



ATII

Association of Translators
& Interpreters Ireland

Cumann Aistritheoirí
& Ateangairí na hÉireann

Bulletin

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Editorial

Bulletin readers may be aware of a steadily growing interest and grá for the Irish language throughout the island. Central Statistics Office figures for the 2022 census mention a 6% rise in Irish speakers, a second level study app reported that 68% of Leaving Certificate students have an appreciation of Irish and there is an increasing number of social media influencers who have made speaking in Irish very much 'on trend'. Cultural influences in music and movies e.g. *Kneecap*, *An Cailín Ciúin*, along with a recent government campaign in the use of Irish language in advertising have created a top-down-bottom-up confluence, which has great potential to give the Irish language a long-needed boost. Could this give rise to opportunities for those of us working in the world of English/Irish translation?

And so, in keeping with this *zeitgeist*, the first ATII Bulletin of 2025 will focus on Irish language translation matters, as well as our usual regular features.

Out of the blocks first is Members' Corner contributor Bríd Ní Fhlathúin, newly elected executive committee member who translates into and out of Irish. Her story tells of a change in the career road, a geographical move and provides lots of very handy tips.

For translators who might wish to specialise in Irish language legal translation, either here or in the EU institutions, Dáithí Mac Cárthaigh gives us a comprehensive overview of courses on offer at the King's Inns.

At home, Sarah Jane Aberasturi gives us the annual report on the latest round of ATII Certified Legal Translation exams and Trish Van Bolderen reports back

on the Members' Coffee Morning (online) held in February at the request of members who wished to discuss how AI has been affecting their work. As this was very well attended, with great input from everyone, further sessions for members are being planned.

At the monthly ATII executive committee meetings, committee members engage in much discussion, which, particularly during in-person meetings, can result in all sorts of ideas for the visibility and promotion of ATII members. A recent brainstorming session gave rise to a series of advertisements in the Law Society's publication *The Law Gazette* and Public Affairs Ireland publication, the *PAI review*. Definitely worth a look at these on page 10.

We would love to hear from members and readers if they notice any increase in either enquiries or work as a result of these advertisements. In fact, the Bulletin would be delighted to hear from members and readers on any other topics that you think might be of interest for inclusion in the Bulletin or for webinars or coffee mornings or whatever!

The regular Snippets column includes news about the latest and previous honorary members.

We do hope 2025 is starting off well for all Bulletin readers and our members and we will continue you to keep you all as up to date as possible on all things T & I during the year.

Anne Larchet, Editor



Members' Corner



Describe yourself professionally in a few lines.

I'm a translator working in the English/Irish language combination, with a background in mathematics. Most of my work is in the areas of legislation, law, and texts for children.

When and why did you decide on a career in translating/interpreting?

In 2004, as the economic boom was unravelling, I was packing up to move from Dublin to Galway and grow my own rhubarb. A phone call came in out of the blue, asking whether I'd be willing to undertake some translation to Irish. The Official Languages Act had come into effect and translators were urgently needed. "All right," I said, recklessly, "I'm not a translator but I'll help you for a couple of months until you find someone else." Here I still am.

How do you find clients?

They tend to find me. I've been around for so long that everyone has my email address to hand whenever they need an urgent speech by 6pm. I am an obliging person but my heart sinks when I hear the ping.

Do you think it is necessary to specialise?

It's a good idea to specialise to some extent. In my case, I translate so much legislation and law that their quirks come readily to me, whereas it would be an uphill struggle for a literary translator. On the other hand, others are a lot better than me at translating marketing text, with its flighty approach to meaning.

[Bríd Ní Fhlathúin](#), MATII, GA <> EN, holds the *Séala Fhoras na Gaeilge* translation accreditation. She focusses on legal and legislative translation from English to Irish and texts for teenagers and children. Bríd lives in the Conamara Gaeltacht.

What is your favourite type of text/assignment?

I enjoy tackling a court judgement or a piece of intricate legislation. Translating such texts is like knitting an Aran jumper: one has to carry the strands of argument safely through the pattern to achieve an intact and elegant whole, and it's easy to get immersed in that. I hope I'm not giving the impression here that I'm a good knitter.

