

# INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF TRANSLATORS

The voice of associations of translators, terminologists and interpreters around the world

# TRANSLATIO

No. 1, 2021 FIT Newsletter



## President's message

Kevin Quirk

Dear FIT Members,

I don't think any of us would have thought we'd still be battling this devastating pandemic one year on after it began spreading around the world. Indeed, as vaccination campaigns begin in many countries, it is my sincere hope that the situation will rapidly improve. While we all may be suffering from pandemic fatigue, I encourage you to continue following the recommendations of your local public health authorities as we – hopefully – see the light at the end of the tunnel.

At least one FIT member association has advocated to national public health authorities for vaccine distribution among interpreters working on the front lines, a move I applaud and one that FIT has supported. May all our translator, interpreter, and terminologist colleagues who are working to overcome this crisis receive the help they need to continue doing their vital work at lower risk to

themselves and their loved ones, and may vaccine access be equitable throughout the world.

Many FIT member associations have adapted to our new virtual normal, putting on lively and informative webinars, annual meetings, and full-blown conferences this past year. The virtual medium may be here to stay, at least in the short term, and you can read about a number of the ongoing virtual initiatives of our members in this issue.

Regional Centre FIT Europe has joined the list of organisations launching meaningful PR campaigns for language professionals with its #GettingYouUnderstood initiative, which you can also read about in this issue. We can always do more to educate our clients and the general public about the importance of our work and relying on professionals, and I hope we see more such initiatives in the coming year.

Last year, I launched an appeal among member associations from the Bologna

Children's Book Fair to translate Roberto Piumini's children's poem about the coronavirus, *Che cos'è che in aria vola?*, into as many languages as possible. You can read more about the results of this effort in this issue, and even listen to audio of some of the beautiful poems that have been submitted.

We are still not out of the woods, however, but by sticking together, we will be soon. In the meantime, FIT will continue to do everything we can to help and support our members. Please stay safe and continue to take care of yourselves and your loved ones. My thoughts continue to be with the translators, terminologists and interpreters who are working on the front lines, risking their health and safety to ensure everyone has access to vital health and safety information, no matter what language they speak.

Happy reading and be well.

Kevin Quirk, [president@fit-ift.org](mailto:president@fit-ift.org)

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# Frans de Laet stands down from Babel

## FIT owes him a huge debt of gratitude for his dedication

As editor-in-chief of FIT's flagship Academic journal for the last six years, Frans de Laet has helped Babel go from strength to strength. He increased the publishing frequency (from four to six editions per year) and the number of pages printed (from 600 to around 900), boosted abstract consultations and article downloads, and improved Babel's international ranking, among a long list of other accomplishments. Furthermore, he achieved all of this at no expense to FIT while simultaneously juggling teaching commitments and travelling extensively. *Chapeau, mon vieux!*

Frans' dedication to *Babel* (and to FIT) has been exemplary, and he has worked exceedingly hard in improving efficiency in the editorial process. Last year, he notified FIT Council of his intention to stand down as editor-in-chief and to make way for two co-editors-in-chief – Yifeng Sun and Audrey Louckx (see separate article below).

FIT is deeply indebted to Frans, not only for his focus on *Babel* but also in general for his (and I quote from a variety of recent tributes) enduring commitment, dedication, empathy, encouragement, energy, enthusiasm, expertise, friendship, inspiration, kindness, leadership, passion, professionalism, understanding and vision. I know I speak for many when I say that Frans' service to FIT has been above and beyond the call of duty. There is no



Professor Frans de Laet in Beijing, 2017, Photo: [www.lbdalliance.com](http://www.lbdalliance.com)

doubt in my mind that he possesses not only a brilliant brain but also what he once claimed was "a better than average sense of humour". And I for one have never been more impressed than I was when Frans took the podium at a conference in Belgrade three years ago and burst into song, singing with a mellifluous voice: "If you know Babel like I know Babel...".

I know that Frans will continue to play an active role in the life of FIT, offering sage

counsel as a FIT Honorary Advisor and attending FIT congresses and other events whenever he can. FIT Council is indebted to Frans for his support over the years. We salute you and thank you, Frans!

Co-editor-in-chief Meifang Zhang also stepped down at the end of 2020 due to time-consuming professional responsibilities, and we thank her too for her significant contribution to *Babel*.

Kevin Quirk, [president@fit-ift.org](mailto:president@fit-ift.org)

## FIT welcomes two new co-editors-in-chief of Babel

FIT Council is proud to welcome Yifeng Sun and Audrey Louckx as new co-editors-in-chief of *Babel*, with effect from the first edition in 2021 (67:1). While we acknowledge that taking over after Frans de Laet and Meifang Zhang will be a decidedly hard act to follow, FIT Council is convinced it made a good choice in approving them as co-editors-in-chief of our flagship scholarly journal. Indeed, they have already shown their eagerness to take what is already a well-functioning journal and make it even better when

they proposed to Council to appoint a managing editor. As the new managing editor, Dr Chris Song's duties will include overseeing and coordinating many of the editorial tasks, thereby reducing the waiting time for authors and improving efficiency in the editing process.

