



**ENPSIT**

**European Network**

**for**

**Public Service Interpreting and Translation**

**Political Recommendations**

These political recommendations were adopted at the 1<sup>st</sup> ENPSIT network meeting at the Committee of the Regions in Brussels on October 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013



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# Political Recommendations for the sector of Social Interpreting and Translation

## **Preface**

Some of the key terms of the EQUAL community programming refer to the “dissemination” and “transferability” as well as “sustainability” of the products developed and the results obtained within the framework of the projects subsidised by EQUAL. The best practices and the resolutions stemming from the EQUAL projects must also be communicated to those who are politically responsible so that they can incorporate them into their future political action plans.

The members of the transnational TRIALOG partnership have therefore opted for an original presentation of their recommendations. For the social translation and interpreting sector we have retained five main chapters (resolutions 1 to 5). For each resolution, we propose concrete recommendations. By presenting our political recommendations in this manner, the people who are politically responsible will be able to identify more easily at which level(s) of the resolutions and/or the recommendations they can become active, according to their own subjects and within their own scope. In addition, the stakeholders within our sector will also be able to follow up more readily which recommendation has been implemented by which level of power.

These resolutions and recommendations have been written so as to be easily transferable and usable in different countries and at different levels of power. Given that this text is a first effort to present recommendations for the social interpreting and translation sector in all European countries, we would like to stress that it is a dynamic document. The document will change over time and, in the future, it will certainly be amended and expanded according to the specific geographical locations.

The recommendations are presented from the general to the more specific. Thus, the informed reader will first receive a brief overview of the resolutions, which will allow him to identify the themes to be touched upon.

Second, for each resolution the corresponding recommendations will be listed so as to give the reader an idea of the concrete recommendations linked with the different resolutions.

Third, for each resolution, an explanatory text will be provided and the usefulness of and necessity for each recommendation will be highlighted. Here, readers who want to increase their understanding of our reasoning, will find something to their liking. This third part, which is the central and most substantial part of the document, will be preceded by a short lexicon allowing us to have a common understanding of a number of terms and concepts used throughout the document. The lexicon will be followed by an introduction outlining the *raison d'être* of our sector.

The present resolutions and recommendations are the result of the Transnational Cooperation Agreement TRIALOG. The partners of TRIALOG’s “social translation and interpreting” working group have maintained contact with other social translation and interpreting services, notably in Belgium, France, Switzerland and Germany. These contacts have been very useful for the elaboration of the present document. In addition, by attending several conferences and seminars we have been able to meet other stakeholders, who have also provided valuable information for the drafting of the recommendations. We particularly want to mention the national seminar on the “professional profile” (11 September 2006 in Brussels), the international TRIALOG seminar “Social interpreting – the challenges, the limitations, the future” (15-16 September 2006 in Toulouse), the seminar “Interpreting in the social context: a tool for a public non-discrimination policy?” (21 November 2006 in Lyon) and the international forum “Translation, Interpreting and Social Activism” (28-30 April 2007 in Granada). During these gatherings, we have been able to meet with numerous organisations from different countries. The information provided by them has also contributed, one way or the other, to develop this document. Finally, and very concretely, these recommendations have also been influenced by the multiple work meetings and gatherings in the past three years between, on the one hand, social translation and interpreting services and the Belgian advice and support services, and, on the other hand, by fruitful meetings within the framework of the TRIALOG working group « social translation and interpreting » which unites the Belgian and French partners.

## **RESOLUTIONS**

Resolution 1 Recognise social translation and interpreting as a necessary tool for an EU integration policy that stands for diversity and equal opportunities

Resolution 2 Guarantee the right to qualitative language assistance in a social context, including public service provision. This right must evolve from a right in principle to a legally enforceable right

Resolution 3 Implement a European quality standard for social translation and interpreting

Resolution 4 Recognise and fund social translation and interpreting services

Resolution 5 Support consultation and partnership structures at various levels: European, national, regional...

