



**Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association**  
*Cumann Aistritheoirí agus Teangairí na hÉireann*

# ITIA Bulletin

## September 2014

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## Editorial

The editorial of this issue of the Bulletin is a cordial invitation to all our members to attend not only our 28th AGM on Saturday 11th October 2014 at the Irish Writers' Centre but also our AGM Event - a two and half hour, two part session on ITIA Certified Translator status which will provide information on what it is, why it is needed as well as a practical workshop on typical issues which may arise. For those members who wish to enhance their skills, and hopefully their income, we highly recommend attending.

Very much related to certification, the AGM this year will include discussion on revising the 'Associate' membership category. This is in line with the necessity for accreditation and professionalisation of our skills in order to ensure the good standing of our profession and to allow users of our services to select a translator or interpreter proven to be capable of carrying out the task. Like so many of our colleague associations, review and renewal of our constitution and codes of conduct are an important part of keeping our members' status up-to-date and up-to-standard.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Anne Larchet  
Adam Brozynski  
Co-Editors

## FIT Statutory Congress Berlin 2-3 August 2014

*Our Chairperson Dr Mary Phelan reports on her time at the FIT Congress.*

The ITIA is a member of FIT, the International Federation of Translators set up in 1953, which holds a statutory congress followed by a conference in a different venue every three years. This year, the event was held in Berlin and organised by the BDÜ – German Federal Association of Interpreters and Translators. I attended on behalf of the ITIA. Some 100 national and regional associations are members of FIT, which also has regional groups for Europe, Latin America and North America. Member associations pay fees based on their professional membership but there is a cap on the fees of very large associations to ensure that they cannot become too powerful. Each association, regardless of size, has one vote.

As the statutory congress governs the association, most of the two days was spent voting on various issues. Electronic voting was introduced for the first time and proved a real time saver, with results immediately visible on screen. We voted to accept new members, to discontinue membership for some associations who had not paid their fees for some time, on changes to the bylaws and to elect a new council.

The FIT Council is rather large with 14 members plus up to three co-opted members to ensure representation across regions. One of the issues for the organisation is the cost of travel to attend the annual Council meeting.

*...smaller associations may decide against getting involved in FIT Council for financial reasons.*

This is funded by each council member's association.

This can work well for large associations but can be problematic for smaller associations. As a result, members of smaller associations may decide against getting involved in FIT Council for financial reasons. A proposal was put to the statutory congress to increase membership fees by 25% and to increase the cap for larger associations to 4500 Swiss Francs so that FIT could cover all travel expenses.

However, the delegates rejected the 25% increase and approved a 10% increase instead as well as approving the increased cap.

In August 2017 the FIT statutory congress will be organised by AUSIT and held in Brisbane, Australia.

For more details see: <http://tinyurl.com/lxoj8v3>

Mary Phelan

## Garda Síochána Request for Tender for Interpreting Services

In 2008, the Garda Síochána issued a request for tender for interpreting and translation services and the contracts for these services expired on the 31st January 2013. In July 2013, the Garda issued a new request for tender for face to face interpreting and telephone interpreting. They had hoped to have a new contract in

place by 1st February 2014 but at the time of writing (August 2014), no contracts had been awarded.

Some changes are envisaged for the new contracts; for face to face interpreting, the number of regions has been reduced from six to three, with two companies to be contracted for each:

- Lot 1 – Dublin Metropolitan Region
- Lot 2- South Eastern + Southern Region plus Kildare, Laois/Offaly and Wicklow
- Lot 3 – Northern and Western Region, plus Meath and Westmeath
- Lot 4 is for Telephone Interpreting and the contract will be for one company.

Unlike in 2008, there is no separate request for tender for sign language interpreting or for translation. In fact, there is no mention of sign language interpreting at all.

While some interpreters who work in Garda stations hold a qualification in languages, in translation or occasionally in interpreting, most do not. This means that if the request for tender were to specify that they would only work with qualified people, the likelihood is that there would be very few interpreters to cover the needs. The ITIA acknowledges this difficulty.

There are some positive aspects to the latest request for tender in that it attempts to encourage providers to bring about some level of change. This has been done through the award criteria, which request information on how providers will train interpreters in legal terminology, ethics, and professional standards.