Professor Yifeng Sun is Chair Professor in Translation Studies at the Department of English at the University of Macau. Yifeng is an Academic Visitor at the University of Oxford and has a Doctorate of Philosophy from the University of Leiden, a Master

of Letters from the University of Cambridge and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Nanjing. Yifeng Sun is also a member of the Executive Council of the Translators Association of China (2004–present) and a member of the Editorial Board of the Chinese Translators Journal (2001–present).

Audrey Louckx obtained her Ph.D. at the Université Libre de Bruxelles (Belgium) in 2014 and has been an associate professor at the Université de Mons for the last six years, where she teaches English



Audrey Louckx

language, British culture and institutions, communication and argumentation strategies, and media literacy at the Faculty of Translation and Interpretation. Audrey has a perfect command of the two working languages of FIT, English and French, and already has experience as a collaborator on a series published by Peter Lang.

Both of our new co-editors-in-chief come highly recommended by Frans de Laet and were introduced to the workings of *Babel* by Frans during the latter half of 2020.

We wish them both every success!

Kevin Quirk, [president@fit-ift.org](mailto:president@fit-ift.org)



Yifeng Sun

## ATA's fun, informative video for ITD

In a year of “new normals,” one thing hasn’t changed: translators and interpreters still power the world’s communications. When volunteers from the American Translators Association (ATA) began planning a short video for this year’s International Translation Day (ITD) celebrations, we focused our efforts on how to share with our audience – members’ friends and family, who would see the video shared on social media – that despite the shifting sands of 2020, translators and interpreters are just as critical as they’ve ever been!

Since 2018, ATA has been celebrating ITD with a social media blitz in an effort to create meaningful, informative, and fun

content that our followers can share with their acquaintances to celebrate these professions and share more about what we do. Starting in 2018 with a series of [six infographics](#) debunking common myths about T&I, ATA has focused on reaching an audience that has little prior knowledge of our industry. In 2019, our brief video on [A Day in the Life of a Translator or Interpreter](#) depicted examples of what language professionals do on a daily basis around the world.

When we began planning for 2020, ATA’s ITD volunteer team decided to create another short video, but this time wanted to hit closer to home with our audience, showing how their everyday lives

are impacted by our work. Translators and interpreters may work behind the scenes, but we wanted to show that they make a big impact. To do this, we zeroed in on a single process that helps illustrate the crucial role of many language professionals worldwide in the making of those devices we can’t live without: our smartphones. The ITD team worked with a graphic designer to develop a script and storyboards early in 2020, then reviewed the materials with several stakeholders who advised us on the process we were describing, based on their experiences. After finalising the script, we recorded the voiceover and our designer brought the video to life. Following some final revisions, we subtitled the video [How your smartphone was made thanks to translators and interpreters](#), so it was ready to launch for ITD on 30 September.

One of the aspects of this year’s video we liked most was the way it depicted not only the work of translators but also conference interpreters, transcreation experts, localisers, proofreaders, and editors. It is our hope that this initiative has helped some of the world’s 3.5 billion smartphone users better understand how the work of language professionals truly does impact their daily lives, and we invite you to watch the video and share it on your social media platforms.

Jamie Hartz and Molly Yurick (ATA)





# A fresh start for the SFT

2021 will be all about revitalisation for the Société Française des Traducteurs (SFT), with the launch of our new website planned for the beginning of the year and the introduction of forums in mid-December 2020, replacing our Yahoo discussion groups.

## A new website

The SFT's website, created in 2007, was state-of-the-art at the time. Early cloud integration meant the organisation did not need to be managed from one central location, but the site no longer met current needs. The project to redesign the site, begun in 2018, is now almost complete. The remit included more up-to-date and clear communication, a mobile-friendly

display, and more information on what the SFT does and the reality of our work: in short, a modern, well thought-out medium designed to last, like its predecessor. The new website would never have been possible without the unreserved commitment of the volunteer team working on it for all this time, and the SFT is proud to be able to unveil it very soon.

## New forums

The second development was creating forums. This happened faster than originally intended, due to the fact that Yahoo closed down its discussion groups with just a few months' notice. Once again, a team of volunteers threw themselves into the task of setting up new forums

in just a few weeks. The SFT is pleased to have been able to launch them on the very day that Yahoo groups shut down, ensuring continuity for our members. Because of the circumstances at its inception, the forum platform, which is reserved for SFT members, may need to undergo further changes over the next few months and years. We are hoping that the forums will eventually integrate seamlessly with our new website for a unified user experience.

