



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Directorate-General for Translation

Translating Europe Forum 2014

Linking up translation stakeholders

Brussels, 18-19 September 2014

Report

&

Follow-up actions

Introduction

On 18 and 19 September 2014 DG Translation organised the first [Translating Europe Forum](#), an initiative that DGT has launched in the context of the new Erasmus+ programme, to establish a more structured cooperation with all actors in the field of translation with a view to giving visibility to the translation world, sharing good practices, developing common projects, and promoting a diversified and sustainable market for professional translators in Europe.

The video files of the event can be viewed here: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/programmes/translating_europe/index_en.htm

The following topics were covered:

1. Innovation in the translation sector
2. EU Initiatives and funding opportunities for the translation sector
3. Bridging the skills gap
4. Translation and intellectual property rights
5. The future of the Translating Europe Forum

This report highlights the main points discussed, including remarks posted on Twitter (#TranslatingEurope). It contains the main conclusions and proposes concrete actions to be taken by all players in the field of translation. x

The scene was set by Mr Christophe Leclercq, founder of EUractiv. In his keynote speech "*Multilingualism in Europe(an media)*" he pleaded, among other things, for a closer cooperation between journalists and translators, as they are both involved in communication. Localisation is the word: where does translation end and trans-creation begin? This could involve the need to adapt professional profiles, with the emerging e.g. of multilingual journalists, who can quickly adapt content to the needs of the specific audiences.

He analysed the situation of pan-European media, where the trend is towards English only, while translation has a vital role to play in creating a truly European sphere.

Translation has a vital role to play in creating a truly European sphere; multilingualism is an opportunity for Europe.

After this introductory discussion the first panel, on innovation in the translation sector, kicked off.

1. Innovation in translation: technologies, in particular machine translation

How can translation adapt to ever faster technological developments?

Management of translation memories, terminology, multilingual desktop publishing and automatic translation post-editing are just a few of the challenges the modern translator faces. This session offered some insights into the new technologies used in the translation business.

Views presented:

- Individual tools are only useful if they are used properly and as part of a structured workflow/environment. 'CAT Tools' was the buzzword of the 20th century in our industry. The buzzwords for the 21st century are 'collaboration', 'translation memories', 'post-editing' and 'cloudtop machine translation'.
- There seems to be a trend towards integration of tools and processes – cluster of tools. This technological environment facilitates data sharing, collaboration and customization. CAT tools now have to be considered not as separate entities but holistically, as part of an environment.
- The development of the cloud is changing the way we perceive the tools we use: the word “**cloudtop**” was mentioned, as opposed to 'desktop'.
- Technologies in the cloud have an impact on individual expertise, for example dealing with cloud-based statistical machine translation requires a deeper technical, computational and linguistic knowledge. Cloud-based statistical machine translation (SMT) technology is the gateway to innovating the translation sector. There is a common focus on this subject from both language service providers and universities. Translation students should be trained in machine translation.
- The trend is towards more machine translation, for example on social media, customer support forums, user-contributed questions and answers, etc. Innovations, such as machine translation, cannot be successful without the **human element**. The trend is to move from CAT (computer-assisted translation) to HAT (human-assisted translation).
- Building an efficient MT engine for the market requires big data. Private investment in MT innovation is still an issue. Small translation companies do not have data to develop machine translation. Big ones do. That said, DG Translation's translation memories can serve as a basis for anybody wanting to set up a system. It is done by translators for translators. Terminology can also be of great help in creating MT systems, with the help of term extraction tools.
- Machine translation is not just a tool to increase production, but also a service in itself, in which case it is important to agree in advance with the customers what level of compliance to predefined requirements they want, so that they know what level of quality they can expect: quality is compliance with customer requirements or a required level of quality.
- The trend towards more machine translation poses challenges, but they can be overcome if the relevant communities (translators, industry and academia) work together.

Linked to all this is of course EU funding for research on language technologies, which was among the topic of the second session.

2. EU initiatives and funding opportunities for the translation sector

EU funding is creating a bridge between business and research. What kind of EU funding is available in the area of translation?

This session aimed to bring the different stakeholders together to join forces and facilitate the development of common projects.

