



Post-conference publication

The Role of a Translator in Peace, War and Humanitarian Crisis



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TEW Statistics

Number of speakers: 12

Number of registered participants: 238, including 29 guests

Number of countries represented: 12

Number of universities from the EMT network involved: 5

Number of translation languages: 3

Organisers: <https://translatingeurope.lst-lublin.org.pl/organizatorzy/>

Partners: <https://translatingeurope.lst-lublin.org.pl/partnerzy/>



Irmina Daniłowska

FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dear Readers!

We are presenting you with this publication, which is the aftermath of an excellent conference that the Lublin Association of Translators organised on 18 November 2022 under the theme “The role of the translator in peacetime and in times of war and humanitarian crises” in close cooperation with the European Commission Representation in Warsaw / Directorate-General for Translation (DGT) Field Office. This extremely valuable event could be held thanks to the financial support of the Directorate-General for Translation of the European Commission.

We dedicate this publication to all the translators and interpreters who, in a burst of heart, rushed to the aid of refugees and national services to assist them in effectively defusing the crisis caused by the war in Ukraine.

We believe that this publication will be a valuable resource for both representatives of the translation sector and decision-making circles responsible for crisis management.

This incredible undertaking would not have come to fruition without the wonderful people who agreed to support us.

We are extremely grateful to Ms Merit-Ene ILJI, Deputy Director-General at the EC Directorate-General for Translation, and Ms Agnieszka WALTER-DROP, Director-General at the EC Directorate-General for Logistics and Translation, for their relevant input and contribution as speakers. Ms Annette SCHILLER, Vice President of the International Federation of Translators (FIT), Ms Natalia PAVLIUK, President of the Ukrainian Association of Translators, Dr Silvia GATSCHER, Health Program Manager at the Polish Office of the World Health Organisation, Dr hab. Artur KUBACKI, Member of the State Examination Commission for the examination for sworn translators, Ms Agnieszka MACURA from CLEAR Global, Translators Without Borders (TWB), Mr Christopher WEGENER from Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Ms Anna KOTARSKA, Public Services National Anchor Point of the European Language Resource Coordination (ELRC) programme, and Ms Stefanie Bogaerts, President of the FreeLing Foundation and the LAPIGUA Foundation.

A very important component of the project was the survey, which was coordinated by Dr Mirosława Kawecka of LST with the support of Dr Katarzyna Liber-Kwiecińska (Jagiellonian University), Dr hab. Katarzyna Klimkowska (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University), Dr hab. Konrad Klimkowski (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University) and Stefanie Bogaerts (FreeLING and LAPIGUA Foundations).

Institutionally, invaluable assistance in promoting the event and carrying out the survey was provided by national and international translator organisations and translator training universities, including those belonging to the EMT network.

Conducting such a large undertaking required the involvement of all the bodies of the Lublin Association of Translators. At this point I would like to mention by name Dr Agnieszka Flor-Górecka, Dr Mirosława Kawecka, Dr Katarzyna Karska, Beata Kamińska, Aneta Strzelecka-Dydycz, Sylwia Świerżewska, Tomasz Olszowy and Krzysztof Lepionka.

This conference could also take place thanks to the work of a team of excellent simultaneous interpreters led by Kamila Trajnerowicz.

We would like to thank all the above-mentioned people and institutions for their commitment and the incredible support you gave us.

We would also like to thank all the translators as well as the lecturers and translation students who appreciated the effort and actively participated in the Translating Europe Workshop event.

*With warm greetings from the Lublin region!
Irmina Daniłowska
President of the Lublin Association of Translators*



Krzysztof Nalepa

MULTILINGUALISM IN EU INSTITUTIONS



Krzysztof Nalepa

Krzysztof Nalepa is the European Commission representative for translation and multilingualism in Poland. He is a translator and an academic lecturer, a graduate of the English Philology Department at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań.

Multilingualism is and has always been one of the core principles behind the functioning of the European Union and, indeed, one of its founding principles. Meaningfully, the very first regulation ever adopted under the EEC in 1958 was on the use of languages. Back then, it related to four languages only; the current consolidated version of the Regulation lists as many as 24, thus reflecting the remarkable development of the European project over the years.

Article 1

The official languages and the working languages of the institutions of the Union shall be Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish and Swedish.

The strong focus on multilingualism seems quite natural considering that Europe is a unique region in the world in terms of the number of languages in use compared to the size of its territory: apart from the above listed 24 official languages of the European Union, there are around 60 regional languages and dialects spoken across the continent, not to mention the numerous additional languages brought to the EU by immigrants from across the globe. As a matter of fact, Europe has always been multilingual. Learning foreign languages, translation, cultural exchange between nations is well established in the European tradition and have played a crucial role in driving Europe's social, economic and cultural progress across the centuries.

If only for that reason, the EU has taken a great deal of effort to preserve its invaluable linguistic mosaic. Multilingualism is enshrined in the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights which obliges the EU to respect linguistic diversity and prohibits discrimination on account of language and regulated by the unprecedented and world-unique multilingualism policy. Its main goals are to enable citizens to communicate with the EU institutions in their own languages, protect Europe's rich linguistic diversity and, very importantly, promote and encourage language learning and translation in Europe.

But, certainly, it's not only about convenience of communication, cultural heritage and better education. The harmonious co-existence of 24 official languages is one of the most distinctive features of the European project. Apart from being an expression of the each country's cultural identity, multilingualism also helps preserve democracy, transparency and accountability. No legislation can enter into force until it has been translated into all official languages and published in the Official Journal of the EU, and the provisions



relating to the EU language regime can only be changed by a unanimous vote in the Council of the EU.

Languages, by their nature, are very symbolic of the European project. On the one hand, they define our personal identities and reflect individuality of every single user. But on the other hand, they constitute a part of a shared inheritance. It is through a language that people and communities can connect, understand each other and share their collective knowledge. In that way, multilingualism seems to be a powerful symbol of the European Union's aspiration to be 'united in diversity'.

In more practical terms, effective multilingualism translates into better opportunities for EU citizens. Language skills increase individuals' employability, facilitate access to services and rights, and contribute to economic growth. The most effective tool the EU can use in the ever stronger global economic competition is the common market. The freedom of movement is only possible if language barriers can be easily crossed and smooth communication ensured. It is for that reason, among others, that the EU has set an ambitious goal, also referred to as the 'Barcelona objective', for Europeans to be able to communicate in two languages other than their mother tongue.

Indeed, the European linguistic diversity is a great treasure that the EU is committed to preserve, but, at the same time, a challenge its institutions face on an eve-

ryday basis. While the principle of language equality is universally respected, for reasons of functionality, particular institutions have been authorised to apply their internal language regimes. The Commission, for example, uses the three procedural languages – English, French and German – to conduct its internal business, while the European Court of Justice has chosen French as its language of deliberation.

But these exceptions just prove the rule: the EU have always been a living illustration of a truly multicultural environment where all languages are listened to and all languages count. But for this to happen we need bridges to connect all those languages, somebody to guide us from one culture to another, who will explain the meaning to enable understanding and communication. We need translators. The European project could not work without translators. To meet its obligation to ensure the highest possible degree of multilingualism, the European Parliament's linguistic services handle a total of 552 possible language combinations, as each language can be translated into 23 others. To provide EU legislation and other significant documents in each official language, the Directorate-General for Translation employs more than 600 translators, and is one of the biggest employers of its kind in the world. Invisible as they tend to be, translators are at the very heart of the European integration from Regulation 1 to this day.



dr hab. Artur Dariusz Kubacki

THE SWORN TRANSLATOR AND THEIR ROLE IN MAKING AND ENFORCING DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL LAW*



dr hab. Artur Dariusz Kubacki

Professor Kubacki has been Head of the Department of German Linguistics in the Institute of Modern Languages at the Pedagogical University of Cracow since 2014 and a practising sworn translator of German since 1998. He was awarded a postdoctoral degree in the humanities in 2013 on the basis of a postdoctoral thesis entitled *Certified Translation. The Status, Education, Working Methods, and Accountability of Sworn Translators* [Tłumaczenie poświadczane. Status, kształcenie, warsztat i odpowiedzialność tłumacza przysięgłego] (Wolters Kluwer 2012). He is the author or co-author and editor or co-editor of 22 books on translation studies and foreign language learning and teaching. He is also the author or co-author of more than 130 articles, reviews, and translations concerning LSP translation and its teaching, especially in the area of legal and economic terminology. Since 2005, he has been a member of the Commission for Professional Accountability of Sworn Translators. Since 2007, he has been a consultant to, and — since 2013 — a member of the State Examination Board responsible for administering the examination to become a sworn translator (the Board is an agency of the Ministry of Justice). Furthermore, he is a legal linguistics expert for the Regional Court in Cracow. The Polish Society of Sworn and Specialized Translators TEPIS in Warsaw awarded him the 2020 Translator's Laurels prize for his active support for the sworn translators' community, expert knowledge, a wealth of experience, and outstanding professional achievements.

The history of Polish sworn translators is connected with regaining independence by Poland in 1918 and with passing two laws in 1920, namely *the Act of 16 July 1920 Amending the Act on Criminal Proceedings for the Former Austrian Partition* and *the Regulation of the Minister of Justice Issued in Consultation with the Minister of the Treasury on 7 August 1920 Concerning the Remuneration of Witnesses, Expert Witnesses, and Translators in Criminal Proceedings*. Both laws set out how translators (treated as language expert witnesses) were to be remunerated.

In the Polish legal system, the term sworn translator appeared for the first time in *the Act of 6 February 1928 on the System of Courts of General Jurisdiction* and in *the Regulation of the Minister of Justice of 24 December 1928 on Sworn Translators*. Sworn translators were appointed by the Minister of Justice by means of a decree. The Minister also allocated them their seat at a regional court. The information about the appointment, striking off, or death of a sworn translator was published in the Official Journal of the Ministry of Justice. As a result, a specific model was developed: in it, a sworn translator's role was to assist the court at which they were appointed.

