



# TRANSLATIO

No. 2, 2021 FIT Newsletter



## President's message

Kevin Quirk

Esteemed FIT members,

On behalf of FIT Council, I would like to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for your kind and welcome support before, during and after the first FIT virtual Extraordinary Congress on 12 June 2021.

The results of the Extraordinary Congress – and your overwhelming support for FIT Council's proposals – provides us with the necessary legal basis and headroom to prepare for our next Statutory Congress, hopefully at a face-to-face meeting in Varadero, Cuba, on 30 and 31 May 2022. It was highly encouraging as well seeing so many representatives from member associations around the world exercising their duties and rights, and I am convinced too that your decisions have given the Association of Cuban Translators and Interpreters (ACTI), our hosts, the peace of mind and encouragement they need to continue working on producing the next FIT World Congress from 1–3 June 2022.

As much as many of us would love to see a return to pre-pandemic conditions, the global spread of COVID-19 continues to affect the lives – and livelihood – of many translators, terminologists, and interpreters around the globe. It is encouraging

to see member associations such as the Association of Welsh Translators and Interpreters (CCC) turning to one of the world's giants, Microsoft, urging them to introduce a feature enabling interpreting in Microsoft Teams. CCC's motivation for doing so is that Welsh speakers are being prevented from using their mother tongue in online meetings, and FIT Council has supported CCC by penning a follow-up letter to Microsoft.

As always, it is a pleasure to hear about the hard work carried out by our regional centres, and this edition of *Translatio* gives the reader, among other things, an excellent opportunity to learn more about important work done at the regional level.

FIT Europe's efforts to counter some of the claims made about the quality of the European Commission's machine translation tool, eTranslation, are highly commendable as the world is awash with similarly glib claims about the quality of raw MT output.

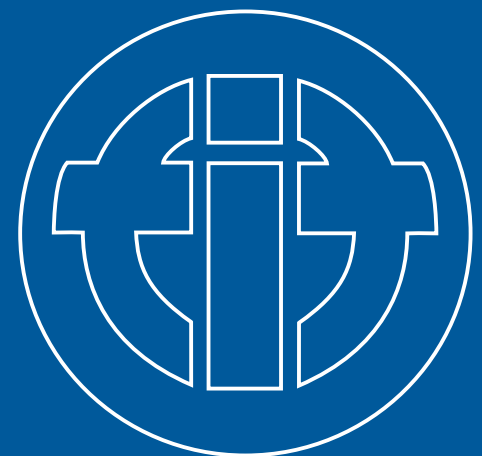
FIT LatAm continues to go from strength to strength as it celebrates 18 years this year. A pioneer of online meetings, FIT LatAm began creating webinars long before the pandemic forced the rest of us over to online solutions, and it is a delight to read about the FIT LatAm 2021 Webinar series

with a strong focus on literary translation and copyright issues.

The first FIT African Forum, the brainchild of the FIT Association Development Task Force, was heralded as a great success since it represented a first step in giving African translators, terminologists, and interpreters their own voice. FIT has already attracted new members from the African continent and the ultimate goal of the Association Development Task Force is to establish a FIT Africa Regional Centre before the end of this mandate.

Happy reading and stay safe!

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



# Recap of FIT's Extraordinary Congress

Faced with the extraordinary and persistent challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and a continued inability to meet in person, FIT decided it was necessary to convene an equally extraordinary virtual congress to make important decisions about the Federation's next steps and the upcoming year. A great deal of organisational work was involved in preparing for this Extraordinary Congress, which was a unique occasion for all – both organisers and attendees – to exercise their institutional duties and rights as FIT members in a virtual meeting that brought together the FIT family across the globe.

