

Outline of the Presentation

by

Liese Katschinka, FIT Committee for Court Interpreting and Legal Translation

FIT is an international federation of associations of translators, interpreters and terminologists gathering more than 100 associations from all over the world. FIT is a strictly non-political organization of professional translators. As a non-governmental organization, FIT enjoys Category A status with UNESCO and maintains close contacts with many other international organizations.

Through its special committees, FIT endeavors to meet the needs of members throughout the world by addressing such issues as training, working conditions and recognition of the profession. The UNESCO Recommendation on the Protection and Improvement of the Legal and Social Status of Translations and Translators, adopted in Nairobi in 1976, is a milestone in the history of FIT.

Mandate of the FIT Committee for Court Interpreting and Legal Translation:

- To organize international meetings as a platform for legal translators and court interpreters to meet and exchange opinions and experiences;
- To participate in international projects concerning LTCI;
- To assist national associations in implementing their public tasks;
- To contribute to promoting the professional status of legal translators and court interpreters;
- To ensure adequate dissemination of information about legal translation and court interpreting.

Criteria applied to court interpreters:

- language competencies
(mother tongue, working language(s))
- interpreting competencies
- translation competencies
- legal and terminological competencies
- cultural competencies
- code of ethics
(impartiality, confidentiality, complete rendering)

The FIT Committee for Court Interpreting and Legal Translation was invited to join the Justice Forum as one of the stakeholders in legal proceedings. In order to represent the European court interpreters and legal translators, in particular, a project is currently under way under the EU's Criminal Justice Program to set up

EULITA – European Legal Interpreters and Translators Association.

The EULITA project aims to establish by the end of 2009 an international non-profit organization. EULITA will be committed to promote the quality of justice, ensuring access to justice across languages and cultures and thus, ultimately, guaranteeing the fundamental principles of human rights as enshrined in the European Convention of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

EULITA, finally, aims to promote cooperation and best practices in working arrangements with the legal services and other legal professionals.

EULITA will be launched at a conference:

'Aspects of Legal Interpreting and Translation'

This conference takes place at **Lessius University College** in Antwerp, Belgium, from **26 to 28 November 2009**.

Draft Proposal for a Framework Decision on Translation and Interpretation:

- Reference to Reflection Forum on Multilingualism and Interpreter Training
- No mention of legal interpreters and translators
- Article 5: Quality of I & T:
..... "MS shall offer training to judges, lawyers and other relevant court personnel in order to ensure the suspect's ability to understand the proceedings."

The FIT Committee for Court Interpreting and Legal Translations supports the Reflection Forum recommendation:

"To the benefit of all interested parties, official registration of all qualified legal interpreters is highly recommended. Registration allows the clients to find the interpreter who best corresponds to their needs and gives the legal interpreters an optimal chance to find employment in line with their particular specialization and location. A well thought-out and regularly updated national register, administered by a national body, is the most adequate instrument for a search when the assistance of a legal interpreter is required.

Admittance to the register, i.e. 'registration', may take place as soon as the legal interpreter has passed the assessment tests and the accredited institute has authorized the result.

Registration implies that interpreters have to abide by the Professional Code of Conduct. Member States may consider to limit registration in time, e.g. for periods of five years, making extension of the registration dependent on attested CPD or other quality assurance or monitoring systems.

It is recommended to make registration mandatory, which means that legal interpreters who are not registered in the national register cannot work for the legal services and that vice versa the legal services are obliged to use only registered legal interpreters.

It is furthermore recommended to consider e-linking all the national registers into a European network. This would be of help when a legal interpreter moves to another country or is needed in another Member State for a rare language or specialization."

Conclusions:

- Slow process of recognition for court interpreting and legal translation (EU Justice Forum, EU Reflection Forum on Multilingualism and Interpreter Training; gradual improvement of national laws).
- More cooperation with national authorities and other stakeholders is needed.
- Closer contacts of court-interpreter associations is necessary to develop synergies.

Liese Katschinka

liese-katschinka@speed.at

www.fit-ift.org

Vienna, 23 September 2009