In Poland until 1975, the attempts to add the profession of translator to the state-run register of practical professions had been unsuccessful. Apart from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it was impossible to employ anybody as a translator. In the Polish People's Republic, the state officially recognized only freelance sworn translators. The profession of translator was added to the official register of professions only in 1981 thanks to the efforts of the Association of Polish Translators [*Stowarzyszenie Tłumaczy Polskich*].

The Regulation of the Minister of Justice of 8 June 1987 on Expert Witnesses and Sworn Translators was of crucial importance for the sworn translators' status because it combined sworn translators and expert witnesses in one document¹.

Candidates for sworn translators had to meet the following criteria: be at least 25 years old, be Polish citizens, have full civil rights, know a foreign language, and have the ability to translate confirmed by a master's degree in a foreign language or in applied linguistics. The command of a foreign language and the ability to translate became priorities and the fundamental conditions a candidate for the sworn translator had to fulfil.

Under the Regulation, a sworn translator had an auxiliary role in the proceedings of the court at which they were appointed for the needs of the court's territorial jurisdiction. The sworn translator's role was similar to the role and duties of the expert witness. A sworn translator assisted judges, public prosecutors, and police officers by, for instance, translating

* The article is an abridged version of a lecture delivered on 18 November 2022 as part of the online event Translating Europe Workshop under the theme "The Role of a Translator in Peace, War, and Humanitarian Crisis".

1 Anna Kegel, Zdzisław Kegel (2004): *Przepisy o biegłych sądowych, tłumaczach i specjalistach* [Regulations on Expert Witnesses, Translators, and Specialists], Cracow.



ing documents from or into a foreign language and by helping those officials to examine witnesses, suspects, or defendants.

However, treating the sworn translator primarily as a person who assists in legal proceedings started to be more and more at odds with a rapidly changing world after 1989. The transformations at that time made legislators aware of the fact that sworn translators' tasks could not be limited only to legal matters. Sworn translators turned out to be also indispensable outside the legal environment: to translate documents necessary for the public, for international trade relations, and for state administration.

It was impossible to change the sworn translator's status—as Grzegorz Dostatni notes²—„by amending the statutory instrument (Regulation) relating to the Act governing the system of courts of general jurisdiction, as a result of which it turned out to be necessary to pass a new act”, that is *the Act on the Profession of Sworn Translator*.

The work on the Act started in 1997 and was finished on 25 November 2004. On that day, the Sejm (the lower chamber of the Polish parliament) of the fourth term passed *the Act on the Profession of Sworn Translator* and submitted it to the President of the Republic of Poland to be signed by him. The Act stipulates the conditions and procedure for acquiring and losing the right to practice the profession of sworn translator. It also lays down the rules that sworn translators have to follow.

Under the Act, regional courts are no longer responsible for appointing sworn translators: now, appointments fall within the remit of the Ministry of Justice. The Act also imposes a new obligation on all those interested in becoming a sworn translator: they have to pass a state examination administered by a special examination board. Moreover, the Act precisely specifies the sworn translator's rights and obligations. Additionally, the Act defines the notion of the sworn translator's professional accountability, lists all penalties that may be imposed on sworn translators, and sets up a commission to conduct disciplinary proceedings (Commission for Professional Accountability). Under the Act, the sworn translator's remuneration depends on the translator's client. If the translator's client is a court, a public prosecutor, a public administration body, or the police, the translator's remuneration is calculated in accordance with the rates stipulated by the Minister of Justice in a special regulation. Those rates take into account the difficulty and scope of the translation service. As far as other clients are concerned, the principles of the free market apply.

A detailed methodology for practising the profession of sworn translator was to be developed by professional associations, which—under the auspices of the Polish Society of Sworn and Specialized Translators TEPIS [*Polskie Towarzystwo Tłumaczy Przysięgłych i Specjalistycznych TEPIS*—drew up together *The Professional Code for Sworn Translators* (2019). The Code contains a number of practical guidelines useful for translating and interpreting. It also includes ethical rules that are binding on translators.

Małgorzata Król³, after an analysis of certified translations done by sworn translators, enumerates—apart from the translators' statutory ob-

ligations of a formal nature—also their obligations relating to content transfer and ethics. Among the latter obligations, she points to the triad of fundamental values of professional translation, that is thoroughness, faithfulness, and impartiality.

Now, let us consider who the sworn translator is and what role they play in making domestic and international laws. Marcin Jachimowicz⁴ examines the translator's status in legal proceedings. Already at the beginning, he states that the term *translator* is not defined in any regulation relating to criminal law, civil law, administrative law, tax law, or administrative court law. What is more, the term is not explained in any of non-code legislative acts granting the right to appoint a translator. In colloquial language, a translator is understood as a person who—thanks to a command of at least two languages—can translate spoken or written texts from a source language into a target language.

Unlike the term *translator*, the term *sworn translator* is defined in many studies by lawyers and linguists. According to one definition, a sworn translator is a person who „has all necessary skills in order to ensure efficient and intelligible contact between a panel of judges and a defendant”⁵. According to another definition, a sworn translator is „an LSP translator who mainly deals with legal translation, including court translation, but also has to do with the translation of commercial, technical, and medical texts as well as texts concerning many other areas of knowledge”⁶. What is more, „a sworn translator is obliged to perform their duties in a diligent manner, being guided by honesty and professional ethics, which results, *inter alia*, from the oath prescribed in article 7(1) of *the Act on the Profession of Sworn Translator*. In addition, a sworn translator should carry out the entrusted tasks impartially and particularly conscientiously”⁷.

According to the provisions of criminal law, civil law, and administrative law, each person with a sufficient command of the language used by the person whose utterances she or he translates can be deemed a translator. Therefore, both a sworn translator and an *ad hoc* translator can be such a person. Jachimowicz emphasizes the fact that the translations done by both groups of translators, irrespective of whether we have to do with the translations of documents or with court interpreting, have the same evidential value. Only article 265 and article 256 of *the Code of Civil Procedure* grant the court the right to demand that a document drawn up in a foreign language be translated by a sworn translator⁸.

4 Marcin Jachimowicz (2019): *Tłumacz w regulacjach procesowych i jego karnomaterialna ochrona* [*The Translator in Regulations on Legal Proceedings and Her/His Protection by Substantive Criminal Law*]. [In:] *Kwartalnik Krajowej Szkoły Sądownictwa i Prokuratury* [*The Quarterly of the National School of Judiciary and Public Prosecution*], vol. 2 (34), pp. 59–91.

5 Jerzy Pieńkos (1999): *Podstawy jurslingwistyki. Język w prawie – prawo w języku* [*The Basics of Legal Linguistics. Language in Law—Law in Language*], Cracow, p. 132

6 Danuta Kierzkowska (2005): *Kodeks tłumacza przysięgłego z komentarzem* [*The Sworn Translator's Code with a Commentary*], Warsaw, p. 82.

7 Artur D. Kubacki (2012): *Tłumaczenie poświadczane. Status, kształcenie, warsztat i odpowiedzialność tłumacza przysięgłego* [*Certified Translation. The Status, Education, Working Methods, and Accountability of Sworn Translators*], Warsaw, p. 154.

8 Marcin Jachimowicz (2019): *The Translator in Regulations on Legal Proceedings and Her/His Protection by Substantive Criminal Law*. [In:] *The Quarterly of the National School of Judiciary and Public Prosecution*, vol. 2 (34), p. 69.

2 Grzegorz Dostatni (2005): *Komentarz do ustawy o zawodzie tłumacza przysięgłego* [*A Commentary on the Act on the Profession of Sworn Translator*], Warsaw, p. 7.

3 Małgorzata Król (2019): *O paradygmacie normatywnym tłumaczenia przysięgłego w dziedzinie prawa* [*On the Normative Paradigm for Certified Legal Translation*]. [In:] *Konińskie Studia Językowe* [*Konin Language Studies*], vol. 7 (3), p. 288.

According to the Supreme Court, „any person who is known to have a suitable knowledge of a given area, irrespective of the character of [their] professional duties and the place of carrying them out and irrespective of whether this person has been entered in the register, can be a translator”⁹.

If this is the case, as Jachimowicz aptly observes¹⁰, a body conducting legal proceedings has to assess each time—taking into account the level of the difficulty of the translation—whether the person who has been allowed to translate possesses „suitable knowledge” in order to do it.

Jachimowicz¹¹ is of the opinion that a translator assumes three roles during legal proceedings. She or he is (1) a type of expert witness because of having a special knowledge, which in this case means the command of a foreign language, (2) is the assistant of judges because of aiding them during court proceedings, (3) is the assistant of public prosecutors, defendants, and suspects.

International regulations offer citizens the possibility of using the services of a translator. The right to have a translator is one of the conditions for fair criminal proceedings¹². In order to confirm that, it is enough to mention the *European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*, the case law of the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the European Union, and also the important *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*.

The 2010 Directive guarantees each person who does not know the official language of a given state the right to receive without delay the assistance of a translator during criminal proceedings before investigative and judicial authorities, also during police questioning, all court hearings and sessions. Member States should ensure—within a reasonable period of time—that suspected or accused persons who do not understand the language of the criminal proceedings concerned are provided with a written translation of all documents which are essential to their ability to exercise their right of defence and to the safeguard of the fairness of the proceedings. Essential documents include any decision depriving a person of their liberty, any charge or indictment, and any judgment. According to Jolanta Ścigała¹³ (2011), such documents

include, for instance, a decision imposing a preventive measure in the form of deprivation of liberty, an indictment, the most important evidential documents, and a judgment. Moreover, Member States are obliged to keep appropriate databases of translators and interpreters and to make them available to interested parties through the e-Justice portal.

