation, over many years the EIBF has faced cases of censorship, but for some time the numbers in Europe have been growing. In 2022 the EIBF therefore led an awareness campaign on social networks, citing, for example, the vote on the anti-LGBTQ law in Hungary and the arrests of booksellers in Belarus (for selling *1984*).



Within the framework of the RISE-Bookselling project co-funded by Creative Europe, on 15 September 2024 (International Day of Democracy) the federation also published a report on “bookshops, censorship and freedom of expression”, which is intended to assess the current state of affairs, not least via a survey of booksellers. Smashed façades in Sweden, France and Italy, the temptation to self-censor, a fear of aggression: booksellers can feel alone after filing a complaint. The important thing to do is to show that they aren’t, and to give them some tools to help them. It’s a sad reality that booksellers’ associations are now obliged to organise workshops on conflict resolution! On these questions, American colleagues are far ahead: the American Booksellers’ Association, for example, has just published an excellent guide to combatting book bans.

Finally, in 2022, the EIBF also unveiled a *Charter on freedom of expression* signed by all members. With its seven major principles, it sets out a framework that allows the federation to be reactive when they have to make a collective statement in response to a case of censorship. In the face of attacks on freedom of expression, translating or publishing a book can be a political gesture – and so can selling it (or not selling it).

**Jørgen Christian Wind Nielsen**, vice president of the Translation and Linguistic Rights Committee (TLRC) of PEN International, reminds listeners that the club, founded in 1921, has around one hundred centres in the world (some in exile like the one in Belarus), working on the promotion of literature and defending the principle of the free circulation of ideas among all nations. PEN is particularly keen to defend the rights of writers, translators, publishers, threatened or imprisoned in the world, and Europe is not absent from the list of troubling cases that PEN keeps updated, and which includes Turkey, but also such countries as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia.

More positively, perhaps, PEN supports translation and linguistic diversity. It is in to this end that it adopted the Gerona Manifesto on linguistic rights in 2011 and signed a memorandum of understanding with CEATL. Among the actions under way through its TLRC committee: the project *Making silenced languages visible* in Africa and Latin America; a poetry marathon with 100 videos in indigenous languages subtitled in English and accessible on YouTube; the defence of threate-

ned languages, such as Sami in the north of Finland, Sweden and Norway. The workshop on language equality organised as part of this conference has once again shown, if it were needed, that the promotion of linguistic diversity, in which translators play such a central part, is a deeply political act.

In conclusion, **Justyna Czechowska** states that publishing and translating have always been dangerous somewhere in the world, but observes that it is still sadly the case in Europe in the 21st century. “Is the European Union still a solution for defending those values, or is it only an economic union?” she wonders.

## Closing of the conference

*The conference is closed by **Pablo Guayasamín**, representing UNESCO's World Book Capital programme, **Francesca Novajra**, President of CEATL, and **Cécile Deniard**, coordinator of the European Conference on Literary Translation.*

UNESCO has always played a major role in the recognition of translation and translators, notably through the Index Translationum (a database of translated books) and the Nairobi Declaration on improving the legal and social status of translators (1976). It also attaches the utmost importance to promoting cultural diversity, and **Pablo Guayasamín** is therefore delighted that the Strasbourg UNESCO World Book Capital programme includes a highlight dedicated to translation:

**“Thanks to initiatives like this one, we have the opportunity to collectively rethink book policies, highlighting linguistic, cultural and editorial diversity. The Rencontres also highlight the importance of translation in our modern societies, and the essential role played by translators. It would be a good thing if future World Book Capitals were to emulate the initiative!”**



# Closing speech

## Cécile Deniard



Hello everyone,

I would like to thank Francesca Novajra, who is an exceptional president, and my CEATL colleagues who have given so much to this conference, and who suggested that I say a few closing words. On this occasion I would like to share with you a few thoughts and some of the emotions that I felt during the time that I devoted to the organisation of this event.