Kevin Quirk, FIT President and chair of the meeting, opened the Zoom congress by sharing his opening remarks after the Credentials Committee confirmed the required quorum of members was present. Participants from associations in nearly every time zone were in attendance, either as delegation heads or observers. This was but one of the challenges for this meeting, which also included ensuring all voting members could use Eligo, the separate voting platform that had been especially arranged for the occasion. FIT's multitasking treasurer Sandra Bertolini was able to overcome the technical hitches encountered during the meeting and all eligible members were ready to cast their

votes on the four motions on the agenda. The first motion, *to ratify the decisions made by the FIT Council for the holding of the FIT 2021 Extraordinary Congress, including but not limited to those stated in the convening letter*, was unanimously approved. The second motion, *that the FIT 2021 Extraordinary Congress resolve to postpone the Statutory Congress and the XXII World Congress (originally scheduled for December 2020 and first postponed to December 2021) to 30 and 31 May 2022 and 1–3 June 2022, respectively, with the venue remaining unchanged, i.e. Varadero, Cuba*, was also unanimously adopted, following explanations from Kevin Quirk regarding the rationale for this decision, and the remarks from Luis Alberto González Moreno, president of ACTI, the host association, and Vice-Chair of FIT LatAm.

As regards the third motion, a 'back-up' plan, *that the FIT 2021 Extraordinary Congress resolve to authorise FIT Council to convene a virtual Statutory Congress in June 2022 should it prove to be impossible to hold a face-to-face meeting due to the coronavirus pandemic and global travel restrictions*, the question was raised about potentially organising a hybrid Congress in the event some countries continued to face more stringent travel restrictions. Members shared their opinions, and ACTI expressed that while it hoped most

association representatives would be able to attend in person, it acknowledged it was worth examining all possible options, considering the FIT Bylaws and the legislation governing FIT. The motion was carried by the required majority of votes, and FIT Secretary General Réal Paquette said registration for Varadero would be updated and shared with members in due time. Finally, the fourth motion was addressed: *the FIT 2021 Extraordinary Congress resolving to authorise the FIT Council to co-opt members to FIT Council for the remainder of the 2017–2020 mandate*, including two new members to replace the two outgoing members who are retiring due to other commitments. After a brief discussion and clarification of the scope of this exceptional measure, the motion was carried by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast.

The meeting was extremely productive and wasn't just strictly business: the chat was very active throughout, with participants sharing friendly greetings and plenty of international entertainment during the intermissions in the form of fun facts and phrases with local colour in many languages. And of course, it was all crowned with the traditional 'family' photo at the end – in our case, four screenshots!

Marita Propato, AATI, CTPCBA,  
ATA, FIT LATAM





# FIT prize for excellence in scitech translation

**F**IT awards a number of prizes and medals for recognised excellence in a variety of fields, ranging from prizes for children's literature to interpreting to a prize for the best periodical. Prizes and awards are one of the best ways of rewarding fellow professionals as well as achieving publicity and recognition for the profession itself in the wider world.

Being selected by an international jury to receive a FIT prize or award signifies recognition as being the best of the best by one's peers around the globe. Each national association submits the name of one of their members who, in their considered opinion, is most deserving of recognition. The appropriate FIT jury then assesses and selects a worthy recipient from amongst the candidates.

[The FIT Prize for Excellence in Scientific and Technical Translation](#) recognises the expertise of translators who stand out in the field of scientific and technical translation, have made significant contributions to this field and whose work facilitates the transfer of scientific and technical information between

languages and amongst nations. It is their expertise, assiduity and dedication that ensures the broadest possible dissemination of the work of researchers, scientists, members of the medical and legal professions, manufacturers, and administrators to fellow professionals, national administrations and civil society. The prize consists of a £300 award, a certificate and a plaque.

I am both proud and delighted to have been able to establish this prize following my year as chairman of the Institute of Translation & Interpreting (ITI) in 2010.

Researchers, scientists, members of the medical and legal professions, manufacturers and administrators rely on scitech translators to keep informed about or be able to share in or monitor the work being done by fellow professionals working in other languages in other countries. Without them, international trade would be limited and the international community would not be able to share innovative thinking.

It has been said that the job of the technical translator is akin to that of a magician,

exercising a sleight of hand or *léger de main*, replicating the expert knowledge of the original writer and producing a text that the target audience can comprehend, as if it had been written by a subject expert in their own language.

The prize is awarded for the successful candidate's body of work, whether published or unpublished. Candidates are asked to supply a bibliography listing their translations, provide references and give a short account of their career in scientific and technical translation.