The SFT is getting a fresh start early this year with these new developments. We are looking forward to sharing them with you soon.

*Société française des traducteurs, [sft.fr](http://sft.fr)*



## Notre accompagnement

### VOTRE PROFESSION

#### Développer votre activité

Comment s'installer en tant que traducteur-interprète indépendant ?

### VOTRE PROFESSION

#### Valoriser vos prestations

Quelles sont les différentes étapes du processus de vente ? Comment maîtriser la

### NOS RESSOURCES

#### Les bonnes pratiques

Quelle est le statut juridique d'un interprète ou traducteur ? Quelle est la réglementation ?

The new SFT website homepage (this image is purely illustrative; the text will be different on the final published version)

# Russian conference on translator and interpreter training

These days, it is difficult to say where a conference is held. They mostly all have the same address – Zoom. The most you can say is who organised it. One recent conference, “Training translators and interpreters: Analysis of national systems and approaches”, was held on 5–6 December 2020 and was organised by the Theoretical and Applied Issues in Translation Studies international research laboratory and the Higher School of Translation and Interpreting at Nizhny Novgorod Linguistics University in Russia.

In our globalised world, with the ever-growing volume of information waiting and needing to be translated, training translators and interpreters is a pressing problem in so many countries. So, it was not surprising that translation teachers from every continent presented papers at this conference. In their welcome addresses, Zhanna Nikonova, Rector of the Linguistics University of Nizhny Novgorod, and Olga Ivanova, President of the Union of Translators of Russia, spoke about the importance of high-quality translation, the role and responsibility of translators and interpreters in the world today, and the contribution of Nizhny Novgorod Higher School of Translation and Interpreting to training translators in Russia and developing translation studies as an academic discipline.

Paper topics varied from the challenges posed by the changing translation market and possible responses to them to the subtleties and technicalities of teaching foreign languages to translation students. Translation teachers from 40 universities shared their thoughts, concerns and experiences, discussed the structure and content of translator training programmes, the basic principles of translation didactics, ways to develop translation students’ professional competences, and the linguocultural aspects of training translators.

We have gradually grown accustomed to this new communication medium and did not feel hindered by the formal restrictions of the online format. Indeed, some sessions turned into roundtable discussions (assisted by simultaneous interpreters), with



instructors from different countries discovering striking similarities between their challenges and the ways they are seeking to respond to them. One particular slide from Christiane Nord’s presentation encapsulated the conference perfectly: jumping over the culture hurdle.

*Olga V. Petrova, UTR Research and Methodology Council*

## NETA zooms in

The New England Translators Association (NETA) is a professional organisation of over 200 translators and interpreters that has been in existence for over 40 years. We organise informational meetings with speakers, an annual conference, and two social gatherings per year. Like many other organisations, we have had to adapt during the COVID era to continue to be able to serve our members.

Also like other organisations, our approach to the pandemic has been to move everything online via Zoom. We had our first taste of this new tool in early spring 2020, when our board of directors

was determined to hold our annual conference even though it could not be at our usual venue. We have hosted our day-long, in-person conference for decades. In 2020, we were able to offer a scaled-back virtual version by focusing on presentations by academics and students and relying on the skilled efforts of board members Lesley Andrews and Diego Mansilla. We called it our “mini conference”: free to all, lasting over six hours, and covering topics ranging from “Translation and Social Media” to “How to Be a Translator or Interpreter and Not Go Broke.” The event was so successful that we will be offering

the full version of our conference online in May 2021.

Another way we’ve adapted to the Zoom age was to have our social gatherings online. Per long-standing tradition, NETA sponsors a summer picnic and a December holiday gathering each year. We didn’t want to sacrifice the camaraderie that those two occasions foster, so programming coordinator Marian Comenetz dreamed up the idea of a modified PechaKucha that turned out to be a lot of fun and may be of interest for other FIT members.

What’s that, you may ask? [PechaKucha](#), a Japanese word for chit-chat, is a form

of storytelling where a person shows 20 images to an audience and talks about each one for 20 seconds. In its original form, the timing and procedures are fairly strict. The basic idea is to share ideas and passions with others. We have adapted the concept to our group so that any member who wishes has five to ten minutes to talk about an area of interest, supported by photos if desired, and then the rest of the group has five to ten minutes to discuss.

We have found that six presentations within two hours is just right. Zoom works well for this activity, which in our case is designed to prompt interaction around interests outside the realm of translation and interpreting. Some of our presentation topics have included zentangling, Bavarian and Greek history, Velásquez's *Las Meninas*, and the US's long-term care ombudsman programme.

*Diana Rhudick, President, NETA*  
*Marian Comenetz, Programming Coordinator, NETA*



Some of the attendees at our online mini conference

## ABRATES credentialing exam goes digital

In 2019, during our 10<sup>th</sup> annual international conference, ABRATES (Brazilian Association of Translators and Interpreters) decided our major international gathering would become a biennial event, which affected the yearly schedule of our credentialing exam. And to think we thought that was going to be our biggest problem.