To counterbalance the legal texts, I translate an occasional poem or story. Any piece of literary translation is a changeling, a substitute for the real thing, but the challenge is to create an inherently valuable translation that is as valid a substitute as possible.

How important are translation tools?

The technical side of translation appeals to me – using CAT tools, glossaries and language datasets to best advantage and leveraging machine translation without losing precision or naturalness. It's been interesting to see that area evolve over the years. I believe we've reached the stage where, in many areas, machine translation is very helpful, but the translator's input in vetting, changing and sometimes totally re-writing it remains essential.



What is the best/worst thing about being a translator/ interpreter?

In the case of a freelance translator, the shiniest aspect of it is the freedom. I do what I like, when I like, and I don't feel trapped in a corporate structure. That, of course, brings its own challenges: one has neither a public service pension nor the safety-net of being part of a large organisation. In a sense, freelance translators are cycling on the motorway, surrounded by large vehicles but enjoying the fresh air.

There's also the aspect of contributing, in some small way, to a sense of fellowship. Translation is inclusive and pitches the discourse on the middle ground rather than in the dominant party's back yard. We live in an erratic era and anything that helps us talk among ourselves, read books from other cultures and value our differences is to be applauded. Translation does that.

What are the most important characteristics of a good translator?

You need to be organised, meticulous and reliable, to enjoy solitude and precision, and to find satisfaction in the cadence of the text. Being somewhat sociable helps as well, so as not to become too eccentric and sit at home with your folios and parakeets.

'You need to be organised, meticulous and reliable'

Is it possible to have a good standard of living?

Well, I write this from my imaginary yacht. If you're a freelancer, you don't have the luxury of a steady salary and there are ups and downs to navigate. That said, there is plenty of well-paid work and it's easy to achieve good rates if you're a professional, competent Irish translator.

What advice would you give someone thinking of embarking on a career as a translator/interpreter?

Try some translation to see whether you enjoy it. To some people, it's fiddly, isolating and limiting. To others, the opportunity to concentrate, to analyse and decode a text and to construct it anew in another language is a peaceful pleasure and an opportunity to learn a great deal.

'Communicate clearly and precisely with clients'

If you want to work for agencies, choose one that specialises in your own language pair and, crucially, values quality. Large international agencies can be heartbreaking, their terms and conditions one-sided (make sure you read them), and their administrative processes time-consuming.

Be wary of TM discount matrices. A TM provided by an agency will often add to your workload rather than decrease it, as you deal with translation issues and inconsistencies.

If you are an Irish translator, earn the *Séala an Aistriúcháin* accreditation and apply to become a professional member of the ATII. Communicate clearly and precisely with clients. Never miss a deadline. Don't translate tattoos.



The Irish Language: A direct link to EU Institutions



Little did we realise during our campaign of 2004 to add Irish to the list of official EU languages that the results of our efforts would be so profound and so positive.

In the advent of the EU enlargement from 15 to 25 members on 1 May 2004, it became clear that the prize of being an official and working EU language was no longer reserved for larger national and international languages but would also become a reality for the languages of smaller nations such as Malta with half a million people and Estonia with 1.3m people.

Irish not being an official EU language cost jobs. People were not employed as Irish language experts (translators, proof-readers, interpreters, lawyer-linguists, administrative and support staff). Because proficiency in at least two official EU languages is required to enter the EU Civil Service and proficiency in three is needed for promotion, not being able to include Irish on one's CV in this context, held Irish people back.

Because of a shortage of language experts, Maltese was given a temporary derogation (2004-2008) during which not all EU laws were produced in Maltese in order to give them an opportunity to build capacity.

The Irish Government secured a similar derogation enabling Irish to become an official language from 2007. This derogation was to be reviewed on a five-year basis. During the first five years the Government funded specialist courses for prospective Irish language experts (such as our Advanced-Diploma courses in legal translation and lawyer-linguistics in King's Inns) and corpus work, in particular at DCU (téarma.ie)

Dáithí Mac Cárthaigh is a practising barrister and the Law and Irish Academic Coordinator at King's Inns Law School. He practices in both Irish and English in civil and criminal matters and has a particular interest in public law.