The winner of the 2014 prize was Svetla Moutafova, submitted by the Bulgarian Translators' Union, and the winner of the 2017 prize was Associate Professor Dr Juraj Sebesta, submitted by the Slovak Society of Translators of Scientific and Technical Literature.

The Prize for Excellence in Scientific and Technical Translation will next be awarded at the forthcoming FIT Congress – provisionally to be held in June 2022 in Cuba.

*Pamela Mayorcas FITI, MSclnFSc,  
DipModLangs (ITI)*



# Member survey results in action

FIT's Association Development Task Force (TF) was established to promote and support the founding and development of fledgling TTI organisations around the world, in particular in areas where not many exist. To do so, the TF relies on available documents (such as FIT's Guide for Establishing a New Translators' Association) and organises specific workshops. However, we also wanted to know what aspects our member organisations consider essential to align our priorities.

To that end, we conducted a member survey, which was distributed to regular members in June last year. We received 36 replies by October, a wonderful response rate given that FIT has 101 members. Thanks go to Réal Paquette for organising the Survey Monkey form and compiling the results as well as to Reina de Betten-dorf for her support. The number of replies from different regions corresponded well with the actual distribution of members. We would like to thank all who found the time to complete our survey.

We asked 11 questions, most of which did not yield any surprising results. However,

the overall outcome was strikingly clear and underscored what members want FIT to focus on: networking and communication (best practice sharing, relevant information, easy exchange options, events), education and continued professional development (special mention was repeatedly made of the benefits of having position papers), and recognition and visibility (self-esteem and the raising of awareness with clients and authorities about the valuable work translators, terminologist and interpreters do).

These same topics were also clearly at the top of the list of things member associations try to do for their individual members. The main means of communication are events, be they face-to-face or virtual, as well as emails and social media, although virtual events have increased in importance lately due to the all-too-well-known circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. Another central issue is making voluntary involvement in association work attractive – this is key to the survival of many associations (but also FIT) in the long run.

One question asked about the use of indigenous languages. While many respondents replied that none are used by their members, some had figures between 50% and more than 90%. This is interesting for our TF, as we are presently focusing on Africa, where FIT hopes to support the foundation of many new associations to promote and support the profession there. In the African continent, indigenous languages are not only abundant, but also used and required in the context of translation, terminology work, and interpreting. An initial step towards increased FIT involvement across Africa has already been taken: the first African Forum was organised and held in February (in connection with the UN International Mother Language Day), with the intention of gathering as many interested groups, stakeholders, and individuals as possible. The event took place virtually and was incredibly successful, uniting more than 70 participants. For more information on the African Forum, please read the dedicated article in this issue.

*Alexandra Jantscher, FIT Council  
(UNIVERSITAS Austria)*

## Conference recap: GALA Connected 2021

The Globalization and Localization Association (GALA) connects and supports professionals and organisations in the global language industry. While currently a FIT partner, not a member, GALA has expressed support for FIT initiatives, such as the position [paper](#) on Relations between Freelancers and Translation Companies.

Given the mutually supportive relationship between GALA and FIT, FIT Council member Alan Melby attended the 2021 GALA Connected conference, which took place in March, as a representative of FIT. Among the distinguished presenters, James Anderson, who has been a conference interpreter for 25 years and is now Director of Global Partnerships at Interpretify, spoke about the enormous changes in remote simultaneous interpreting (RSI) during the pandemic. He began by stating

the obvious: that RSI has gone from being a disruptive innovation to a necessity. He then noted that the average lead time for organising simultaneous interpretation for an event has gone from over a month to approximately eight days. He gave a balanced comparison between the use of Zoom for RSI and a specialized RSI platform, noting that, currently, approximately 80% of RSI is done using Zoom, despite its limitations.

He concluded with predictions regarding RSI and interpreters in a post-pandemic world. He sees a return of traditional local interpreting, a continuation of RSI, and the introduction of hybrid interpreting, where some interpreters are local and some are remote. His hybrid mode predictions are based on an assumed reduction in long-distance travel by interpreters: at an in-person, multilingual event in a large city, interpreters

for some languages will be close by, while others would have to get on an airplane. He predicts the latter will be likelier to continue interpreting remotely.

