

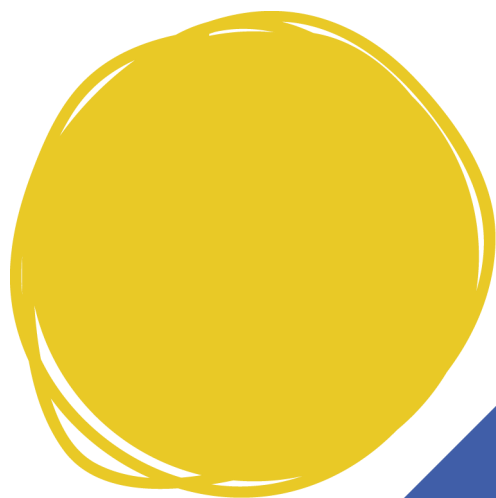
# ITIA

# Bulletin

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2022 / 01

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



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# Editorial

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Interpreting, in its different forms, is the main focus of this first 2022 issue of the ITIA Bulletin and, something worthy of note, is that *all*, except one, of our contributors are ITIA members, the majority from the Executive Committee. The Bulletin 2021.04 included an article about the Court of Appeal judgment of 18th November 2021, in which three judges found the trial of a couple accused of carrying out FGM on their daughter was unfair based solely on the interpreting provided.

The solicitor involved in this appeal was **James MacGuill**, who has contributed a detailed article recounting his background as a member of European legal bodies, how he became interested in interpreting in the courts and his work in highlighting serious shortcomings in the quality of court interpreters in Ireland.

ITIA Chair, **Mary Phelan**, adds a further dimension on this with her article on how the ITIA and other European legal organisations were consulted about a recent court case and their involvement in the assessment of the recorded interpreting.

Recent arrival to the ITIA Executive Committee member, **Sarah Jane Aberasturi**, ITIA PM Spanish and German into English, carried out a mini survey amongst her ITIA and [AIIIC](#) colleagues to find out how they managed to (very speedily) adapt their practice to using Remote Simultaneous Interpreting (RSI) platforms and the pros and cons of this new way of working.

New ITIA Honorary Secretary, **Tara Russell**, ITIA PM German into English, also carried out research into the matter of payment practices and her article shows an interesting picture of what's happening out there for translators and interpreters.

**Sarah Berthaud**, ITIA PM English into French and Executive Committee member has written a report for the Bulletin about development in translation and interpreting services for Irish NGOs working around the globe. Recent research has highlighted the need for such services, particularly in the area of child protection.

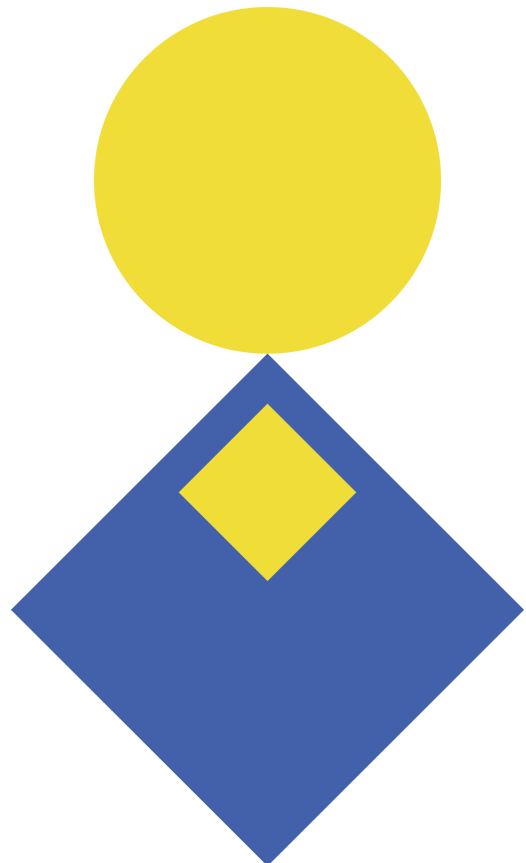
Members' corner contributor for this issue is **Vera Smyth**, PM English into Russian, who writes about her career in translation, beginning in Tver, Russia and, currently in the Arts Office in Dublin City Council.

The Bulletin's regular features, Snippets and Worth-a-Click, provide the latest T & I news from Ireland and around the world which will hopefully keep our readers and members up to date.

As the pandemic appears to be fortunately on the wane, the ITIA Executive Committee is working towards being able to organise some form of get-together in the near future for our members, hopefully at our new home in TCLCT, as our last event was our Christmas party in December 2019!

**Anne Larchet**

Editor



# Members' Corner



*Vera Smyth, PM English into Russian, on her career in translation, beginning in Tver, Russia, and currently in the Arts Office in Dublin City Council*

## 1. Describe yourself professionally in a few lines.

My name is Vera Smyth. I am a professional member of the Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association. I graduated from University of Tver (Russia) with a Master's Degree in English (Teaching and Translation).

I worked for Aer Rianta International Moscow Duty Free as a translator and interpreter before I moved to Dublin. I now work in the Arts Office of Dublin City Council.