Once the higher-education sector had established our capacity to upskill candidates, the strategy of those candidates securing EU jobs by means of temporary contracts was seriously examined. Proficiency in three official EU languages is necessary to obtain a permanent post as a translator or lawyer-linguist, but temporary contracts of 3-years or more are available to those with just two in order to allow them to acquire the third language on the job with language classes being part of the working day.

Once this pathway was recognised, the Irish Government moved in 2015 to phase out the derogation over 2017-2022 and today Irish is a full working and official language of the EU with hundreds of Irish language experts living and working on the European mainland forming part of a vibrant international Gaeltacht with its own writers, poets, singers and musicians.

EU institutions continue to recruit Irish language experts. These positions are available with the European Parliament, Commission, Council, and Court of Justice, located in Brussels, Luxembourg and County Meath. Pay and conditions in such positions are excellent.



Translators translate legislation and other official documents. Lawyer-linguists, who have law degrees and/or professional legal qualifications, ensure that the various language versions of legislation are of the same effect throughout the EU. Lawyer-linguists also translate pleadings and judgments in the Court of Justice.

The aim of King's Inns Advanced Diploma courses in legal translation and lawyer-linguistics (supported by Roinn na Gaeltachta) is to prepare post-graduate students for the EU's recruitment process and examinations.

A degree in Irish is not necessary but a high standard of Irish is required as well as the desire to improve one's command of the language and an openness to acquiring a third European language. A law degree or a qualification as a barrister or solicitor is necessary for the lawyer-linguist course but not the legal translation course.

'EU institutions continue to recruit Irish language experts'

Applicants must demonstrate their level of ability in Irish in an online entrance exam in September or by producing a TEG B2 (full credit) certificate or higher achieved within the last 3 years.

These courses are delivered on-line. The linguistic content (Irish grammar, terminology, and translation skills) for both courses is taught to a combined class of all students on both courses: 41 evenings (123 teaching hours). Regarding the law content of the lawyer-linguist course, 30 extra teaching hours are delivered in the following subjects: History and Institutions of the European Union; Legislative Process of the European Union; Continental Civil Law System (Napoleonic Code); Practice and Procedure of the Court of Justice of the European Union; and Jurisprudence.

Twelve extra teaching hours are delivered in the subject "Legal Systems" to students on both courses. All students receive two sessions (6 hours) in relation to on-line resources and two sessions (6 hours) on psychometric testing and the recruitment process of the European Union.

'Translators translate legislation and other official documents'

Classes are delivered Monday and Wednesday evenings during the academic year 6pm–9pm beginning in October through to the end of course examinations in April. The legal content and the sessions on psychometric testing and the recruitment process of the European Union are delivered at weekends. At the end of the course there is a study visit to EU institutions in Brussels and Luxembourg.

EU Institutions provide an opportunity for a diverse and exciting career and people who begin as language experts can move to other areas of work should they so wish.

For further information see [King's Inns' Advanced Diplomas in Legal Translation and in Lawyer-linguistics](#).



ATII Certified Legal Translator Examinations 2024

Each year, Professional Members of our Association may apply to become ATII Certified Legal Translators, or CLTs. Typically, they will have worked as professional translators for at least five years and will have experience in the translation of legal and state documentation.

Candidates attend a mandatory online workshop prior to taking the exam, and this workshop is generally also attended by a number of existing CLTs. We have found this to be of benefit for keeping the guidelines in step with real-world practice, giving candidates the benefit of input from experienced colleagues and encouraging our existing CLTs to bring up issues that have arisen in their work during the year and warrant further discussion.

The CLT examination itself involves the translation of one short document (certificate) and a longer legal text of the kind that certified translators are required to do in their day-to-day work. The marking system is anonymous and scripts are assessed by carefully selected international experts, who generally provide detailed feedback along with the Pass or Fail grade.