Initiatives presented:

- Mobility is a key element for all domains in getting the education and employment sector work closer together to boost employment. [Erasmus+](#) with its budget increased by 40% to 40 billion EUR is there to facilitate mobility as well as strategic partnerships between universities, schools, businesses, public administrations, etc.
- An important element in this respect is ESCO – the multilingual classification of skills, competences, qualifications and occupations. The [ESCO Portal](#) serves as a bridge between the labour market and the education and training sector. It also allows employment services to exchange relevant labour market information across borders and boosts online and skill-based job-matching.
- This is also relevant for the translation sector since it is a European system linking NACE¹, ISCO² and qualifications frameworks with skills for each occupation, thus defining the relevant skills for the translators looking for work Europe-wide.
- The [Connecting Europe Facility](#) is about making public services in the EU talk to each other without language barriers. Its main target is to build pan-European digital services like the e-health and e-justice system. For the moment, the e-government services are country-based, but the aim is to make them work across the EU.
- The future of research and innovation depends on human resources, so there is a pressing need to invest in them. The [Marie Skłodowska Curie](#) programme, which offers opportunities for funding of research, has a bottom-up approach – it includes all domains of research and innovation: not only technology but also humanities and social sciences.
- The [Horizon 2020 programme](#), in particular the part on [information and communication technology](#) offers interesting funding opportunities in the area of the language industry. See also the other [calls for proposals](#).

¹ Statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community. (NACE is the acronym for “Nomenclature statistique des activités économiques dans la Communauté européenne”.)

² Internal Standard classification of Occupations.

3. Bridging the skills gap

What skills are needed in today's translation market? How happy are translation employers with the skills that translation graduates bring to the market? How happy are translation students with what they learn?

The starting point for this session was a [study](#) by McKinsey, which states that 34 million of people are unemployed, while at the same time 1 million jobs are vacant in the digital sector. The skills gap is the biggest problem in the EU after the euro crisis. In Europe, 74 percent of education providers are confident that their graduates were prepared for work, but only 38 percent of youth and 35 percent of employers agree. The different players seem not to understand one another's expectations and needs.

Views presented:

- Translator training should give students a realistic picture of the job in real life; a lot of students think that translation is a highly creative job, and then they are frustrated by working hours and constraints.
- Command of students' native language (grammar and spelling) remains essential for the job but is not always adequate.
- Do Translation markets differ from country to country or not? What about private vs. public sector translation? Markets seems to be different depending on the country (in Spain, for example, the main problem is lack of specialized knowledge - e.g. legal - in would-be translators).
- The market conditions of the translation profession have also dramatically changed, productivity must be much higher than in the past, but without a commensurate increase in remuneration. The quality-price balance is much better for customers now.
- The translation profession becomes more and more interdisciplinary, increasingly embracing IT and technological skills besides the traditional language and linguistic competences. To be efficient, translators must be technology-savvy, proficient in the usage of various software tools, online systems and databases. Soft skills like communication skills are also increasingly important as a dynamic and rapidly changing environment requires efficient communication with co-workers, clients, community (social networks), etc.
- The profession is losing attractiveness for students³. How can it be made more attractive to become a translator? Are minimum guaranteed prices possible?
- There is a growing demand for translators with an expertise in a particular subject area (economics, legal...). This opens new opportunities for young people. If they cannot find a work in their speciality they can acquire translation skills to become expert translators in their professional field.
- The universities have shown willingness to bridge the skills gap and cooperation between Universities and the private sector works very well in some countries, but it will not work if the political level is not on board. The real power of change is in the politics.

³ In this context, DG Translation's study on [the Status of the Translation Profession in the European Union](#) contains some interesting material.

- Universities do not operate in a vacuum; they have to take account of the needs of the market, while at the same remaining faithful to their mission of fostering science. Education policy should be more practically oriented and focus on employability (e.g. through work placements), and universities should periodically review the curricula offered. The European Master's in translation (EMT) is a good example to follow. It is important to provide practical training in an industry setting during academic education of translators.
- Another good practice is setting up translation bureaus in universities, which mimic real working conditions of a translator.
- The conference also offered the opportunity to two translation students to share their opinions. The students should receive better information about the market situation.
- Tailor-made approaches are needed, depending on the different countries. This is why DGT organises local Translating Europe workshops. They are also organised in conjunction with bigger events (e.g. FIT World Congress in Berlin, or EXPO2015 in Milan, where the translation needs of the food industry will be addressed). See full list of workshops on the [Translating Europe website](#).