## 2. When and why did you decide on a career in translating/interpreting?

I have been interested in languages from a very young age, it must have been when I was 5 or 6. I found it fascinating to hear sounds that I didn't understand. That made me curious to learn and be able to understand and speak this language. My parents studied German at school and remembered it pretty well, so they taught me the first words and expressions. A friend and I used to sing to a hair brush in a 'foreign' language. The only problem was that we couldn't sing together as we were making up different words!

In school our class was assigned English and I enjoyed it so much that I was teaching my mum as I learned it myself. Years later my mum found this very useful when my parents came to visit us here in Ireland. I think it was in school when I realised that I would like to have a profession in some way connected with languages.

But the realisation of what I wanted to do in my life came during studies at the university. Among many subjects there was a course in Translation in Practice where we attempted to translate well known pieces and had discussions about each other's versions.

One of the key things for me to become an interpreter was a level of confidence in speaking the language. Some courage is also required to be able to speak freely and not to think that people around would listen and judge. This confidence comes at a certain level of professional development and it took me some time to get there.

## *'Interpreting requires a different set of skills'*

It is widely underappreciated by the general public that the ability to speak a foreign language does not automatically make the person a translator or interpreter. Translation skills, in my view, are acquired with the study of the language at a professional level and with an in-depth understanding of the structure of both the source and the target languages.

It is also important to point out that interpreting requires a different set of skills. A short-term memory needs to work very efficiently, quick thinking in difficult situations, like how to interpret "untranslatable".

### 3. Do you think it is necessary to specialise?

Specialisation is another aspect of work. In most cases a translator/interpreter is expected to possess a vast knowledge on a variety of subjects. I think specialisation can help to improve the quality of translation. The more you know about a particular area, the more understanding you gain and this leads to higher standards of translation.

### 4. What is your favourite type of text/assignment?

I really enjoy working with general types of texts, such as guides, information leaflets, pieces on art and culture. I also very much enjoy translating poetry. Recently I translated a book of haiku by the poet Dermot O'Brien. It was a challenging and very exciting project. For a few years I was one of the main organisers of the Festival of Russian Culture in Dublin and enjoyed interpreting guided tours of the permanent collection of the Hugh Lane Gallery.

### 5. What is the best/worst thing

### about being a translator/ interpreter?

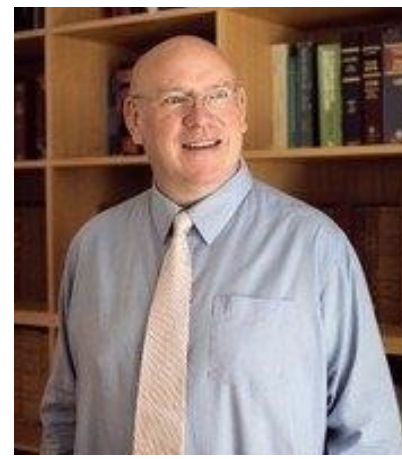
To me the best thing about being a translator/interpreter is to connect people and to make them understand each other. I also like the opportunity to be a part of interesting projects and to see places I would otherwise never have seen. The downside is that a translator and, even more an interpreter, becomes a tool of communication. There is a danger of losing their identity and sometimes this could present itself as an inability to have their own opinions on matters.

### 6. What advice would you give someone thinking of embarking on a career as a translator?

My advice to people who are thinking of choosing a career as a translator/interpreter would be to believe in yourself, be professional and be prepared to help people to communicate with each other.



# Court interpreting – a solicitor’s view



***James MacGuill** served as President of the Law Society in 2007-2008, and has been the nominee to the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) since 2008*

## How did you get interested in the topic of interpreting?

In 2002 I became involved with the [European Criminal Bar Association \(ECBA\)](#) and learned the scale of the problems where interpretation and translation are not provided at a high level in criminal cases. Such was the scale of the problem throughout Europe that the European Commission addressed the issue in a green paper on 19 February 2003 addressing a limited number of critical fair trial rights. The identified rights are basic by any standards:

- the right to legal advice and assistance (representation) provided by a lawyer;
- the right to an interpreter and to translation of essential documents;
- the right for persons accused of an offence to obtain written information about their fundamental rights in a language they understand, which may take the form of a "Letter of Rights";
- the right of vulnerable persons to proper protection;
- the right to consular assistance.

The need to promote these rights reflected the then impending accession of former Soviet bloc States where procedural safeguards were in some cases non-existent. Unfortunately, under the then law this Commission proposal could only progress on the basis of unanimity. It is to be deplored that Ireland was one

of six countries that blocked the progress of this minimalist proposal. In our case I suspect financial motivation rather than any point of principle influenced our obstruction.

Having failed with the Green Paper, the Commission changed tack following the passage of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009. They launched the [Stockholm programme](#) which broke down the package into individual propositions to be adopted one by one. The strategy clearly was that some measures would achieve support more easily than others principally because there was more difficulty with legal aid for some measures, again because of cost. The first leg of the package to be approached became known as Measure A and led to [DIRECTIVE 2010/64/EU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 20 October 2010](#) on the right to interpretation and translation in criminal proceedings.