The credentialing exam became an issue for the 2020 incoming board to solve. We realized it would have to be done 100% online and proceeded to explore our colleagues' websites, looking for an example to follow. We found none.

Thankfully, our Executive Committee had two self-described nerds with plenty of knowledge and daring to spare. Ricardo Souza and Val Ivonica, Secretary-General and Vice President respectively, came up with what proved to be an achievable solution. Our 2020 credentialing exam took place last October – with the hitches and hiccups of a pioneering initiative, but with satisfactory results nonetheless.

Our main concern was to create an exam environment that would allow candidates

to demonstrate their actual professional translation skills. Therefore, candidates would be strictly forbidden from accessing any type of automated translation source but would be allowed full access to their preferred online research assets. A simple concept, but one that would require strict controls.

Planning for the event took months. After all, we needed a process that would not detract from the exam's main purpose that was also user friendly. We needed to test the strategy we devised and recruited volunteers for a mock certification exam. That exercise gave us an overview of the difficulties we might face, especially with the disparity in candidates' comfort levels and basic technical literacy.

In an attempt to level the playing field, ABRATES offered a live workshop on the exam's intricacies and later made a guide available on its YouTube channel. Other guides and sessions were created specifically for the candidates to ask questions about the process and discuss the exam procedure guidelines. These were also made available on our

YouTube channel.

Strict guidelines were created for the process. The sitting was monitored in real time by both remote-access software and inspectors, who were allowed to access candidates' computers at any moment during the exam. As a result, one candidate was caught violating the guidelines during the exam and was disqualified and two suspected cases were cleared after having their exam trail audited. Of the 22 candidates who took the exam, 14 were approved both in Brazil and elsewhere, in different language pairs. Now we are studying the lessons learned from the process.

We are confident that our online model will reliably make our certification process available to colleagues who work with the Portuguese language internationally. Therefore, we intend to use it to offer online credentialing exams more frequently throughout the year and, ultimately, make the ABRATES name an even more recognizable brand in international translation worldwide.

*Giovanna Lester, ABRATES*



# Welsh Translation Challenge winners celebrated

International Translation Day 2020 was marked in Wales by celebrating the winners of the annual Her Gyfieithu and Translation Challenge, an annual literary translation competition into Welsh (Her Gyfieithu) and into English (Translation Challenge).

The challenge was to translate a series of short poems titled *Nahaufnahmen* by Turkish poet, Zafer Şenocak, from German. Zafer Şenocak lives in Berlin, where he has become a leading voice in discussions on multiculturalism, national and cultural identity, and a mediator between Turkish and German culture.

The winners were Grug Muse and Eleoma Bodammer respectively. Both Grug and Eleoma each received a prize of £200. In addition, as winner of the Welsh language competition, Grug also received the Her Gyfieithu Staff.

In sponsoring the Her Gyfieithu Staff once again, the Association of Welsh Translators and Interpreters (CCC) had the great pleasure to acknowledge the fine craftsmanship of Elis Gwyn, who carved this

unique prize from a piece of wood found in the woodlands around Llanystumdwy near Cricieth, a village made famous by former UK Prime Minister David Lloyd George.

Presenting Grug with the staff was a challenge in itself for CCC. Restrictions meant that a ceremony could not take place indoors and social distancing had to be observed. Where better than on the green in Cricieth in North West Wales and Howard Bowcott's *Welsh Incident*, a sculpture inspired by the poem of the same name written in 1929 by Robert Graves. The staff was placed on one of the three stones that form part of the sculpture, Geraint Wyn Parry, Chief Executive of CCC said a few words, and Grug lifted her staff. The ceremony was filmed and shown as part of the virtual celebration held on International Translation Day.

Grug Muse is fast making a name for herself as an innovative young poet and



Grug Muse with the Her Gyfieithu Staff and CCC Chief Executive, Geraint Wyn Parry

editor whose work has been widely published in Welsh periodicals. She received a Literature Wales Writers Bursary in 2020.

Dr Eleoma Bodammer is a Black Welsh academic who learned German in school in Newport, has degrees in the language from the University of Manchester, and now teaches German, including literary translation, at University of Edinburgh.

The winning translations in both Welsh and English, along with the adjudications, can be read on the [Wales PEN Cymru website](#).

By Geraint Wyn Parry (CCC)



2020 winners: Dr Eleoma Bodammer and Grug Muse

## ITI reaffirms its commitment to international partners

Prior to the end of the Brexit transition period in December 2020, Paul Appleyard, Chair of the UK-based Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI), wrote to fellow institutes and associations around the world. In his open letter Paul wrote that he wanted to “reach out, with the hand of friendship, and not let go,” and committed ITI to a close collaborative future post Brexit.