More than 90 Polish legal acts refer to the status and participation of a translator or a sworn translator in judicial and administrative proceedings¹⁴. It is enough to mention *the Code of Civil Procedure*, *the Code of Criminal Procedure*, *the Fiscal Criminal Code*, *the Code of Procedure for Summary Offences*, *the Code of Administrative Procedure*, *the Tax Act*, and *the Act of 28 November 2014 on Civil Status Records*. The last Act will serve as an example what actions require the participation of a translator. Her or his participation is necessary when the register office head „is unable to communicate independently with persons taking part in the procedure of reporting a birth or death” and also „when statements stipulated in an act or a procedure connected with entering into marriage are made” if „persons making those statements or persons intending to enter into marriage (...) are unable to communicate with the register office head”¹⁵. Additionally, the presence of a translator is required when the witnesses of persons intending to enter into marriage are unable to communicate with the register office head¹⁶. It is worth adding that the translator in question may but does not have to be a sworn translator.

To sum up: *the Act of 25 November 2004 on the Profession of Sworn Translator* has created in Poland a new profession whose members operate in the public interest, the profession of sworn translator. The Act also specifies who and according to what rules may pursue this profession and what consequences sworn translators face if they do not exercise it in a proper manner. According to the Act, the sworn translator is not any more only the assistant of judges during court proceedings, which role they performed from the moment the first regulations concerning sworn translators were introduced in 1928. Only since 27 January 2005, that is since the Act in question came into force, has this profession acquired the status of an independent profession. The new regulation has granted those who are entitled to pursue the profession of sworn translator the exclusive right to use the title “sworn translator” and to do certified translations, authenticated by the seal of a sworn translator, for all members of society.

It is worth emphasizing that—apart from a sworn translator—also an *ad hoc* translator may assist bodies conducting legal proceedings in carrying out their basic duties (for example, when it is necessary to take evidence, to hear a party who only speaks a foreign language, to serve letters). Moreover, such translators guarantee defendants, suspects, witnesses, and other people involved in legal proceedings the possibility of performing their duties and exercising their rights¹⁷.

9 The Supreme Court’s ruling of 10 December 2003, file number: V KK 115/03, Lex no. 83762.

10 Marcin Jachimowicz (2019): *The Translator in Regulations on Legal Proceedings and Her/His Protection by Substantive Criminal Law*. [In:] *The Quarterly of the National School of Judiciary and Public Prosecution*, vol. 2 (34), p. 69.

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 65–68.

12 See, for example, Joanna Długosz (2009): *Prawo do udziału tłumacza jako jedna z przesłanek rzetelnego procesu karnego* [The Right to Have a Translator as One of the Conditions for Fair Criminal Proceedings]. [In:] *Investigationes Lingusticae*, vol. XVII, pp. 100–107; Krystyna Witkowska (2014): *Tłumacz w postępowaniu karnym* [The Translator in Criminal Proceedings]. [In:] *Prokuratura i Prawo* [Public Prosecution and the Law], no. 1, pp. 29–42.

13 Jolanta Ścigała (2011): *Praktyczne aspekty tłumaczenia terminologii organów ścigania i europejskiego prawa karnego* [Practical Aspects of Translating the Terminology of Law Enforcement Bodies and European Criminal Law]. [In:] *Lingua Legis*, no. 19, p. 16.

14 As at 12 June 2012—See Biuletyn TEPIS [TEPIS Bulletin], no. 53/2012.

15 Article 32(1) of the *Act of 28 November 2014 on Civil Status Records*.

16 Article 32(2) of the *Act of 28 November 2014 on Civil Status Records*.

17 See Bogumił Zygmunt (2004): *Prawo do korzystania z bezpłatnej pomocy tłumacza w postępowaniu karnym w świetle standardów europejskich* [The Right to a Translator’s Free of Charge Assistance in Criminal Proceedings in the Light of European Standards]. [In:] *Państwo i Prawo* [The State and the Law], vol. 4, pp. 76–87.



dr Annette Schiller (FIT Vice President)

THE ROLE OF FIT AND ITS PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS IN CRISIS SETTINGS

It has long been established that “clear, timely and accurate information ... (is) ... strategically and operationally critical to disaster response”, generally requiring the provision of information in multiple languages (O’Brien, S. et al. 2018). However, crisis management plans do not always include the provision of translation and interpreting (T&I) services as a matter of course. The International Federation of Translators (FIT), a global network of translator and interpreter organisations, has an important role to play in efforts to improve the situation in relation to language support in the crisis landscape.

This paper will begin with an outline of the origins and structure of FIT and its key objectives. This will be followed by a brief account of some of the work carried out at FIT to date in relation to crisis settings. Finally, a summary of the initial action items planned by the newly formed FIT Standing Committee on Crisis Settings will be provided.

FIT was established in Paris, France, in 1953 under the auspices of UNESCO and is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year.

The key objectives of this global federation are:

- to foster an understanding of the vital role of translation and interpreting for the proper functioning of society as a whole,
- to promote the recognition and enhance the status of linguists in society,
- to connect existing FIT member associations and facilitate the formation of new associations,
- to provide FIT members with information about work conditions, technological advancements, training, and other matters relevant to our professions.

FIT has 108 regular members that are professional translator and interpreter associations representing over 90,000 individual linguists. In addition, there are 28 associate members that are universities and translator and interpreter training institutions.

FIT has member associations in 87 countries across all continents. Some members are simultaneously part of a Regional Centre (RC) – (FIT Europe – 61 members), FIT LATAM – (Latin America – 19 members) and FIT North America (6 members).

FIT Regional Centre Africa is currently in development. The RCs work in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, whereby issues that are best dealt with at regional level are dealt with by the Regional Centres.



dr Annette Schiller

Dr Annette Schiller is Vice President of the International Federation of Translators (FIT) and is a member of the newly formed FIT Standing Committee on Crisis Settings. She is a former Chairperson of FIT Europe, the Regional Centre Europe of FIT, and former Chairperson of the Irish Translators’ and Interpreters’ Association (ITIA). Annette is an independent translator, specialising in academic and legal translation. She has a PhD in Translation Studies and a degree in Legal Studies and is an ITIA Certified Legal Translator. She has taught on postgraduate and undergraduate translation programmes at Dublin City University for over 20 years. She is a member of the ITIA and of the German Bundesverband der Dolmetscher und Übersetzer (BDÜ)/Landesverband Bayern.



Fig. 1: FIT global network: The darker areas represent FIT presence in a country.

The Federation has three official languages: French, English and Spanish.

The supreme governing body of FIT is the Statutory Congress which convenes every three years. In the intervening period the federation is governed by an elected Council of 17, from which an Executive Committee of six is elected.

A vital part of our work is to foster, maintain and build relationships with external partners at global level (for example, Red T, AIIC, NGOs, the UN Sub-Committee on Language and Languages and industry generally).

FIT publishes a quarterly ezine, *Translatio*, and an academic journal, *Babel*.

As a global network, FIT covers a vast geographic, cultural and linguistic space. Its linguists are therefore well placed to understand the needs, the culture and the language or dialect not only of their own people but of those of the many other languages and cultures with which they work or are in frequent contact.

The global work of FIT is carried out, in the main, by various standing committees (SCs), for example, the Technology SC, the Communications SC and the Indigenous Languages SC.

Although a Crisis Settings SC has only recently been established, FIT organisations have been involved in a number of productive collaborations in recent years in relation to crisis settings.

One such collaboration involved the preparation of guidelines referred to as the Conflict Zone Field Guide for Civilian Translators/ Interpreters and Users of Their Services in conjunction with the Red T and AIIC.

FIT is also active in the Open Letter Project with Red T and other partners which was launched in 2013 with the aim to “advocate on behalf of these embattled linguists by sending letters of appeal to the relevant authorities”.

In 2019, FIT Europe, in conjunction with the EU Commission/Directorate General for Translation organised a Translating Europe Workshop in Athens, titled “Translation and Interpreting in Crisis Settings”. The workshop drew speakers from Greece and other parts of Europe, from government agencies, NGOs, the legal profession and academia. Practitioners and representatives of the professional associations of translators and interpreters were also well represented. The event was live streamed, presenting to an in-person audience of 150 and an online audience of 400+.

The main takeaways from this TEW were that

- a) a collaborative approach involving all practitioners, users and beneficiaries of T&I services in a crisis setting is vital
- b) perceived (lack of) power and status of T&I practitioners can be an issue regarding trust placed and acceptance of T&I services
- c) a more specific role definition would be useful when commissioning such services, and finally
- d) training in relation to T&I is crucial not only for practitioners but also for the commissioners and beneficiaries of such services.

A chapter in the recently published *Translating Crises* (2022) addresses the purpose, content and takeaways of the Athens workshop.

Despite these and other projects carried out by FIT associations, there has been no systematic collation or exchange of the information and data produced. This has resulted in a somewhat fragmented approach and also significant experience and expertise not being shared and applied as widely as could be the case.

Drawing on lessons learned from the work outlined above, the new SC proposes to address this unsatisfactory situation and take an association-based approach





that will be relevant to any crisis setting, be it humanitarian, conflict zone or natural disaster. Ultimately, while each setting may differ, many of the language-related challenges are similar across the board. Emergency response should ideally incorporate two-way communication, ensuring that the actual needs on the ground can be properly communicated to responders, recognising that needs and therefore language-related needs evolve and change during a crisis. It is important that all possible resources are used in information provision. For example, AI, is becoming increasingly important in some settings and visual information may be more important than just text.

Therefore, the aims of the new FIT Standing Committee for Crisis Settings are:

- to map the current situation with all FIT associations in relation to their work and support for their members in the crisis landscape, and
- to follow this up with a language-in-crisis policy assessment paper to be provided to individual associations,
- to support the associations in devising strategies for lobbying their own governments, based on the data collated,
- to support associations in accessing existing relevant handbooks and guidelines, including information from other sectors and in creating relevant new and evolving documentation in relation to needs at different stages of a crisis and finally,
- to bring together experts in the field, disseminate results and outcomes, review the work to date and revise plans for the future.