At this time Ireland had an absolute entitlement not to become party to this Directive and to exercise a full opt out. However, they chose to be bound by the Directive, I believe, in the mistaken belief that we were already compliant because interpretation, of a form, was generally available. I believe the Department of Justice still naively believe we meet this standard.

## Article 5

### *Quality of interpretation and translation*

*1. Member States shall take concrete measures to ensure that the interpretation and translation provided meets the quality required under Article 2 (8) and Article 3(9).*

2. In order to promote the adequacy of interpretation and translation and efficient access thereto, Member States shall endeavour to establish a register or registers of independent translators and interpreters who are appropriately qualified. Once established, such register or registers shall, where appropriate, be made available to legal counsel and relevant authorities.

3. Member States shall ensure that interpreters and translators be required to observe confidentiality regarding interpretation and translation provided under this Directive.

However, I do not believe that those who drew up our implementing statutory instruments had adequate regard for Article 5. For instance, the quality control in [S.I. No. 564/2013 - European Communities Act 1972 \(Interpretation and Translation for Persons in Custody in Garda Síochána Stations\) Regulations, 2013](#) is limited to

#### *Quality of Interpretation*

7. (1) An arrested person may make a complaint about the quality of the interpretation provided.

(2) Where a complaint is made, the member in charge shall investigate the matter and take such steps as he or she considers appropriate in the circumstances including, where appropriate and practicable, arranging to replace the interpreter. In deciding what steps to take he or she may consult, where appropriate, with other members, the solicitor for the arrested person and the interpreter.

and the equivalent provision in [S.I. No. 565/2013 - European Communities Act 1972 \(Interpretation and Translation in Criminal Proceedings\) Regulations, 2013](#) merely provides as follows:

#### *Quality of Interpretation*

7. Where the Court, of its own motion or on application by any of the parties to the hearing, considers that the interpretation being provided is not of such a quality as to ensure that the person before it can effectively exercise his or her right to a fair trial, it may direct that the interpreter be replaced.

This year marks the 20th year of my involvement with the European Commission on this topic both representing the ECBA and more recently the [Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe \(CCBE\)](#) who actively work to express the concerns of European lawyers about unfairness and disadvantages in trial processes, especially in the case of vulnerable and impecunious persons. The Irish State well knew in 2010 when they agreed to this Directive that the priority identified in the Commission proposal was the protection of accused persons and not the safeguarding of national finance. It is notorious among colleagues

## ***‘The priority was the protection of accused persons and not the safeguarding of national finance’***

that significant injustices arise when there are shortcomings in the provision of interpretation and translation. Until the State take seriously the responsibilities they voluntarily assumed under the Directive it is inevitable that there will be poor outcomes in cases up to and including significant miscarriages of justice leading to unjust terms of imprisonment. That is not to be taken as suggesting for a moment that persons charged with the lesser offences but which may impact their livelihood or reputation should not have the expectation of reasonable interpretation and translation provided for them. Where accused are not reliant on legal aid they can avail of the interpreter of their choice. In civil and commercial matters would the State tolerate the low standards in the criminal process?

As practitioners I think we are always struck with the level of resources the State are prepared to make available to ensure that the European Arrest Warrant process moves efficiently. That too is a European measure, but it is one in ease of the prosecuting authorities whereas interpretation and translation is relegated to a different category.

Can you tell us about the appeals you have taken on the grounds of inadequate interpreting in garda stations and/or the courts. How do you find out about such cases?

I have been fortunate enough to have been involved in two significant Irish cases where the Courts have given real teeth to the Directive. The earlier in time was the decision of Ms. Justice Donnelly 16th July 2019 in the case of [DPP-v- DS](#).

In this case DS, a Lithuanian national, was arrested in respect of a serious offence. The member in charge identified that an interpreter would be appropriate, and a Lithuanian interpreter was provided. The particular interpreter had no training in legal interpretation and had only been in a Garda station on one previous occasion. Fortunately, the entire interview was audio-visually recorded which meant that it was possible to review precisely what had taken place. As is the usual case, the Garda written memo of interview was incomplete but when a complete transcript of what had occurred took place it was apparent that there had

## ***'The absence of a register or availability of interpreters in certain languages'***

been significant non- and misinterpretation. Furthermore, it was apparent that the prisoner realised that there were shortcomings in the interpretation and attempted to make his case in English which he had no real capacity to do. The issue was the extent to which the right to interpretation was a fair trial right. Ms. Justice Donnelly addressed the Directive issue but placed it in the context of fair trial rights as guaranteed by [Article 38.1 of the Constitution](#) drawing an analogy between the right to legal representation and the right to interpretation. The judgement is a very strong one.

Paragraph 61 gives a flavour of the judgement.

