



ITIA BULLETIN

January 2009

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Irish Translators' & Interpreters' Association
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■ Editorial

Dear Readers,

The year 2009 looks set to be one of the most difficult ones for some time. The crisis that started at the highest levels of banking has wasted no time in trickling down to every man, woman and child. In the ITIA, we have been trying to draw attention to issues of professionalisation and rates of pay for the T/I profession. It was a hard battle when the public finances were in good standing so we must be prepared for an even tougher battle now that the government is in cutback mode. See below for the article on the funding cut to the Irish Writers' Centre (home of the ITIA).

From reading a popular online translation forum, it is becoming clear that some freelancers are being asked to cut their rates on the grounds of the economic crisis. While the crisis is undeniably real, we must be on our guard for opportunists using it as a pretext for increasing margins.

I would love to hear from anybody who would like to share their experience of how the economic crisis has affected their professional lives.

Elizabeth Hayes
Editor ITIA Bulletin
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■ Arts Council to cut IWC funding

Before Christmas, the *Irish Writers' Centre* (IWC) was informed that it would no longer be receiving funding from the Arts Council. Last year's Arts Council grant, which amounted to €200,000 represented about 40% of the IWC's funds. The reasons the Arts Council has cited for withdrawing funding are staffing costs, literary expertise and how resources are deployed. The money will instead be distributed to other literary artist-support organisations.

Cathal McCabe, director of the IWC, expressed shock and dismay at the funding cuts. He pointed out that in 2008, the IWC received over 4,000 drop-in inquiries, more than 9,000 telephone inquiries and more than 1,000,000 hits on its website which is a testament to its relevance. The IWC also runs several courses throughout the year.

The IWC provides the space for other organisations to work from, including the Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association.

Fundraising efforts are continuing for the IWC but inevitably, some programmes will have to be cut. Even worse, the IWC may be forced to close down. The IWC is appealing the Arts Council's decision.

Please consider signing the petition to save the IWC: <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/IWC/>

The following is a letter written by ITIA chairperson, Annette Schiller, which was published in the Irish Times on Saturday 24th January 2009.

Funding cut to writers' centre

Madam, We are mystified at the recent decision of the Arts Council to eliminate funding to the Irish Writers' Centre.

Since being appointed, Cathal McCabe, along with his team, has done tremendous and innovative work at the centre.

In addition to organising workshops, book launches, creative writing courses and other literary events involving writers from Ireland and as far afield as the USA, the Czech Republic and the Middle East, they have also overseen the renovation of the premises, returning it to its former glory. Most importantly, the IWC runs the annual Glen Dimplex Awards, which offer unprecedented support to new and emerging writers in a number of genres.

For many years, the IWC has been home to organisations such as the Irish Writers' Union, the Dublin Women Writers' Group and the Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association. This has served to strengthen the links between the centre and literary artists not only at home but also abroad through the translation of Irish works of literature.

The decision to cut funding will be detrimental to the good work that has been done over the years and may even force the centre to close its doors. We suggest that a reversal of this decision would be in the best interests of Irish literature at home and abroad. Yours, etc.,

Dr ANNETTE SCHILLER,
Chairperson,
Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association,
Irish Writers' Centre,
19 Parnell Square,
Dublin 1

■ ILE Bursaries

Ireland Literature Exchange/Idirmhalartán Litríocht Éireann (ILE) invites applications from literary translators from China, Japan and India who are working on the translation of a work of contemporary Irish literature and wish to spend a period of up to four consecutive weeks in Ireland during the period March 2009 to July 2009.

The deadline for applications is 20 February. More information can be found on their website www.irelandliterature.com/#bus

■ Joining the ITIA

The *Irish Translators' & Interpreters' Association* is always delighted to welcome new members to the Association. There are five categories of membership:

- ◆ Ordinary
- ◆ Professional
- ◆ Corporate
- ◆ Concession (undergraduate & senior citizen)
- ◆ Honorary

Ordinary membership is open to anyone with an interest in translating or interpreting. *Professional membership* is for those who meet strict criteria set by the professional membership committee of the ITIA and which is part of the drive to raise the status of the profession in the European market.