Language is vital in creating trust and therefore improving outcomes in crisis settings. Going forward, FIT and its ever-expanding network of associations of linguists around the globe will play a vital role in relation to language support as a crucial element in crisis management.

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dr Silvia Gatscher

BREAKING THE LANGUAGE BARRIER – INTERPRETERS AND TRANSLATORS AS PARTNERS IN EMERGENCY RESPONSES AND PUBLIC HEALTH INTERVENTIONS



dr Silvia Gatscher

Health Program Manager World Health Organization Poland

Dr Silvia Gatscher worked as a pediatric neurosurgeon in the UK, Germany, and the US. After receiving her MBA from Hult International Business School in 2016, she became a consultant for the WHO Emergency Response Office (WHO EMRO). In this role, she supported relief projects in Northern Syria and later in Somalia. She then worked for the UNICEF Somalia and East Africa office as a health manager, supporting the capacity building of Somali government officials and helping to improve the resilience of East African health systems, so that these services can better withstand and cope with future stresses. Her current role as health program manager for the WHO country office includes the coordination of national and international health partners as well as the implementation of the refugee response plan and health operations in support of the Ministry of Health.

Abbreviations

RCCE	Risk Communication and Community Engagement
WHO	World Health Organization
Interpreter	Interprets and translates languages orally
Translator	Interprets and translates written text
Displaced person	Person who has been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters. This definition covers both internal and cross-border displacement
GBV	Gender based violence

Risk Communication & Community Engagement in Emergency Responses

Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) are critical components in any public health emergency response or intervention. The exchange of real-time information between experts or officials and those facing risks to their lives, health or well-being enables people to make informed decisions and take relevant protective or preventative actions to mitigate the effects of the public health threat or hazard in question (World



Health Organization, 2020c). A range of communication methods is employed within risk communication, including different printed, social or digital media, mass dissemination of correct and reliable information, and community and stakeholder engagement. However, not only information dissemination is required in the response and management of health emergencies. Another key strategy is to engage and involve communities effectively and affected populations in the response, with the first step being to ensure that the affected population's perceptions, beliefs and concerns are heard and considered (Corbin et al., 2021). It is essential in building mutual trust and respect between the public and response authorities, as well as strengthening the individual's and community's capacity to deal with the effects of a crisis (Ramsbottom et al., 2018; World Health Organization, 2020b, 2020a).

Infodemics

RCCE also plays a critical role in preventing "infodemics", which the WHO describes as an overabundance of accurate and inaccurate information that makes it difficult for individuals to identify trustworthy sources or separate the accurate information from the less accurate (World Health Organization, 2022b, 2022a) §13. The overabundance of information is often accompanied by an "information void", where public demand for information is greater than evidence-based communication. Providing information on uncertainties and what is still unknown becomes just as important as providing other information or instructions. An infodemic was especially observed during the onset and development of the Covid-19 pandemic (World Health Organization, 2022a). Providing timely, accurate and suitable information, as well as uncertainties, to the public will increase both trustworthiness and credibility of the response authorities and the overall response. It will increase the chances that people follow any advice given and minimize the risk of misunderstandings or spreading of mis- and disinformation, which undermines planned responses and risks further spread of disease or exposure to health risks (Pan American Health Organization and World Health Organization, 2020; World Health Organization, 2022a).

Information & Communication in Cases of External Displacement

Health information also becomes a vital emergency response component for those displaced because of a crisis or adverse event, such as the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Current reports indicate that since the onset of the Ukrainian crisis in February 2022, a little over 15 million people have left Ukraine for neighboring countries, the majority of whom are women and children (WHO European Region, 2022). Externally displaced persons often

have limited access, or knowledge on where to find available and appropriate health information and services in their destination country, and a lack of accurate and credible information is often a significant contributor to stress and anxiety for those affected by a crisis. Receiving correct and comprehensible information at the right time increases individuals' ability to navigate and access health services in their new country, and enables prevention and treatment of urgent as well as chronic health conditions (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2007; International Federation of Red Cross And Red Crescent Societies, 2020).

Furthermore, the risk that human rights violations like sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), human trafficking and gender-based violence (GBV) will occur is heightened in cases of emergencies (UNFPA, 2019). Cases of violence, directly or indirectly, related to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine have already been documented, although the true scale of these crimes is not known and can be assumed to be exceedingly higher than what is reported (GBV Sub-Cluster Ukraine, 2022; IOM, 2022). Ensuring access to clear, understandable and culturally appropriate information in the affected population is also an essential tool in mitigating and preventing cases of violence and ensuring that victims receive the support, health care and legal advice that they need and are entitled to (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2007; IOM, 2022; Women, 2022).

The Role of Translators & Interpreters in Public Health Emergencies Overcoming Linguistic Barriers

The many vital functions of health information, risk communication and community engagement in responding to emergencies have previously been discussed. The information must not only be available but easy to find and understand for those it is intended for. Therefore, the language and cultures through which information and communication are mediated play an essential role.

Displaced persons often face a range of barriers in accessing health information and services, which includes access to appropriate information channels and, often, linguistic barriers (International Federation of Red Cross And Red Crescent Societies, 2020). A recent survey report on the health of refugees from Ukraine in Poland suggests that the most prominent obstacle to accessing health services for UA refugees is various information barriers, including language and cultural barriers (Statistics Poland & World Health Organization, 2022).

Low proficiency in the language spoken by service providers, authorities, or the host country at large has proven to have a range of adverse health and social impacts (Cadwell, 2021), especially for those who are



elderly, have disabilities or have chronic health conditions (Statistics Poland & World Health Organization, 2022). In times of emergency, linguistic and cultural barriers have been shown to affect an individual's ability to understand and consider risks, utilize humanitarian services or take recommended preventative and protective measures (Cadwell, 2021).

Studies have, for example, suggested that in somatic as well as psychiatric healthcare settings, interpreters serve a vital role in improving the quality of care provided to individuals who do not proficiently speak the language of those providing the services. It not only decreases the risk of communication errors and increases patient comprehension and satisfaction, but it also improves health care utilization, equity and clinical outcomes (Karlner et al., 2007; Bauer and Alegría, 2010).

Furthermore, emergencies like the Ukrainian conflict have emphasized communication challenges of the Ukrainian deaf community, relating to their ability to access audio reports, warnings or information dissemination via radio and/or television. These individuals are at an increased risk of missing out on vital risk communications and health information, and access to interpreters familiar with Ukrainian sign language is paramount to managing certain day-to-day tasks, utilising health care, social and legal services, or taking necessary safety precautions (Meet Oleksii and Roman: Interpreters helping Deaf Ukrainian refugees, 2022). Thus, there are clear rights-based arguments for considering language, interpretation, and translation in emergency settings.

Providing Cultural Mediation

Health emergencies not only include linguistic challenges, providing timely information and communication in the context of cultural diversity provides its own challenges and need for consideration. Translators and interpreters can therefore provide essential linguistic, as well as cultural mediation in humanitarian emergencies (Cadwell, 2021; Increasing access through interpretation, 2021).

In many cases the interpreter or translator are members of the community they are translating or interpreting for. It gives them a unique understanding of the cultural context, including social and political structures, which plays an important role in building and maintaining trust between response workers, authorities and communities (Cadwell, 2021; Increasing access through interpretation, 2021). It is therefore important to tailor information and communication efforts accordingly and is the foundation on which any emergency response must lie if it is to be successful (Ramsbottom et al., 2018; World Health Organization, 2020a).

Furthermore, translators and interpreters can be essential partners in mitigating and preventing infodemics. By enabling access to timely, linguistically, and culturally appropriate information and communication across affected populations, individuals are more likely to understand and trust advice, instructions or information provided to them and are better equipped to take actions to prevent or mitigate the impacts of the crisis (Pan American Health Organization and World Health Organization, 2020; World Health Organization, 2022a).

Some topics may require cultural sensitivity when discussed or during service delivery. One such topic is mental health. For populations exposed to armed conflicts, the need for access to psychosocial and mental health services is particularly pressing. Based on recent WHO estimates, it is assessed that as many as 22% of those affected by the Ukrainian conflict are expected to suffer from a mental disorder, and 5% to develop symptoms (Charlson et al., 2019). However, reports indicate that this something that mental health issues are still a stigma among Ukrainian refugees, and many refrain from disclosing mental health needs if asked about them. It has been reported that access to services provided by professionals from their own community / culture may help in breaking this barrier to accessing services (Statistics Poland & World Health Organization, 2022). Furthermore, in mental health contexts especially, the translator or interpreter is an important mediator of not only language, but cultural meanings as well by providing translation of not only words, but underlying meanings that require a deeper cultural understanding. It makes the interpreter not only a language mediator, but an integrated part of the therapeutic process ("Refugee Services National Partnership for Community Training: Mental Health Interpretation Program Structure and Funding Challenges Information Guide," no date).

Challenges Faced by Translators and Interpreters

Considering these facts, the provision of translation and interpretation is critical in successfully delivering linguistically and culturally appropriate information and services across crisis-affected populations. However, ensuring access to these services is not without consequences for those who provide them, which becomes especially true in cases where the interpreter or translator shares cultural backgrounds or history with the population they are translating or interpreting for ("Refugee Services National Partnership for Community Training: Working With Interpreters: Service Provision for Torture Survivors," no date). In situations like the Ukrainian conflict, translators and interpreters may share traumatic experiences with the refugees they are working with. It can, of course,



create connections and build relationships but may also become a strain by re-living trauma, conjuring feelings of powerlessness or being overwhelmed by the stories they are hearing. To be part of the same community but not share a history of trauma can, on the other hand, create feelings of guilt (“Refugee Services National Partnership for Community Training: Working With Interpreters: Service Provision for Torture Survivors,” no date). Therefore, it is crucial that those providing translation and interpretation services have access to and are offered relevant support to tackle any signs of psychological distress.

