

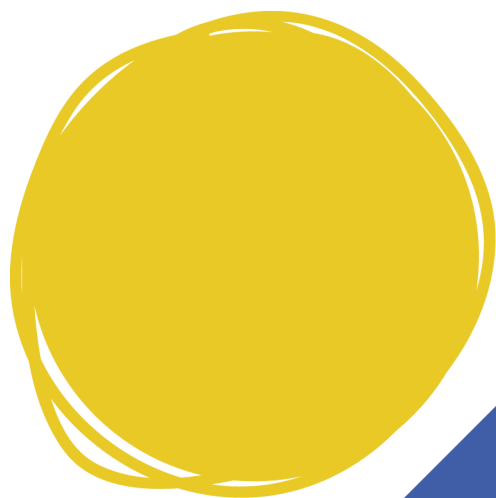
# ITIA

# Bulletin

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2023 / 04

Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association  
Cumann Aistritheoirí agus Ateangairí na hÉireann



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# Editorial

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**A**n array of T&I topics appears in this fourth issue of the 2023 ITIA Bulletin and should cater for all interests.

Starting at home, the 37th AGM was held online (as has become the norm), where the items on the agenda were covered in good time.

As well as all the subcommittees (Professional Membership, Certified and Mentoring) who gave account of their activities over the last year, the officers - Chair Mary Phelan, Honorary Secretary Tara Russell and Honorary Treasurer Graziano Ciulli also gave us their reports. We are very sorry to lose ITIA Secretary Tara who has been a great asset to the executive committee with her clear-thinking contributions and impeccable committee meeting minutes. We can only wish her the very best for the future and no doubt will see her at some of the ITIA events. Taking on the mantle will be Trish Van Bolderen who will no doubt take on the new role with her usual spirit.

Two very positive and interesting motions were presented to the membership to vote on at the AGM. The first one was one of the most important to be put to an AGM in recent years – the creation of a new identity for the association which means a new name, brand, colours etc. The second motion was a proposal to vote for long overdue honorary membership for one of the ITIA's founding members. Read all about these developments in News from the 37th AGM.

Our first article is by Vanessa Kelly, an ISL interpreter who is very passionate about her work and has written a very positive piece about her career path and how she enjoys her job.

Moving much further away, to Africa to be precise, Dr Vincent Magugu, East Africa Interpreters' and Translators' and Association (EAITA) tells us about how he and other African associations, members of FIT, joined forces to set up the new FIT regional centre, FIT Africa, which was officially launched at a conference hosted by the South African Translators' Institute (SATI) in Stellenbosch, South Africa, in September. The ITIA's membership in FIT allows us access to other T & I associations and we can learn a lot about how they organise themselves. It also gives us a wide window on associations outside of Europe and the West, which is always good for perspective.

Chair Mary Phelan keeps a watchful eye on interpreting services in Ireland, in particular in state service settings, which she regularly shares with the Bulletin. For this issue she reports on the current state of healthcare interpreting, including a response from the HSE to a public representative's enquiry.

And there is lots of even more positive news in our regular Worth-a-Click feature - T & I professionals taking legal action to assert their rights (and winning), high praise for interpreters from a prize winning Irish writer and the latest App to be used at the 2024 Olympics in Paris.

All of us on the ITIA (soon-to-be ATII) would like to wish all our members and Bulletin readers a very Happy Xmas and the very best for 2024.

**Anne Larchet**

Editor

# So you want to be an ISL interpreter...



*Vanessa Kelly qualified as an ISL/English Interpreter in 2018. She is a committee member of the [Council of Irish Sign Language Interpreters \(CISLI\)](#).*

## *Sign language interpreting as a career*

Is interpreting something you have ever thought about as a career? Maybe not, but perhaps it's something you should think about. What do you think of when you think of sign language interpreting? Do you only think of the person you might see at the side of the TV screen at all hours of the night/early morning? Well, believe me, sign language interpreting is a lot more – it is a full-time career.