As objectively demanding as I found the task, it gave me this huge chance to spend some months in a kind of 'time shelter', in the words of the author Georgi Gospodinov who paid us the honour of delivering a speech at our opening evening; a bubble of time, an enchanted world in which I was in constant contact with people who, in the four corners of Europe, were passionate about translation and literature in general; people who were happy to see what we were building together.

Europe, for me, has always been a story of friendship – friendship not only between peoples, as they say, but between people, individuals. Add to that the fact that translation is in itself a story of friendship (a friendship that was so palpable in the delightful conversation that played out on stage that first evening between Georgi Gospodinov and his translators; that intellectual and emotional friendship among creative people that Magda Heydel also spoke about in her beautiful inaugural speech yesterday morning), and you will understand why Europe and translation are indissolubly connected in my mind.

You will also understand the joy that filled me every time I came into contact with all of these people whom you have heard, and whose talent, intelligence and commitment stirred my admiration; the joy of being able to invite them here to the European Parliament (a uniquely symbolic place for me) for our *Rencontres* – Encounters – and here you will note that we were pleased that the French title of the event was not a simple translation of the English title *European Conference*, since the word 'conférence' in French could not have conveyed the warmth of the invitation that we issued at the time (in a genuinely untranslatable form!). And my only frustration today lies in not being better able to meet each one of you; in any case, I hope that the participants in the conference have beautiful encounters, and found something to feed into your practice.

But another feeling – more covert and austere, but equally present, also prompted me into action; the feeling of the duty to create or consolidate between us networks and solidarities that can resist present threats and those yet to come – in our countries, in Europe, in the world. Because I know what

lies outside of the time shelter. I know as you all do that nationalism, "that arch-plague", as Stefan Zweig wrote in exile in *The World of Yesterday*, is making its big come-back, that nationalism that we thought was a thing of the past, and which

is so fundamentally opposed to the translator's vision of the world. I know that many different kinds of power are methodically trying to de-activate all the supranational and international authorities that have allowed us to live in relative peace for the last few decades, particularly in Europe. I know that censorship is raging increasingly in various forms. I know that language is also being corrupted on a massive scale, that the simplest and finest of terms (peace, freedom, democracy) are being warped, and that we must rise up against that, since we have an existential relationship with words; we must rise up, we must resist at every opportunity, as Melinda Nadj Abonji said yesterday. A war is not a 'surgical' operation.

And yet here we are back in the time of the "wars without declarations of war", as Zweig also put it, of mass robbery and bombing attacks of helpless cities. "I was forced to be [I am still quoting] a defenceless, helpless witness of the most inconceivable decline of humanity into a barbarism which we had believed long since forgotten, with its deliberate and programmatic dogma of anti-humanitarianism<sup>1</sup>."

Culture does not prevent barbarism, as history has so often shown; but it is a way to keep the lamp lit. There are night watchmen around us; in France, the translator from the Russian André Markowicz is one, determined to take on the contemporary world because it requires it of him, while at the same time literature never ceases to be his help and support, as it becomes the help and support of the readers of his articles.

Men and women of goodwill rarely succeed in stopping wars, but they prepare the future; they allow us to follow Ariadne's thread even through the deepest darkness.

It is up to each of us to find their path of resistance so that the just, the true and the beautiful win out in the end; but I will finish with these magnificent words with which Georgi Gospodinov concluded his speech on Wednesday, in Angela Rodel's English translation: "All of us writers and translators (which actually turn out to be one and the same thing) are trying to lead the reader by the hand, step by step and page by page to the shores of yet another tomorrow."

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1 - Translation by Benjamin W. Huebsch and Helmut Ripperger.