Corporate membership is for firms and agencies associated with the profession while *concession* membership is for undergraduate students engaged in third level language and/or translation studies and senior citizens. Finally, *honorary* membership is intended for national and international persons who have distinguished themselves in our professional field. For more information on how to join as well as for the relevant application forms, visit the ITIA website at: www.translatorsassociation.ie

New Associate Members (was "Ordinary")

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POLISH from English
general, medical

■ Interpreting News

The ITIA can reveal the preferred bidders for the Garda tender process for interpreting and translation. As not all contracts have been signed, this information is subject to change. For face to face interpreting, garda stations will be issued with a list of 3 companies to contact depending on the region where the Garda station is located. For example, if an interpreter is needed in Store Street Garda Station in Dublin city centre, the Garda will be instructed to contact FC Translations first. If FC Translations cannot provide an interpreter for that particular language then the Gardaí will contact Lionbridge. If Lionbridge cannot provide an interpreter, the Gardaí will contact Context. And if Context cannot provide an interpreter, the next step is not at all clear. Perhaps the Gardaí will then phone other agencies. This table provides more details:

| Face to face Interpreting by region | Company No. 1 | Company No. 2 | Company No. 3 |
|--|-----------------|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Dublin Region City and County | FC Translations | Lionbridge | Context (Galway) |
| Northern Region – Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Monaghan, Cavan | FC Translations | Lionbridge | WordPerfect (Dublin) |
| Southern Region – Cork North and West, Cork City, Kerry, Limerick | FC Translations | Lionbridge | Context |
| Eastern Region – Longford, Westmeath, Louth, Meath, Carlow, Kildare, Laois, Offaly | FC Translations | Lionbridge | Context |
| Western Region - Clare, Mayo, Galway West, Galway East, Roscommon | FC Translations | Lionbridge | Context |
| South Eastern Region -Tipperary, Waterford, Kilkenny, Wicklow, Wexford | FC Translations | Lionbridge | Unique Voice (Tralee, Co. Kerry) |

WordPerfect Translations is the preferred bidder for translation and *Language Line* is the preferred bidder for telephone interpreting. Will Language Line interpreters based in the UK or the US be able to cope with challenging Irish accents? In the tender documents the Garda were looking for three companies to provide sign language interpreters but we don't know who the preferred bidders are as yet.

The contracts are for a period of up to four years which is a long time. It is difficult to see how the new system can improve the situation. Up to now the Garda did not have any formal contracts with any agencies. Certain garda stations worked with particular translation companies. That situation was not particularly satisfactory but the proposed solution is not much of an improvement. It just means that the work is divided up among a smaller number of companies.

We already know that the Courts Service regularly contacts translation agencies around the country to provide interpreters when the contracted agency is not in a position to do so. Local translation agencies tend to have good contacts with local interpreters. Despite this, location does not appear to be a consideration for the Garda. We wonder if the contracted agencies will be able to provide interpreters at 3 in the morning in Letterkenny or Tralee or Achill. As suspects can only be detained for a certain amount of time depending on the crime involved, the amount of time it takes to provide an interpreter is a really important issue.

The contracted companies will be expected to provide training to interpreters who work in garda stations. We wonder if interpreters will be expected to attend training by different companies. For example, if an interpreter is based in Cork, will she/he have to attend training run by *FC*, *Lionbridge* and *Context*? We hope that companies will accept attendance at each others' courses. The tender process does not specify how much training should be provided. It is unlikely that translation agencies will expend much time, effort or money on training. The ITIA would be interested in obtaining feedback on training courses and in particular on cost (if any), duration and content.

...the proposed solution is not much of an improvement.

We would advise interpreters to check out the rates of pay on offer from the different agencies for Garda Station work and in particular for out of hours work, travel expenses and travel time. We don't know when exactly the new system will commence; possibly at the start of February 2009 but there may be further delays.