Summary

Linguistically and culturally correct and appropriate Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) is a vital part of public health interventions as well as emergency responses and does not just entail leaflets, posters and information materials but also engaging and interacting with communities. Receiving accurate, clear, and understandable health information, for example on how to access health care services, is essential for refugees who find themselves in a situation of extreme confusion and anxiety. It also not only improves the refugee’s ability to navigate and access an unfamiliar system in a new country but also provides a sense of orientation and belonging. Furthermore, studies have shown that receiving appropriate information at the time needed influences and improves overall wellbeing and mental health. Translators play an important role in this process to ensure that no patient is left behind due to language barriers, people can express themselves freely in their own language, services are provided in a culturally sensitive manner and stigma, particularly for mental health services, is reduced and community engagement increased.

Stella Hedlund
 Silvia Gatscher
 Paloma Cuchi
 WHO Poland Country Office

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Christopher Wegener

POLICIES FOR HIRING INTERPRETERS FOR INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGNS CONDUCTED BY MÉDECINS SANS FRONTIÈRES

Christopher Wegener

HR & Financial Manager (Iraq, Congo, Sudan, Ukraine, Yemen) Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)

Christopher Wegener has been a humanitarian worker with Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) since 2019. He gained his experience during numerous missions in the field as a human resources and finance manager, primarily in Yemen, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and Ukraine. Born and raised in Switzerland, Christopher previously worked in the finance sector for ten years, starting in a consulting firm and then joining a venture capital fund focusing on the European mid-cap market. Driven by a desire to be needed and to use his skills and knowledge to help others, he joined the humanitarian aid community three years ago and has since taken part in both regular aid missions and emergency missions such as the one in Ukraine. Passionate and motivated, and open to other people, Christopher tries to learn as much as possible from each mission on the ground.

Recruitment is part and parcel of any humanitarian project, since local and international staff members ensure the goals and targets are well achieved on the ground.

Besides, humanitarian projects are usually launched in contexts where translation and interpreting services are needed. Interpreters and translators play a key role on the field and therefore they are an integral part of a humanitarian project and contribute to its success. In fact, they help Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) teams communicate with local communities, authorities, and populations so that their presence and activities are accepted. Acceptance can sometimes be challenging because of the local communities' hesitancy and reluctance towards humanitarian agencies. Therefore, communication with local communities at all levels is key to a project's success. But recruiting translators and interpreters on the field may raise more than one challenge and can be very difficult under some circumstances.

Firstly, it is worth noting that in MSF, we mainly recruit local interpreters and translators. Many reasons explain this practice. In fact, beyond the local spoken language, local interpreters and translators also understand the local customs and traditions and most importantly they are familiar with the context and with local sensitivities. Their knowledge is therefore of utmost importance for our work and helps us understand and communicate with local communities. Not only is the task of an interpreter or a translator to transmit a message in another language, but it is also to bring cultures closer. It is through good communication and thanks to our good understanding of local contexts and nuances that we can ensure our project and our activities are accepted. Interpreters and translators take part in this process and largely contribute to its success.

Moreover, on every humanitarian project, it is essential to address security issues. Thanks to their skills, their language competencies and local knowledge, local translators and interpreters are in a good position to accompany us to our meetings with local authorities or leaders to discuss our work and any security issues that may arise on the ground. It is crucial for us to guarantee our local and international staff members' security and therefore all discussions around security matters are essential.

There is no doubt it is necessary for us to recruit local interpreters and translators when we do not speak the local language. However, as it was



mentioned before, recruiting local interpreters and translators is challenging in most cases. The main challenge encountered is the lack of professional interpreters and/or translators. Most of the time, people who are recruited as interpreters and/or translators have no diploma in translation or interpreting. In fact, they are recruited because they have a good command of English in addition to their mother tongue which is the local language that is spoken in the country or the region where the project is implemented. In some cases, those people who join our local staff to offer their translation or interpreting services do have a diploma or a training in other fields of study such as literature for instance. Moreover, in some contexts, mastering three languages can be required. For instance, in Iraq, depending on the region where MSF activities were carried on, command of the Kurdish language was also necessary in addition to Arabic and English. The lack of training and the lack of professional interpreters and translators is a real challenge for us in the field. Usually, the people we recruit must learn on the job.

Besides, one must distinguish between regular humanitarian projects and urgent humanitarian projects. A regular mission refers to a project that has been implemented for several years. Even though all humanitarian activities, regardless of the mission type, must be quick in responding to the population's needs, it is worth noting that on a regular and well implemented humanitarian project, we have enough time to engage in a proper

recruitment process. In other words, we do not find ourselves in a rush. It is then possible to collect CVs, to assess them and to organize tests as well as interviews in some cases. Tests usually consist of texts that candidates are invited to translate into and from English and the local language. In some cases, some consecutive interpretation exercises can be included. The aim is to select the people who have the most appropriate skills to work as translators and/or interpreters even though they have had neither academic nor professional training.

On the contrary, an urgent mission such as the one that was launched in Ukraine does not allow us enough time to review CVs or motivation letters. We cannot organize tests or interviews either. In such situations, we must act very quickly, and we must recruit a local team in a record time. We cannot afford being selective and the aim of such urgent projects is to launch humanitarian activities and provide assistance to the ones who urgently need it as soon as possible. For an interpreter and/or translator, language command would be a sufficient criterion to be recruited amongst our local team.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that interpreters and translators play a key role and are essential to ensure the success of a humanitarian project. The lack of professional local interpreters and translators on the field remains the main challenge in the recruitment process and it would be interesting to explore possible ways to address this challenge.



Agnieszka Macura

LANGUAGE AND TRANSLATION FOR EFFECTIVE HUMANITARIAN ACTION – LESSONS FROM THE UKRAINE RESPONSE



Agnieszka Macura

Senior Programme Officer at CLEAR Global – Translators Without Borders (TWB)
Aga Macura has experience working in multilingual environments in humanitarian response, studying how language impacts communication and effectiveness of aid. She's raising awareness about the need for systematic language data collection, use of appropriate terminology in organisations' communication materials, and about the need to include language services in aid project planning. Since March 2022 she is leading CLEAR Global's response in Poland to help local organisations and the affected people break communication barriers. She's also interested in how the language we use in our everyday life impacts the way we perceive and build the world around us.
She's fluent in English, Polish and French.



Why do language and language data matter in humanitarian aid?

There is little information available on the languages crisis-affected people speak and understand. Systematic data collection on languages spoken in a given community is not a standard practice in aid programming. Organizations often develop communication strategies without reliable data on literacy, languages spoken, or preferred means of communication. The result too often is that crisis-affected people struggle to communicate with responders in a language they understand. Women, children, older people, and people with disabilities are often at the greatest disadvantage because they are less likely to understand international languages and lingua francas. This lack of attention to language affects each stage of program design and implementation, and reduces the effectiveness and impact of aid.

Language can drive vulnerability

This gap in approach to language is critical because language can be a huge driver of vulnerability. Humanitarian and development organizations are used to looking at factors such as poverty, gender, age and disability as drivers of vulnerability. Yet language and vulnerability are often interconnected: speakers of marginalized languages often experience multiple layers



of disadvantage that excludes them from vital services like healthcare, nutrition, and education.

In many societies, women have less access to education and fewer chances to learn other languages. Older generations have often not benefited from educational opportunities and may be less likely to read and write, or to speak a national or international language. Children and young people won't use the same words as adults to talk about traumatic experiences, especially if they don't fully understand what has happened to them. Poor educational provision for disabled people in many countries limits their communication options.

So an impoverished older woman with a disability who speaks a marginalized language could be the very last person to know how to access services. Yet she may be the one who needs them the most.

It all starts with data!

Language data is an important part of humanitarian project planning. But existing data about language is often of poor quality. Earlier this year, CLEAR Global published the Global Language Data Review, which assessed language data in 88 countries. It looked at how recent, representative, relevant and accessible the language data is, among other criteria. The Review found that only 11 of these countries (12.5%) have good-quality language data for operational purposes – the rest are either moderate or poor.

This provides a poor basis for program design that meets the needs of marginalized people. However, organizations can start to fill the gap by collecting data about the languages used by the people they assist.

Language data for Ukraine

The most complete statistical data on languages used in Ukraine is available from the All-Ukrainian Census of 2001, visualized in CLEAR Global's language map of Ukraine. The census recorded more than 130 nationalities and ethnic groups in the country at the time. Over two thirds of the population (67.5%) gave Ukrainian as their first language, 29.6% Russian, and 2.9% another language. But it is not an accurate reference for communication strategies in the humanitarian response to the war more than two decades later, for three main reasons.

- The census contained inaccurate information about language use among certain ethnic minorities, in particular the Roma, Crimean Tatar and Greek communities. In fact, the census only allowed people to select from a list of 11 minority languages while the number in Ukraine is much higher. It is also very likely that marginalized communi-

ties like Romani speakers were underrepresented in the census.

- Changes in language policy since 2001 have influenced language use and language identity.
- Events since 2014 have affected how Ukraine's linguistically diverse population relates to the country's most widely spoken languages: Ukrainian and Russian.

All this means that we can't really rely on the information from the 2001 census to understand today's language use – we need updated data to know how best to communicate with people in and fleeing Ukraine.

Language and communication barriers impact the effectiveness of the Ukraine response

Through its work in the response to the war in Ukraine, CLEAR Global and other actors identified several linguistic and information challenges for both affected people and responders.

Linguistic challenges include troubled communication in harder-to-source languages like Romani and sign languages, limited access to professional interpreters and translators (including sworn translators), as well as complex English terminology.

The second type of challenges are tied to information access. Since February 24 2022, we have seen an unprecedented amount of information provision in the form of hundreds of websites, QR codes, hotlines, social media groups, complaint and feedback mechanisms, and help desks. They all aim to provide important information to people affected by the war. However, these efforts are often disjointed, uncoordinated and overwhelming, with no way of knowing what information is correct and up-to-date. The staggering amount of information sources creates information chaos. It makes searching for accurate and updated information difficult, adding time and stress to an already difficult situation.