# Feedback from participants

*Amanda Aaserød, translator from French into Norwegian, learned French so she could read Georges Perec's La Vie mode d'emploi in the original. She started out as a proofreader and is currently working on a project to translate Louise Labé's Sonnets.*

"I'm a member of the Norsk Oversetterforening association, which brings together around 200 Norwegian fiction translators. I heard about these three professional days at the annual meeting of Norwegian literary translators in Kløfta. I was able to take advantage of a grant from the Ministry of Culture to attend, as well as the Assises de la traduction in Arles. Here, I met highly specialised translators and exchanged ideas on subjects such as AI."

"I think that MT and AI can be used at the correction stage, but not for translation, which is rewriting involving following the flow, the melody, the current of the language. Also, we can't lose the very first contact with the text, which is fundamental!"

**I had a great time. I learned a lot and I came back home bubbling with ideas and energy!**

*Itziar Santín, translator,  
ACE Traductores delegate*

*Stéphanie Bernoux, who is reconverting after a career in banking, lives in the Canary Islands. She translates from Russian and Spanish into French. Her first translations were published by Éditions Hauteville and in Café magazine.*

**You could say I'm taking part in the Woodstock of translators!**

*Oana Dobosi, bookseller  
(La Două Bufnițe, Timișoara)*

"For me, as a newcomer to the profession, the programme was a comprehensive introduction to the various networks and programmes supporting literary translation in Europe. The meetings provided me with a wealth of references and information on the sector (including the *Translators on the Cover* report and the mapping of the translation market). I'm wondering about remuneration: is the profession economically viable?"

"I was worried that the event would be too institutional and formal, given that the Parliament was both prestigious and solemn, and that many of the speakers represented associations or institutions, but I was pleasantly surprised by the quality and interest of the presentations. The only downside was that the conference schedule left little time for socializing and networking! And another workshop session would have been welcome."

*Estelle Delavennat translates from Ukrainian into French. Attracted to the theatre since childhood and an amateur actress, she trained as a linguist before devoting herself to literary translation. She is currently working on the translation of a play by Ihor Matiushyn (Ihor Tour on stage), former director of the Marioupol theatre, now in exile in central France.*

"A member of the ATLF and SGDL, I learned about the conference through them. For me, these meetings are an opportunity to get in touch not only with other translators, but also with all the players in the book chain. I was also able to talk at length with the Ukrainian representatives of the Pen Club. As it's impossible to travel to Ukraine, this exchange between us was invaluable. They pointed me in the direction of important texts to translate.

"I stayed for the three days, because the whole programme was exciting, but it represents a significant budget. For my part, I chose the most economical transport and accommodation. Financial help would make it possible for more translators to take part, who give up because the cost is too high without support."

**Zeinep Diker** came as a neighbor. A graduate of Strasbourg's Institute of Translators, Interpreters and International Relations (ITIRI), she translates from Turkish and English. She works mainly in the audiovisual sector, but also for the publishing industry (fantasy). Her translation of the comic book *Tepe, la colline* by Firat Yaşa (Éditions Ça et Là) was in the Eco-Fauve selection at the Angoulême 2025 festival.

"My main motivation was initially to see again the people who trained me in literary translation, in 2014, as part of a CNL and Turkish Ministry of Culture programme for Franco-Turkish translators. And then I looked at the conference programme, which seemed very interesting, and I thought it would be an opportunity to meet colleagues and get an overview of the state of literary translation in Europe and around the world. During the workshops, I took notes so as not to forget the procedures for applying for grants and subsidies, but the sheer volume of paperwork can be daunting. What I learned from these meetings is that there's strength in numbers, and if you want to get something done (or avoid seeing your achievements disappear), you have to lobby!"

**Clarisse Tchatchou**, born in Cameroon, lives in London and translates from English into French. After bringing up four children on her own, she returned to school, graduating with honours with a master's degree in translation. Her dissertation was on the translation of units of measurement in the King James Bible.