Possible action points:

WHO	WHAT
1. Universities + translation employers	Teach real-life skills: look for ways to innovate, redesign curricula, so as to better meet market needs. Translation employers could be involved, giving advice on what skills are needed.
2. Translation employers	As a follow-up to the OPTIMALE report, which lists skills that employers find important, organisations such as ELIA, EUATC and GALA and others could work together to compile a list of skills that young translators entering the market are <u>missing</u> and then liaise with universities and translator associations on how to improve this.
3. Universities + translation employers	Create translation bureaus to make translation students familiar with the real world of translation.
4. Translation employers + universities	Enhance the quality of work placements by agreeing on minimum standards.
5. DG Translation	Explore possibilities of organising local workshops that also contribute to collecting hard facts about translation students and their performance on the job market.
6. DG Translation	Follow developments in the context of ESCO – work together with DG Employment
7. Universities + public administrations	Explore possibilities of creating work placements with translation services in public administrations (ministries, etc.)
8. Universities + translation employers	Initiate/step up cooperation contributions to education and training costs (a sponsoring programme?); having more translators from the real world teach translation students (guest lectures for a period of 2-4 weeks? DG Translation's Visiting Translator Scheme could be a model). Also for training of trainers.
9. Translator Associations	Organise workshops on how to make the profession more attractive.

4. Translation and intellectual property rights

What role do intellectual property rights (IPR) play in translation?

Taking a new [study](#) by DG Translation as a starting point for debate, this session looked into how intellectual property law has been impacted by advances in technology and new business models in the global translation industry. The session aimed to raise awareness among stakeholders and decision-makers of the relevance of IPR for the fair remuneration of creators, and hence for maintaining quality and innovation.

Views presented:

- Copyrights are at the core of the language industry, as they are everywhere: in source documents (how does this affect the right to translate them?), in translations (what are the translator's rights?), and in CAT tools (Can a translation memory created with the documents from client A be used to translate documents for client B?).
- Is copyright law an obstacle for innovation in Europe? The translation market is global, but the copyright laws are national. This generates legal uncertainty at the European level. For example, if somebody pays a translator to translate a website, who owns the translated website content? The answer depends on whether this is explicitly mentioned in any contract, but also on the copyright law of the country concerned.
- Existing legal exceptions are uneasy to use and ill-adapted to the digital environment. The broad concept of "fair use" (using the work without authorisation from the owners), if adopted in the European Union as it is applied in the USA or in Canada for instance, could offer an alternative solution to the issues related to machine-aided translations, leaving it to the judge to decide where "fair use" stops and infringement of copyright begins.
- Alternatively, the study recommends that EU law provide for a special exception regarding the further commercial use of source documents and translations in machine translations.
- Originality is one of the fundamental requirements for copyright protection. However, how originality is assessed by national courts varies from country to country. Generally speaking, the threshold for a text being considered original is not very high.
- Before a text can be translated, the author of the original must give permission to do so. The same applies to using them in translation databases or other language technology tools. This is felt to be cumbersome.
- Translators are authors and translations are therefore protected by copyright as well; they are protected by copyright as an original work, but the "originality" criterion will depend on the nature of the original text. The more technical and 'mechanical' the translation, the less likely it is for a translation to be protected under copyright. But since there is little reported case-law on this issue, there is limited guidance available on the application of the originality criterion.
- Translation tools and translation memories imply copyrights on the data (including fragments) and on the database itself (*sui generis* rights).
- Oral works, also webstreamed or on the internet, if original, are copyrightable. They need to be on some tangible format (interpretations for example) but pragmatic solutions can be found via contract management.