It would appear that Gardaí on the ground are not aware of the tender process. There is a new internal document on how to work with interpreters but we don't know if there are guidelines about when to use telephone interpreting and when to opt for face to face interpreting

or what to do if none of the three contracted translation agencies can supply an interpreter.

Other news – FC Translations now provides translations to the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC) and interpreters to Refugee Legal Services.

Mary Phelan

■ Saving money on translators and interpreters

In the latest issue of *The Linguist*, the journal of the Chartered Institute of Linguists, there is a snippet from an article that appeared in the *Daily Mirror* a few weeks ago concerning the interpreter appointed by Wigan Athletic for their star Egyptian striker, currently with them on loan, Amr Zaki. The football club discovered that the interpreter wasn't up to the job. Not surprising really, as they had appointed him after finding him selling pies on a stall and being told that he was fluent in Arabic.

Wigan Athletic is in the top football league, and players of this calibre earn several hundred thousand pounds a year. Manager Steve Bruce moved to Wigan last year for a reported salary of £3m a year including bonuses, according to an article at the time. The club's hospitality packages start at £1250 per person, and there is a package that costs twice as much (see here). Yet the club didn't see fit to shell out the going rate for a professional interpreter. Incredible!

they had appointed him after finding him selling pies

Stories like this are all too common. Companies that spend a fortune on entertaining clients, and that wouldn't dream of appointing trainee or unqualified accountants or medical staff, think it's perfectly ok to get translations done by someone's daughter, brother-in-law or other willing volunteer. In a document produced by the Institute of Translation and Interpreting, there are some translation horror stories. A US manufacturer of radiation equipment didn't bother to translate instructions into French, assuming that technicians would all be fluent in English; they weren't and some patients died of radiation overdoses. In April

2007 the prime ministers of France and Canada held a memorial service to honour Canadian soldiers who had died in France during the First World War. Journalists spotted that historical plaques put up nearby were riddled with grammar and spelling errors, and it turned out that they had been translated by well-meaning but unqualified volunteers.

Susan Purcell

This article was taken from Susan Purcell's blog *The Virtual Linguist*. For more, see

http://virtuallinguist.typepad.com/the_virtual_linguist/

■ Murder case postponed for interpreter no-show

The court case of a man accused of murdering his girlfriend in Galway had to be postponed because the interpreter failed to present at the court. Jakub Fidler, a 23-year-old Czech national, is accused of murdering 19-year-old Nicola Vonkova, also from the Czech Republic. The body of Ms Vonkova was discovered in a drain behind a cottage near the Poit'n Stil pub in Inverin in July 2008. She had been living in the area for a year while taking care of an elderly and visually impaired Czech-US national.

Judge Mary Fahy said of the situation, "this is the most serious charge a District Court can have and the interpreter has not appeared [...] I want it to be checked so that it doesn't happen again." The case was resumed later in the afternoon when an interpreter had been found.

This story was reported by Martina Nee in the *Galway Advertiser* on January 8 2009.

■ Advertise in the ITIA Bulletin

ADVERTISE DIRECTLY TO OVER 1,000 T/I PROFESSIONALS WORLDWIDE.

The **ITIA Bulletin** is a great way to advertise job openings, products etc. to T/I professionals. For information and rates, contact [theitiabulletin\(a\)gmail.com](mailto:theitiabulletin(a)gmail.com)

■ Second EU translation contest winners announced

A new vintage of 'young translators' will be invited to Brussels in April to receive a prize for the best translation from the European Commissioner for Multilingualism, Mr Leonard Orban. The names of the 27 winners of the 'Juvenes Translatores' contest held by the European Commission are published on the website http://ec.europa.eu/translation/contest/index_en.htm together with the winning translations.

"I'm pleased to see that schools across Europe have embraced the contest so enthusiastically", commented Mr Orban. "The contest provides a true challenge in testing the language skills learned at school. At the same time, students get a foretaste of what it is like to work as a translator".