Local responders also face communication challenges in international settings

Humanitarian terminology can be hard to translate in ways that are understandable to non-specialists and people unfamiliar with English terms. The overreliance on English communication in humanitarian and development contexts often excludes local responders from participating equally and actively in coordination efforts. The assumption is that "everyone speaks English," and that there is no need to provide information in local languages for local responders. This approach creates barriers to participation, data-sharing, funding and coordination mechanisms, as well as respectful partnerships.



Marginalized language speakers risk exclusion in the Ukraine response

CLEAR Global’s work on the Romani language in the Ukraine response shows why being informed about language and information needs matters for programming. Organizations estimate 400,000 Roma lived in Ukraine before the escalation of the war in February, and the vast majority use Romani. While many use a second language to some extent, not all do, and not all do so comfortably. This means they need support in Romani to make safe, informed decisions about what to do.

Romani has many dialects; some are similar and some are not. Romani also borrows words for some technical and medical topics from nearby languages like Ukrainian and Hungarian. Roma communities in different parts of Ukraine use different second languages – some are much more likely to use Hungarian, Slovak or Romanian than Ukrainian or Russian.

Due to educational exclusion, some Roma will struggle to engage with written information like brochures. This is especially the case for women, older people and people with disabilities. People from more rural areas often cannot access digital information channels like smartphone apps.

This is one example of how understanding the communication barriers that marginalized communities face can guide the sector to provide more effective assistance.

And each language and each community is different. The example of Romani illustrates that asking questions about communication builds a complex, nuanced picture that helps responders and people affected by a crisis to communicate.

Translating and interpreting sensitive topics can create further challenges

Sensitive topics like trauma, human trafficking, abuse and violence can be difficult to translate or interpret for a variety of reasons. But in humanitarian settings, responders, linguists and the people they assist need to talk about these topics often. Knowing how to do so effectively, accurately and safely is vital.

Terms related to sensitive topics often lack direct equivalents

Translating sensitive topics has its own linguistic challenges. In some languages, terms related to sensitive issues do not exist, or they carry stigma. In these cases in particular,

CLEAR Global’s tools and resources for effective communication in crisis settings

Resource type	Example	Description
Glossaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSEA Glossary • Protection and Accountability Glossary • Other glossaries 	CLEAR Global Glossaries help responders and affected people find the right words and definitions for complex humanitarian terms in their language.
Information in multiple formats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual (posters, flyers, videos) • Audio (face-to-face, radio, loudspeakers, voice messages) • Text (leaflets, emails, SMS, websites) 	Using multiple information formats helps reach more groups with important information.
Plain language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plain language tipsheet • Plain language reviews 	Providing information in plain language helps people find, understand and use information easily and quickly.
Guides and tipsheets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Romani language factsheet • Field guide to interpreting in humanitarian contexts • Interpretation and sensitive topics tipsheet 	Guides and tipsheets improve responders’ communication skills and inform them about possible communication challenges.
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanitarian interpreting training • Communication in humanitarian contexts training 	Training for people acting as community interpreters and cultural mediators in humanitarian response.
Data Platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Platform 	This dashboard combines multiple resources to give as complete a view as possible of the languages used by people affected by the war in Ukraine.
Awareness raising events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webinars • Advocacy efforts 	To advocate for prioritizing language and communication in humanitarian contexts.

Table 1. Different types of resource can support responders to address language and communication challenges



cultural sensitivity and knowledge are extremely important, as well as high professional integrity.

In addition, many people use euphemisms and indirect language to talk about stigmatized, sensitive or traumatic topics. Only a skilled interpreter may be able to understand and also ask questions in a sensitive and respectful way. In some cases, language can also be gendered, especially for words related to sexuality. For example, in refugee camps in Bangladesh, Rohingya women have developed a sociolect, or a social dialect of their own in response to the sociocultural constraints and segregation they face. Certain words and euphemisms within this sociolect are not easily understood by Rohingya men. For instance, haiz is an academic word for menstruation that is borrowed from Arabic. However, many young women do not like to say this word. They prefer to use the euphemism, gusol, which literally means “to shower.”

In the context of Ukraine response, the word “conflict” quickly became a sensitive term. English people in the humanitarian sector generally accept the word “conflict” as a synonym of the word “war.” The expression “armed conflict” is common in humanitarian terminology. But translated into Ukrainian, the equivalent of “conflict” may be perceived as less serious, and not showing the real picture of the situation. This creates a risk of misunderstanding or frustration between English-speaking and Ukrainian-speaking actors.

Preparation and planning can help organizations manage language barriers when communicating on sensitive topics. These can be done through:

- Adding budget lines for hiring professional, trained interpreters and translators to ensure accurate and reliable language support for critical issues.

- Considering whether relying on an informal interpreter or interpreter from the same community as the affected population is appropriate. In some cases people from the affected community are most trusted and can help responders reach more community members.
- Guarding confidentiality and ensuring that people providing language support know how to manage information safely. In some cases, people may feel shame or stigma if a person they know is interpreting for them about a traumatic experience.
- Providing training and guidance on translating sensitive topics to help the interpreter accurately convey information.
- Providing psychological help to all translators and interpreters as working with sensitive and traumatic topics can put serious mental strain on a person.

Conclusion

The role language and translators and interpreters play in emergency settings is vital. By starting to collect language data and include language in programme planning and budgets, responders can ensure that communication and information reaches all those who need it, including speakers of marginalized languages. We should consider different linguistic and cultural challenges when preparing to translate or interpret, and specific support and resources should be available to ensure effective communication.

About CLEAR Global

CLEAR Global is a US nonprofit helping people get vital information and be heard, whatever language they speak. With its innovative language technology solutions, research, and community of over 100,000 linguists, CLEAR Global supports partner organizations working in various contexts around the world. Envisioning a world without language barriers, CLEAR Global is set to improve global communication and information access.

For inquiries, contact Aga Macura at aga.macura@clearglobal.org



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dr Mirosława Kawecka

THE ROLE OF TRANSLATORS IN CRISIS SITUATIONS – SURVEY RESULTS



dr Mirosława Kawecka

Second Vice-President of the Lublin Association of Translators

Mirosława Kawecka – Ukrainian and Russian philologist by profession. University teacher, Head of the Department of Slavonic Studies at the State School of Higher Education in Chełm. Experienced sworn translator of Ukrainian, second vice-president of the Lublin Association of Translators.

The translator's role in various challenging communication situations was brought into focus due to the events that unfolded in recent years and months, that is, the migrant crisis as well as the war in Ukraine started by Russia and the refugee crisis that ensued. This crisis situation became a test for translators confronted with difficult new experiences from both personal and professional standpoints.

Therefore The Lublin Association of Translators (LST) and the European Commission Representation in Warsaw held the Translating Europe Workshop event "The Role of a Translator in Peace, War and Humanitarian Crisis" in an attempt to define the role of translators in crisis situations.

The participants of a survey study conducted within the project were translators and bodies cooperating with them. The purpose of the survey was identifying the needs and problems of translators in crisis situations as well as the areas of cooperation between translators and state institutions. One hundred and fifty-five translators from different languages and one hundred and nine institutions for foreigners participated in the survey study.

The results of the survey indicate that both translators and state institutions are unfamiliar with humanitarian crises, hence many answers in the survey were vague and imprecise. Although 84% of the institutions cooperated with translators, the answers clearly show that there is no uniform policy with regard to the collaboration of these bodies with translators, as exemplified by the answers to the question: *In the event of crisis situation, should state institutions receive unpaid services from translators?* The answers were: *hard to say* (36%), *probably not* and *definitely not* (18%), *definitely yes* and *probably yes* (46%). With regard to this question, the translators' answers were more uniform: *definitely not* and *probably not* (79%). Only 11% translators answered: *hard to say*. However, with respect to other questions, for example, the question about the additional expert function of the translator, they were not so unanimous.

The translators and institutions both agree that translation should be part of the state crisis management policy. Asked whether it should be the case, both translators and state institutions answered almost unanimously. 83% translators answered: *yes* (*definitely yes* – 60% and *probably yes* – 23%), similarly 84% institutions answered: *yes* (*definitely yes* – 41% and *probably yes* – 43%). Moreover, institutional participants stated that part of this policy should be ensuring personal security (68%) as well as financial and psychological help for translators.



The problem of translation being excluded from state crisis management policy becomes apparent when we look at the survey results, which indicate that 54% of the participating translators had no knowledge about the support offered by the state and 37% of the translators never had any support from the state for the translation in crisis situations. Since migrant crises are becoming part of our reality, it would be beneficial if the experience gained in the present situation helped to create a new crisis management policy taking into account translators. After all, cultural contacts, communication, understanding other cultures and resolving crises are often not possible without them.

In an attempt to define the social role of translators in crisis situations the respondents were asked about the expert role of translators. The answers indicate that the majority of translators see their part in the communication process as more than just getting the message across. The question: *In the translation process should the translator be an expert clarifying socio-cultural issues?* was answered: *definitely yes* (26%) and *probably yes* (37%). However, with regard to politics, reconnaissance, ethnic or religious minorities fewer translators answered: *definitely yes* and *probably yes*. It can be attributed to their professional code of conduct which draws on the need to remain impartial. The question: *Can political and world views of translators negatively affect translation?* was answered: *They shouldn't* (34%). However, the translators added that they possibly could, which is in keeping with the translators' reluctance to provide their expertise in the areas of politics and military reconnaissance. The answers given by the institutions were completely

different. It turned out they count on *translators' expertise with regard to socio-cultural issues* (64% respondents answered: *definitely yes* and *probably yes*) and *intelligence information* (48% institutional respondents answered: *definitely yes* and *probably yes*, whereas 62% translators answered: *no* and *probably no*). Hence, there is a need for the institutions and translators to work on finding common ground with regard to this point.