He continued: “ITI is committed to a close and collaborative future with fellow institutes and associations, not just in Europe, but worldwide. Brexit doesn’t change that, indeed it rather serves to reinforce our desire to be a force for effective communication and collaboration, regardless of where people are located. Our members’ *raison d’être* is communication, we exist to build bridges, and we work to ensure

that messages are not only heard, but also understood, clearly, in any language.

“Over 20% of ITI’s members are outside the UK, and, in many cases, are also members of their local associations. We look forward to continuing to support them individually, as well as strengthening the ties that bind us as we emerge into an interesting new world.”

Institute of Translation and Interpreting,  
[www.iti.org.uk](http://www.iti.org.uk)

# Course for Peruvian sign language interpreters

On 14 November 2021, the Peruvian Association of Professional Licensed Translators (CTP) will celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

To mark this important date, the CTP has signed an agreement with the Peruvian Association of Sign Language Interpreters and Interpreter-Guides (ASISEP), a WASLI member, to co-organise the first specialisation course for Peruvian sign language interpreters. The course has been designed and coordinated and will be delivered by AICC conference interpreter and trainer Hilda Tejada Tellez, with the collaboration of a select group of Mexican specialists including Tony Rosado, Georganne Weller, Alexis Martínez, Daniel Maya, Noé Romero, Érika Ordoñez and Judge María del Carmen Carreón Castro.

The aim of this specialisation course is to provide our Peruvian sign language interpreter colleagues with the tools to

do their work better, work that is essential to helping citizens exercise their rights equally.

This course is the first of its kind in Peru and covers a kaleidoscope of subjects that are paramount for an optimal interpretation practice, such as linguistics, legal and judicial interpretation, deontology, the rights of the deaf community, and more. The course is taking place over seven weekends between January and February 2021, with a total of 56 teaching hours.

It has been a first step in formal interpretation education for the Peruvian sign language interpreters invited to participate by the ASISEP that will result in better work performance. Some of the participants' thoughts can be found at the YouTube links [here](#) and [here](#).

This course is a testament to the collaboration between two national associations and our Mexican colleagues, and seeks to

provide the academic basis necessary to inform the professional decisions Peruvian sign language interpreters must make every day. It should be noted that Peruvian sign language interpretation is not yet taught at the university level in any translation or interpretation school in Peru. It is the hope of the CTP and the ASISEP that this situation will one day change, so that sign language interpreters can have access to a formal education that will allow them to advance to reach their goals and, furthermore, provide a more efficient service to their communities.

We hope that this is not the last course of its kind, and the collaboration between the CTP and ASISEP will undoubtedly continue to bear fruit for the benefit of our members, the translation community and Peruvian society.

*Hilda E. Ascencio Pasache, President, CTP*

## Translation in the face of coronavirus

Like many other industries, the translation industry was severely affected by the 2008 financial crisis. Today in early 2021, we are in another world crisis, the coronavirus crisis, which is affecting not only the financial health, but also the physical health, of the world.

In times of crisis, everybody looks to cut costs, and human resources are costly. To some, translation is an obvious choice when it comes to saving a penny or two – why use costly human translators when machines requiring a one-off investment can produce legible results?

Some might mistakenly believe the ability to produce machine translated (MT) texts is a recent development, but I was presented with my first MT text, a 30-page contract, as far back as the 1990s. My customer could make out the gist from the (admittedly very rudimentary) MT output and extracted a few clauses for me to translate from scratch where he needed to know the details. From a financial point

of view, it was a sensible way of using MT – he had extracted only the relevant clauses for exact translation after using MT to find them.

However, machine translated texts can rarely be used without editing. In this case, the customer made good use of it, but as translators we know that MT output is seldom fit for purpose. It needs editing to ensure it is not only grammatically correct, but appropriate for the industry and target culture. Many translators have been lured into the profession of post-editing, with translation agencies making increasing use of MT. As a result, many are no longer translators but editors, reviewers, proofreaders, etc. Perhaps the coronavirus crisis and the resulting financial hardship have added to this trend.

Globalisation has increased the need to read texts in other languages – not least in times of crisis – because we are communicating across borders and cultural boundaries. As human translators, we can make a

difference with our cultural awareness and ability to detect what machines cannot, for example irony and metaphors. However, as machines get to know the texts and the terminology, MT output is increasing in quality, especially when it comes to clearly defined subjects or companies using codified language. Some companies have been using their own in-house MT tools for several decades quite successfully.

Time will tell where the future lies for translation as a profession. It will certainly not disappear, although the picture is rapidly changing, and the creativity some of us enjoy in the translation process must make way for more editorial efforts. Even now, some translators, or rather linguists, have turned into editors and never translate. The need to communicate information fast and reliably around the world is critical, and as human translators or editors, we can make a difference, especially in times of crisis when speed and reliability are equally important.