## **Resolutions and Recommendations**

Resolution 1 Recognise social translation and interpreting as a necessary tool for an EU integration policy that stands for diversity and equal opportunities

**Recommendation 1.1 Encourage the use of social translation and interpreting**

FOR:

- Equal access to each service
- Integration of ethnic minorities
- A shared and active citizenship: giving everyone the opportunity to enjoy their rights and fulfil their obligations
- A prompt application of the existing rules at all policy levels
- A contribution to learning the national language
- A reduction in the total social cost

Resolution 2 Guarantee the right to qualitative language assistance in a social context, including public service provision. This right must evolve from a right in principle to a legally enforceable right

**Recommendation 2.1 Guarantee and improve access to language assistance**

- Optimise supply by establishing and promoting partnerships between social translation and interpreting services
- Guarantee optimal territorial coverage

Resolution 3 Implement a European quality standard for social translation and interpreting

**Recommendation 3.1 Define a European professional profile for social translators and interpreters**

**Recommendation 3.2 define a European code of ethics for social translation and interpreting**

**Recommendation 3.3 define a European quality standard for social translation and interpreting studies**

- Developing basic and advanced courses of study for social translators and interpreters
- Formal recognition of the course of study by the competent authorities
- Guarantees that only trained interpreters and translators are used
- The public administration facilitates access to the course of study by recognising qualifications and/or competencies acquired elsewhere

**Recommendation 3.4 define a European quality standard for social translation and interpreting services**

**Recommendation 3.5 consultation, awareness raising and training for user services**

Resolution 4 Recognise and fund social translation and interpreting services

**Recommendation 4.1 Recognise and structurally embed social translation and interpreting services through legislation and appropriate subsidies**

**Recommendation 4.2 Funding for social translation and interpreting work by the various social and public services that use social translators and interpreters**

**Recommendation 4.3 Recognise and structurally fund education**

**Recommendation 4.4 Recognise the profession of social translator and interpreter**

Resolution 5 Support consultation and partnership structures at various levels: European, national, regional...

**Recommendation 5.1 support consultation**

- Consultation platform at national and/or regional level
- Consultation platform at European level
- Professional association for social translators and interpreters



## ***Lexicon***

**ETHNIC MINORITY:** foreign nationals or people of foreign descent

**FOREIGN SPEAKERS:** people whose native language is not the national language and who have little or no command of the national language

**USERS/USER SERVICES:** first-line service providers and social workers who work in sectors with a social character or in public institutions and who use the services of a social translator or interpreter for their interactions with foreign speakers

**INTEGRATION:** integration in terms of society, culture and citizenship, avoiding any form of discrimination

**NATIONAL LANGUAGE:** the dominant language in a territory (country, region, etc); some countries have more than one national language

**SOCIAL TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION SERVICES:** services that organise and provide language assistance

**SOCIAL TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING:** general term covering other terms used in the various EU member states, such as community interpreting, Sprachmittlung and mediazone linguistica

**SOCIAL TRANSLATORS AND INTERPRETERS:** general term covering other terms used in the various EU member states, such as community interpreter, Sprachmittler and public service interpreter

## Introduction

**Social interpreting** is a form of interpreting:

- in which the oral message is faithfully and fully translated from a source language to a target language
- to provide everyone with access to high-quality, regular social and public service provision and assistance so that everyone is able to guarantee their rights and fulfil their obligations

**Interpreting by phone** is a form of social interpreting assistance in which the social interpreter interprets a discussion between the user and the client by phone.

**Interpreting on site** is a form of social interpreting assistance in which the social interpreter travels to a site to interpret a discussion between the user and the client.

**Social translation** is a form of translation:

- in which the written message is faithfully and fully translated from a source language to a target language
- to provide everyone with access to high-quality, regular social and public service provision and assistance so that everyone is able to guarantee their rights and fulfil their obligations.

**The Social Interpreting and Translation Sector** is an entity consisting of

- social interpreters and translators,
- supported by the social translation and interpreting services
- and, in some cases, assisted by support and advice units.

