

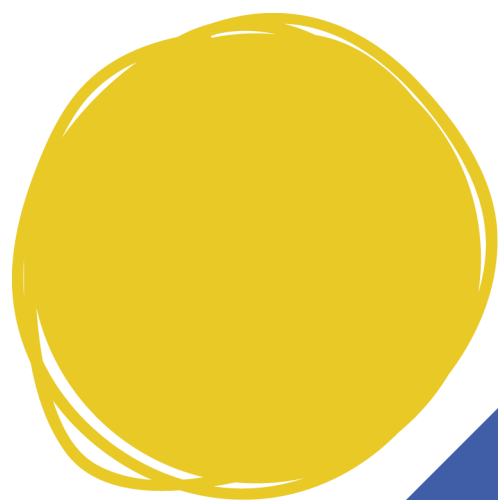
# ITIA

# Bulletin

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2020 / 02

Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association  
Cumann Aistritheoirí agus Ateangairí na hÉireann



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# Editorial

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Beginning an editorial in June 2020 isn't the easiest of tasks and reference to what is happening, the world over, just cannot be avoided. Without doubt, translators and interpreters are among many other sectors that have seen their business suffer greatly. This issue of the Bulletin hopes to bring a little solace, starting with [ITIA Chairperson Mary Phelan's article](#) on the measures the ITIA have taken to try make members' lives somewhat easier.

Executive Committee member, Ken Waide, gives us an analysis of the recent [ITIA Covid-19 survey](#) completed by our members.

[Annette Schiller's article](#) also shines some light on the considerable efforts by other translator and interpreter associations around Europe to learn about how their members are managing through the crisis. Surveys were commissioned and results compiled in record time.

Moving away from current difficulties (and surveys), Sheelagh Hughes from the newly branded [Association of Freelance Editors, Proofreaders and Indexers of Ireland \(AFEPI\)](#) gives us excellent advice on how to avoid 'oops' moments.

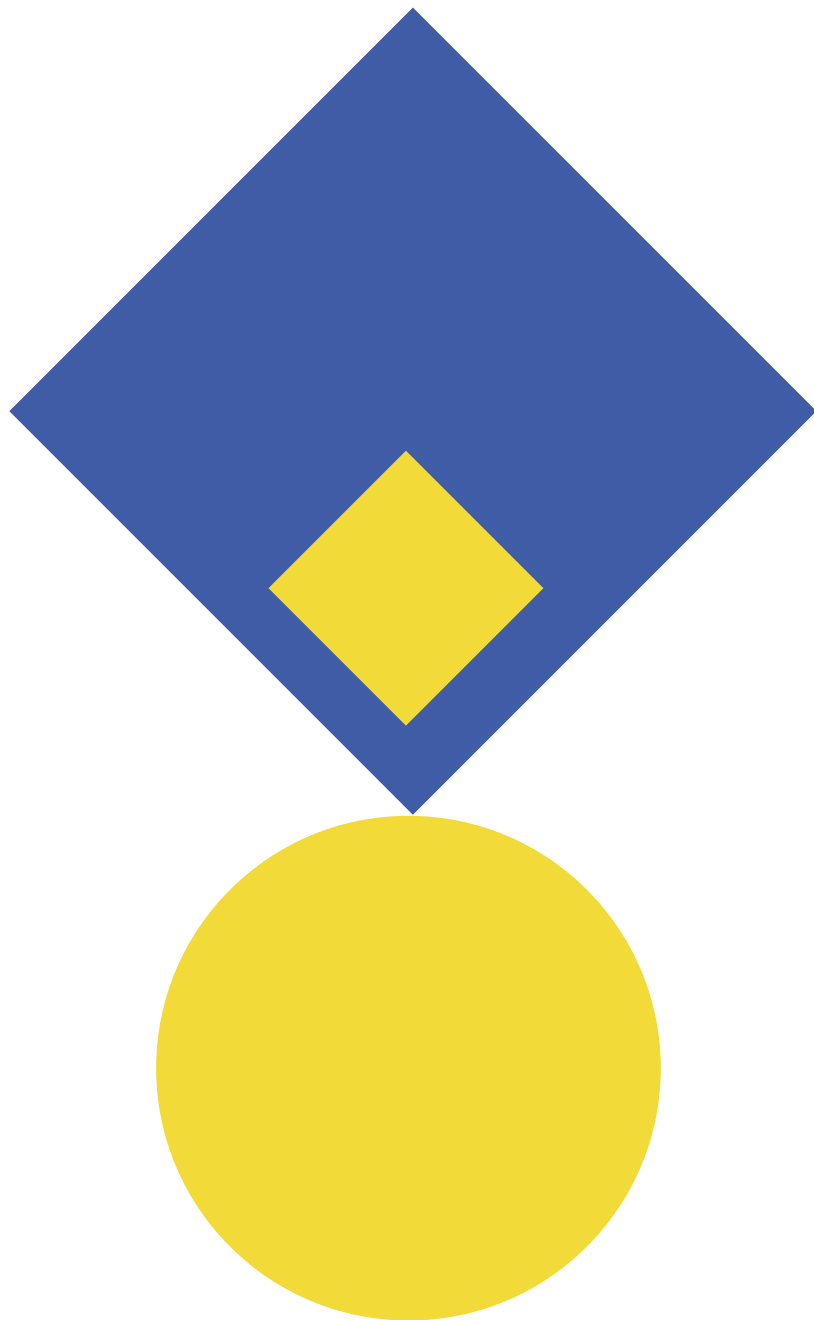
The annual report from [CEATL's AGM](#) this year is decidedly virtual and therefore rather brief, but at least the event wasn't cancelled, like so many others.