So how did my personal story begin and how did I become an Irish Sign Language/English Interpreter? It began when I started work as a Communications Support Worker in a Further Education College in Dublin. This meant that I supported a student in a classroom setting, taking notes and supporting them when needed. One year, I happened to be assigned to a Deaf student in this College. While I took notes during the classes, the student also had a team of interpreters on a daily basis. As a result, I became very interested in their role and how they communicated with the student. I started to pick up different signs so I could communicate with them. So much so, that a mere week into the course, I enrolled in Irish Sign Language (ISL) classes facilitated by the Irish Deaf Society who were at that time based in Blessington Street, before they made the move to Cabra and the creation of the Deaf Village Ireland (DVI).

I was thoroughly invested in this from day one, and the fact that I was now able to start communicating with the student, opened up a new world for me. I became fascinated with Deaf culture and all it involved.

These beginner ISL classes ran in the evening from September to April for four years. I also volunteered in the Deaf Village, which incorporates various organisations. This gave me great experience as I helped out in summer camps for children and teenagers where I worked on reception and also set up Irish Sign Language classes.

During this time, I stayed with my initial student for three years, and was also placed with other Deaf students in other Colleges in Dublin. All this experience reinforced my passion for embarking on a career as an ISL Interpreter.

### **Choosing between interpreting and teaching**

At the end of six years of classes with students and volunteering, I decided it was time to continue on my journey to become an ISL/English Interpreter. The first port of call for this was to apply for a BA in Deaf Studies (ISL Interpreting) in the Centre for Deaf Studies at Trinity College Dublin. I was delighted to be accepted on the course. At the end of the second year (depending on results), you could choose your area of interest, interpreting or teaching.

I chose interpreting, which meant two further years of study. Throughout this time, I remained involved with the Deaf Village and continued to gain experience while I was studying.

## ***'Irish Sign Language was officially recognised as a language in the ISL Act 2017'***

Then a momentous event happened in the passing of the ISL Act 2017. This meant that as Irish Sign Language was officially recognised as a language, the Deaf community was legally entitled to have an interpreter in all public arenas and as a result there would be a huge increase for the services of sign language interpreters.

In Ireland we are now more aware of equality, diversity and why everyone has the right to participate in society as full citizens.

The Irish Deaf Society (IDS) had advocated in many ways for many years to have ISL recognised including protesting at Leinster House and I am very proud to have been involved with them. Since the passing of the ISL Act 2017, demand for sign language interpreting services has increased.



#### A career working in many different sectors

Fast forward to my graduation and this is where my career started. The day after receiving my results I got a call offering me a job in the Deaf Village. All the studying and all the volunteering experience was now officially put into practice for my new career.

In the 5 years since I graduated, my career has taken me into all the areas that it is possible to be employed in, including the House of the Oireachtas, Trinity College Dublin and REACH Deaf Services. However, there is also the option of self-employment. I have covered jobs in very different sectors, such as medical, education, employment, platform work at conferences, theatre and political events and signing at historical events like when Pope Frances visited Ireland. Although there are varied and extreme scenarios and instances, I consider myself privileged to be there at all these extremely personal experiences for Deaf people, including the birth of a new baby.

While the above gives an indication of my journey to becoming an interpreter and what was involved, I cannot conclude without giving an overview of what my career as an interpreter is really like – because this isn't just a job. It is a career.

***'I count myself very lucky to be part of this noble profession'***

No two days are ever the same. The main goal is bridging the communication gap, ensuring equality between the Deaf community and the hearing community. I have made numerous friends and met numerous colleagues over the years. I am proud that some of my colleagues are among the first cohort of Deaf interpreters to graduate from Trinity College Dublin. We all work as a team.

I count myself very lucky to be part of this noble profession, and I welcome the varied challenges it brings. It is a fact that you never stop learning.

Going back to my initial question – Is interpreting something you have thought about as a career? Well, if the answer is that you are interested in the most varied career you could want, as well as the most rewarding – then – why not?

I can now honestly say that anything is possible if you put your mind to it.