During the question and answer period, he was asked about interpreters being replaced with artificial intelligence. He believes that although some interpretation, especially in low-stakes environments, will be done by machines – whether we like it or not – there will be a need for professional interpreters into the foreseeable future.

GALA Connected 2021 featured many other presentations of interest in areas including post-edited machine translation, blockchain technology, and games localisation. If interested in learning more, write to [alan.melby@fit-ift.org](mailto:alan.melby@fit-ift.org) with GALA in the subject line.

*Alan Melby (ATA)*



# First FIT African Forum

The FIT Association and Development Task Force held the first FIT African Forum on 20 February 2021 as part of FIT's development programme, aimed to support current and emerging associations in the African continent.

As anyone who has ever thrown a party knows, sending out invitations does not guarantee your guests will attend. It was all the more exciting, then, to see the original 40 registrations swell to 80 as translators, interpreters, terminologists, and trainers logged on to join the African Forum, sharing experiences and challenges facing both professional associations and translators without association support in 14 countries across the African continent.

Through the Forum, representatives of associations, collectives, and departments engaged to discuss specific local issues and challenges for professionals in the continent. Translators and interpreters in Africa share the same concerns as the broader community around professional training, quality management, ethics, accreditation, and collective support.

The problems might look similar, but the circumstances are unique. Many countries in the continent have 'official' languages, several languages with distinct ethnic groups, as well as indigenous languages, so minority languages and different cultural norms require added consideration. In addition to diverse geographical, social, and structural issues, the impact of the pandemic further complicates the picture, as does a high demand for language services in the region for peacekeeping.

Associations cited diverse challenges, such as governance, isolation, communication difficulties, training options, ethics awareness, and quality assurance. Professionals in Africa are working for professional status for individuals and associations, and recognition of status and professional representation. Associations aim to expand and generate funding models to become self-sustaining and drive membership. The hope is that the African Forum will provide the opportunity to learn, both from each other and from the wider FIT network.

Seeing strength in diversity and challenges can create opportunities. The Forum has given a rare chance for us to connect and begin to consider the complications of the profession in the continent and its place in the wider international industry. The Forum was our moment to hear the thoughts and experiences of our colleagues in Africa, and to include their voice in unison with FIT.

The profession in Africa is growing rapidly, with an opportunity to continue to build up better, strengthening skills, relationships, and benefits. FIT is committed to supporting its members, emerging collectives, and training institutions in Africa under its Development Project, providing a forum for discussion and support, sharing best practices, helping strengthen networks across the continent and the globe, and training new professionals to build a sustainable, recognised profession to fulfil the expanding global need for translation.

*FIT Association and Development Taskforce*

## ITI Western Regional Group hosts a successful GDPR webinar

On Friday 12 March 2021, the Institute of Translation and Interpreting's Western Regional Group (ITI WRG) hosted a GDPR webinar uniquely tailored for translators and interpreters. This long-awaited event was scheduled for March 2020 but had to be adapted to a Zoom webinar due to the then-imminent COVID-19 restrictions. The event sold out within a few days of being open to members of the ITI, FIT associations and other ITI networks, a strong indication of the interest the topic generates amongst language professionals in a range of organisations.

The webinar consisted of a one-hour presentation delivered by GDPR expert and commercial legal advisor at Carbon Law Partners, Viviana Mucharraz, followed by an hour-long Q&A session moderated by former ITI WRG Events Officer Sandra Mouton. John O'Shea (FIT Europe) wrapped up the session revealing the findings of the survey conducted by FIT

### KEY PRINCIPLES

**Lawfulness, fairness and transparency:** data must be "processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to individuals".

#### LAWFUL BASIS FOR PROCESSING – SIX OPTIONS

- i. **Consent:** individual has given **clear consent** for you to process their personal data **for a specific purpose**.
- ii. **Contract:** the processing is **necessary for a contract** you have with the individual, or they have asked you to take specific steps before entering into a contract.
- iii. **Legal obligation:** the processing is necessary for you **to comply with the law**.
- iv. **Vital interests:** the processing is necessary **to protect someone's life**.
- v. **Public task:** the processing is necessary for you **to perform a task in the public interest**.
- vi. **Legitimate interests:** the processing is necessary for your legitimate interests or the legitimate interests of a third party, unless there is a good reason to protect the individual's personal data which overrides those legitimate interests.