Both the Bulletin editorial team and the Executive Committee wish to express our solidarity with all our members and do hope that, some time in the not too distant future, we will all be able to meet, in the flesh.

Stay well.

**Anne Larchet**

Editor



# ITIA's response to Covid-19



*Mary Phelan, ITIA Chairperson, reports on ITIA Covid-19 initiatives*

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed all our lives hugely. In Ireland, the first sign of change was the cancellation of the Six Nations rugby match against Italy and then of the St Patrick's Day festivities. They were big decisions to take, affecting many people and businesses. The closure of creches, schools and colleges followed relatively quickly and then restrictions on the number of people who could meet indoors and outdoors. On 27th March Ireland went into lockdown with most people, apart from essential workers, working from home where possible, and often looking after babies and small children and even home schooling children at the same time. For over two months, the only topic of news has been the Coronavirus and we have been assimilating many new words and terms: exponential growth, asymptomatic, super spreaders, herd immunity, cluster, cocooning of over 70s, contact tracing, containment, the bid to 'flatten the curve', social distancing, vectors, incubation period, self-isolation, PPE or personal protective equipment, lockdown, infodemic.

## A changed world

Medical professionals and scientists are gradually learning about how the virus works. While some people do not experience any ill effects, others are very ill and need a lot of time to recover and sadly many have died. We face a future of great uncertainty; what does the future hold? Will our world return to the way it was? Or is it changed forever? What will be the effect on the translation and interpreting markets?

## Impact on our members

The ITIA executive committee was concerned at the effect of the pandemic and at the start of April we surveyed our members to find out how they had been affected. Many translators had experienced a downturn in their workload. For some it was small or temporary while for others it was drastic. Conference interpreters of conferences and meetings. Community interpreters were affected by the closure of courts and a switch to telephone interpreting, leading to vastly reduced incomes.

***“There did not seem to be any real understanding of the situation of freelance translators and interpreters”***

While some of our members received the Covid-19 pandemic payment, others were refused because they were still working. The ITIA was in contact with the Department of Social Protection by email but there did not seem to be any real understanding of the situation of freelance translators and interpreters who had no desire to close down their business and simply wanted to continue albeit with a much reduced workload. In order to draw attention to this issue, the ITIA, together with AIIC Ireland (International Association of Conference Interpreters) and CISLI (Council of Sign Language Interpreters in Ireland), sent a joint letter to An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar and Minister for Social Protection Regina Doherty.