*61. As the right to the assistance of an interpreter, even at the investigative stage, is one of the essentials of justice, it follows that the trial judge*

*who is under a constitutional duty to ensure the administration of justice, must ensure that there is no unfairness of the trial arising from lack of, or inadequate, translation. This is not a mere formal requirement placed on a trial judge, it is a requirement to ensure at a substantive level that the trial is fair. Therefore the trial judge must where the circumstances demand enquire as to the adequacy of interpretation facilities that are in the course of the trial being provided or were in the course of the investigative stage provided. Apart from a constitutional duty this type of enquiry would be one aspect of the concrete measures that member states must take to ensure the interpretation and translation provided meets the quality required under the 2010 Directive.*

The second example is the decision of the Court of Appeal in the linked cases of DPP-v-HM and DPP-v - BO decided as recently as 18 November 2021. This was a case where interpretation was provided for the two accused during the trial. One of the accused chose to give evidence in the trial with the assistance of the interpreter. Regrettably the interpreter was inadequately trained in legal matters. Fortunately, the giving of evidence and the interpreting provided were recorded by the digital audio recording system (DAR) used by the courts and it was possible to conduct an exercise in comparing what each person was saying to identify the mistranslations.

In a 29-page judgement the court referenced the quality of the expert independent interpreters who prepared a report for the court on appeal and cited some examples.

The court states at Paragraph 91 of the judgement *" it seems to us that as far as the appellants trial was concerned it must be regarded as having been unsafe and unsatisfactory for not having complied with either the spirit or the substance of what is required by the Interpretation and Translation Directive in order to safeguard the fairness of the proceedings and in particular to ensure that the applicants were properly able to exercise their right of defence. We have no hesitation in finding that the appellants trial was unfair in that respect and was other than a trial in due course of law."*

Again, the Court of Appeal are linking the constitutional guarantees to the guarantees of the Directive.



In other cases it has been possible to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Director of Public Prosecutions that the quality of interpretation provided in Garda stations has been inadequate so much so that the State chose not to attempt to lead the evidence of those interviews.

**In your opinion, what needs to be done to improve the current situation where police and court interpreters in Ireland are untrained and untested? Also, what can solicitors and barristers in particular do?**

I think the starting point must be that the obligation to provide high-quality interpretation and translation services is an obligation of the Member State and can never become the responsibility of the defence legal practitioner. Too often we encounter the suggestion that if you are not happy with the interpretation provided you can replace it with your own. That is not always readily achievable given the absence of a register or availability of interpreters in certain languages. The difficulty would not arise if the State contracted with interpreters or interpreting companies who committed to proper quality and training and were not placed on the register until they complied. Registration would be particular to the individual and their nominated and tested languages. In Section 5 of the Green Paper of 2003 questions are posed to the Member states on the issue of interpretation and translation from the point of view of quality control. Those questions are as relevant now as they were previously. They address issues such as recruitment into the profession, proper training, proper payment, the provision of two interpreters in circumstances where there may be a conflict of interest and the maintenance of a transparent national register. All of these issues remain current.

As defence practitioners we have an obligation to protect our clients' best interests. It extends beyond analysing the evidence against them and giving them legal advice as to their options. It also involves ensuring the integrity of the trial process. Care should be exercised in every case in which interpretation is relevant to ensure that the

interpreter provided has adequate qualifications. This information should be sought at the time of the Garda station interview because too often one finds that the particular interpreter is no longer readily available at the point of trial some years later. Where there is concern this should be recorded immediately. It can be apparent even to a solicitor with no knowledge of the index language that there is an obvious mismatch between the length of the answer given and the length of the answer interpreted. This same applies for the interpretation of the questions. One often sees lengthy and complicated questions being put to a suspect which are not even adequately recorded by the Gardai and not recorded at all in writing by the interpreter prior to attempting to interpret. I have a particular discomfort with the same interpreter being present for the purposes of interpreting a legal consultation and then interpreting the interview conducted by the Gardai. It is well documented that the role of an interpreter can be misunderstood by a suspect who may believe that the interpreter is still acting as a defence expert rather than as an interpreter facilitating the interrogation. A suspect, particularly if the lawyer no longer is present, might feel that they can, with confidence, give an account without realising that that account now forms part of the case against them.

Joint training of interpreters and lawyers would benefit an understanding of the importance of accurate interpretation and translation as well as appropriate professional boundaries. A challenge that unfortunately we encounter all the time is that a spin can be put on advice that is being given potentially to *sugar coat* that advice. We even encounter cases where the interpreter appears to suggest the answer. Such conduct would lead to exclusion from the register, if there was one.

On a final positive note the recent experience of the Irish Prison Service relaxing their rules to allow participants in video-links to do so from different locations has greatly improved the accessibility of interpreting services.

**James MacGuill**

# ITIA checks recordings of legal interpreting



*Mary Phelan is director of the Centre for Translation and Textual Studies at Dublin City University and chairperson of the Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association*

The ITIA has highlighted the lack of standards in interpreting many times over the last twenty years (see [submissions](#) on our website). It is quite obvious to us that interpreters who have no access to training, who get no feedback on their work and who have never been tested are unlikely to have the ability to provide a professional level of service in the legal (or any) sphere. However, we had no concrete evidence to corroborate our belief that interpreting in garda stations and the courts can be inadequate. The recording of interviews in garda stations and of court cases allows defence solicitors like James MacGuill and others to play a vital role in challenging poor interpreting.