*Hanne Sterndorf, MA (DACTI)*



# New remote work paradigms: hope, disappointment, and reflection

## Hope

Overnight, remote interpretation became the only option for working during the pandemic. While this took me by surprise, I quickly realised that it was here to stay and I needed to adapt as fast as possible. During these past few months, we have learned to behave like a virus: adapt or die is the mantra. I took part in the continuing education activities announced by the Mexican College of Conference Interpreters (CMIC), which helped familiarise me with remote interpreting platforms and encouraged me to make necessary updates to set up a home interpreting studio. I already had the physical space and some of the tools required, but did have to upgrade my computer, bandwidth, and other things. After a sizeable investment of time, money, and effort, my studio was ready, enabling me to provide services from the “comfort” of my home.

## Disappointment

There are many variables in play in home-based remote interpreting: as Murphy’s law states, so much can go horribly wrong.

I learned this the hard way at a three-day event involving complex subject matter, with three language combinations, six interpreters working from different parts of the globe, and presenters hailing from many more.

For the first two days, everything was smooth sailing. On the third day, however, I suddenly had trouble with the audio output. It was a simple configuration problem, as I later learned, but in the moment, I could neither fix it, nor did I know how to request assistance from the online technician. I asked my boothmate to take over for me. They say that lightning never strikes the same place twice, but in this case, it struck two different places: as soon as my colleague took the mic, her internet connection dropped and our booth went silent.

## Reflection

Through this and other experiences, both good and bad, I’ve learned that understanding platforms and having the appropriate equipment is not enough. We need proper working conditions and should not take it upon ourselves to simultaneously

provide interpretation services and resolve technical issues. In addition to basic technical skills and a well-equipped studio, home-based interpreting requires a solid communication strategy with the team, especially event technicians. The use of platforms designed specifically for interpreting is key. Each event requires specific considerations, and working from home for large and complex meetings poses a significant risk to us as interpreters. In my experience, a professional interpretation studio (hub) is the best solution for clients, interpreters, and audiences. Having professional booths, appropriate equipment, and specialised technical support are essential to the quality of our performance, as well as our physical and mental health.

We must continue discussing our new work reality and reach consensus on how to cope with changes if we are to perform well (and not die in the process). The way we work has changed, as have our professional needs. New times bring about new demands. Let’s talk about them!

*Marilene Marques de Olivera (CMIC),  
translated by Tyler Reeves*

# From Italy, with love

## A truly global collaborative translation project

Back in April 2020, in the early days of the pandemic, Kevin Quirk shared with the FIT community both an invitation and a challenge: translate a rhyming poem on the coronavirus, *Che cos’è che in aria vola?* (Is there something in the air?), by Roberto Piumini, one of the greatest Italian authors of children’s literature, into as many languages as possible.

The translations would be published (and translators duly credited) by the Bologna Children’s Book Fair on its website and social media. The initiative was part of a collaborative effort between FIT and CEATL (European Council of Literary Translators’ Associations). Many associations joined the effort, with the goal to spread the poem among children around the world

as a “playful antivirus”. The result? Original translations into more than 20 languages, and a spirit of solidarity that spread throughout the T&I community.

All participants recently received an email of appreciation from Francesca Novajra and Eva Valvo, AITI and STRADE representatives to CEATL, announcing that the Bologna Children’s Book Fair has started to [publish](#) the audio and video readings of the translations and the biographies of the translators.

For the full list of translators, click [here](#). Every Tuesday for one month, new translations will be published on the Book Fair website.

Gabriel Torem, from AATI, shared his experience: “The coronavirus pandemic has

frustrated the celebration of meetings, congresses and fairs. As virtuality gained ground, access to international events became available to minoritised cultures and languages, which are usually forsaken even in their own home countries. As a part of AATI’s efforts to disseminate Argentine aboriginal languages, we participated in the international collaborative translation of the poem *Che cos’è che in aria vola?* We offered our translation into Quichua Santiagueño, the most southern variety of the Quechua family. This is the first time that a translation into Quichua, and maybe any other Argentine aboriginal language, has reached such a transcendental international event. This participation is not an isolated effort by