# Africa Rising



***Vincent Magugu is the Chairperson of FIT Africa, and is a member of the East Africa Translators and Interpreters Association (EAITA) Chairperson of the Training and Accreditation Committee.***

## ***FIT Africa officially launched***

**W**hen the FIT Africa Regional Centre was established during an online inaugural meeting on the 29th of July 2023, the board was elected and hit the ground running. On the 26th of September, FIT Africa was officially launched in Stellenbosch in South Africa. The birth of FIT Africa marked a historic moment both for Africa and FIT, with FIT celebrating its 70th anniversary this year! The FIT Africa RC is an important addition to the larger FIT family. As the fourth Regional Centre, at FIT Africa we are delighted to have received a warm welcome from our colleagues across FIT. We have our work cut out for us and there are many important initiatives we plan to drive on the continent in support of the industry, associations and professionals..

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The linguistic landscape in Africa is predominantly multilingual – both on societal and individual levels. This multilingualism has prompted a majority of African countries to adopt bi/multi-lingual policies, identifying specific national and official language(s). Adoption of such policies, however, has not been

without challenges. Since over half a century ago most of Africa gained independence from colonial rule. The biggest challenge is arguably that linguistic diversity – which is closely tied to diverse ethnic identities – has been exploited politically to cause and incite ethnic tensions and conflicts among communities. Translators and interpreters in Africa continue to mediate these linguistic and cultural barriers but much still needs to be done. No single person should be discriminated against on the basis of their ethnicity and/or their language. Language is an integral part of societal heritage and herein lies vast knowledge. As FIT Africa, we recognize and support the work that translators, interpreters and terminologists do in preserving and mediating linguistic and cultural heritage.

## ***‘The linguistic landscape in Africa is predominantly multilingual’***

The implementation of bi/multi-lingual policies places translation, interpretation and terminology development in a central position. This, coupled with the increased opening up of the continent to global trade, has further heightened the need for translators, interpreters and terminologists. It is for these reasons, among others, that Africa has continued to experience an increase in the number of professionals pursuing full time careers predominantly as translators and interpreters. As young and upcoming professionals pursue these careers, FIT Africa is ready to assist with establishing and supporting vibrant professional associations that will meet the needs of their members across Africa.



As FIT Africa, we are also aware that our members comprise mostly of young professionals, which is to be expected given that around 60% of the African population is younger than 25 years. This positions associations, and by extension FIT Africa, as key drivers of professional development and mentorship programmes. Most of the individual translators, interpreters and terminologists are in the first decade and the early stages of the second decade of their careers. It is for this reason that FIT Africa has prioritized mapping out TTI associations across Africa to ensure that professionals working in each of the 54 countries are represented in one way or another in FIT. We acknowledge that this will be a gradual process that FIT Africa will commit to right to the end. Currently, six African countries are represented in FIT Africa and the journey to bring the remaining 49 into the fold has already begun, with considerable progress being made in Cabo Verde and Côte d'Ivoire.

The other issue that continues to be a challenge for most of the professionals working in the indigenous African languages is certification and accreditation. Most African universities are currently developing curricula in the African languages and this has gone a long way to increase the pool of linguists working in and between various African languages. Of course, a lot still needs to be done in developing and standardizing terminology orthographies. Currently in Africa, only the South African Translator's Institute (SATI) has a long-standing recognized accreditation system dating back to 1956. Despite this accreditation system serving the South African languages,

including South African Sign Language and a relatively large number of foreign languages, there is a huge gap that needs to be filled for the over 2000 languages that are not yet covered by any certification and accreditation system. FIT Africa wishes to invite partners and collaborators in this regard to ensure that most, if not all, of the African languages have accreditation systems in place. This is particularly important given that every African language should take up its rightful place in the linguistic landscape of Africa. There can be little doubt that this will go a long way to increase the visibility and value of languages of lesser diffusion.

## ***'Certification and accreditation in the indigenous African languages is a challenge'***

As we continue with our agenda, we are confident knowing that globally we have a network of regional centres and peers with whom we can partner and collaborate. We also recognize the immense potential of our member associations and their individual members in Africa. We are eager to tap into diverse talents that exist on our vibrant, diverse continent. FIT Africa is at the ready to meet our objectives as set out in our strategic plan.