Garda station interviews are still very slow processes with one garda asking questions while another takes notes in longhand. In serious cases, the garda station interview is recorded on CDs. This allows lawyers to check the video recording against the book of evidence. It also means that if an interpreter was present, the recording can be checked to establish whether or not the interpreting provided was adequate. Most importantly, did the interpreter translate the caution correctly? Can the interpreter cope with mentions of legislation? How accurately are the questions asked by the police conveyed? How accurately are the suspect's answers conveyed? For example, in [DPP and Darius Savickis](#) (2019) a translation review found that the caution 'did not appear to have been translated into Lithuanian' and that the accused, who had limited English, had answered questions in English 81 times and in Lithuanian 51 times.

In the courts, digital audio recordings are made and when an interpreter interprets aloud to the court for a defendant or a witness, what is said will be recorded and the recordings can be reviewed and translated. In 2019 in a case that attracted a lot of media attention in Ireland, a couple were found guilty of female genital mutilation (FGM). At the trial, one of the defendants was examined and cross-examined by lawyers through a French-speaking interpreter for an hour and 40 minutes. With the help of Liese Katschinka (founder of [EULITA](#)) and Professor Christiane Driesen, I

transcribed and translated the recording in this case and we provided a joint expert report to the defence solicitors. The detailed judgement DPP and HM and BO (unfortunately not available on the courts.ie website at the time of writing) in November 2021 shows how meticulously the three judges considered our report and transcript. They were 'satisfied that there were serious, and potentially far reaching, inaccuracies in the interpretation process',

## ***'How accurately are the suspect's answers conveyed?'***

that 'medical terms caused the interpreter difficulty' and that the interpretation provided 'impacted the appellant's credibility before the jury'. The judges concluded that the earlier verdict was 'unsafe and unsatisfactory' solely on the grounds of poor interpreting and a retrial was ordered. The State will now incur the expense of a second trial that could, like the original trial at Dublin Circuit Criminal Court, last eight days.

We would urge more solicitors to consider the possibility that interpreting in garda stations and the courts may be inadequate and to have recordings checked. In addition, we strongly recommend that the State provide for a system of independent checking of samples of recordings from garda stations and the courts to establish if the 'quality sufficient to safeguard the fairness of proceedings' in [Directive 2010/64/EU](#) is being met.

Mary Phelan

ITIA Chairperson

# Remote Simultaneous Interpreting: Reports from the Front Line



***Sarah Jane Aberasturi**, ITIA PM and ITIA Certified Legal Translator, German and Spanish into English. Sarah is a conference interpreter and member of AIIC*

It goes without saying that the last two years have involved huge change for everyone, but for this edition of the ITIA Bulletin, we decided to ask a small number of Ireland-based conference interpreters to share their experiences and impressions of how the pandemic has played out in their professional lives, specifically in relation to remote simultaneous interpreting (RSI). All six are AIIC members and well established in the profession.

We started by asking whether they had any experience of RSI before COVID-19 reared its spiky head. Two of the six had tested some platforms, but none had had any live experience at all, so once lockdown arrived and in-person conferences were abandoned, they had no choice but to jump in at the deep end. For almost all assignments, they found themselves working from home. One described it as an “overnight revolution”. So, how did they find that?

***‘All had to adjust fast and take on a steep learning curve’***

The words used to describe their experience range from destabilising, stressful, fear and overwhelming, to relief, grateful and even excitement. All had to adjust fast and take on a steep learning curve, learning by doing and finding new ways to interact with (remote) booth partners and colleagues. There were

many problems that were simply out of their control and added to their stress and fatigue. However, on the positive side, the possibility of working online rather than not at all was a lifeline after the sudden cancellation of all previous engagements.

## **What do they dislike about RSI?**

One of the major drawbacks all described was the lack of technical support when working from home, so that interpreters can no longer concentrate solely on their actual work but must act as technicians too. In RSI, they cannot really switch off mentally when their “booth” partners are on the mic, in case technical difficulties arise and they have to take over. They must continually monitor and manage at least three devices (for listening to the main speaker, listening to other interpreters, and communicating with their booth partner and/or others). This all increases the cognitive load and associated fatigue and can lead to errors.

Poor sound quality is an enormous problem in RSI, whether working from home or from hubs. One of our respondents has developed tinnitus due to the compressed sound received through the platforms, compounded by issues of background noise, bad connections etc. While very clear guidelines have been drawn up in this respect by bodies such as AIIC and the UN, delegates seldom comply with them, whether through ignorance or simply because they don’t consider it important.

Teamwork is a fundamental aspect of conference interpreting, and this is severely restricted when working from home. Although interpreters can

communicate with each other to some extent (via a separate device or a dedicated in-platform chat, depending on the software used), it is less immediate and always screen-mediated. Mic handover is less smooth, and on a more human level, the interpreters all alluded to a sense of isolation and loneliness, missing the camaraderie of in-person events.

Work/life balance has also been affected, with assignments reduced in length and rates having to be (re)negotiated, so that one interpreter said she has at times had to work twice as much to make a living. Another said that she is as tired after working for two hours with RSI as she would be after working an eight-hour day in person.

RSI also involves increased overheads for interpreters, as they spend more time in the home office and have to invest in new equipment in order to guarantee continuity and quality of service from home. These costs do not apply when working from hubs, but the reality is that there are no permanent hubs in Ireland, so needs must.