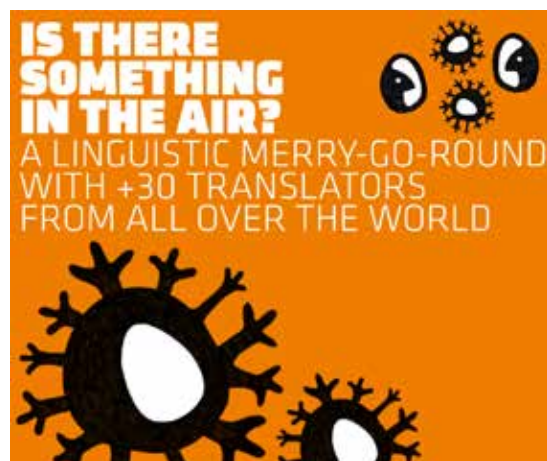
AATI, as it has a long tradition of supporting aboriginal languages, sponsoring authors' participation in fairs, organising international meetings of aboriginal translators and interpreters, and currently, supporting the Ethnodiscursivities project, whereby aboriginal authors have their writings published in their own languages by the publishing houses of national universities." The Quichua name of the poem is *¿Imataq paan anaq pachapi?* Other translators have also praised the results of this great team effort, expressing their gratitude to the organisers for the

opportunity to face this difficult situation with poetry, union and joy, and for the visibility afforded by this unique project to the literary translation profession.

As Roberto Piumini explains:

*Words are presents, words are seeds  
they're gifts that we have plenty of  
and if they're good they're all we need,  
when we're apart, to grow our love.*

*Marita Propato, President, AATI,  
Gabriel Torem, Aboriginal Languages  
Committee, AATI*



## FIT LatAm general meeting and future steps

On 28 November 2020, FIT LatAm's associations gathered for a virtual general meeting of members via Zoom. FIT LatAm is used to virtual meetings – online professional, cultural and social activities have become the new way to engage – enabling almost full attendance and shortening distances across our expansive region.

During a very productive five-hour meeting, led by FIT LatAm Chair Alejandra Jorge, representatives addressed all items on the agenda, including the 2019–2020 management report; the FIT LatAm bylaws reform to align membership categories with the FIT Mundus bylaws; the debate and approval of the 2021

FIT LatAm budget; a review of the main projects carried out by LatAm associations in 2020 (distributed in writing in the interest of time); and future regional projects. At the end of the meeting, Luis Alberto González Moreno, President of ACTI (Cuba), shared an update on preparations for the FIT World Congress to be held in Varadero in December 2021.

One of most immediate areas of focus was the development of a code of ethics for the Regional Centre to serve as a framework for all associations, with the goal of improving their interactions at all levels. Once drafted, it will be submitted for approval at an extraordinary meeting of members. Other projects include strengthening the Regional Centre's social media presence through more active association participation. To that end, a special Social Media Committee was formed, headed by VP Dagmar Ford (CONALTI, Venezuela), with ACTI and CTP (Peru) as members. The region's most ambitious project yet is undoubtedly the organisation of the first regional online translation, terminology and interpretation conference, which is expected to bring together prominent speakers on topics of interest to professionals in the region.

In addition to the above, the FIT LatAm Council has been quite busy with other projects, too. In November, LatAm Council issued a Social Media Policy with recommendations on social media engagement for associations and their members. Additionally, several LatAm representatives participated in two panel discussions hosted by the International Authors Forum (IAF) focusing on Latin American translators, entitled [Creating a Living in Latin America: Presentations](#) and [Challenges and Opportunities for Authors in Latin America](#). They were great opportunities to learn from other institutions and build a relationship with the IAF headquarters in the UK.

Recent interactions among FIT LatAm members have demonstrated that the Regional Centre is a lively, highly committed team full of ideas and energy and eager to help each other and capitalise on lessons learned from the pandemic and other challenges, all while continuing to improve the status of our profession.

*Marita Propato, FIT LatAm Council Member  
Alejandra Jorge, FIT LatAm Chair*





# FIT LatAm webinar series keeps growing

*The webinars have proven a powerful tool for keeping the TTI community connected during lockdown.*

It was in Lima, in 2015, that FIT LatAm members decided to work more closely to share knowledge throughout the region. At that general meeting of members, representatives decided that sharing expertise in diverse areas of specialised training would strengthen associations' professional development efforts and benefit the region's large member base. Since then, the FIT LatAm board, with the invaluable collaboration of FIT LatAm associations, has been offering a series of webinars that has steadily grown with new proposals each year, becoming a new tradition.

In 2020, FIT LatAm hosted six webinars using the Zoom account provided by FIT Mundus for Regional Centre training activities. In response to the need for more professional development opportunities and in line with the tidal wave of solidarity initiatives that abounded during the

global lockdown, most of the webinars were made available for free on YouTube, not only to association members but also to the wider TTI community, helping raise awareness of the Regional Centre and FIT's work to promote the profession. The response has been amazing, with great participation from different countries and continents.