# Healthcare Interpreting



## Healthcare interpreting in general practices

The first step for anyone seeking health care in Ireland is to go to a GP. This has always been difficult for service users who are not proficient in English because spoken language interpreters are not routinely provided. GPs try and manage with the help of family members, children, other patients, Google Translate, Microsoft Translator, even Alexa. Anecdotal evidence would suggest that many people avail of cheap flights to return home to access medical services in their own language. But not everyone can do that.

In February 2022, Ukrainian people started moving to Ireland to flee the war and Ukrainian beneficiaries of temporary protection are provided with interpreters when accessing GP services. There is also a telephone interpreting services for Ukrainian people in Ireland who need to access health services. These services are a useful model that could and should be extended to all languages. However, they would be even better if interpreters had access to accredited training and were tested to ensure competency.

On 11th July 2023, Neasa Hourigan, Green Party T.D. for Dublin Central, asked Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly to outline 'how each individual CHO [Community Healthcare Organisation] funds interpreting services in general practices; if he plans to improve access to interpreters in general practice by establishing a central service for use across all CHOs; and if he will make a statement on the matter'. [33798/23]

The Health Service Executive sent a written response to Neasa Hourigan, which she has kindly shared with the ITIA. Unfortunately, the response fails to address the specific query in relation to interpreting services in general practices and does not even refer to Ukrainian beneficiaries of temporary protection.

**Mary Phelan is director of the Centre for Translation and Textual Studies at Dublin City University and chairperson of the Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association.**

Below is the response from the HSE:

*Dear Deputy Hourigan,*

*The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 33798/23) which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.*

*The Health Service can provide an Interpreter for those who can't communicate in English (where appropriate), there is no centrally held budget for this, the health service who arranges the interpretation pays for it, e.g. each hospital or health clinic pays for their own Interpreter. The HSE developed resources for those planning to use the services of an interpreter which can be found at the links below:*

*On Speaking Terms: Good Practice Guidelines for Staff in the Provision of Interpreting Services and Guideline for Communication in Cross-Cultural General Practice Consultations*

*The HSE is currently examining the implementation requirements for the use of the Office of Government Procurement framework for the provision of Interpretation services (excluding Irish Language services).*

*I trust this is of assistance.*

*Seán McArt  
General Manager Primary Care  
National Community Operations*



# News from the 37th AGM

## ITIA becomes ATII

As mentioned in the editorial, the 37th ITIA AGM was held online on 14th October and after all the main items on the agenda had been covered, two motions were presented to the members to vote on. The first was probably one of the most significant motions to be put to members in recent times – a proposal to change the name of the ITIA.



Earlier this year, the executive committee decided it was time to move away from blue and yellow and make a fresh start with a rebrand incorporating a new logo, new brand colours and, most importantly, a new

website. The blue square with a small yellow square had been our logo for the last twenty years and as we had decided to update the website it made sense to also update all our visual 'assets' - logos, headed notepaper, the ITIA Bulletin, members' badges, etc

This then led to discussions in relation to our name and how a change would better reflect the ITIA as it is now in 2023. In accordance with our constitution, the executive committee have to put such a proposal to the membership at an AGM.

Prior to the meeting members were supplied with a healthy list of very good reasons for the proposed change which included:

- A new name will help to anchor the new look.
- The domain name itia.ie is not available, as it belongs to the Irish Tyre Industry Association. A suitable acronym would be good for SEO purposes.
- Most members either live in Ireland or have lived or studied here, but many are not actually Irish. Therefore, the word 'Irish' does not reflect the reality of many members.
- It is often wrongly assumed that the ITIA is an association of translators and interpreters who work in Irish only.

And so to the vote – the majority of members voted in favour of the name change from Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association (ITIA) to Association of Translators and Interpreters Ireland (ATII).



The change will be brought out on a phased basis, starting with the new website scheduled for early in 2024 and members will be informed along the way.

### Honorary Membership

The second motion was a proposal to award Honorary Membership of the association to Anne Bernard Kearney for her initiative in co-founding the ITIA (then known as the ITA) and for her contribution to translation into and out of French, especially of poetry by Irish poets.