Mr Orban's impressions are confirmed by the increased participation and the results of an online survey sent to teachers in the schools picked to take part. Practically all of the teachers surveyed (99%) would enter their school again, while 86% found the length and level of the texts to be appropriate, a view that is borne out by the high quality of the translations.

The contest provides a true challenge in testing the language skills learned at school.

The entries to the 'Juvenes Translatores' contest ('young translators' in Latin) were marked by a panel of professional translators and revisers from the European Commission's Directorate-General for Translation (DGT). They were impressed by the high standard —

The next issue of the ITIA Bulletin will be out next month. If you have any contributions, suggestions or scandals that you would like to share with over 1,000 subscribers worldwide, send them to Elizabeth Hayes at [theitiabulletin\(a\)gmail.com](mailto:theitiabulletin(a)gmail.com).

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10% of the pupils obtained a mark in the top range of the scale.

Each anonymous translation was marked by a native speaker of the language into which the text was translated. A board chaired by the Director-General of DGT then picked out the best translation from each Member State.

The 27 winners from European upper secondary schools will win a three-day trip to Brussels for themselves and for one accompanying adult to receive a prize and a certificate at a special award ceremony on 3 April.

They were among 2247 pupils from 593 schools in the EU taking part in the second edition of the translation contest which was held on 27 November 2008 at the same time in all Member States and supervised by the schools. Entrants were given two hours to translate a text on the topic of multilingualism from one of the 23 official languages of the EU into another official language of their choice. The Commission received translations covering all official languages and 147 language combinations.

Ireland's winning student was Marian Madden from Coláiste Chiaráin in Limerick who translated from French to English. Congratulations Marian!

For more information, see http://ec.europa.eu/translation/contest/index_en.htm

■ MEP discusses progress of Irish as official EU language

Since Irish became an official working language of the European Union in January 2007, 52 jobs have been created to date within the EU institutions. Recruitment procedures are taking time but, according to Seán Ó Neachtain, more job opportunities within the EU institutions for Irish language translators, interpreters and lawyer linguists are on the way.

In January in Brussels a meeting took place between Seán Ó Neachtain (MEP for the North and West of Ireland) and leading groups from Ireland involved in Irish language issues with the EU Commissioner for multi-lingualism Leonard Orban. The purpose of this important meeting was to assess what has happened to date within the European Union institutions since the

Irish language became an official working language of the European Union in January 2007. Representatives from *Stadás, Comhdháil na Gaeilge, Conradh na Gaeilge, Pobal, Foras na Gaeilge, Fiontar, Gaelchultúr* and the EU Committee of the Regions were all in attendance at this meeting with Commissioner Orban.

Minister Ó Neachtain said, "Within the EU institutions 52 jobs have been created since January 2007 for Irish translators, interpreters and lawyer linguists. But I am confident that as the use of the Irish language takes root within the EU institutions that more jobs will be created into the future.

But the recruitment process does take time. At the moment, only new laws that come under the rules of 'co-decision' are translated into Irish. This is the procedure whereby the European Parliament and the EU Governments enact new EU directives and regulations together.

...as the use of the Irish language takes root within the EU institutions that more jobs will be created...

In the event of the Lisbon treaty being ratified the European Parliament and the EU Governments will secure new powers in the areas of co-decision, which will mean that even a greater number of jobs working though the Irish language will be created within the EU institutions. The number of positions would treble. As economic integration takes place in Europe, we must support a policy framework within the EU institutions which seeks to protect and promote the different national, linguistic and cultural diversities in Europe. It is the richness of diversity within Europe which make the European Union such a successful project. He concluded by saying "Commissioner Orban is deeply committed to promoting the Irish language within the EU institutions."

■ New blog for medical translation

A Medical Translation Blog has been launched at www.medical-translation-blog.com. The content will revolve around issues impacting medical translation professionals: Regulatory news such as the pending *Asian Medical Device Directive*, technology news (from machine translation to personal efficiency tools)

and language developments like the current Brazilian Portuguese spelling reform.