(ctd.)

## Positive news

We have some good news for our members. In recognition of the effect of the pandemic on our members' incomes, at our online executive committee meeting on 9th May, we agreed to reduce membership fees on a one off basis for the coming year June 2020 - June 2021. Professional membership fees will be reduced from €120 to €90 while associate membership fees for both existing and new members will be reduced from €80 to €60. Fees will return to the previous level in June 2021.

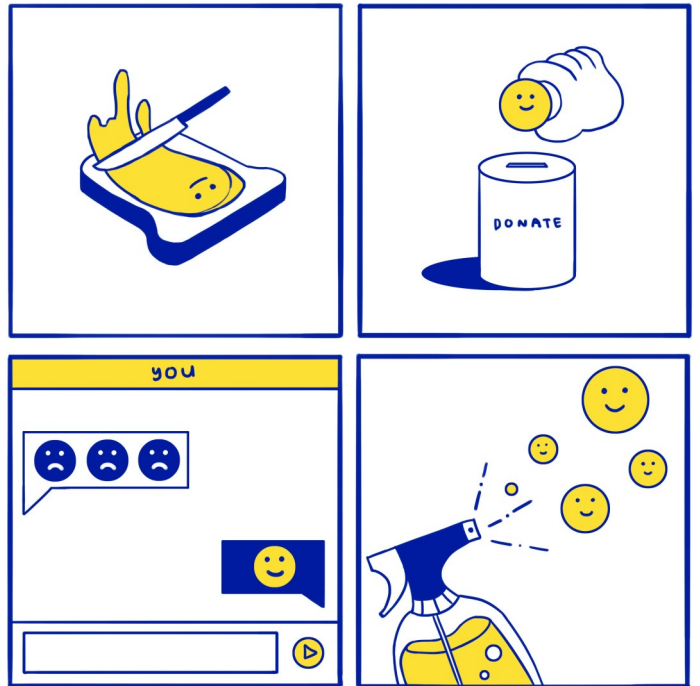
***“We agreed to reduce membership fees on a one off basis for the coming year”***

We held a Zoom coffee morning on the 14th May. Thanks to the 23 participants who contributed to a really interesting discussion about the effect of the pandemic on their work. We will be holding more such sessions over the coming weeks focusing on particular topics. We are also planning some short online CPD (continuing professional development) sessions.

The executive committee has been meeting online since March. It may be necessary to hold our Annual General Meeting online in October. As usual, we will be in contact with our members by email and will post information on our website. See also our Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn accounts.

Mary Phelan

**SPREAD POSITIVITY**



**NOT THE VIRUS.**



# ITIA Covid-19 Pandemic Survey

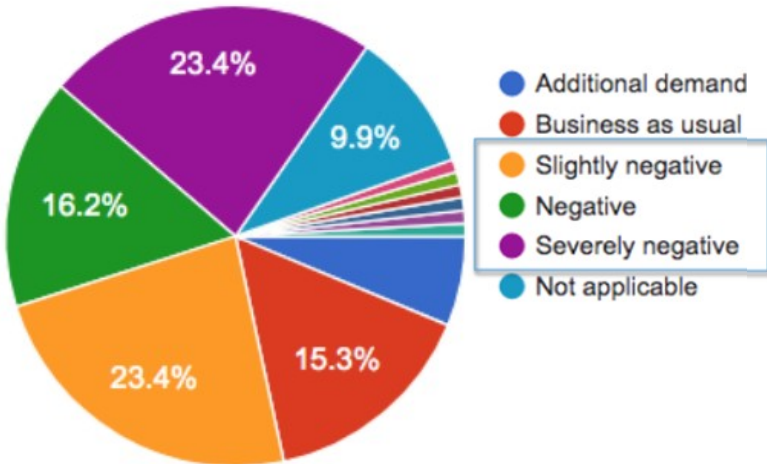
*Ken Waide, ITIA Executive Committee member, gives us his report on the latest ITIA survey*