- The study emphasises the need to have contracts with specific provisions on the modes of exploitation of the translation, and the fair remuneration for each of them.
- However, translators may not always be aware of their rights; 'pragmatic' translation means that translators usually waive their rights. It is necessary to raise their awareness of their rights. Perhaps translators could sign every translation they do?
- Training on ethical issues for the industry and the professionals is a good practice, because using a translation without proper transfer of rights amounts to plagiarism. Standardised translation contracts covering IPR would be a step in the right direction.
- Translator associations have a role to play here: they could help draft standardised contracts clarifying the transfer of rights (what purpose, what users, contracts applying for all the countries involved in the project). To this end they could organise seminars/trainings for their members, as for instance [SFT](#) did on 10 October.
- Copyrights are an area of conflict between big players and small players: a middle ground must be found between creators and language service providers.
- Hopefully the study and the discussion about it at this conference is the beginning of addressing the needs of the profession in this area.
- Translators could receive a small remuneration every time their translation is re-used, much like music artists receive royalties for every CD that is (re-)sold. This could be a compromise solution between the economic survival of translations and an open data policy. Collecting societies would facilitate the collecting and management of such small fees.

Possible action points:

WHO	WHAT
1. Translator associations	Submit proposals to the EU legislator to harmonise EU copyright law addressing issues such as protected/unprotected translations, right of translation, exceptions for terminology research and machine-aided translations;
2. Translation industry + Translator associations + DGT	Raise awareness and disseminate best practices among professionals, the industry, academics, possibly as one of the local workshops DG Translation is planning under the 'Translating Europe' umbrella. Such a workshop could share information on how translation companies deal with copyright in translation and terminology.
3. Translator associations	Training activities for professionals at the local level would be recommended, taking account of national and EU copyright law on rights and obligations under contractual arrangements.
4. Translator associations	Work together with translation employers to draft standardised contracts clarifying the transfer of rights.

5. The future of the Forum and ideas for local workshops

What next?

The final session of the conference focused on the way forward for the Forum, bearing in mind next year's theme: Youth. Representatives of different stakeholder categories shared their expectations for the future, based on this year's Forum. They also came up with ideas for the local workshops to take place in EU countries.

Views presented:

- The Forum provides an ideal opportunity to tackle the preconceived ideas that students have about the translation profession, to bring together young translators and mentors/role models, potential trainees and providers of traineeships, and generally to share experiences. Translators have no reason to fall under the "humble servant syndrome"; they are equal partners in any organisation's process.
- But bringing together the translation stakeholders is not enough; it is important to bring in other actors as well, such as clients, who can give valuable feedback to (young) translators. It is good for translators to "get out of the microcosm".
- Universities can give exposure and not experience. Is it reasonable to expect graduates to be fully trained? "Hire for attitude, train for skills".
- Universities are concerned with the future of their students. The Forum should invite students and graduates to participate and tell us what kind of job they are doing, their needs, their responsibilities and their involvement in the labour market, and of course their opinion on whether they learned the right skills and competences for the market.
- The link between the Forum and the local workshops is the theme of employability. The combination of the Forum and these workshops can help gather data and more hard facts on what translation students do after graduating: pay levels, expectations, etc.
- It is also important to raise more awareness about the place of translation in society. Young people may not always realise they are users of translation services (music, cartoons, comics, subtitling...) and are not aware of the economy of translation and its business models.
- Translation is essential, but how to mobilise young people to be translators or interpreters? This starts at school, through foreign language learning at school, using grammar and translation⁴ by embedding translation into teaching.
- But it is also a money issue: making the translation profession more appealing in financial terms would make the profession more attractive. More financial means should be available for translation, in particular for smaller languages, so that publishing houses and the translators can make a decent living. Literary translation is vital for cultural exchanges, for the preservation of languages and for keeping Europe as culturally rich and diverse as it always has been.
- Terminology is an important aspect of translation, which would deserve a whole session at next year's Forum, as would quality.

⁴ See DG Translation's study [Translation and Language Learning](#).

- The Forum offers a great potential to gather topics and ideas which could be looked at in more detail at the local workshops, which will focus on practicalities, and then serve as a source of concrete input for future fora. These workshops will also make it easier to engage the young people to attend.
- Translators should listen to the language buyers. Translation has become a profession at the cutting edge of new technologies. There is a lot of innovation, new business models, new professions. It is a very dynamic and innovative field, far from being a dull profession as some might think.
- As for the future of the Forum, it could be used to discuss concerted efforts that are needed to cross the language barriers in Europe, based on the work of groups such as [Metanet](#) (Multilingual Europe Technology Alliance), a Network consisting of 60 research centres from 34 countries, dedicated to building the technological foundations of a multilingual European information society, which has prepared the [Strategic Research Agenda for Multilingual Europe 2020](#).
- Language technologies are a key enabler in overcoming language barriers. The [Connecting Europe Facility](#) aims at establishing a Pan-European language resource coordination mechanism for data needed for human and machine translation - translation memories, terminologies, glossaries, grammars, etc.
- Other themes to be addressed in future Translating Europe Forums ranged from how to gain access to the translation profession, including translation jobs at multinationals such as Amazon and public services (ministries, for example). Other themes mentioned were the concept of 'fit for purpose', which is not generalised in the translation community, crowdsourcing and cloud sourcing, and laws.

