

## **Collège international des Traducteurs littéraires en Arles (CITL) and Réseau européen des Centres de traduction littéraire (RECIT)**

### **Background**

The first European college of literary translation was launched in Straelen (FRG) on January 1st, 1978. After a European conference organised on June 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> in 1985 in Arles, France, which gathered about 150 professionals coming from 14 countries, the necessity of a social and professional acknowledgment of literary translators was raised. This meeting notably contributed to the launching of a network of translation centres throughout the EU and Europe, between 1987 and 1998. The Collège international des Traducteurs littéraires en Arles was created in 1987. In 2000, RECIT (Réseau européen des centres de traduction littéraire) was launched as a French association, settled in Arles. RECIT is gathering ten members in 2008, out of which two are French: CITL and MEET (Maison des écrivains étrangers et des traducteurs) à Saint-Nazaire which mainly welcomes authors.

### **How it works**

All centres affiliated to RECIT must fulfil some requirements:

- to offer translators and authors a library, rooms and other facilities for continuing training;
- to propose autonomous manifestations; as an example, CITL has launched ATLAS Junior Price, dedicated to students of high schools in five languages: German, English, Spanish, Italian and Provençal. Winners receive vouchers to buy books.
- to take part into any local, regional, national or international symposium or colloquium tending to spread out the knowledge about literary translation as part of cultural heritage. Specifically in Arles, the cost of a day in residency amounts to 15 euros/day. Different possibilities of grants exist through the French National Centre of book (CNL, Centre national du livre), Region Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur and the European Commission (Culture programme).

Candidates have to apply for the grant while applying for the residency. Periods of stay are two weeks up to three months long. Translators may require specific works to use, before coming to Arles. They may use a computer provided by the Centre. Each of them is invited to take part into conferences, readings and any kind of manifestation liable to promote literature and literary translation.

The priority is given to professional literary translators or to authors being also translators themselves. Translators may come with the author the work of whom they are translating. The candidacy file requires the list of main translated works and the on going translation, for which the residency is required. The publisher's contract must also be sent. Finally, the type of social security granted during the staying in Arles, is asked. The file is rather easy to fill up and does not require any further criteria. Potential effects on the mobility of national and foreign professionals (includes also compatibility with EC regulations).

The potential effects on the mobility are various. First of all, such a residency consists of an acknowledgment of translators as skilled and demanding professionals, needing specific conditions to work. Secondly, it allows invited translators and authors to discover a new cultural and professional context, to the extent that CITL's guests are proposed to take part into meetings, conferences or any kind of intervention liable to promote reading and translation. Finally, the staying in Arles has benefits on translators when they are back in their own country (CV added value, experience of a scheme which could be applied in their own country, strengthening of international contacts).

## **Results**

CITL welcomes about 98 translators per year, in other terms, people representing 34 countries and 25 languages. The origin of translators is as follows:

- France : 17% ;
- European Union : 48% ;
- Other European countries : 20% ; and
- Rest of the World : 24%.

No formal evaluation was made of the CITL's work, but CITL made reports in the frame of Culture programme. What is asserted by its Director is the continuity of candidates' application during all these years (twenty). CITL considers its mission necessary and totally useful for the circulation of Literature and Human sciences throughout Europe and the World. Without an EU support, it seems difficult to develop activities at this scale, only relying on local or private funding.

One of the main topics of debates could be how to use this pan-European experience to have a clear view of the situation of translators in each European country and to see what is the relationship between their professional status in their own country and the possibilities offered by translation centres. Could not these services offered to translators be considered as part of continuing professional training and validated as such?

Of course, RECIT members coordinate their criteria and types of services provided. But they cannot ignore the disparity of means and habits between European centres.

The CITL's scheme is based on an absolute necessity for literary translators who do need specific spaces and confrontations to have their skills developed. As an artist, a literary translator is always learning. That is why literary translation and authors' residencies should be considered as part of these professionals' continuing training and validated as such.

## **Sources**

Contact details: Collège international des Traducteurs littéraires en Arles (CITL) and Réseau européen des Centres de traduction littéraire (RECIT); CITL, Espace Van Gogh 13200 – Arles; Tel.: + 33 4 90 52 05 50. Website : <http://www.atlas-citl.org>

An interview with Claude Bléton (in 2003), former Directeur of CITL

An interview with Françoise Cartano (2008), Director of CITL

Public CITL's documents including the candidacies' files.

## **Author**

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