Few industries have been spared from the wide-ranging and devastating economic impact of Covid-19, and translation and interpreting are no exception. As most translators and interpreters are self-employed, our situation is particularly precarious. In late March, the ITIA conducted a survey to gauge the effects of the pandemic on business for translators and interpreters. The results showed that the majority of translators and vast majority of interpreters had already felt a negative impact on business.

The survey was open from the 23<sup>rd</sup> March to the 1<sup>st</sup> April, when the lockdowns in Ireland and many other European countries were beginning. Of a total of 111 responses, 47% were ITIA Professional members, 46% were Associate members, and 7% were non-members. The majority (75%) were based in the Republic of Ireland, and a large majority were working as freelance translators and/or interpreters (71% full-time and 23% part-time), with employees accounting for less than 5%.

Respondents were asked what the impact of the coronavirus situation had been on demand for their services to date. A majority (63%) of translators reported a negative impact on demand. 23.4% said the impact had been "severely negative", 16.2% "negative", and 23.4% "slightly negative", while 15.3% reported "business as usual" and less than 10% had experienced "additional demand". Meanwhile, the impact on interpreting was much greater still, with some 80% of interpreters experiencing a "severely negative" impact and all respondents reporting at least some negative impact.

### Impact of coronavirus situation on demand for translation



Despite these severely challenging circumstances, many respondents said they had not made any changes to their business as of yet, whether because they were already working remotely and had not been affected or because they welcomed the free time they now had. The extra time was being used by some for professional development, from increased marketing and reaching out to clients to language training and CPD. Many interpreters expressed a move towards telephone interpreting, with several noting the particular difficulties of this type of work. Some respondents indicated that they were lowering their rates in order to secure business, while a few stated that they were considering other types of work.

Given that only one respondent reported having insurance to cover loss of income due to the Covid-19 situation, it is clear that the current circumstances are unsustainable for many in our professions. Several respondents indicated that they felt clarity and information were needed in relation to social welfare payments and whether Covid-19 support was applicable when work was reduced but not fully eliminated. Some indicated a need for government lobbying to legislate for a partial rather than total loss of income, as well as measures such as deferral of the annual tax return.

The results of the survey demonstrate the severe impact of Covid-19 on translators and interpreters at this early stage of the pandemic. As many countries in Europe and elsewhere now look to ease out of lockdown, it remains unclear what the long-term economic effects will be, and it may be necessary to conduct further surveys to assess the changing situation.

We would like to extend our thanks to everyone who responded and to Executive Committee member Susanne Dirks who organised the survey and collated the results. A full summary of these results is available at <https://tinyurl.com/yc54dloh>.

Ken Waide



# 'Oops!' moments and how to avoid them



*Sheelagh Hughes, writer and editor, regales us with tales of oops moments and how to avoid them*

**W**e've all seen them – a report referring to the public sector or the strain on local health services. A daft press release that is, thankfully, not out the door yet. The Forward to the book .... oops!

The English language is tricky, not least because it's full of homophones that lie in wait to trip people up – their, there, they're, where, were, ware, led, lead, discrete, discreet – the list goes on.

And it isn't just words that can get us into trouble. Remember the gun-toting pandas so brilliantly evoked in Lynne Truss's book *Eats, Shoots and Leaves*? An errant comma did the damage there.

When you come across mistakes like this it makes you wince and at the same time inwardly rejoice that it didn't happen on your watch.

But it could, and easily.

We're all under pressure from deadlines and more work than we can fit into a working week. So we rely on Word's spellchecker to flag up typos. However, it's not much use when the 'wrong' word is a fine word in itself and of no interest to the spellchecker.