### What about the positives?

The list of 'likes' was much shorter than the 'dislikes', but it is clear from all responses that RSI has removed geographic barriers, with new clients and assignments materialising from outside Ireland. It has eliminated the issue of commuting and international travel, with the associated time and fatigue, and the shorter work sessions mean that the whole day no longer revolves around the assignment. One interpreter pointed out that RSI is quite an environmentally friendly solution for short multilingual meetings.

### Looking to the future

All interpreters expressed the belief that RSI is here to stay, given that it allows clients to meet more often and for shorter sessions without having to fly everyone in to one location. It facilitates their workflow and communications and can be easier on their budget (depending on the platform used). Several felt that hybrid events might increase, with delegates attending an in-person conference while interpreters work remotely from home or from hubs. Some also mentioned the importance of client education to find the best solution in each

case, advocating for in-presence interpreting where appropriate.

A few respondents mentioned a shift in the market caused by interpreting platforms and agencies. Certain interpreting platforms have started to act as interpreting agencies, giving them power to set fees in much of the international market and reducing the ability of interpreters to negotiate their own fees. An agency in Ireland charges interpreters to be registered and/or train on their proprietary platform and has described itself as the "Uber" of interpreting. One of the respondents expressed concern that younger, less experienced interpreters might be taken in by this abusive practice.

## ***'The interpreters all alluded to a sense of isolation and loneliness'***

One interpreter also wondered about the future of conference equipment providers and technicians in peripheral markets such as Ireland: Will they still be active when in-person meetings resume, or are we in danger of losing an essential sector of the industry? Given the top-notch service and excellent rapport our conference interpreters have enjoyed with techies in Ireland, this would clearly be an undesirable outcome.

The final word goes to the respondent who said she has learned the importance of being proactive and willing to keep learning and staying abreast of new technologies. She has found both AIIC and the ITIA to be extremely useful resources through this difficult time, along with her interpreting colleagues. Can I have an "Amen!"

*(Contributors: Sarah Jane Aberasturi, Azucena Bermúdez Pérez, Camila Comas Capo, Marie Delumeau, Manuela Spinelli, Aleksandra Sweeney.)*

**Sarah Jane Aberasturi**

# Interpreting Practice at Irish NGOs – research and new developments



*Dr Sarah Berthaud, ITIA PM English into French, is a lecturer in French at GMIT and has worked as a translator and interpreter for over 10 years*

Ireland is an acknowledged contributor to international aid and development, be it through money, material donations and/or contributions from Irish non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as Trócaire, Goal, and Concern to name but a few. Recently, awareness about translation and interpreting (T&I) needs and their importance in the work carried out by NGOs in the countries where they operate has increased to the extent that some NGOs have created their own in-house T&I departments. This is definitely a step in the right direction but Wine Tesseur's [2021](#) research on [T&I practices](#) within NGOs indicates that NGOs tend to focus on the translation of documents for their external audiences (e.g. media and not necessarily the programme beneficiaries). Her findings also show that translation services only – not interpreting services – tend to be provided and that even though some NGOs have T&I services integrated into departments, they tend not to be given any priority during planning and/or budgeting.

Communicating with beneficiaries, workers, volunteers and donors is paramount for NGOs so they can reach set goals. The work done by Translators without Borders clearly demonstrates this is the case, especially in times of crisis. NGOs must achieve their goals in order to secure future funding from donors. Yet solely providing translation services to beneficiaries, workers, and volunteers is not enough to ensure the successful completion of work. Interpreting needs must also be met. These needs are even more critical in sensitive matters such as child protection and safeguarding which require the use of feedback mechanisms. It is essential that information is communicated as effectively as possible, through the appropriate channels and with confidentiality assured in order to protect all the participants – beneficiaries, workers, volunteers and donors. For instance, a child

might be hard-pressed to write down a complaint – they may not have the necessary literacy skills – to report a safeguarding issue of any kind, particularly of sexual harm. This is made even more complicated if they cannot use their own language. Voicing that concern orally would be better suited in such a situation but might not be possible without

## ***'Awareness about T&I needs for NGOs has increased'***

appropriately trained interpreters, specialised in safeguarding or child protection matters. Clearly, work remains to be done in the area of interpreting service provision. It is heartening though to see some of the Irish NGOs participating in research on their own practices in the area of T&I.

### **Translating safeguarding terminology**

One such piece of research was carried out by Nadine Gleasure from Concern and presented at the Dóchas Safeguarding Working Group on 20 October 2020. [Her study](#) used an online survey and interviews aimed at examining how English safeguarding terminology can be translated and what linguistic and cultural issues NGOs faced when implementing safeguarding in the field.

34 Concern staff from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 23 from Niger, and 15 from Sierra Leone participated in the survey. The findings of this online survey reveal a rich linguistic capacity among staff with a minimum of 30% of the participants having a mother tongue other than the language used in the community they work in. However, despite the linguistic capacity, more than 50% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that there are language barriers between Concern staff and the local communities they work with.