Another innovation is that contractors will be expected to assess and verify interpreters' competency in English and the foreign language. In practice, this will probably mean that interpreters will have to take a test to establish their proficiency in English.

However, testing of proficiency in other languages could be complicated in that there may be no test available for certain languages. The erroneous assumption that anyone who speaks two languages reasonably well will be a competent interpreter has not gone away.

The ITIA welcomes a question about how tenderers will support interpreters who are involved in a traumatic interpreting session.

The Garda reserve the right to test and/or monitor interpreters but it is unclear why or how this would be done. If done properly, by professionals, this could of course be very useful. It is more likely to be used in cases where the Garda have doubts about the competency of interpreters and are perhaps concerned that the defence team would have video evidence checked.

Of course, it is also a good idea to warn translation companies that this can be done.

## *The introduction of a minimum number of hours of experience is a good idea ...*

In section 1.9.1 the request for tender lists 'personnel performing functions' and this section is somewhat disappointing as it pitches the level very low. It should be noted that these are, of course, minimum levels:

1. Have, at a minimum, FETAC Level 5 standard of education;
2. Have, at a minimum, 70 hours of experience in providing interpretations services previously;
3. Have been trained in interpreting techniques and procedures;
4. Provide genuine and accurate interpretations;

The introduction of a minimum number of hours of experience is a good idea although experience does not necessarily guarantee quality or competency. However, some interpreters will use the experience they gain to work on their interpreting skills, to learn new terms and to improve their performance.

The stipulation that interpreters should 'provide genuine and accurate interpretations' is rather disingenuous as it

is highly unlikely that interpreters who have not been properly trained in this area, who have not received any feedback, and who have not been tested, will be able to do so.

While this request for tender is a nudge in the right direction for translation companies, it is very far from the high quality of interpreting that is necessary to ensure that defendants understand exactly what Garda officers say to them, and that Garda officers understand exactly what is being said by defendants.

We have some way to go before we meet the quality requirements of EU Directive 2010/64/EU on translation and interpreting in criminal proceedings. The Garda cannot bring about change on their own.

The Department of Justice needs to intervene to ensure that all interpreters working in **Garda** stations and the courts are trained and tested. Mere provision of untrained, untested interpreters is not enough.

Mary Phelan

## **Translation Right or Wrong**

*This is an adaptation of a talk given in Trinity College Dublin in May 2014 at the launch of Translation Right or Wrong edited by Susana Bayó Belenguer, Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin and Cormac Ó Cuilleánáin, assisted by Giulia Zuodar (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2013), €49.50.*

The first thing in this elegant and stimulating collection that deserves comment is the title. It's not Translation: Right or Wrong? These authors are not trying to answer a question, nor even to pose one. For this we should be grateful. Not long ago there was a body of opinion that queried whether we should bother translating some things at all, with poetry held to be what got lost in translation. Thankfully, we never heeded these warnings: poetry continues to be translated.

Nor indeed, is the title a battle-cry – Translation, Right or Wrong! As a community, we are more confident in our stance and status than to feel the need to defend it

constantly. Rather we investigate more fruitful trajectories by examining how translation creates its own rights and wrongs.

Thus the right/wrong dichotomy is left open. And this book takes its lead from two epigraphs, one by Theodore Savory noting that “there are no universally accepted principles of translation because the only people who are qualified to formulate them have never agreed among themselves” and the other by Douglas Robinson referring to the world of translation as “a compromised world of half-rights and half-wrongs” (9).

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*Translation is all too frequently conceived of as an activity carried out by functionaries...*

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I like these two quotes, yet I'm not sure that either hits the nail on the head. Yes there are half-rights and half-wrongs involved in any compromise. But does translation necessarily involve compromise? As the editors astutely note in their Introduction (10) “the quarrel about ‘sense for sense’ versus ‘word for word’, the disputed point when ‘fidelity in transcription’ degenerates into ‘pestilent minuteness’” (quoting St Jerome) actually relates more closely to the encounter with the foreign to which the translator exposes the reader. To regard this encounter as merely an obstacle to be surmounted appears, in the light of these essays, reductive in the extreme. Like all the best obstacles, it is an opportunity – not so much a dumb boulder in our paths to be clambered over, as a gatekeeper to be cajoled and beguiled by doing our best to speak his language. What the boulder-in-the-path metaphor primarily ignores is the creative impulse behind translating. To ask ‘right or wrong?’ is to fall into the essentialist trap of presuming translations to be primarily faithful (or otherwise) reproductions of the originals. To say ‘right or wrong be damned!’ is to defiantly proclaim that you’ll reproduce the original regardless, as though in an effort

to defy your (or translation’s) detractors. Yet for those of us really interested in creating something new – something worthy of the source text, rather than a pale imitation of it – the limitations of this polarity are obvious.