Action points:

WHO	WHAT
1. All DG Translation's stakeholder	Help DGT in selecting young people (students, graduates, entrepreneurs) to be invited to the Translating Europe Forum 2015.
2. DG Translation	Pay attention to terminology and quality as themes for local workshops and keep this in mind for next year's Forum.
3. DG Translation	Identify further possible interested parties – beyond the current stakeholders – for next year's Forum and local workshop ('get out of the microcosm').
4. Translation employers	Become (more) involved in international networks such as Metanet, to help shape the profession.

The list of Translating Europe Workshops can be found on the Translating Europe site: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/programmes/translating_europe/index_en.htm

Some panel members sent us their ideas in writing, which we summarise here for completeness' sake:

I. Schuch, Austrian National Bank:

Ideas for next year's Forum

Invite interns, mentees, etc. to give feedback on what worked for them

- to help enhance existing programs, and
- to present role models to young translators (and for such programs)?

They could talk to **experts** (like ELIA again) and **providers of internships**, and with **mentors** and **organizers of mentoring** programs.

It would be interesting to hear what students take away from **bridging the gap lectures** of professionals (which would also be a chance to showcase **role models** for such lectures (University of Helsinki; University of Heidelberg – started its series in 2007).

Another idea would be to launch a **discussion on the role of translators in the process of communication**, to enhance awareness of two points that are often neglected in practice:

- **translation is not an end in itself** and not about us, but about our clients and readers, and about what they need;
- **one of the key skills translators need to develop is self-observation skills**, to be aware of how we come across to clients and readers, and how well we serve their needs – and to empower translators to do more than translate to serve those needs.

Suggestions for topics/speakers:

- Translators tend to dutifully render every phrase as written in the source text or as translated before, whereas authors and readers want clarity and readability. **Author feedback can** make a difference and **empower translators to redefine translation quality**. Maybe actual **clients** can be persuaded to share their views.
- Or **researchers**, like Jonathan Downie (working on a PhD on client expectations of interpreters), who in the latest ITI Bulletin quoted research where student journalists and student interpreters were asked to interpret an interview – and where the journalists' versions were found to be smoother and more coherent. **"Many of us were trained that ... accuracy and terminological precision are the gold standard"**. Maybe "we need to rethink what it means to be professional."
- One of the reasons why translations go bad is that translators neglect **how the source and the target language differ in terms of good writing**. For instance, good English is simple and direct, but in other languages this style may generate the impression that the text was written by a kid.

C. Groethuysen, German Federal Association of Interpreters and Translators (BDÜ)

Ideas for the Forum

1. While the quota of dropout is not higher than with any other courses of studies, universities and other institutes providing translator training all report that a very large percentage of students state that they have no intention to enter the profession after graduation. They continue their studies and graduate because they recognize the quality of their linguistic training and know that they will be able to use their skills in other areas. This obviously is a loss of talent for the profession.

It would be a good idea for translator trainers to get a more systematic insight into which reasons students have for this decision.

Why is it difficult to enter the translation profession?

- Gaps in terms of employability – to be addressed by both translator trainers and future employers.
- Lack of employment opportunities – We need to try and argue for changing this by presenting best practice employers.
- Entering the freelance world is daunting for a newly graduated translator (and not only for them). In a world where specialization is essential it is difficult to do so as a new kid on the block. Translators typically lack the entrepreneurial skills and confidence to thrive on the market (and not to end up in the army of poorly prepared, frustrated and underpaid translation providers). Translator associations now offer founder seminars and mentoring programs but this needs to be complemented by offers of other stakeholders.
- A lack of feedback culture - this exacerbates the situation for young freelance translators since it makes it difficult for them to learn on the job. In a situation, where there are not enough opportunities to work as an employed translator under the supervision and guidance of senior translators and internal translation buyers, we need to find ways to provide this sort of guidance (even if it is costly and time-consuming) beyond the further training offers provided e.g. by translator associations.