## **‘Survey reveals a rich linguistic capacity among staff’**

In addition to the survey, Gleasure conducted interviews with 10 staff based in Concern’s HQ and field offices. Their contributions indicate that there are interpreting needs in the field that cannot simply be met by using the main Western languages such as English and French as *lingua franca*. Staff can attempt to meet the interpreting needs in an ad-hoc and informal basis but this is not always possible and thus can create issues. Her study includes key recommendations for interpreting for NGOs in safeguarding contexts. She advocates for the collaboration with local staff, partners and communities for the T&I of linguistic and cultural knowledge; the inclusion of T&I needs in the entire project cycle, including when budgeting; the provision of T&I training for multilingual staff; the collaboration with other NGOs on T&I needs.

### **Many staff engage in informal T&I work**

Her findings are echoed by a survey presented by Wine Tesseur in November 2020. She surveyed 117 staff from GOAL in different parts of the world (Irish HQ, Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean). Her findings show again a rich linguistic capacity among staff, with skills ranging from beginner to advanced reported in over 35 languages. Importantly, her results show low levels of spoken English fluency in French and

Spanish speaking participants. This could result in issues during meetings or training if interpreting services are not provided. As in Gleasure’s findings, Tesseur found that many staff engage in T&I informal work when possible (some as often as every day). Unfortunately, such informal T&I work is seldom recognised and thus staff do not receive appropriate training. She concludes by highlighting the fact that language work and skills require better recognition and support, including in the form of training. She also provides a [list of freely accessible resources](#) for T&I training.

These two studies undertaken within Irish NGOs show a positive attitude to tackling and raising awareness about T&I issues in the NGO sector, particularly for more sensitive domains such as child protection and safeguarding. This is a very welcome direction for interpreting research and practice. Let’s hope that these studies will lead to further improvements and research!

**Dr Sarah Berthaud**



# Snippets

## Top 5 online resources for payment practices

Every so often, the ITIA Executive Committee hears from a translator or interpreter colleague who has accepted work from a new client and has subsequently encountered problems in receiving payment. Many of us will have been in similar situations over the years, particularly in the early days before the advent of online knowledge sharing. The explosion in the number of LSPs crowding onto the globalised market in recent years has potential to exacerbate this issue. Fortunately, this increasingly complexity has been matched by a growth in online resources for exchanging information with peers on clients' payment practices.

We have researched some of the resources most widely used by language professionals and would like to share them with you here:

The [Blue Board on ProZ.com](#) was set up in 2001 and contains almost 200,000 entries on nearly 15,000 outsourcers. Some information is restricted to ProZ members.

The [Payment Practices online database](#) is the successor to the original Payment Practices list (PP list) on Yahoo Groups. It is subscription based and costs USD 19.99 annually. A free 7-day trail is available.

['Translation agencies business practices' on LinkedIn](#). Run by the same administrator as the Payment Practices online database, Ted Wozniak, this LinkedIn group provides a free alternative for LinkedIn members.

[French and English-language forum](#) where translators discuss payment and other business practices of clients.

[German-language group for translators](#) to discuss payment practices of clients.

We hope that these resources will help you to assess the risk before accepting work from new clients.

If you have other links to other similar resources that you want to share with your ITIA community, please get in touch with us at [info@translatorsassociation.ie](mailto:info@translatorsassociation.ie) or on our LinkedIn, Facebook or Twitter account!

Tara Russell, ITIA Honorary Secretary

## EU report – Multilingualism and Translation

The Open Method of Coordination (OMC) is an EU policy-making process or regulatory instrument. It doesn't result in EU legislation but is a method of governance which aims to spread best practice. [Translators on the cover - Multilingualism and Translation](#) is the name of the recent EU report by an OMC working group made up of some 30 experts from many European countries, working over 18 months. Four participants were practicing literary translators. Ireland was represented by Sinead MacAodha of Literature Ireland. CEATL, of which the ITIA is a member, is among other translator/translation organisations featured in the report.

The report gives an overview of the issues facing the translation sector in Europe, primarily dealing with literary translation and the promotion of translated literature across borders, but also with the situation for AV-translators. The report addresses issues of education and training, the decline of multilingualism in literature, AI and digitalisation in the sector, relay translation, issues of diversity, the different funding opportunities for translated literature and, not least, the working conditions of literary translators.

Most importantly, the report contains a number of recommendations on how to improve the conditions for translators and translated literature and to secure continuous translation from "small" languages.

The results of the report have already been presented to the representatives of the member states in the EU Council. On February 24, the chair of the group, Xavier North, presented the [conclusions of the report](#) at a seminar in Paris on the book sector in Europe.