Europe GDPR Working Group about GDPR and linguists in Europe.

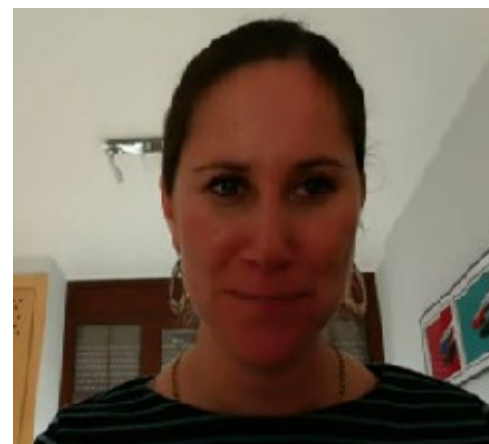
Viviana started by defining the scope of legislation regarding GDPR in the UK and the often-confusing issue of what constitutes personal data. The key lies in examining the purpose for which data is being used and whether it can identify a living person. She went on to define the roles and the obligations of “data controllers” (those who decide how and why data is collected and processed) and “data processors” (those who process data on behalf of the controller and subject to their instructions).

Identifying these roles in relation to the client, the agency and the translator or interpreter – and understanding who gives and receives instructions – is crucial for GDPR compliance. Similarly, Viviana emphasised the importance of determining when personal data is being processed or transferred to a third party. Removing all traces of any personal data after the purpose for

processing has been completed appears to be another important step to ensure compliance. Other topics included the impact of Brexit and the role of legal agreements in the UK GDPR to protect the rights and obligations of both controllers and processors.

The event was comfortably capped at 40 attendees, which ensured a lively Q&A session. Viviana expanded on several pressing attendee questions, such as why identifying the CAT tool licence holder is relevant for GDPR, keeping copies of past translations for insurance purposes and obtaining consent to process data.

Finally, John O’Shea presented the findings from the FIT Europe survey and provided further insights on the work the Regional Centre has been doing to clarify the scope of GDPR in the context of the language professions. The webinar was followed by a well-attended online debrief a week later led by ITI WRG Joint Co-ordinator Emma Plested, which offered an



Viviana Mucharraz (Carbon Law Partners) during her presentation

additional, more informal opportunity to further unpack the abundant information received during the session.

Disclaimer: The information provided by Viviana Mucharraz does not constitute legal or professional advice.

*Mariana Roccia, Social Media Officer of ITI WRG*

## Interpreters, translators, and the Japanese smallpox vaccine

Vaccination, which is such a relevant topic these days, provides us with an opportunity to look back and take stock of the contribution interpreters and translators have made to disseminating knowledge – beyond linguistic mediation – throughout history.

As late as the mid-nineteenth century, smallpox continued to decimate Japan. At that time, the presence of foreigners in Japan was strictly monitored under the Tokugawa shogunate, and official contact with the West was limited to trade with the Dutch East India Company (VOC), which operated a tiny trading post in Nagasaki – hence the importance of Japanese-born Dutch interpreters.

Trade with the Dutch led to intellectual and scientific exchange. Due to restrictions on their importation, books were highly coveted, and interpreters in Nagasaki were the first to have access to them. Around 1803, a young interpreter overheard a VOC official discussing a book about inoculation with cowpox lymph to prevent people from contracting smallpox.

That interpreter was Baba Sajūrō. Under normal circumstances, Baba would have remained in Nagasaki facilitating trade transactions, translating official documents, and teaching Dutch. However, in 1808 the government tasked him with overseeing the translation and publication of a world map, so he moved to Edo (now Tokyo). As part of this job, he translated a variety of western works. He also studied French, English and Russian, and became the preferred interpreter for special missions.

Between 1812 and 1813, Baba was dispatched to Hokkaido as an interpreter for negotiations with the Russians. There, he had access to a short Russian treatise on smallpox vaccination and translated a draft of it with help from a Russian naval officer. In 1818, he worked as an interpreter aboard a British ship that was seeking permission to sell its cargo in Japan. Its captain attempted to gift Baba some cowpox scabs, lancets, and instructions on how to use them, but interpreters were not allowed to accept gifts.