The idea of including within our concept of translation the notion of a ‘creativity’ on a par with literary and artistic creativity remains anathema to many, particularly those outside the translation community. Translation is all too frequently conceived of as an activity carried out by functionaries, a (poorly) paid service eternally in deference to an authoritative original. Minako O’Hagan’s contribution in this book challenges this stance by examining the phenomenon of unsolicited fan-translation, a practice that has evolved particularly with regard to such textual genres as anime and manga. While this began as a minority interest, the emergence of crowdsourcing and parallel developments in activism, all facilitated through social media, have brought volunteer translation very much to the fore, problematising our notions and expectations of ‘professionalism’ along the way. We will translate regardless, it seems. We will translate right or wrong.

Michelle Woods pursues this even further, looking at the ‘translational’ relationship between Milena Jesenská and Franz Kafka. Jesenská was not only the first translator of Kafka’s work, but also the first translator into his other native language, Czech. Jesenská has suffered in the past by being regarded exclusively as a textual construct in Kafka’s eyes, a reductivism compounded by the secondary status traditionally attributed to translators. If we progress with our notion of translation as a non-professional activity, Woods’ examination takes this further to show that it can also be an activity of intimacy: Kafka enjoys reading Jesenská’s translations because they provide for him a voice that is an alternative to his own. As Woods writes “The story of a doomed love affair... seems more arresting on the surface than a narrative about two people falling in love over a translation. Yet the recognition in Kafka’s Letters that he had met

someone who understood the frailty and possibilities of identities at the borders of different cultures and languages that are, in turn, articulated by language, means a recognition also of Jesenská's professional worth as a translator. Not only does she bring his words back into the other language of his home town, but she understands the process and importance of doing so" (60-61). Therein lies a conception of what is professional far exceeding monetary worth but taking stock of the product as the trace of a human life of love and pain.

One good litmus test of the extent to which translators have gained confidence in their abilities to create brave new texts over pusillanimous palimpsests is to examine their handling of source-text profanity: do they gingerly try to sanitise vulgarity for an audience they timidly cower before, or do they regard fidelity's task as turning the target air as blue as that of the source?

Bart Defrancq's descriptive study examines the real-life translation of insults, noting that self-censorship remains a strategy in the translation of strong insults. Softer insults, however, tended to be either overstated or understated: "some authors indicate that the translation is (even) less offensive than the original ('polite'), which is completely in line with strategies deployed for offensive terms.

In other cases, translation strategies seem to reflect and probably reinforce stereotypes that already exist among the readership" (148). Ilaria Parini's study of taboo language in the dubbing of *Pulp Fiction*, *Reservoir Dogs*, and *True Romance* into Italian reveals similar inconsistency, with explicit sexual references sometimes being maintained, sometimes attenuated through various translation strategies, while on other occasions they have been omitted (and indeed sometimes all these inconsistencies can be noted in the translation of the one film).

Naturally in a review such as this, there is insufficient space to provide an account of all nineteen papers in this excellent collection. Suffice it to say that, similar to its predecessor *Translation and Censorship* (also published

by Four Courts Press), this elegant volume is a solid and authoritative contribution to the growing volume of language mediation scholarship being published in Ireland and, in particular, is fine testament to the energies recently expended on translation studies at Trinity College Dublin.

John Kearns  
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## Irish-Chinese Literature Translation Prize, 2014

*Chinese Translator of Claire Keegan's "Walk the Blue Fields" Wins the Inaugural Irish Literature Translation Prize in Shanghai*

Ireland Literature Exchange is delighted to announce the winner of the inaugural Irish-Chinese Literature Translation Prize, 2014.