Our society today is characterised by great cultural diversity. We live with people of various descents, each with their own cultural heritage – and their own language. Those different languages can sometimes create **linguistic confusion** and a **language barrier**.

Public officials, service providers and social workers regularly interact with people from around the globe. Service provision is not possible without dialogue. Service providers and social workers want to provide the same high level of service to all their clients – including foreign speakers - and they are often unable to do so without help. Highly simplified language and signing, the use of children or family as occasional interpreters, the use of a third language that both parties have some command of – these are all ways user services endeavour to solve the language problem. This kind of stopgap often leads to misunderstandings however, as a consequence of which people withdraw from the process or the process itself is unnecessarily drawn out.

When language becomes an obstacle, when service provision is impossible because communication ends, because the words stop, you **need a social interpreter**.

**The social translation and interpreting sector** is still developing but it has already set itself up as an indispensable tool for numerous social-profit organisations and public services that wish to optimise the quality of their service provision to foreign speakers.

Unfortunately, **social translation and interpreting as a tool** continues to be met with resistance at a number of user services. The role of social interpreters (and translators) is often decisive, but it is often passed over due to a lack of resources. Social interpreters (and translators) are still confronted with prejudice too, and the interpreter's presence is sometimes considered objectionable. The unknown is often unloved...

Yet a great many service providers and social workers are already convinced of the value of their social translators and interpreters: counsellors who would rather see an immediate return on their efforts, headteachers who wish to involve foreign-speaking parents and ask for an interpreter for a parent evening, doctors who want to ask a patient's permission to start a course of treatment, public officials who are able to communicate in their own language with foreign-language customers.

These people have come to realise that social translation and interpreting is an indispensable tool in the application of a reception and integration policy focused on new and established migrants who often live in isolation. In a society that is open to multiculturalism, this function is sorely needed in terms of:

- Access to essential services (education, health, integration, justice)
- Application of economic, social and cultural rights (training, employment, housing)

Translation and interpreting **adds value** in several ways:

- Social translation and interpreting makes a tangible contribution to the development of a diversity policy within the user services
- It stimulates foreign speakers to learn one of the national languages
- It reduces the isolation of foreign speakers, stopping them from turning inwards on themselves and their communities
- It increases the rate of participation of ethnic-cultural minorities



- It stimulates foreign speakers to participate in other fields (e.g. socio-cultural sector)
- It considerably improves the quality of service provided by the users
- It cuts the duration of the service provision (and the number of interactions) and reduces the total economic cost. Service efficiency improves when, from the start, you use a social interpreter with responsibility for both communication and a good understanding between the service provider and the client. A common consequence is the reduction in the number of interactions needed with respect to any given customer. Various studies have been conducted into quality improvement when there are no language barriers. In terms of financial cost, there is an **earn-back effect**, which means that the total cost of a service provision (health care for example) is lower when a social interpreter is used from the start (given the reduction in the number of interactions) compared with when a social interpreter is not used.

Organised translation and interpreting assistance does not yet have any legal basis as a tool of an inclusive policy and of diversity conceptualisation. The social translation and interpreting sector is still looking for structural embedding and recognition, and for the far-reaching commitment of the involved public administrations, so that social translation and interpreting can mature into a full-fledged tool of an inclusive diversity policy. A policy that guarantees everyone access to their basic rights, that aims to banish discrimination and exclusion, that wishes to enable everyone to participate in this society, in a Europe focused on diversity and equal opportunities.

**By adopting the following recommendations the national and European public administrations would make a tangible contribution to the integration of foreign-speaking citizens and so eliminate a great number of problems and sticking points the sector is currently trying to deal with.**





## **RESOLUTION 1      RECOGNISE SOCIAL TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING AS A NECESSARY TOOL FOR AN EU INTEGRATION POLICY THAT STANDS FOR DIVERSITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The social translation and interpreting sector must ensure **application of the government policy** in the field of **social cohesion, equal opportunities, combating discrimination** and **integration** of people of foreign descent in Europe. The sector actively ensures that **everyone is given access to their rights in the same way** and that **differences are respected**.