We had an increase in applications in 2024, with eight candidates covering eight language pairs. Three candidates were successful, with the result that our CLT cohort now has one more person authorised to certify translations from English to French, and covers two new language combinations for the first time: Arabic to English and Catalan to English. Congratulations to Sarah Jane Aberasturi (CA-EN), Véronique Eloir (EN-FR) and Mennatallah Mansy (AR-EN).

Other language combinations attempted this year were French, German, Polish and Spanish to English, as well as English to Polish. We encourage these candidates to try again next year, and would welcome applications from other Professional Members across all language combinations. Details of the application process are available on our website, and the documents and dates for 2025 will be published in September.

Sarah Jane Aberasturi
CLT Subcommittee
certification@atii.ie



How is AI impacting your professional experience?

Ongoing developments in artificial intelligence (AI) over the past three years have led several ATII members to contact us with queries related to how AI is affecting their own and others' professional work as translators and interpreters.

It was in response to these collective concerns that, at noon on 14 February, the ATII led an hour-long online dialogue with interested members to learn more about the impact of AI on their professional experience.

At the heart of this exchange were three key questions:

1. As translators/interpreters, how have you been experiencing recent changes to the profession, such as those related to AI, machine translation (MT), reduced opportunities for freelance translators, and shifts in how the public perceives the value and usage of language?
2. How have you been responding to these changes?
3. What ideas do you have for how the ATII might support and advocate for its members in the midst of these changes?

The gathering brought together 18 ATII members from across the island and beyond, representing all membership categories and a range of professional stages and perspectives.

The rich discussion that ensued reminded us not only that there is strength in numbers but also that there is solidarity in community and communication.

Stay tuned for a summary of the discussion points and for details about a follow-up event.