Ma Ainong, the Chinese translator of Claire Keegan's collection of short stories *Walk the Blue Fields* published by Shanghai 99 Readers' Culture Co. Ltd in 2011 is the winner of the inaugural Chinese Irish Literature Translation Prize! The Prize was presented by the Consul General, Austin Gormley at the Shanghai Book Fair on Thursday, August 14.

The Prize is organised by the Consulate General of Ireland in Shanghai in association with the Shanghai Book Fair, the Shanghai Review of Books and Ireland Literature Exchange.

The winning translator receives a trophy, a cash award of 17,000RMB and a bursary to travel to Ireland to work on another translation by a contemporary Irish author. While in Ireland, the winning translator will be hosted by Ireland Literature Exchange, the national organisation for the promotion of Irish literature abroad.

Speaking at the announcement of the winning Chinese translation, the director of Ireland Literature Exchange, Sinéad Mac Aodha said:

*We are delighted that many excellent and exciting works of Irish literature are being translated and published to such a high standard in China with the support of Ireland Literature Exchange. I should like to congratulate Claire Keegan, her translator Ma Ainong and her publishers Shanghai 99 Readers' Culture Co. Ltd on winning this prestigious award. Ma Ainong was hosted in Dublin on a literary translation bursary by Ireland Literature Exchange in 2011. We look forward, together with our partners in the Tyrone Guthrie Centre in Annaghmakerrig, to welcoming her again to Ireland and to seeing many more of her sensitive and expert literary translations of Irish literature.*

Ma Ainong is a translator and editor. She is the director of the Foreign Literature Department at the People's Literature Publishing House. Over the course of her career she has translated over 40 English language books into Chinese, including Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, Annie Proulx's *Shipping News*, L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* and J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. She has also edited translations by, amongst others, Sebastian Barry, Karen Ardifff, Michael Frayn, Ali Smyth and Julian Barnes.

Claire Keegan grew up on a farm in Wicklow and studied English and Political Science at Loyola University. Her first collection of short stories, *Antarctica* (1999), won the Rooney Prize for Irish Literature. Her long-awaited second collection, *Walk the Blue Fields* (2007), established her as an exceptionally gifted writer. Her third work, *Foster*, appeared in 2010 and won the Davy Byrne Memorial Prize.

Ireland Literature Exchange makes international friends for Irish literature, by bringing the finest of Irish literature in the best possible literary translations to readers around the world; by encouraging publishers to publish the work of Irish writers worldwide; by hosting literary translators in Ireland and representing Irish writers at international events, book fairs and festivals. Established 20 years ago, Ireland Literature Exchange

has funded the translation of over 1,500 works of Irish literature into 55 languages around the world.

In the past five years, Ireland Literature Exchange has supported over 30 works of Irish literature in Chinese translation, hosted seven Chinese literary translators in Ireland, organised participation of Irish authors at events and festivals in China and attended international book fairs in Beijing and Shanghai.

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## Translation Ireland – Call for Papers

*Volume 20, Issue 1 – General Issue*

Submissions are now open for the forthcoming issue of *Translation Ireland* (20:1), the journal of the Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association.

As the next issue will be a general one, we are open to contributions addressing all aspects of translation and interpreting. However, we would be particularly interested in articles dealing with community or conference interpreting (especially with reference to the Irish context), translation technology and tools for translators, legal and medical translation and interpreting, Irish-language translation and interpreting, and professional ethics.

Articles are generally between 4000 and 7000 words in length and should adhere to the *Translation Ireland* style guidelines, available at <http://tinyurl.com/kwj77g>.

The deadline for submissions is November 14th 2014 and the volume will appear in spring 2015. All submissions and enquiries should be addressed by email to the journal editor, John Kearns: [kearns@pro.onet.pl](mailto:kearns@pro.onet.pl)

## European Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity

The European Commission has recently unveiled the composition of the new team and the new portfolios assigned to the 28 Commissioners. The NPLD is disappointed to see that multilingualism has not been assigned any specific portfolio and wishes to note the decreasing importance languages have had over the past few years, going from a Commissioner for Multilingualism (Leonard Orban, 2007-2010), to a Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth (Androulla Vassiliou, 2010-2014), to no Commissioner in charge of the multilingualism portfolio.