And rereading your report before you pass it up the line won't save you either. You'll see what you meant to write, not what you actually did.

## Plan your proofread

What's required to avoid an 'oops!' moment is a fresh pair of eyes and a systematic proofread. By systematic, I mean not a read from start to finish, but a check carried out in several passes. Here's one way of doing it:

- **Check the headings.** Are they grammatically correct and all styled similarly (upper or lower case)? Do they have the same voice? For example, I've seen documents which use headings to ask questions but mix up the voice. So the first heading might be: 'How you can get help with ...', but later headings change to

'What do I need to do?'. Check also that the hierarchy is correct when there are several levels of subheadings.

- **Review the Contents page.** Do the headings given on the Contents page exactly match those in the document? This can be assured by generating an automatic table of contents, and remembering to update it if the headings are changed.
- **Scrutinise the body text.** Now it's time to read the text. Slowly. Check not just for grammar and spelling but also for tense, punctuation, use of acronyms, accurate cross referencing, numbering of sections and validity of URLs.
- **Examine bulleted lists.** Along the way you might come across bulleted lists. Review them all at once to check they are styled the same way – for example, sentence case or lower case on each bullet point and punctuation.
- **Check the captions.** Go through the document checking the captions for images, tables and diagrams. Again, are they correct, all styled similarly and do they follow a common form of wording?
- **Check appendices, bibliography or footnotes,** if they are in your document. Do each as a separate pass.
- **Use a style guide**

A lot of proofreading checks relate to consistency rather than correctness. That's because there is more than one correct way to skin a cat, or, for example, write a date: 12 August 2017, 12th August, 2017, August 12th, 2017, 12/8/17.

To ensure consistency within your document, and across all the documents in an organisation, you need a style guide. This sets out the organisation's rules about capitalisation, acronyms, dates, hyphenation, numbers and other content that can be presented in more than one way.

(ctd.)

For example:

- Use of full stops in acronyms and abbreviations – yes or no? DOE or D.O.E.?
- Hyphenation of words: subtropical or sub-tropical? Multidisciplinary or multi-disciplinary?
- Numbers: written in words or numerals? 1, three, twenty-one, 42?
- Spelling: some words can be spelt with a ‘z’ or an ‘s’ – organization/organisation. The past tense of some words can take a single or double consonant – focused/focussed, benefited/benefitted.
- Capitalisation: are staff titles written as directors, executive officers and cleaners, or Directors, Executive Officers and Cleaners? Or indeed, Directors, Executive Officers and cleaners (which tells its own story).

These examples are just the tip of the iceberg; a good style guide can run to many pages.

***“Without a style guide it’s impossible to apply consistency across all documents coming out of an organisation”***

To see an example of a comprehensive style guide, take a look at the Guardian newspaper’s: <https://tinyurl.com/qfbyukf>

Without a style guide it’s impossible to apply consistency across all documents coming out of an organisation. And it’s impossible to proofread effectively. A professional proofreader will be able to help you create a style guide for your organisation and, believe me, it’s worth its weight in gold in terms of time saved and frustration averted.

### **Spare your blushes**

In 23 years as an editor I’ve seen and corrected some mighty bloopers, but as a writer I’m not immune to making them myself.

So let’s all avoid red faces by getting our work proofed by someone else, preferably a professional. Because when it’s too late for corrections, you’ll just have to grin and **bare** it ... oops!

**Sheelagh Hughes** has over 23 years’ experience as a writer and editor in Editorial Solutions Ireland Ltd, and has carried out a wide range of editorial projects, including copy-editing and managing the production of academic books, copy-editing and proofreading government and research reports, corporate journalism, copywriting marketing materials and plain language writing and editing. She is a Full Member of AFEPI Ireland, a Professional Member of the Chartered Institute of Editing and Proofreading (CIEP), a member of EPANI and a member of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations. Connect with Sheelagh on [LinkedIn](#) or via the [Editorial Solutions Ireland](#) website.