By giving everyone equal access to their rights, social translation and interpreting becomes a **tool for participation and integration**. The presence and the function of the interpreter ensure that prejudices are eradicated. Foreign speakers are no longer assessed on their 'capacity to express themselves', but rather on what they say. This changes the perspective of their interlocutors.

Social translation and interpreting has a social purpose because by ensuring that social workers and their clients understand each other, social translators and interpreters contribute to equality of opportunities and integration in an intercultural society.

Language assistance in itself is no guarantee of dialogue but it does have **a part to play in a broader strategy**. Social translation and interpreting is one of the many tools for making assistance and other services accessible, alongside courses in national languages for foreign speakers, intercultural communication, intercultural mediation, diversity plans etc.

Language assistance encourages participation and supports the learning and integration process by bringing foreign speakers out of their isolation. Social translation and interpreting enables social-profit organisations and public services to provide quality, also to people who as yet have an inadequate command of the national language.

### ***Recommendation 1.1      Encourage the use of social translation and interpreting***

#### **FOR:**

#### **- Equal access to each service**

More and more services and institutions say that they wish to or have to reach people of diverse descent. Accordingly, accessibility to service for ethnic minorities is also an objective of all manner of policy plans.

A language problem must not be an alibi for not responding to a request from any person in society. Hence, there is a need for customer-oriented service personalised to each individual citizen, also for those who speak the national language little or (as yet) not at all. Social translators and interpreters are there to give public and social services the opportunity to be open to all citizens.

#### **- Integration of ethnic minorities**

A new migrant who does not speak the national language is completely helpless in our society. Social translators and interpreters can support both counsellors and new migrants in the integration process. They can provide help in the discussion of the new migrant's opportunities, possibilities and responsibilities.

But established migrants sometimes need language assistance too. It is simply a fact of life that some people find it harder and need more time to learn a new language. There are still situations in which translation and interpreting assistance remains necessary, even for those who have a good command of the national language:

- In emergency and stressful situations linguistic competency is significantly impaired.
- In many contexts highly specific jargon is used.
- Sometimes even a good command of the national language is inadequate to understand a very complex message.

Services must consciously consider whether they and their foreign-speaking clients need a social translator or interpreter. Translation and interpreting assistance is not free of obligation. This assistance does not imply that foreign speakers should not make efforts to learn and speak the national language. But service providers and social workers also have the responsibility to make use of language assistance if it benefits the integration of their client.

Social interpreters help create space for a transitional situation in which the new and the old – foreign – society meet each other – basically the ideal situation for the integration process, which is seen as reciprocal. The interpreter's presence enables ethnic minority clients and social workers to put their identity to one side for a while. They can take on a new identity to speak with each other.



Social translators and interpreters are also the living proof that you can actively participate in our society thanks to a good knowledge of the national language. They use their knowledge of the national language in a professional way to help others integrate. They are therefore positive integration role models for newmigrants and established migrants alike.

The sector thus creates **a new niche on the job market** for people of foreign descent. At the same time, employment in this sector also entails for them **recognition of their own specific competencies**.

- **A shared and active citizenship: giving everyone the opportunity to enjoy their rights and fulfil their obligations**

A language problem must also not be an alibi for people's failure to participate in society. Social translators and interpreters enable people to assert their rights but also to be reminded of their obligations. Expectations and agreements become clear. This prevents a great deal of acrimony among foreign speakers, service providers and social workers.

Good and effective communication is actually a prerequisite of the fulfilment of a number of basic needs (a home, medical assistance, income, etc). Only when people have security here are they truly able to learn the language in the guest country, to follow training, to look for work, to join clubs and associations; basically, to become an active citizen.

Citizenship is recognised because people who initially did not understand now understand everything and are able to make themselves understood. They gain access to their rights.