In the Commission's recent press release announcing the new team, the Commission notes that the current unit dealing with Multilingualism Policy; Skills and Qualification Strategy will move from DG Education and Culture to DG Employment.

NPLD completely shares the Commission's view of stimulating growth and jobs in the current economic and social scenario and believes that languages can greatly contribute to stimulate Europe's economy. We wish to note, however, that all European languages – EU official languages but also regional, minority or small-state languages – serve for much more than for economic purposes.

The new Commission's approach on multilingualism gives a utilitarian, market-oriented approach to the languages of Europe, which will only prioritize big, hegemonic languages and will leave a remarkable number of lesser-used languages – small-state, regional or minority languages – aside.

NPLD is highly concerned on the increasingly wide gap between the European institutions and its citizens. We strongly believe that the new narrative that the European Union is currently forging must bring together all the peoples of Europe and ensure that no one is left behind, with their wide variety of histories, cultures and

languages – which is one of its main features – which can be shared as a common asset.

Strengthening the European economies and ensuring high levels of employment will be key issues in the near future, but other elements will need to be included in the European strategy if it is to lead, ultimately, to a more stable, prosperous and inclusive society.

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## Worth a click

### Ukraine Crisis Intrudes Into Translators Congress

- <http://tinyurl.com/qctz4fz>

### Judge tries to source interpreter from Chinese takeaways as private company fails to provide one

- <http://tinyurl.com/kcko464>

### A word in your ear: the interpreters who speak for world leaders

- <http://tinyurl.com/qcsrrf3>

### Skype Translator Will Change the World

- <http://tinyurl.com/pfrm2c3>

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## What's Hot, What's Not?

### What's HOT...

Minister for Education and Skills, Jan O'Sullivan launched consultations on foreign languages in Irish post primary, further and higher Education which will allow key stakeholders to have an input into the strategy's development of the role of foreign languages. Let's hope our voice will be heard!

### ...What's NOT

A Cambridge Councillor in England called for translation services for all information issued by the council be scrapped to 'force indifferent people to learn and understand English'. Where does that leave the non-English speakers - and the translators?

## Joining the ITIA

The *Irish Translators' & Interpreters' Association* is pleased to welcome new members to the association. We currently have the following categories of membership:

- Professional
- Associate
- Institutional
- Student
- Honorary

**Professional Membership** is awarded to translators or interpreters who meet the strict criteria of the ITIA based on qualification and level of experience.

Applicants must also achieve a PASS in the annual Professional Membership Examination (translator or interpreter) set by the ITIA.

**Associate Membership** is available to translators and interpreters who are starting out on their careers and to those who do not work full-time as a translator or interpreter. Many members avail of Associate Membership until such time as they have acquired the requisite experience and/or qualifications to apply for Professional Membership. Associate Membership is also availed of by people with a professional interest in the professions of translation and interpreting (e.g. terminologists, translation/interpreting tutors etc.) and by those who have a general interest in these professions.

**Institutional Membership** is available to bodies that do not function as commercial agencies, for example university centres for translation and interpreting studies or cultural institutes. Application documents for Institutional membership are currently being prepared.

**Student Membership** is available to persons undertaking undergraduate studies in any discipline or those undertaking postgraduate studies in translation or interpreting.

**Honorary Membership** is awarded by the ITIA AGM to persons in Ireland or abroad who have distinguished themselves in the field of translation or interpreting.

For further details and application forms, please see our website at <http://tinyurl.com/y65bgtb>

### New Associate Members of the ITIA September 2014

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**SUSANNE FIESSLER**

ENGLISH to and from GERMAN

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**ALESSIO FREDA**

ITALIAN to and from ENGLISH

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**SIMONA IGNAT**

ROMANIAN from English, French

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**MILENA MARTIN**

BULGARIAN to and from ENGLISH

### New Professional Member of the ITIA September 2014

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**MARCELLO NAPOLITANO**

ITALIAN from English - IT, marketing/advertising, software localisation, engineering, agricultural science

## Contacting the ITIA

### Irish Translators' & Interpreters' Association

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### ITIA Executive Committee: 2013–2014

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Honorary Secretary	Justyna Maćkowska
Honorary Treasurer / Chair of The Professional Membership Sub-Committee	Graziano Ciulli
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