Trish Van Bolderen
ATII Honorary Secretary

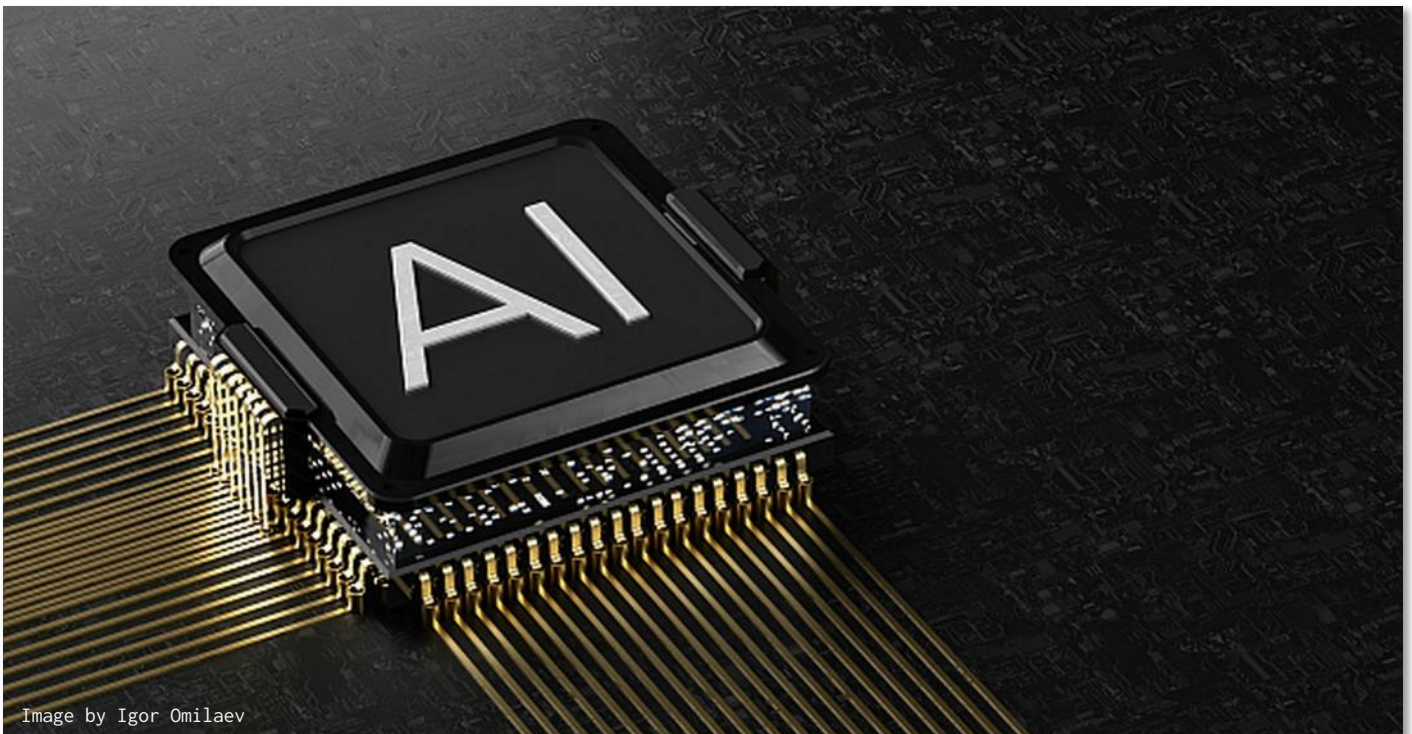
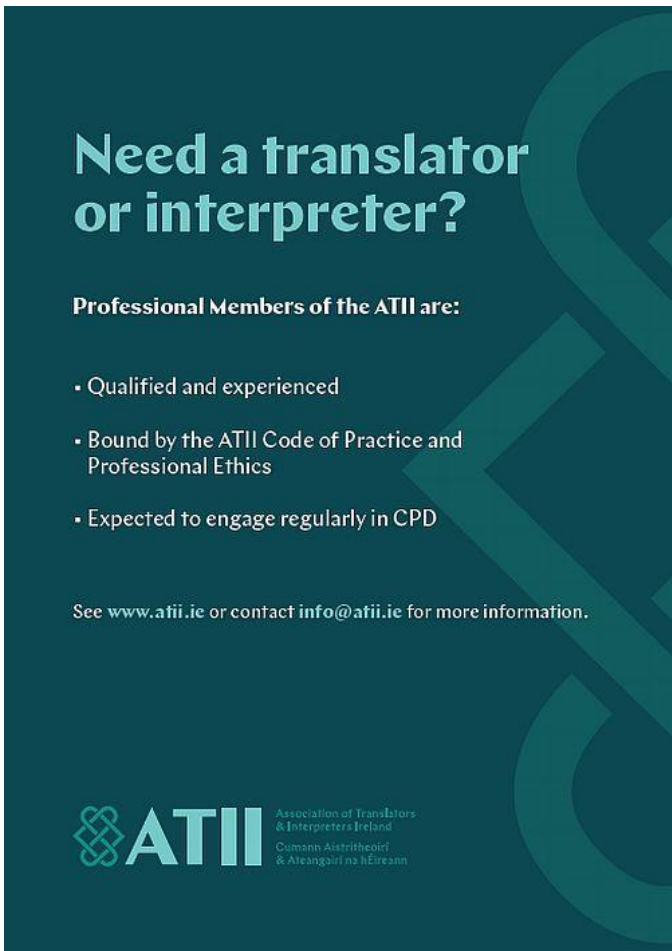


Image by Igor Omilaev

Promoting ATII members

When ATII members agreed with a motion put forward at the 37th AGM in 2023 to embark on a new name, identity, website - a complete rebranding in fact - this opened lots of scope for increasing ATII's visibility and in doing so promoting awareness of our members and their specific skills. As mentioned in the editorial, after much discussion, the decision was made to run advertisements in two publications - *The Law Gazette* and the *PAI review* during 2025.

[Roisin Ryan](#), who designed our new logo, was consulted once again and provided us with the design for the advertisements. The executive committee will review the situation at the end of the year in relation to repeating the exercise. To ascertain if these ads have been beneficial to our members, we really need you, the members (especially ATII Certified Legal Translators), to let us know if you have had any increase in your work as a result of the ads.



Need a translator or interpreter?

Professional Members of the ATII are:

- Qualified and experienced
- Bound by the ATII Code of Practice and Professional Ethics
- Expected to engage regularly in CPD

See www.atii.ie or contact info@atii.ie for more information.