The blog is run by Andres Heuberger, President of ForeignExchange Translations, Inc. You can stay up-to-date by subscribing to email updates or read the feed with your favourite RSS reader. And you are invited to participate in discussions or by providing tips to developing news.

■ New interpreting software for UK hospitals

The cost of providing translating/interpreting services in healthcare is regularly rolled out in the media as though it were an unnecessary extravagance rather than a human right. As a result of this erroneous misconception, the quest to find cheap software alternatives to real-life interpreters continues apace. The various technologies that are springing up out of R&D departments the world over seem to be increasingly concentrating on healthcare interpreting.

A new web-based translation program called *SignTranslate Hospital* has been launched in the UK to help hospital staff to communicate with patients who are non-English speaking or deaf. The technology is not new but this type of product is starting to be seen as a viable alternative or, at best, preliminary step to the services of an interpreter.

The program translates pre-defined medical questions from English into twelve foreign languages including Urdu, Arabic, Bengali, and Polish. The translated questions are displayed in written and spoken format, so that the non-English speaking patient need not be literate to understand the question. The questions are also translated into *British Sign Language* (BSL) using short video clips. The patient responds to the question with 'yes' or 'no' answers or sometimes points to a picture on the screen.

The company behind this product is primarily concerned with the deaf community but saw the benefits of scaling the software up to languages other than BSL. They offer access to a "live" fully qualified BSL interpreter via a web-cam for more in-depth consultations.

■ Conferences, Calls & Courses

CALL FOR PAPERS

Viceversa. Revista galega de tradución/Galician Translation Journal

Edited by: Galician Translators Association (ATG) and Department of Galician Philology, University of Vigo. Viceversa is an academic journal that adheres to the highest standards of peer review and engages both established and emerging scholars from around the world. Viceversa is a transdisciplinary journal focusing on a wide spectrum of scholarship and welcomes contributions from the many disciplines and approaches that intersect translation as a whole.

Viceversa is a broad-based journal whose aim is to publish refereed, well-written original research articles, and studies that describe the latest research and developments in the area of translation. The areas of interest include (but are not limited to):

- ◆ History of translation and interpreting theory and practice
- ◆ Theory of translation and interpreting
- ◆ Development and use of translation and interpreting tools (dictionaries, glossaries, software, etc.)
- ◆ Critical reviews of literary and non-literary translations
- ◆ Critical reviews of translation and interpreting tools
- ◆ Translators' reflections on their work
- ◆ Specific translation and interpreting problems

Manuscripts may be sent to the Editor, Viceversa, via e-mail (alugris@uvigo.es). Detailed instructions on how to prepare your manuscript are available from the editor or under "Committee-Author Instructions" at <http://webs.uvigo.es/webatg/viceversa/consello.htm>

Papers may be submitted in any major European language but will be translated into Galician for the print publication. The electronic version of Viceversa will contain both the original and Galician versions.

DEADLINES:

- ◆ Number 15 (due October 2009): April 2009
- ◆ Number 16 (due January 2010): October 2009

CONTACT

You may contact the editor for questions: Alberto Álvarez Lugrís. Please circulate this information and visit our website at: <http://webs.uvigo.es/webatg/viceversa/viceversa.htm>

6th International Conference On Professional Communication And Translation Studies

Timisoara, Romania, 3-4 April 2009

Organized by Politehnica University, Department of Communication and Foreign Languages. The conference aims to continue and develop the exchange of ideas on the following topics:

- ◆ Communication and public relations: theoretical and didactic problems and solutions
- ◆ Linguistic insights into professional communication
- ◆ Translation theory and translation didactics: their roles in communication

For more, see <http://www.cls.upt.ro/ro/conferint%205.html>

■ Contacting The ITIA

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■ ITIA Resources for Translators

The *Irish Translators' & Interpreters' Association* has compiled a series of useful information leaflets for translators and interpreters - both members and non-members alike. These leaflets are available from the ITIA website at www.translatorsassociation.ie.