This last encounter prompted Baba to resume his translation of the Russian

treatise, which he completed in 1820. He entitled it *Tonka Hiketsu*, The Key to Escaping Smallpox, considered to be the first Japanese text on the benefits of vaccination. Baba died two years later, perhaps a victim of the 1822 cholera epidemic that ravished Japan. *Tonka Hiketsu* was circulated privately and finally published in 1849, when the smallpox vaccine was available in Japan – half a century after Edward Jenner first administered it in England.

Returning to the present and the current public health emergency, we should consider the role of translators and interpreters in disseminating information on COVID-19. How many instruction manuals, posters, scientific or journalistic articles, protocols, conferences, meetings, interviews and other events and materials have we been called on to interpret or translate? As in centuries past, we’re once again able to prove our essential role not only as mediators, but also disseminators of knowledge.

*Virginia Aguirre (CMIC)  
Translation by Tyler Reeves*

# Interpreting in Wales in a pandemic

The effective way in which Welsh interpreters adapted quickly to the COVID-19 pandemic was significant. Face-to-face meetings were cancelled overnight and virtual meetings mushroomed in their place. In Wales, where legislation allows people to speak in the language of their choice, the presence of an interpreter is commonplace to enable participants to contribute either in Welsh or in English. The new challenge was to provide interpreting remotely using Zoom or Microsoft Teams, which interpreters did efficiently, professionally, and with little complaint. Zoom provided the easiest option as it has a built-in interpreting channel. However, security issues meant that the majority of public authorities banned its use. A notable exception was the Welsh Parliament, which permitted its plenary sessions to be conducted remotely using Zoom.

For the majority, there was no choice but to use Microsoft Teams. Without an interpreting channel, this proved problematic. Interpreters spent hours experimenting and practicing using external means of interpreting. Despite these best efforts, there was evidence of a reduction in the use of Welsh in many meetings, which impacted both effective communication and interpreters' livelihoods.

The Welsh Language Commissioner published an advice note on holding bilingual video meetings that provided practical guidance to organisations on how to continue to offer high-quality bilingual services and comply with their Welsh Language Standards.

The Association of Welsh Translators and Interpreters (CCC) created a new subsection in the free directory of translators and interpreters on its website to allow people to find members who provide remote interpreting services.

In May 2020, Eluned Morgan AS/MS, the Minister with responsibility for the Welsh language in Welsh Government, wrote to



Microsoft to request a feature to enable interpreting in Teams, noting that this request was not solely related to Welsh but to all languages, pointing out that making such a feature for just one language would work for all of them.

As a result, there was positive collaboration on the development of an interpreting channel. As the year drew to a close, however, it became apparent that this would not happen as quickly as anticipated.

In December 2020, CCC wrote to Microsoft Teams urging them to move swiftly on the introduction of this function as an integral component of Microsoft Teams. The letter emphasised that because it was not possible to effectively provide interpreting in Teams, Welsh speakers were being prevented from using their mother tongue in meetings.

FIT Council, in a letter to Microsoft on 25 February 2021, lent its support to the Welsh Government's request that Microsoft expedite development of support for interpreters using Microsoft Teams.

Microsoft Teams has indicated that an interpreting channel will be introduced during the second half of 2021. When it appears, there will be a welcome in the hillsides!

*Geraint Wyn Parry (CCC)*

## “Don't let a bad translation get the last word”

Since November 2020, hundreds of thousands of professionals and members of the public have seen this slogan as part of the new awareness-building campaign of the Ordre des traducteurs, terminologues et interprètes agréés du Québec (OTTIAQ). The slogan accompanied three short but attention-grabbing videos that clearly conveyed the Order's message: certified translators are professionals and they should be the ones who get the last word.

### Campaign objectives

The objectives of this online campaign were twofold. The first was to highlight the risks of bad translation – or worse, no

translation at all. Each of the three videos shows a situation where translated product instructions must match the original to the letter: installing a car seat, operating a chainsaw, and using a camping stove. Inspired by real-life situations, these scenes were chosen for their potential emotional impact on viewers, as they eloquently illustrate how serious the consequences of a bad translation can be.

