

FIT Committee for Court Interpreting and Legal Translation

Report for the period 2005 – 2008

Since the last FIT Congress, the FIT Committee for Court Interpreting and Legal Translation has organized two international conferences, i.e. one at the University of Zurich in Winterthur, Switzerland, in November 2006, and the second at the University of Tampere, Finland, in May 2008. While the training of court interpreters and legal translators, as well as theoretical issues were the main subject of the 8th International Forum at Winterthur, the recent 9th International Forum focused on professionalization. The EU documented its interest in court-interpreting and legal-translation problems by delegating Leonard Orban, Commissioner for Multilingualism, and Marco Benedetti, Director General of DG Interpretation, to address the conference in Tampere. The Committee owes its member Satu Leinonen great recognition for her formidable organization of the event.

Another activity of the Court-Interpreting and Legal-Translation Committee was to attend the NAJIT conference in Portland, Oregon, in May 2007 in order to establish closer contacts to court interpreters in the USA. Committee member Nancy Schweda-Nicholson, USA, was instrumental in supporting this initiative of the Committee chairperson.

Danuta Kierzkowska, Poland, continued her series of international conferences with a conference in August 2006 that tackled problems of court interpreting and legal translation in the enlarged Europe. The proceedings of this well-attended conference are available from Translegis Publishing, Warsaw.

The initial and continuous professional development of court interpreters and legal translators is the prime concern of Committee member Christiane Driesen. The DVD produced at the University of Magdeburg on the training and practice of the court-interpreting profession is used at many interpreter-training schools, as well as by professional associations throughout the world.

The FIT Committee has been asked to join the Justice Forum, which the European Union is launching at the end of May 2008. The Forum will serve as a platform for the representative bodies of the main players involved in legal contexts. The ELITA project under the EU's Criminal Justice program, which serves to set up a European association of court interpreters and legal translators, as well as administering a website on all issues involved, will make it possible for the Committee to participate in the work of the Justice Forum on an equal footing with public prosecutors, judges and lawyers.

It is too early to report in detail about a project where UNDP Afghanistan has contacted the FIT Committee for Court Interpreting and Legal Translation concerning the creation of legal translation services for the higher courts in Afghanistan. The chairperson will be able to provide further information at the Statutory Congress in Shanghai this August.

Liese Katschinka, Chairperson

Vienna, May 2008