# FIT Europe response to Covid-19

*FIT Europe Chair and ITIA Executive Committee member, **Annette Schiller**, brings us right up to date on what the organisation has been doing to cope with the crisis*

**F**irstly, a bit of background on FIT and FIT Europe for those readers who may not be familiar with them:

FIT – the Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs/International Federation of Translators – is an international grouping of associations of translators, interpreters and terminologists. It was founded in Paris in 1953 by six associations from Denmark, France, Italy, Norway, the Federal Republic of Germany and Turkey under the auspices of UNESCO. It has three regional centres, FIT Europe, FIT Latin America and FIT North America. Its main goals are to constantly improve conditions for the profession in all countries and uphold translators' rights and freedom of expression.

FIT Europe represents 59 professional translator and interpreter (T&I) organisations, representing the interests of about 40,000 individual T&Is across Europe. FIT Europe also has associate members which are the universities and T&I training institutions.

FIT Europe is administered by a Board of seven members, the most recent being elected in Barcelona in 2017 for a term of three years.

## COVID-19

Since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, FIT Europe has gathered information from around Europe about the situation in each country and the forms of support, financial and otherwise, available to T&Is. This information has been made available on the FIT Europe website at: <http://fit-europe-rc.org/fr/measures-around-europe-in-response-to-covid-19-to-support-interpreters-and-translators/>, and takes the form of blogposts, infographics and heatmaps.

FIT Europe has also been conducting a series of surveys to gauge the impact the pandemic is having on our professions. The results of the two surveys conducted to date can also be found on the website.

## The COVID-19 survey

The first COVID-19 survey ran (as a supplement to the annual European Language Industry Survey which closed at the end of February) for one week (from 27 March to 3 April). 1,036 independent language professionals from 29 European and 18 non-European countries responded. The survey was short with just 5 core questions plus a couple of follow-up questions.

***“At the time the survey closed, COVID-19 proved to be a game-changer”***

It was designed to take the pulse of the market and get a snapshot of how the pandemic had impacted the translation and interpreting sectors at that point in time.

At the time the survey closed, COVID-19 proved to be a game-changer.

The main (European Language Industry) survey had already shown that many independent language professionals in 2020 were already in a financially precarious situation, with many unable to earn enough from freelancing and having to top up their income from other sources, and many unable to afford private insurance if things go wrong (like illness, or inability to work) and also unable to plan for their future retirement, mainly because of unstable earnings from translation/interpreting.

Then came COVID-19. The picture of the market on 3 April when the first COVID-19 survey closed was that the vast majority of translators and interpreters said business had been affected to varying degrees.

Full results of the first COVID-19 survey <https://tinyurl.com/y7lbbnad>

***“The vast majority of translators and interpreters said business had been affected to varying degrees”***

### Take 2 survey

In order to follow up on how COVID-19 crisis continues to impact freelance translators and interpreters around Europe or working with the European market, FIT Europe commissioned a second survey, FIT Europe’s COVID-19 Take 2 survey, with 1,419 language professionals from 36 European countries and 13 other countries taking the time to respond.

The Take 2 survey took a snapshot of how the COVID-19 crisis is impacting the business of freelance translators and interpreters in the week from 17 to 24 April. Recall that the Take 1 survey presented a snapshot for the week ended 3 April. In that initial survey 58.1% of respondents reported they had seen their business drop dramatically and 38.7% said business was slow.

Almost a month on, very many freelancers who reported their business was impacted by the COVID-19 crisis continue to face major problems due to a lack of work, though the Take 2 survey reveals a drop in the number reporting their business is off a cliff (down 11.3 percentage points) and a growth in the number reporting that business is slow (up 8.2 percentage points).

Full results of Take 2 survey <https://tinyurl.com/y6w4qjfq> and <https://tinyurl.com/yczcfnb5>

Other important issues that the surveys have looked at include how long freelancers can survive without government financial support (the picture isn’t pretty) and the level of uptake of such support, with a very clear shift between the Take 1 and Take 2 surveys towards reliance on government support.

