

## Critical Role of Translation in a Global Culture Considered

The worrying professional position of literary translators was the focus of the Salzburg Global Seminar "*Traduttore Traditore?*" between 21 and 26 February. FIT President Marion Boers and FIT Vice-President Miriam Lee were among the participants.

People from all corners of the world, leading lights of literary translation, from academics and translators to writers, editors and civil society representatives – and in graceful surroundings and stimulating company – addressed the seminar theme: Recognizing and Promoting the Critical Role of Translation in a Global Culture. The role of literary translation in our globalised world and how it can be promoted was particularly relevant in light of the results of the CEATL Study (see [http://www.ceatl.eu/en/situation\\_survey\\_en.html](http://www.ceatl.eu/en/situation_survey_en.html)).



But the seminar was more than a group of literary translators commiserating with one another on their poor standing in society.



For five days, the topic of this seminar was considered from every angle in four working groups – representing academia, publishers, sponsors/funders and translators and their associations – the focus in every case being how to cajole, persuade or convince the various role-players to support literary translation and give it its rightful place in society.

The formal presentations exposed participants to an overview of the position of translated literature in various parts of the world, a project to translate stories into 21 of the local languages for children in India, the results of a survey of rates paid to literary translators in Europe and how these compared with other occupations, insight into a translators' collective in Spain, feedback from certain arts funders on where and how literary translation fits into their portfolio, perspectives from publishers on what influences decisions about which works are translated, projects and organizations that promote translated literature and aspects of the teaching of translation.

The recommendations presented by the working groups the last day were creative and varied. Implementing even a fraction of them should have a positive effect on the profession. A few examples give an impression of the energies generated at the seminar:

- FIT should compile and make available a database of (the best) contract and copyright law provisions around the world and assist their members to make translators aware of their rights.
- Associations, other organizations or translators should encourage publishers to involve the translator in the promotion of translated literature.



- Efforts should be made to showcase literary translation at international book fairs.
- Educational institutions should establish relationships with relevant cultural institutions.
- All major literary prizes should provide 25-page sample translations of the shortlist, so that publishers have a better idea of what is available.
- Funding should be provided for translators' houses and to help publishers with marketing as well as translation costs.

Let us hope that each participant is able to help implement at least one recommendation and that the ripple effect of the intellectual exchange at this seminar continues to be felt for a long time to come.

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