The second objective, beyond the safety issues portrayed in the videos, was to raise awareness about the Order and its members, not only amongst potential clients but also new members of the profession.

The campaign promotes certification as a unique qualification of OTTIAQ members and reassures companies big and small that professionals produce impeccable work.

[Click here](#) to view the campaign in English.

### Certified translators and professional standards

Under the Professional Code, the law that governs all 46 professional orders and 55 regulated professions in Quebec, certified translators are bound by a strict code of ethics. They are also subject to professional inspections and, of course, professional



secrecy. Certified translators must also be covered by liability insurance.

### Previous campaign

In 2019, OTTIAQ launched its first fully digital advertising campaign with the primary goal of promoting certification to potential clients, as well as future and current members. With the support of an advertising agency, the Order opted for a simple, effective slogan: "Put your communications in order. Hire a certified professional." The success of that campaign was one of the reasons OTTIAQ decided to work with the same agency again.



### Ordre des traducteurs, terminologues et interprètes agréés du Québec

#### Ordre des traducteurs, terminologues et interprètes agréés du Québec

As part of its mandate to protect the public, the Order strives to ensure and promote competency and professionalism among its members in the fields of translation, terminology, and interpreting.

To fulfill this role, the Order follows the mechanisms set out in the Professional Code and conducts inspections and entrance evaluations. For more information, visit the OTTIAQ website [here](#).

*Sylvie Rivard, Communications Manager, OTTIAQ*

## AITI annual general meeting

### 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary and new national governing board











The Italian Association of Translators and Interpreters (AITI) was established on 31 December 1950 by notarial deed and registered in the northern Italian town of Biella. With 70 years of history, AITI is Italy's oldest association of translators and interpreters and it has grown to Italy's largest in terms of members. Since AITI's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary fell during such a difficult year, it was impossible to celebrate as initially planned.

Nevertheless, we have faced these challenging times with characteristic strength and team spirit, quickly adapting to the new requirements imposed by the pandemic. At the same time, we did not lose sight of the goals set out in our articles of association, including offering continuing professional development, protecting and promoting the image of the profession, and providing support and opportunities for dialogue among members.

A 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary video celebrating the association and the members who are our strength and stay was presented at the annual general meeting on 17 April. You can watch the video [here](#).

The meeting also saw the changeover of the national governing board for the next four years (2021–2025). The new team can't wait to take up the challenge!

*Italian Association of Translators and Interpreters, [www.aiti.org](http://www.aiti.org)*

 <b>Laura Iovanna</b> Chairperson	 <b>Enrica Torti</b> Deputy Chairperson	 <b>Riccardo Olivi</b> Treasurer	 <b>Cristiana Latini</b> Secretary	 <b>Valeria Andreoni</b> Board member	
 <b>Associazione Italiana Traduttori e Interpreti</b>	 <b>Francesco Foresta</b> Board member	 <b>Marina Minella</b> Board member	 <b>Sara Morselli</b> Board member	 <b>Gabriella Rostaing</b> Board member	

The new national governing board



# FIT LatAm turns 18

Established on 3 May 2003, the FIT LatAm Regional Centre has evolved over the years to represent and advocate for the translation, terminology and interpreting professions in the region. Today, FIT LatAm includes 17 member associations from Costa Rica to Argentina and Cuba to Chile, with individual members speaking the two main languages in the region, Spanish and Portuguese, plus a rich variety of indigenous languages.

Recent activities have included an update of the Regional Centre's bylaws, preparatory work to draft a regional code of ethics, increased social media presence (with the addition of a LinkedIn account), a new edition of the LatAm Webinar Series, and the joint organisation of events giving visibility to the profession. The latter two activities help underscore two of FIT LatAm's objectives: to foster ongoing training and education and to develop institutional relationships.

The FIT LatAm 2021 Webinar series launched in April with a lecture on the translation of Shakespeare for the stage and the big screen by Pablo Ingberg, who in 2017 received a FIT award for this career in literary translation. He shared interesting perspectives on conventions that have changed from Shakespeare's time to the present, reflecting on translation and the passage of time. He posited that even though the original texts remain the same, successive translations of the same play include different elements, introducing nuances and new angles. The webinar was open to the T&I community and convened participants from 25 countries. It was delivered in Spanish on the FIT Zoom platform and organised by FIT LatAm jointly with AATI (Argentina). A replay is available [here](#).