FIT Europe plans to conduct these surveys regularly at 3-4 weekly intervals to monitor how the situation is changing. Look out for Take 3 soon.

FIT Europe representatives, Annette Schiller and John O’Shea, took part in a webinar on Friday, 17 April to present some of the findings of the main European Language Industry Survey <https://tinyurl.com/yc85ches> and of the first COVID-19 survey FIT Europe conducted on how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the translation and interpreting professions.

## A final word

Quite apart from COVID-19, there are many challenges facing our professions at the moment, for example, general market uncertainty, the unchecked rise of MT and the accompanying unquestioned acceptance of “automated translation” as a panacea for all ills, downward pressure on fees, a lack of training for community and court interpreters, not to mention the general lack of understanding of how vital the human translator and interpreter are and will continue to be.

It is only by working together as professionals, supporting our national associations and working in collaboration with the main industry stakeholders that we will be able to face these challenges with success and consequently shape our own future.

#StrengthInNumbers

FIT Europe has two twitter accounts @FIT\_Europe and @FIT\_EuropeChair and is also present on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/FITEUR/>.

So, if you don't already follow FIT Europe, now is your chance!



## Annette Schiller





# What's HOT

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Irish sign language interpreters' visibility has never been more prominent than in recent times and we see these consummate professionals every day on our television screens. Well done to them all!

# What's NOT

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It took a federal judge's ruling this month to oblige New York Governor Andrew Cuomo to supply an ASL (American Sign Language) interpreter, within camera shot, at his daily television briefings.

# Worth-a-click

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Sheelagh Hughes' article should pique an interest in AFEPI

<https://tinyurl.com/y8ql9su6>

Hopeful picture for small translation businesses

<https://tinyurl.com/ycrnnl5h>

CEATL's latest issue of their biannual bilingual E-zine

<https://tinyurl.com/yce4ea55>

Professional Interpreter Tony Rosado's blog updates us on how Remote Simultaneous Interpreting has become so much more prevalent in the current situation

<https://tinyurl.com/yb7klxcp>

How to convince clients of the worth of our work? Some tips about how to work on your sales pitch

<https://tinyurl.com/y89q6348>

# New Members

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# Joining the ITIA

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## New Professional Members

**Tim Webb**  
French to English

## New Associate Members

**Muirne Maher**  
English to Irish  
Irish to English

**Vladimir Mogaldea**  
English to Russian  
English to Romanian

**Olga Shevchenko**  
Russian to English  
Ukrainian to English

**Vanessa Prazeres**  
Portuguese to English  
English to Portuguese

**Christian Muraru**  
Romanian to English  
English to Romanian

## New Student Members

Tara Kutec

Roisin Kelly

Wiktorija Dul

Runu Bai

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

- Professional
- Associate
- 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** may be granted to holders of a third-level qualification in translation and/or interpreting and/or languages or to holders of a third-level qualification with relevant experience.

**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 and interpreting.



# Contacting the ITIA

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## ITIA Bulletin

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To subscribe to the ITIA Bulletin, send an email to [itiabulletin+subscribe@groups.io](mailto:itiabulletin+subscribe@groups.io)

## ITIA Executive Committee 2019-2020

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Chairperson	Mary Phelan
Honorary Secretary	Elaine Jennings
Honorary Treasurer	Graziano Ciulli
Administrator	Rosemary Kratschmar
Chair of Professional Membership Sub-Committee	Annette Schiller
ITIA Bulletin Editor	Anne Larchet
Chair of Certification Sub-Committee	Penelope Eades-Alvarez
Chair of CPD Sub-Committee	Mary Phelan
Chair of Marketing Sub-Committee	Susanne Dirks
	Karl Apsel Sarah Berthaud Rachel McNicholl Christine O'Neill Ken Waide