Below is a list of the 2020 webinars, delivered in Spanish (the English names are provided for reference):

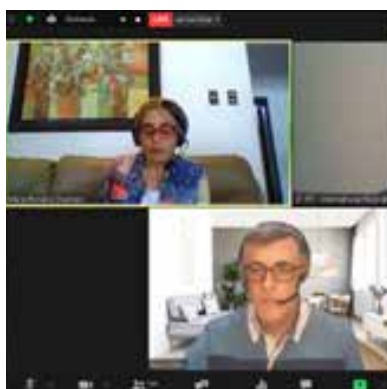
- 2 April: *Interpreting and Palimpsests in Languages. A Literary Perspective* by Alberto Bejarano (Colombia), organised by ACTTI (Colombia), 220 participants
- 30 June: *Fundamentals of Contract Translation: What You Need to Know to Succeed in This Field* by Maria Rosario Ocampo Cayo (Peru), organised by ATPP (Peru), 877 participants
- 30 July: *Adopting Remote Simultaneous Interpreting in Professional Practice* by Cecilia Lipovsek (UK) and Virginia Vázquez Vaccaro (Spain), organised by

AATI (Argentina) and CONALTI (Venezuela), 288 participants

- 12 September: *#BETAMODE: How to Navigate a More Competitive, Complex and Uncertain Market and Envision New Work Opportunities* by Sylvia Falchuk (Argentina), organised by ACOTIP (Costa Rica), 280 participants
- 25 November: *Access to Culture: A Tour of Museographic Translation and Interpreting* by Tania Rozas (Chile), organised by ANTIO (Costa Rica), 275 participants
- 11 December: *False Friends in English < > Spanish Legal Translation* by Thomas West, organised by CTP (Peru), 898 participants

Kudos to the speakers, organisers, participants, and especially to Dagmar Ford, FIT LatAm's VIP, and the mastermind, co-organiser and master of ceremonies of this iconic project. Stay tuned for more webinars in 2021!

*Marita Propato, FIT LatAm Council Member*



Diversity – of topics, speakers, and specialisations – is a hallmark of FIT LatAm webinars

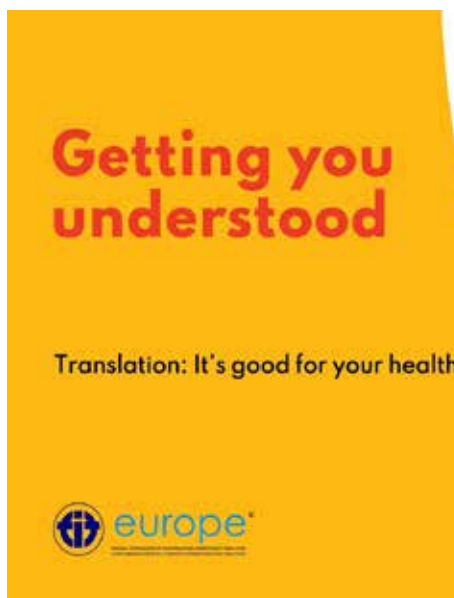


# Language professionals: enablers of trust

Last year, FIT Europe launched its #GettingYouUnderstood campaign, featuring a series of modern visuals designed to go hand in hand with the slogan “Getting you Understood.”

So, who is the “you” in the slogan? Underpinning the campaign is the idea that translators and interpreters should be developing stronger ties with their clients, explaining to them the benefits of working with a translator or interpreter. Therefore, this “you” is any current or future client.

The idea is for the visuals and hashtag to be shared widely so end users of our services know that we are on their side, working for them, defending their interests, conveying their message, and putting their thoughts and ideas into a language people they interact with and their customers, clients, business partners can easily understand. We want to bring translators and interpreters to the fore as enablers of trust, helping the people who interact with our clients see them as people who “get” them, who talk directly to them in their own language.



A message like this one is especially important in these times we’re living in. With machine translation on the rise, translators and interpreters need to position themselves more clearly than ever as defenders of their clients’ interests, helping them be understood no matter what setting they are in, be it in dealings with the police, lawyers and courts; in business settings; on holidays, in museums and galleries; at conferences and events; or just chilling at home watching yet another film or series while we’re stuck at home.

I’d encourage all freelance translators and interpreters out there to contact their national associations to learn more about the #GettingYouUnderstood campaign and to access the visuals with the official translation in their own language.

I’d also encourage you to be creative in how you use them. Actively share them on social media and think of smart ways to open up conversations with your clients so they know you’re right behind them when it comes to their language needs and that thanks to you, they will be truly understood.

At FIT Europe, we’ve been doing our utmost to get the message out there, too. Last December, John O’Shea of FIT Europe spoke at an EU event explaining the importance of human translators in the translation of tourism texts. We encouraged tourism businesses in two of Europe’s top holiday destinations in the southern Mediterranean to develop a translation policy, actively assess their language needs and how to meet them. We suggested they think about what message they convey to potential guests when they fail to use a professional or when they just have their whole website machine translated. We highlighted cases where machine translation might be useful but emphasised the importance of speaking to potential guests in a language they understand, and that critical, public-facing messages should be translated professionally.

We’d encourage national associations and freelancers to engage in similar constructive discussions with clients.

*Annette Schiller, Chairperson, FIT Europe*



Getting you understood