The membership unanimously accepted the proposal and we very much look forward to holding an award ceremony for Anne Bernard in 2024. Members will be informed in good time and we hope that you will be able to join us in celebrating Anne's contribution to our association. If it wasn't for her and the other two co-founders, we wouldn't be here today.

# What's HOT

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The [Fairwork](#) project, based at Oxford Internet Institute and WZB Berlin Social Centre, is a global network of researchers who carry out research on digital labour platforms and artificial intelligence. Millions of workers interface with these technologies which bring both benefits and risks. Fairwork evaluates platforms and employers against measures of fairness and then rank them based on their five principles of fair platform work. The principles are fair pay, fair conditions, fair contracts, fair management and fair representation. Not unlike the situation for freelance translators and interpreters, platform workers don't have the option of collective bargaining and as a result neither do they have the opportunity to negotiate wages or working conditions.

It's good to know that there is a monitoring process out there.

# What's NOT

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And speaking of work practices, this [Irish Times article](#) shows that unfair practices (in some instances) will not always prevail. It's unfortunate an interpreter had to undertake the onerous, and no doubt stressful, task of bringing a T & I agency before the Workplace Relations Commission for wrongful dismissal. The agency seemed to have difficulty in deciding if the 'translators' were employees or not according to the WRC adjudicating officer. Neither the first nor the last time we will read about such goings on.

# Worth-a-click

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Danish authors, publishers and the collecting society CopyDan have had a long legal battle with the state-owned library service, Nota, about the non-payment of copyright for the use of their work in audiobooks. The use of audio books for visually impaired people in Denmark has been a great success with up to 300,000 users per year. The legal proceedings began in 2021 and concluded in August of this year with the Commission on Copyright Licensing ruling that authors, publishers and translators are to be paid retrospectively from 2018. Read all about this victory in [CEATL's news](#) section.

Sticking with the good news, Irish author John Banville had heaps of praise for interpreters in this [article](#) in The Guardian. He marvels at the 'wizardry' required to carry out the task of interpreting both consecutively and simultaneously and is a strong believer that AI will not be up to the task. So nice to be appreciated!

Interpreters in Ireland and translators in Denmark aren't the only ones prepared to embark on long drawn-out legal proceedings to be paid what is rightly owed to them, as reported in this news item from [Slator](#). Interpreters in California took a class action lawsuit in 2022 against AMN Healthcare for undercompensating them for overtime hours. A California District Court ordered AMN Healthcare to make a large settlement in November 2023. Patience clearly required to stay the course.

With 15 million people expected to attend the 2024 Olympics in Paris, the Paris metro operator, RATP, has supplied its staff with an instant translation app called Tradivia, purportedly able to offer translation in 16 languages. The [Journal.ie](#) reports that the app translates spoken queries into French for RATP's staff whose answers are then in turn translated back into the visitor's language. The metro apparently has more than 300 stations, so accuracy will be a must if people are to get where they are supposed to be going.

# New Members

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## New Associate Members

**Julia Alvares Campos**

English < > Portuguese (Brazil)

**Aurora Barbizzi**

Italian into English  
Spanish into Italian

**Amélie Le Jeune-Dehay**

English into French

**Agnieszka Mckeon**

Polish into English  
French into English

**Helen Mykhailyk**

English < > Ukrainian  
English < > Russian

**Mariia Myronchenko**

Ukrainian into English  
Russian into English

**Áine Ní Cholchúin**

English < > Irish

**Ildiko Somogyi**

English < > Hungarian

**Agnieszka Woytyna**

English < > Polish

## New Student Members

**Patricia Montes-Torres**

**Kristina Nashakhalova**  
**Sean William O'Mahony**

# Joining the ITIA

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The Irish Translators' & Interpreters' Association 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 ITIA based on qualification and level of experience.

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

**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 ITIA AGM to persons in Ireland or abroad who have distinguished themselves in the field of translation and interpreting.

# Contacting the ITIA

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## ITIA/ATII Executive Committee 2023-2024

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Trish Van Bolderen

Honorary Treasurer

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