In the survey the translators were asked about their social involvement. Only 6% of respondents answered that they focused solely on the translation process. 77% respondents answered: *often* or *sometimes* to the question: *Apart from translating, do you ever engage in other activities to help the person you translate (draft a document, make a phone call)?* This answer points to the personal aspect of translators' work, especially in crisis situations when both the translator and the person translated are under a lot of stress. The respondents stated they could not emotionally detach from the situation, however, they made sure their emotions did not affect the translation process itself. Moreover, 63% respondents stated that a translator had the right to refuse translating if they found it unethical, offensive or if it violated their dignity.

Even though translators remain on the sidelines of events, overshadowed by people and texts they translate, they have an important social role to play. The results of the survey study show that in crisis situations translators provide a vital link in the process of communication and bringing help. It is worth finding out more about the role of translators so as to make their work in crisis situations more effective.

Stefanie Bogaerts

TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING AS A PERMANENT ELEMENT OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES



Stefanie Bogaerts

President of the FreeLING Foundation and the LAPIGUA Foundation

A Belgian living and working in Poland (Zamosc) since 2001. She holds a Master's degree in Eastern European Languages and Cultures and postgraduate studies in public relations, business communication and management. She has been working as a translator since 2004 and was certified as a sworn translator of Dutch in Poland in 2014. She is co-founder of the FreeLING Foundation, where she is responsible for managing and organising training courses. She has been running workshops for Dutch translators for several years. She is an active member of the Lublin Association of Translators and one of the originators of the Professional Translator – Conscious Client Programme. She participates in the deliberations and consultations of the GDPR team, which was established as part of this Programme. On behalf of the LST, she also participates in the deliberations of the team for the amendment of the law on the profession of sworn translators. At the 2017 Translators' Conference, she received an award for her contribution to the development of the Polish translation industry.

“The most powerful way of helping people in a crisis is to provide support and information in their own language”. This statement may seem a bit egocentric, considering that it has been uttered by a member of the translating & interpreting (T&I) community. Nevertheless one cannot deny that communication barriers are one of the major obstacles in a transborder humanitarian crisis involving multilingual communities.

This is exactly what we have been experiencing in the humanitarian crisis resulting from the war in Ukraine. With the influx of refugees into the neighbouring countries a huge communication crisis emerged and an urgent demand for interpreters and translators was felt from the first days of this crisis.

And already in these first days it became clear that the national and local crisis management strategies did not include multilingual communication policies and that there were no plans to provide adequate interpreting and translation support. This lack of plan can of course be justified by the emergency character of the situation, which is a typical element of all crisis. Still, crisis management strategies are supposed to prepare us for this type of unexpected situations and should therefore also incorporate adequate policies facilitating multilingual communication.

It is the task of the T&I sector to put this issue on the agenda and take an active part in the preparation of communication policies and their implementation in crisis management strategies.

Analyses of required translation and interpreting support in crisis settings have been made by experts and academics and recommendations have been drafted. Nevertheless, it is our responsibility to ensure that they become part of any crisis management strategy for situations affecting multilingual communities.

A good outline of issues to be considered in a communication crisis strategy can be found in the “Recommendations on policies” published by the INTERACT International Network on Crisis translation. This document contains 10 recommendations, on which I would like to elaborate in the context of personal experience gained from the project “Translators for Ukraine”.

The project “Translators for Ukraine” was initiated at the beginning of the war in Ukraine by the Polish translators' and interpreters' associations. The associations joined forces to coordinate the efforts of the T&I sector in Poland and to support their Polish and Ukrainian colleagues, whose commitment has been tremendous throughout this humanitarian crisis.

Let us take a look at the recommendations which are discussed in the order suitable for the present article.



Recommendation 1: Emergency management communication policies should include provision for translation and interpreting and should be regularly reviewed and revised.

The first and most important step to take is therefore to raise awareness among policy makers and make sure that crisis management strategies include a communication crisis plan.

Recommendation 2: A specific owner of the policy on translation and interpreting should be identified and assigned within organizations responsible for emergency communication policy and implementation.

During the humanitarian crisis caused by the Russian aggression in Ukraine, it became very clear that in Poland there was no central or even local management of interpreting and translation support. Although the Polish translators' associations established a working group very quickly, it was difficult to efficiently communicate with the authorities to direct our support to the areas where it was most required. In the future, the assignment of a national or local coordinator for interpreting and translation support should improve cooperation at all levels and stages of communication crises. This is what the next recommendation suggests:

Recommendation 3: Establish direct lines of communication between emergency responders and professional associations of translators and interpreters for the purposes of collaboration.

Short lines of communication between associations, coordinators and other organisations responsible for or requiring support should be defined in the communication crisis plan. What is more, the appointment of such coordinators on the side of the associations would also be advisable.

Associations of translators and interpreters, who are not only expert linguists but also cultural mediators, can also undoubtedly play an active role in the consultation of communication policies with the affected communities, as mentioned in the following recommendations:

Recommendation 4: Emergency management communication policies should be developed in consultation with relevant multilingual and multicultural communities.

Recommendation 5: Emergency management communication policies should allow for two-way communication between responders and affected communities.

Recommendation 6: Emergency management communication policies should consider languages spoken by affected communities (including sign language), levels of literacy, and cultural appropriateness.

In order to secure adequate communication, organisations offering support in humanitarian crises should also be aware of the role of the translator/interpreter and

the skills needed to offer professional communication support:

Recommendation 7: Recruit into multilingual organizations who are responsible for aid or emergency response in such a way as to avoid reliance on international lingua franca and ad hoc or convenience translation and interpreting.

This recommendation should also be implemented in the other direction, i.e. translators and interpreters should be allowed to focus on their job and not be burdened with the many other tasks that often arise in crisis settings. Professional interpreting and translation requires full concentration and adequate time for rest and recovery. The intellectual and physical effort is often underestimated.

Therefore, not only time for relaxation and rest is required, but also adequate preparation to provide translation and interpreting support in crisis settings.

Recommendation 8: Ensure training is provided for professional and volunteer translators and interpreters so that they can effectively operate in crisis and disaster settings. Also ensure training for users and managers of translation and interpreting services.

Training is however only one element of this preparation. Translators and interpreters working in crisis settings should also receive psychological support, amongst other to avoid secondary traumatic stress in the short and long run.

This need for a long term perspective is also underlined in the next recommendation:

Recommendation 9: Emergency management communication policies should cover all phases of crisis and disaster management (mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery).

Communication crisis plans should encompass tools for long term response, which is sometimes neglected when the first peak of the crisis has passed. In the humanitarian crisis that we have been experiencing in Poland after the Russian invasion in Ukraine, it is clear that some communication problems are still not adequately identified or solved. The lack of interpreting solutions for medical support for refugees is just one example. Crisis management strategies should therefore not only be focussed on alleviating urgent needs, but they also should provide long term solutions.

Recommendation 10: Alternative formats and channels for dissemination of translated information should be considered – not just traditional written or spoken formats.

New technologies such as machine translation or interpreting apps can definitely offer solutions for some urgent and long term communication issues. These technologies should however be used carefully, with full awareness of their advantages and flaws. A communication crisis



plan should encompass a list of recommended translation and interpreting tools with indication of the context where they can be safely used.

The policy makers and users of translation and interpreting support should also be trained as how to adequately choose between new technologies and a professional human interpreter or translator.

Regrettably, the choice of a human interpreter or translator is very often impeded by the lack of financial means to employ a professional. Too often, a volunteering community interpreter with little or no professional experience is chosen in situations requiring the services of a professional.

Therefore, one more recommendation should be added to the list, which can also be found in the “Ethics Recommendations for Crisis Translation Settings” published by the INTERACT International Network on Crisis translation:

Recommendation 11: Emergency management communication policies should offer the necessary tools and information to make an informed choice between non-professional (volunteering) community interpreters and professional interpreters.

As mentioned in the Ethic recommendations, “the deployment of citizen translators (some of whom may not have professional translation training) should be considered during crises when more highly trained translators or interpreters are not available in sufficient numbers. Clear policies on the scope of practice and required training for translators and those working with them should be developed. Additionally, measures should be taken to avoid damaging the image or livelihood of professional translators.”

This damage to the livelihood of professional translators should be carefully considered. Although many pro-

fessionals have volunteered during the first period of the humanitarian crisis related to the war in Ukraine, they now need to return to their paid jobs in order to secure an income. That is why, I hereby add this last recommendation to the above list since it is a crucial element of any communication crisis policy:

Recommendation 12: Make sure that an adequate budget for translation and interpreting services is provided.

The above recommendations can be used as a framework for communication crisis plans. However, in order to make sure that this type of plans are incorporated in crisis management strategies, awareness should first be raised, as mentioned in my comments to the first recommendation. Too often, translating and interpreting is considered as a job for volunteers, forgetting that in many cases the services of professionals should be acquired. It is our task as representatives of the T&I Sector to raise awareness among decision and policy makers of the need for crisis management strategies and to make sure communication policies are implemented.

Without the acknowledgement of the policy makers of the need for crisis management strategies and a communication crisis plan, no policy concerning translators and interpreters, their roles and services in the times of humanitarian crises, can be implemented. To raise this awareness, Fundacja Lapigua, which coordinates the project “Translators without borders”, Lubelskie Stowarzyszenie Tłumaczy, Clear Global, FIT Europe and EAUTC are working on an information campaign. This campaign is prepared in the framework of this Translating Europe Workshop and will become available soon.



Beata Kamińska

SUMMARY OF THE TEW CONFERENCE

The TRANSLATING EUROPE WORKSHOP conference entitled “The Social Role of the Translator in Peace, War and Humanitarian Crises”, organised by the Lublin Association of Translators under the auspices of the European Commission was held on 18 November 2022. It served to raise awareness and verbalise what the role of the interpreter is in humanitarian crisis response activities, what issues they face, in what way they contribute to these activities, what tools they can use and what they need.