ATII Association of Translators & Interpreters Ireland
Cumann Aistritheoirí & Aiteangairí na hÉireann

PAI Review advertisement



Need an Accredited Legal Translator?

Look no further...
For all your legal and official translation needs, download our register of ATII Certified Legal Translators at www.atii.ie or contact info@atii.ie

ATII Association of Translators & Interpreters Ireland

Law Gazette advertisement



Snippets

ATII Honorary Membership

December 2024 marked the long-awaited conferring of ATII Honorary membership on co-founder Anne Bernard Kearney. As Anne lives and works in Boston, finding a suitable date proved to be a little tricky. However, happily, she was able to join the ATII executive committee as well as her friends and family, at 36 Fenian Street on 19 December to receive her citation.

In 1985, Anne attended a translation workshop in Arles, France, where another attendee asked if there was a translators' association in Ireland. When Anne replied that she didn't think there was, it was suggested that she could set one up. Anne followed up on this suggestion and set things in motion, with the collaboration of Cormac Ó Cuilleain, translator, influential scholar and Professor Emeritus, formerly of Trinity College Dublin's Department of Italian, and John F. Deane, poet, novelist and publisher. By 1986 the then Irish Translators' Association (ITA) was officially launched. The Association will celebrate its 40th anniversary in 2026.

[Anne Bernard](#) grew up in Paris of a French father and an Irish mother and is a qualified architect, an artist, a writer and translator. She studied architecture at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris and worked for a number of years as an architect in Dublin. However, in parallel, she had an ongoing interest in poetry and in translation.

Now living in America, she lectures on French in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at Boston College, Massachusetts.

Anne has translated a large body of work, both poetry and prose, and continues to collaborate with French poet Nicole Laurent-Catrice. She is the French translator of Irish poets, including Seamus Heaney, Seamus Deane and Paula Meehan among others.

In 1990, the Académie Française awarded Anne the Prix Amic for her translations of Séamus Heaney's poetry. She is the author of *Six Femmes Celtes*, which she translated herself and which was published with the title *Lovers, Queens and Strangers, Strong Women in Celtic Myth*. The book was later translated into Romanian.

Anne taught a preparatory course for people preparing to take the Institute of Linguists Diploma in Translation with DCU Language Services from 1990 to 1995.

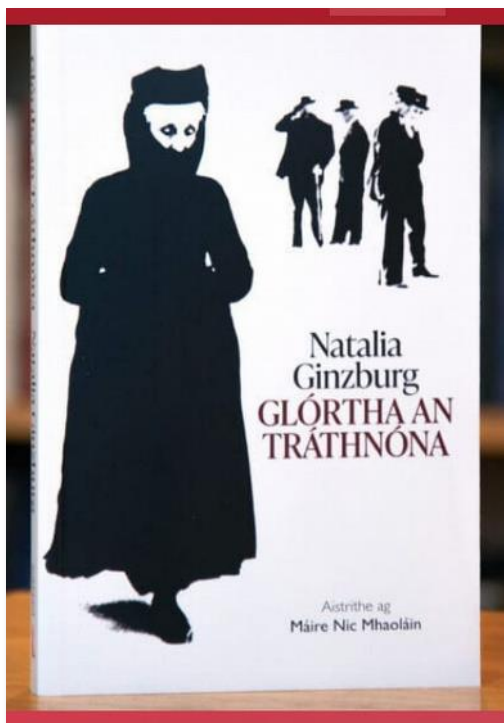
Anne has kept up her interest in art and devotes one day a week to drawing, etching and painting.



Anne Bernard with fellow ATII Honorary Members Michael Cronin, Máire Nic Mhaoláin, Hans-Christian Oeser and Cormac Ó Cuilleain

Italian Irish connections

Another Honorary Member (2005) and former ATII (then ITIA) Chair, Máire Nic Mhaoláin translated Michaela Murgia's (1972 – 2023) novel *Accabadora* in 2023 ([ATII Bulletin 2024/01](#)) and now she has produced yet another Irish translation of an Italian writer, Natalia Ginzburg (1917 – 1991).