## ISO 17100:2015 Qualified Status

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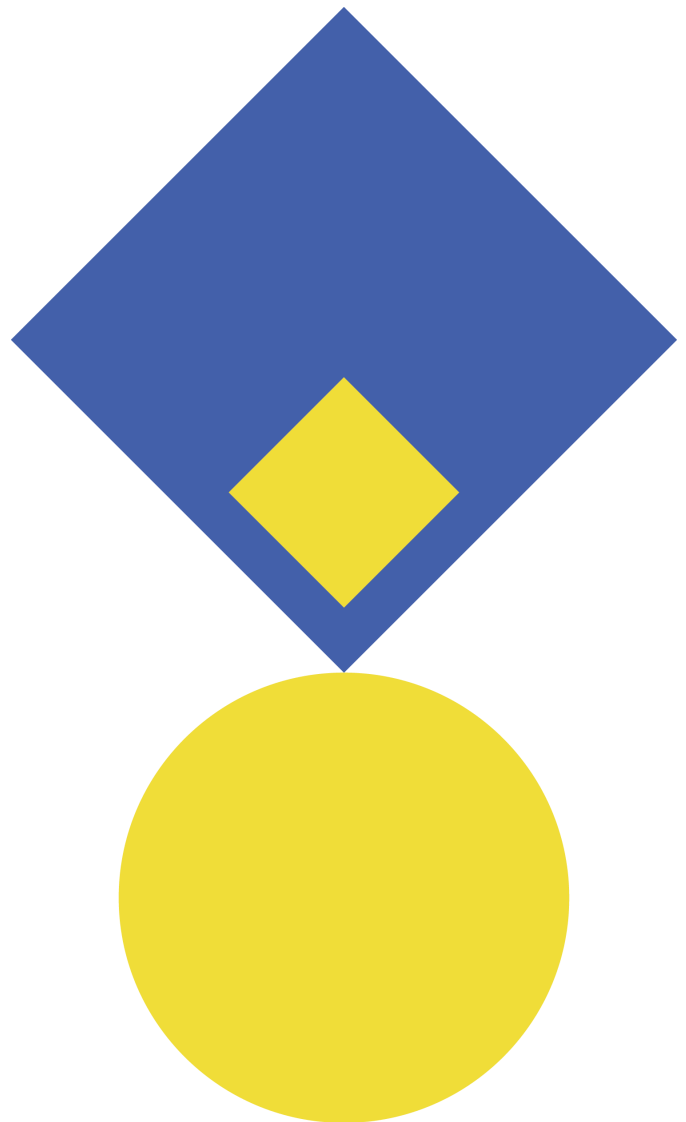
Towards the end of 2021, the ITIA introduced a new service for professional members - [ISO 17100:2015 Qualified status](#). Approval is based on a combination of qualification(s), professional competences and up-to-date CPD, as set out in the standard. Once a PM is approved, the 'ISO 17100:2015 Qualified' badge is added to their online profile in the ITIA directory.

For any PMs who have not yet decided to apply, we would encourage you to consider adding this important badge of recognition to your translator profile to demonstrate that you work to the highest international standard.

Part of the application process involves ensuring that your CPD record on 'My ITIA/ Login' link is up-to-date and meets the minimum number of hours (30) required by the ITIA per calendar year. The [ITIA CPD policy](#) introduced in 2020 can be viewed and downloaded from the ITIA website.

We encourage all members to take advantage of this facility to keep a record of their CPD activities.

If you wish to apply for ISO 17100:2015 Qualified status, please complete the form and send it to [iso@translatorsassociation.ie](mailto:iso@translatorsassociation.ie).





# What's HOT

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The number of Irish language translators across the EU institutions has risen to 200 from the 58 of five years ago. After an incredibly long derogation, as of January of this year, Irish now enjoys 'full status' as an official EU language. This should mean a major boon for the Irish language. It will also require updating of language skills and modernising the Irish language lexicon. Hopefully a career incentive for Ireland's primary and secondary school goes as well as university students!

# What's NOT

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One of the reasons for the delay in achieving 'full status' was there weren't enough suitable candidates for the work. Despite Brussels placing four advertisements over a period of six years and receiving a high number of applicants, only 10 translators in 2017 and 15 in 2019, were of a standard to be selected. Hopefully an incentive for raising the Irish language teaching and learning bar in Ireland's primary and secondary schools as well as universities!

# Worth-a-click

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The links below are all on the topic of interpreting in Ireland and further demonstrate how the current need for regulation in the profession is long overdue.

A [trafficked Vietnamese woman](#) forced to carry about €1 million worth of drugs was processed though the whole Irish criminal justice system without being allocated an interpreter. This was discovered when she had been detained in prison.

A [recent Oireachtas debate](#) included submissions about interpreting services for refugees and migrants to Ireland. Sr Breege Keena of Crosscare spoke about how the absence of appropriate levels of interpreting services directly impacts on migrants' capacity to engage with State bodies and services.

Written answers to Dail questions in January of this year included Minister for Social Protection, Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphrey's [account of contracts and payments to T&I service suppliers](#), including Irish Sign Language interpreters. Interesting to get a look into how taxpayers' money is being spent.

# New Members

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## New ITIA Certified Legal Translators 2021

**Silvia Pajoro**

English into Italian

**Emeline Dubois**

English into French

**Danièle Tort-Moloney**

English into French

## New Associate Members (Dec 2021 to Feb 2022)

**David Cassidy**

Russian into English

**Alexandra Corte-Real**

English into Portuguese (Eur)

German into Portuguese (Eur)

**Justyna Cwojdzinska**

Polish into English

English into Polish

**Magali Fabre**

English into French

**Cécile Guerin**

English into French

Italian into French

**Suzanne McMahon**

French into English

English into French

**Marcus Martin**

German into English

**Katie Murray-Hayden**

German into English

## New Student Members

**Michelle Yang**

# Joining the ITIA

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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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