Speakers at the conference were:

- ❑ Merit-Ene ILJA, Deputy Director-General at the Directorate-General for Translation (European Commission), who gave a talk on multilingualism in the EU institutions;
- ❑ Artur KUBACKI, Dr hab., member of the State Examination Commission for the examination of sworn translators, who gave a lecture on the sworn translator and their role in making and enforcing domestic and international law;
- ❑ Dr Annette SCHILLER, Vice President of the International Federation of Translators (FIT), whose lecture focused on the role of professional associations in organising support measures for translators and the beneficiaries of translation services;
- ❑ Dr Silvia GATSCHER, Health Program Manager (World Health Organisation Office in Poland), who gave a lecture on interpreters and translators as partners in emergency responses and public health interventions;
- ❑ Agnieszka WALTER-DROP, Director-General, Directorate-General for Logistics and Interpretation for Conferences (LINC), European Parliament, who spoke about the role of translators and interpreters in European integration;
- ❑ Christopher WEGENER, HR & Financial Manager (Iraq, Congo, Sudan, Ukraine, Yemen), representative of the international independent medical humanitarian organisation Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), who spoke about the policies for hiring interpreters for the international campaigns conducted by the humanitarian organisation Médecins Sans Frontières;
- ❑ Natalia PAVLIUK, President of the Ukrainian Association of Translators, who shared with conference participants the experiences of translators from a war-torn country, spoke about the challenges they face and their needs;
- ❑ Agnieszka MACURA, Senior Programme Officer at CLEAR Global, Translators Without Borders (TWB), who in a lecture entitled “Language and Translation for Effective Humanitarian Action”, presented lessons learned from operations in Ukraine;



Beata Kamińska

Sworn, audiovisual and literary translator, proofreader, content reviewer & language expert

Graduate in German philology from the Catholic University of Lublin and post-graduate studies in proofreading at the Institute of Applied Polish Studies of the University of Warsaw, specialised in audiovisual and literary translation, transcreation, transcription & annotation, content review, creative writing and more
Board member of the Lublin Association of Translators (Lubelskie Stowarzyszenie Tłumaczy)
Participant in translation workshop at the Austrian Cultural Forum held regularly since 2007 by the eminent translator of German-language literature Slawa Lisiecka (collective published translations under her guidance are i. a. collection of short stories of Ilse Aichinger „Mój zielony osioł”, ISBN: 978-83-63129-47-7, Biuro Literackie, Wrocław 2013; Hanna Sukare, „Zakurzony język”, ISBN: 978-83-946860-8-6, Wydawnictwo Od Do, Łódź 2019; Thomas Bernhard, „Zdarzenia”, ISBN: 978-83-954-3932-2, Wydawnictwo Od Do, Łódź 2020, Alois Hotschnig, „Na siedząco lepiej się ucieka”, ISBN: 978-83-963-4124-2, Wydawnictwo Od Do, Łódź 2022)

- ❑ Anna KOTARSKA, Public Services National Anchor Point in Poland of the European Language Resource Coordination (ELRC), whose lecture was on the use of language technology in emergency situations;
- ❑ Dr Mirosława KAWECKA, Second Vice-President of the Lublin Association of Translators, who presented the results of a study entitled “The role of translators in crisis situations” and
- ❑ Stefanie BOGAERTS, President of the FreeLING Foundation and the LAPIGUA Foundation, who presented a lecture on “Translation and Interpreting as a Permanent Element of Crisis Management Strategies”.

The conference was opened and summarized by Irmina DANIŁOWSKA, President of the Lublin Association of Translators.

Conclusions:

Communication is an essential part of humanitarian action.

- ❑ The assumption that knowledge of an international language is sufficient to manage a crisis does not hold true in crisis situations, as numerous groups of people at risk of communication exclusion are involved (people at risk of poverty, without access to education, with disabilities, ethnic minorities, the elderly, children).
- ❑ Communication barriers are one of the main obstacles to effectively addressing the challenges posed by humanitarian crises, hence one of the most essential forms of helping people in need is to provide them with support and information in their own language.
- ❑ Rapidly developing language technologies can be helpful in communication, but they must be used appropriately so that they do not become a source of further crises. In a life-threatening situation, the presence and support of another person can be invaluable.

The role of the interpreter:

- ❑ It is crucial.
- ❑ The interpreter is a partner of international humanitarian crisis relief services, as through the interpreter, the refugee gains access to information and guidance on how to navigate the unfamiliar system of the host country, gains orientation, which has a significant impact on their sense of security and belonging, mental health and ability to find their way in the host country.

- ❑ The success of the mission locally often depends on the interpreter, as their work enables communication with communities and local authorities, often on sensitive issues where it is essential to create an atmosphere of trust and an understanding of the role and purpose of the proposed activities.

Interpreter needs in relation to translation during humanitarian crises are:

- protection in high-risk areas;
- providing training, both for professional translators and interpreters and for volunteers, so that they can act effectively in a crisis;
- ensuring an adequate budget for translation and interpreting, as professional translators are ultimately unable to do their work for free;
- better coordination of the activities of all services, including those directing interpreters;
- the development of future systemic solutions and a broader strategy for cooperation between state authorities and relevant institutions managing refugee and humanitarian crises and the interpreting community, which can be supported by the lessons learned from the experiences described;
- raising awareness of the importance of translators in management activities, as the perception of the role that translators can play in emergency situations is not clear either to the translation community itself or to the institutions that undertake cooperation with them (in order to raise this awareness, the Lapigua Foundation, which coordinates the Translators Without Borders project, is developing an information campaign in cooperation with the Lublin Association of Translators, Clear Global, FIT Europe and the EAUTC).

Summing up the conference, Irmina Daniłowska, the president of the Lublin Association of Translators, on whose shoulders the main burden of organising the event rested, thanked the speakers and translators, presented their attitudes and actions taken by them in connection with the crisis in Ukraine, as well as the actions of the relevant services and the conclusions of the conference.

It is worthwhile reiterating her words here:

“At this point I would like to praise my fellow translators who spontaneously, out of the need of their hearts, started to organise themselves to help those in need. They put themselves at their disposal as volunteers at information points at the border, at reception points, night shelters, in organizing transport, psychological support and interpretations.



I would like to pay special tribute to my fellow Ukrainian interpreters who, from the outbreak of the war in Ukraine until now, have carried the greatest burden when it comes to interpreting and helping the Ukrainian refugees. In addition, they carry emotional burden, as their families and friends are in Ukraine.

Beautiful work was also done by organisations of translators and interpreters, mobilising around the 'Translators for Ukraine' project, but also individually committing their energies and resources to free training for translators and interpreters themselves in the fields of medical translation, environmental translation and family law, to support colleagues from Ukraine, but also to projects to support public administration, for example by organising courses for translators in learning Polish as a foreign language.

I would also like to pay tribute to the public services responsible for crisis management. For them, crisis management in a situation of armed conflict in our eastern neighbours was also something new. Expectations were high, but the uniqueness of the situation in the first weeks after the outbreak of war in Ukraine surpassed us all.

The interpreting community has made heroic efforts in some cases to bring aid to refugees and support state bodies in dealing with the crisis situation caused by the war in Ukraine.

In the individual speeches of our excellent speakers, there was a resounding appreciation for the work of interpreters and translators, their important role in defending human rights, health education, psychological support for those affected, which simply stems from the knowledge of their native language, which in itself provides a sense of security and helps to relieve negative emotions caused by a lack of understanding of the situation.

In all this, however, we must remember that interpreters are also people who have their physical limitations, their mental limitations and their obligations. They cannot work without pay because they have to support themselves, their families and their businesses. It is up to them to decide for themselves how much time and personal resources they want to devote to their voluntary activities. This cannot be imposed on them top-down. All work should be rewarded. It should also be borne in mind that interpreters, as people who are very often emotionally involved, also need psychological support.

Key findings from TEW:

Both interpreters and translators play a huge role in the social life of all countries.

Through the services they provide, they contribute to social integration, to the resolution of crisis situations, to the

education and awareness of societies on health, legal, business and new technology issues.

The development of new translation technologies is progressing, it is inevitable, it is the natural order of things, because modern society lives fast and needs fast solutions. This is also to counteract social divisions and exclusion, which we understand perfectly well. Nevertheless, the experience of recent months clearly shows that where the welfare and safety of another human being is at stake, where an emergency situation is involved, a flesh-and-blood interpreter is irreplaceable.

The translation campaigns in the framework of the 'Translators for Ukraine' project have clearly demonstrated that the greatest need for translation is for native inhabitants of the conflict country, as well as students who wish to leave the affected area as soon as possible.

As far as the specifics of the texts to be translated are concerned, these are predominantly medical documents, civil status records, school documents, employment certificates and powers of attorney of all kinds.

In the field of interpreting, it is extremely important to cooperate with institutions providing assistance to refugees, as well as with notaries, due to the need for refugees to provide all kinds of power of attorney for activities that must be carried out in the country they have left.

On the role of the interpreter in times of war and humanitarian crises, we therefore call on the European Commission and state authorities to:

- include interpreters in crisis management procedures (crisis communication, psychological care, medical care, social care etc.);
- identify the entity that will administer the involvement of interpreters in crisis management;
- secure resources for the work of interpreters in crisis situations;
- provide psychological care for interpreters involved in crisis management;
- secure funding for training for professional medical translation staff, which could be organised by registered translation organisations and foundations focused on translator education;
- ensure that interpreters involved in crisis management have access to appropriate technology to assist in translation".

On behalf of the Board of the Lublin Association of Translators, we would like to thank all the speakers for their invaluable contribution to this extremely important and inspiring conference, as well as all the participants for their participation, and we encourage you to read the post-conference papers.