When the novel *Le voci della sera* was published in 1964, Ginzburg was already lauded as being among the finest and most prolific Italian writers of her time. The Irish version *Glórtha an Tráthnóna* was published by the Donegal-based company [éabhloid](#) last year.

The story is set in a small town ('which doesn't appear on any map') in northwest Italy, around 1950. The first-person narrator is a young unmarried woman in her twenties, whose family, while by no means rich, are far from poor. She presents a vivid (sometimes amusing, sometimes sombre) picture of her own family life and that of her neighbours, especially of the family who own the local cloth factory where the whole countryside is employed. The Second World War and the rise and fall of Fascism are recent memories, but such subjects usually come up in a matter-of-fact way amid discussions on love, marriage, invitations and other social events and interests. Conversation is the medium of information here. The author's touch appears light, but her sharp eye and ear is informing the narrator's voice!

What's Hot

As mentioned in this issue's editorial, the arts – song, literature, film and theatre can be strong messengers of many things. Two recent plays in London theatres are putting translators in the the spotlight: *Kyoto* and *Churchill in Moscow*. The latter stages a meeting between Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin in 1942 where suspicion and distrust abound. Just behind their shoulders are the interpreters who, apparently, smooth the path of the discussion, “judiciously losing insults in the translation” according to a UK newspaper review. Would an interpreter at a recent meeting between two heads of state in the USA have achieved a better outcome? Hmmm

What's Not

The Bulletin has heard tell of a very large international LSP, working on behalf of a world wide company, which is now looking at becoming a big player in literary translation. The LSP is offering literary translators 'an exciting opportunity to collaborate in a new project evaluating the quality of book translations'. This would entail machine translation post editing and quality control of translations from English into German and English into Spanish @ 6.5 US dollars per page. Hmmm

New members

New Certified Legal Translators

Sarah Jane Aberásturi
Catalan into English

Véronique Eloir
English into French

Mennatallah Mansy
Arabic into English

New Associate Members

Anna Lojewska
English <> Polish

Carole Redmond
English <> French

Tayla Sanchez Tzirulnik Cronin
English <> Portuguese - Europe

Patrick Schwanberg
Chinese - Mandarin into English
German into English

Mariusz Sztuczka
English <> Polish

Ilaria Vrenna
English <> Italian

Mustafa Kamal Yousufzai
English <> Dari
English <> Persian

New Student Members

Donncha Cuttriss

Zoe Fitzsimmons

Emma Maldea

Joining the ATII

The Association of Translators and Interpreters Ireland is pleased to welcome new members to the association. We currently have the following categories of membership:

- ◆ **Professional**
- ◆ **Associate**
- ◆ **Student**
- ◆ **Honorary**

Professional Membership is awarded to translators or interpreters who meet the strict criteria of the ATII based on qualifications and level of experience.

Applicants must also achieve a PASS in the annual Professional Membership Examination (translator or interpreter) set by the ATII.

Associate Membership may be granted to holders of a third-level qualification in translation and/or interpreting and/or languages or to holders of a third-level qualification with relevant experience.

Student Membership is available to persons undertaking undergraduate studies in any discipline or those undertaking postgraduate studies in translation or interpreting.

Honorary Membership is awarded by the ATII AGM to persons in Ireland or abroad who have distinguished themselves in the field of translation and/or interpreting.

Contact the ATII

Postal Address

c/o Trinity Centre for Literary & Cultural Translation
Trinity College Dublin
Dublin 2
Ireland

Email

info@atii.ie

Website

www.atii.ie

ATII Bulletin

Editor

Anne Larchet
bulletin@atii.ie

Proofreader

Penelope Eades-Alvarez

Design

Róisín Ryan
roryan.com

Layout

Graziano Ciulli

To subscribe to the ATII Bulletin, send an email to atiibulletin+subscribe@groups.io

ATII Executive Committee 2024-2025

Mary Phelan
Chairperson

Trish Van Bolderen
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Graziano Ciulli
Honorary Treasurer

Annette Schiller
Chair of Professional Membership Sub-Committee

Sarah Jane Aberasturi
Chair of Certification Sub-Committee

Anne Larchet
ATII Bulletin Editor

Cristina Barroso Durán

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