Following the Memorandum of Understanding signed by FIT LatAm with the International Authors Forum, a series of online events has been organised by associations in the region and IAF. The events are called Tertulias, recognising Latin America's rich tradition in cultural gatherings and celebrating indigenous languages, and are held as part of IAF's Creating a Living initiative. Moderated by UK and Latin American representatives of the IAF, the first Tertulia featured presentations, songs and poems from Argentine artists and translators, with simultaneous interpreting into English. Other Tertulias will follow during the year, highlighting the work of authors and translators from other Latin American countries.

Associations in the region are also focussing on initiatives to strengthen programs for new professionals, co-organise activities with universities, provide support on emerging issues (e.g., new concerns over reproduction rights associated with the work of interpreters in online events), and host virtual conferences for professional development. So many ways to ring in 18 years as a Regional Centre!

*Marita Propato, FIT LatAm Council Member*

#SEMINARIOSFITLATAM2021

## ¡Excelente inicio!



**Pablo Ingberg y el equipo AATI - FIT LATAM**

# FIT Europe champions MT literacy

Early in the COVID-19 crisis, the European Commission decided to make its machine translation tool, eTranslation, available to all small/medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the EU. The stated aim was to bolster the digital economy, allowing more businesses within the EU to transact with each other and to give citizens access to more information about what those businesses do. Disclaimers, buried within the website, said the text was raw MT output and was only intended to get the gist. eTranslation was originally meant only for government agencies, but this expansion in scope attracted the interest of FIT Europe and set alarm bells ringing.

Why? Primarily because the messaging from the Commission and the developers of the system was inconsistent and misleading. It was also aimed at a group of clients that accounts for a large portion of freelance translators' work in Europe. In fact, the last two European Language Industry Surveys showed that around 50% of translators work primarily for direct clients (be they individuals or SMEs).

When it launched, eTranslation was accompanied by a social media campaign stating that it was free, fast and "high quality". Such claims of "quality" are, in fact, highly misleading for anyone who is not MT-literate. Why? Reality is much more complex. The data used to train the MT engines varies widely in terms of volume and quality, and not all languages generate equally good output. This key fact was lost in the generalised claim of "high quality". Not only that, but source text affects the MT engine's ability to generate decent output, too.

In response, FIT Europe convened a series of meetings with its member associations



Connecting Europe @Connecting\_EU · Mar 26

There's more to come, stay tuned! 😊  
Our #eTranslation tool is constantly improving and evolving!  
Register and start using eTranslation 🇪🇺 [europa.eu/CN37Fv](https://europa.eu/CN37Fv)

European #SMEs, #startups, and #PublicAdministrations can expect new domains, services, and languages soon!



Tweet from March 2021, after FIT Europe intervened, where quality claims have been replaced with "free, easy and secure"

to discuss this matter. It attended the CEF Conference in September, publicly stating the impact that such misleading claims could have. eTranslation's developers listened to the concerns of FIT Europe and its member associations. A brainstorming session with the team behind the tool followed and resulted in all quality claims being removed from all eTranslation advertising. It pays to speak up!

Nevertheless, the messaging around eTranslation continues to be problematic. The main reason is the absence of basic MT literacy. Another meeting with the developers has been planned to devise a list of do's and don'ts so that any future social media campaigns are more accurate and reflect what the system is actually capable

of. On another positive note, representatives of FIT Europe and various national associations are now also being invited to events about the system to provide a more balanced view.

Continuing its work to raise awareness among member associations about the need for MT literacy, FIT Europe organised a webinar in January on how to spot "hype" about MT. Once the list of do's and don'ts is ready, FIT Europe will share the results with its members.

Lesson learned: if you see wild claims about what MT can do, speak out as a language professional so we can build greater awareness about what MT can (and cannot) do.

FIT Europe

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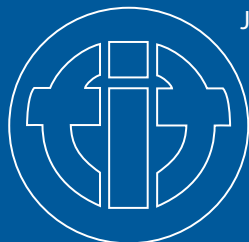
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