"After graduating, I was immediately asked to do technical translation, but I came here to find out more about the world of literary translation and what it has to offer. As a child, I was thrilled to read *The Little Prince*, and then to find myself in Saint-Exupéry's homeland. All my life, I've retained a taste for writing and literature. I've always been thirsty for that water! I'd like to specialise in the translation of biographies. These meetings give me the opportunity to be advised by more experienced people."

**Bogdan Ghiu**, President of ARTLIT, the Romanian association of literary translators, is also a renowned writer. In 1997, he was awarded the Romanian Writers' Union prize for several volumes of poetry, and in 2003 for his translations of Charles Baudelaire and Henri Bergson.

"All the discussions at the conference struck me as so important that I decided as soon as I got back home to devote a series of articles to this historic moment in my column in *Observator cultural*, Romania's leading cultural weekly. Seven very detailed articles have already been published, and I haven't yet exhausted my series on this magnificent conference!"

**Eszter Orbán**, a freelance translator from Spanish into Hungarian and vice versa, has over ten years' experience in audiovisual and documentary translation (culture, tourism, business). She also works as a literary translator, teaches at university and is co-founder and editor-in-chief of the online literary magazine *lho.es*.

"I came to the conference hoping to build my network and strengthen the international relations of the Hungarian Literary Translators' Association, MEGY. This seemed all the more important as the current cuts in public funding for the arts in Hungary (and increasingly in Europe) are affecting the working conditions of literary translators."

"I thoroughly enjoyed the event: I was struck by the thoughtful organisation, fascinating discussions and openness of the participants. It gave us the idea of a collaboration between the Slovak, Polish and Hungarian associations, whose representatives committed to working together on a regional project. The aim is mutual support, and there are even plans to involve the Czech association. It's still a work in progress, but it's a promising initiative."

### The conference in numbers

80 speakers from 28 countries  
350 on-site participants from 38 countries  
1,500 online registrations from 73 countries  
12 hours of video in 3 languages

# Speakers

To find out more about them, go to our website: [www.ceatl.eu](http://www.ceatl.eu)



María Afonso



Jörn Cambreleng



Victoire Feuillebois



Georg Häusler



Duncan Large



Robert Alagjozovski



Lucie Campos



Julià Florit



Johanna Hedenberg



Andrej Lovšin



Vladimir Arsenijević



Iñigo Cebollada



Amalie Foss



Magda Heydel



Christophe Lucchese



Jürgen Jakob Becker



Justyna Czechowska



Yana Genova



Lara Hölbling Matković



Sinéad Mac Aodha



Julie Belgrado



Cécile Deniard



Marion Gilbert



Sawad Hussain



Alena Makouskaya



Juergen Boos



Goedele De Sterck



Georgi Gospodinov



Elżbieta Kalinowska



Simona Mambrini



Alexandra Büchler



Oana Doboși



James Hadley



Martin Krafl



Lya Mayahi



Miquel Cabal Guarro



Ina Engelhardt



André Hansen



Pamela Landrevie



Jesper Monthan



Sandra Mouton



Camilla Pargentino



Magdalena Pytlak



Gaea Schoeters



Eva Valvo



Melinda Nadj Abonji



Elena Pasoli



Estelle Renard



Milena Selimi



Ela Varošaneć Krsnik



Jan Naess



Arnaud Pasquali



Diana Riba i Giner



Joris Smeets



Marie Vrinat-Nikolov



Bohdana Neborak



Tanja Petrič



Corinne Rigaud



Benoît-Thaddée  
Standaert



María Vútova



Xavier North



Monika Pfundmeier



Christophe Rioux



Gabriela Stöckli



Juliane Wammen



Francesca Novajra



Rosie Pinhas-Delpuech



Nicolas Roche



Katharine Throssell



Jørgen Christian  
Wind Nielsen



Ágnes Orzóy



Simina Popa



Angela Rodel



Antonio Toral



Shaun Whiteside



Furkan Özkan



Renate Punka



Angelika Salvisberg



Enrico Turrin



Françoise Wuilmart

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