Ideas for workshops

The idea of workshops in general: It is a good idea to organise them around events in Member States. While they will therefore more specifically address challenges and needs in the respective Member State(s), the Forum should provide a more global view of what the situation is and what needs to be and is done in Europe. What we'll need to discuss whether and how the results (if any) of those workshops can be introduced into the Forum.

D. Toudic, University of Rennes

Ideas for the Forum

Involvement of young people: The majority of translation graduates are by definition "young people" (between the ages of 21 and 30) : 1 or 2 recent graduates from each of the EMT programmes could therefore be invited to take part in the forum, to talk about their expectations or their first steps in the translation industry and other areas of employment, and how that relates to the academic training they received.

Pre-university students could be invited to take part in a competition (short essays describing their experience of translation through films, TV series, music, books, study, etc.) and the winners invited to take part in the forum.

Link between the Forum and the Member State workshops

The issue of employability is central, but hard facts on the issue have never been available at the European level. A compilation of data from the employability sections of the EMT applications could provide the starting point for a European-wide survey of translation graduate employment (including areas of employment, starting salaries or rates, tasks and responsibilities, expectations and prospects), which could be the focus of local workshops and the Forum session.

The issue of language skills in the job market is a much wider issue which has been addressed in many EU-funded projects over the past twenty years. We should be careful not to lose the focus on the translation industry per se.

A central issue that needs to be addressed in future fora is the impact of machine translation: how can we continue to motivate students to spend years training to be highly-skilled translators when their best chances of employment in the translation industry may be as post-editors of MT, project managers, MT managers, etc.? The issue of remuneration is also a central issue, at a time when remuneration levels in the translation industry are no longer commensurate with the time and effort spent on acquiring a specialised Master's degree.

Andrejs Vasiljevs, Tilde

Ideas for the Forum

A rapid utilization of machine translation drives a paradigm shift in the translation industry. Benefits of a fast and cheap machine-enabled translation are obvious. But there are major challenges to overcome. New skills, competences, processes, business models, application scenarios should evolve. These challenges could be addressed only in a **close cooperation** between the communities of translators, industry, and academia.

The Forum could serve as a platform for creating links between the key stakeholders and initiatives and to launch joint activities. Translators, technology developers and universities can identify the major opportunities and issues, share the best practice, discuss how to benefit from the state-of-the-art technologies and in what direction they should be developed further.

The forum can discuss **concerted efforts** that are needed to cross the language barriers in Europe. Various groups could share their developments and build collaborations, e.g.:

- META-NET (Multilingual Europe Technology Alliance) has prepared the Strategic Research Agenda for Multilingual Europe 2020.
- Industry association LT-Innovate has prepared a Vision for language technology development.
- Multilingual Europe Infrastructure project is analyzing requirements for setting-up a Pan-European infrastructure of automated translation services.
- Huge action is planned in CEF to establish a Pan-European language resource coordination mechanism for data needed for human and machine translation - translation memories, terminologies, glossaries, grammars, etc.

Among the consequences of the paradigm shift are **new skills required by translators**. To be efficient they should be technology-savvy, proficient in the usage of various software tools, online systems and databases. The translation profession is becoming more and more interdisciplinary, increasingly embracing IT and **technological skills**, besides the traditional language and linguistic competences. Soft skills like **communication skills** are also increasingly important as dynamic and rapidly changing environment requires efficient communication with co-workers, clients, community (social networks) etc.

It is important to provide **practical training in an industry setting** during academic education of translators.

There is a growing demand for translators with **an expertise in a particular subject area**. This opens **new opportunities for young people**. If they cannot find a work in their specialty they can acquire translation skills to become expert translators in their professional field.

Ideas for workshops

Local Workshops can help identify best practices at various local institutions that could be useful for the Pan-European audience at the Forum. Conversely, the Workshops can disseminate the key findings and raise awareness about the major issues discussed at this Forum.