- **A prompt application of the existing rules at all policy levels**

Social translation and interpreting makes compliance with legislation possible without compromising service provision, e.g.:

- Safeguarding professional and medical confidentiality
- Effectuating the right to clear and understandable communication, for example as laid down in the Belgian Patients Rights Act
- Effectuating basic rights / constitutional rights such as Articles 2, 22 and 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or even, Article 6, §3, a) and e) of the European Convention on Human Rights.

- **A contribution to learning the national language**

It is often (incorrectly) assumed that language assistance obstructs foreign speakers' ability to learn, speak and understand the national language and consequently their integration.

Nothing is further from the truth. Interpreting and learning the national language are *complementary*. Even those that have just joined the integration process must be able to communicate with service providers and social workers (e.g. with a consultant about their employment possibilities). Social translation and interpreting are not the flipside of national language learning, they are complementary steps to independence. Many statements from foreign speakers have taught us that social interpreting is experienced as a form of dependence, which they want to leave behind as soon as possible.

Social translators and interpreters can form a springboard to language courses. If social workers systematically refer their clients to the existing educational offering in the national language when they call in an interpreter, social translation and interpreting will form a strong link between speaking the foreign language and learning the national language. The referral is always in response to an expressed need at that moment. This can be clearly conveyed through the interpreter.

- **A reduction in the total social cost**

Social translation and interpreting does have an earn-back effect: clear communication of questions and problems but also of possible solutions makes social assistance and service provision more efficient and much more goal-oriented. When you work with an interpreter you can address the intended topic immediately in an interview. The topic is also dealt with more efficiently and the interlocutors have clarity as to whether the message has been understood, what the precise expectations are, etc.



**RESOLUTION 2      GUARANTEE THE RIGHT TO QUALITATIVE LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE IN A SOCIAL CONTEXT,  
INCLUDING PUBLIC SERVICE PROVISION. THIS RIGHT MUST EVOLVE FROM A RIGHT IN  
PRINCIPLE TO A LEGALLY ENFORCEABLE RIGHT**

***Recommendation 2.1      Guarantee and improve access to language assistance***

The demand for social translation and interpreting greatly exceeds the supply. The supply must be increased where the need is great, where constitutional rights are under threat due to a lack of communication.

This may be related to simple service provision that is in danger of failing, which will have major consequences. There are numerous examples: the failure to understand an invitation from the employment office; the failure of debt mediation with marginalisation as a consequence; the failure of a driving test invalidating a job offer. But just as often it is related to complex, emotional social assistance interviews in which understanding each other is a primary condition for both social workers and foreign speakers.

Based on the equality principle, the institutions and every social worker must be able to make use of social translation and interpreting. At least one of the possibilities of oral translation must be possible: interpreting on site or by phone. All too often, the need of language assistance is met with stopgap solutions in which quality cannot be guaranteed and that can have serious consequences.

Interpreting by phone is a tool in itself and a safety net when it is not possible to find an interpreter on site. Furthermore, interpreting by phone makes it possible for the social worker or service provider to access a high-quality professional interpreter almost immediately.

- **Optimise supply by establishing and promoting partnerships between social translation and interpreting services.**

The existing demand from users must be met as much as possible. Because the purpose of the supply is to assist doctors, teachers, public officials, job market consultants, social assistants and others who wish to communicate fully with their clients whose command of the national language is (as yet) inadequate.

The social translation and interpreting services must cooperate to guarantee that needs are covered. The services for interpreters on site could for instance promote interpreting by phone as a complementary tool and vice versa.

- **Guarantee optimal territorial coverage by:**
  - Recognising a sufficiently dense network of social translation and interpreting services
  - Providing remuneration for costs in connection with work travel (time and/or transportation costs) of the social translators and interpreters. The travel costs and time can vary hugely depending on the distance the interpreter has to travel and the chosen means of transport. If interpreters are to be available throughout the region, remuneration must be provided for the (sometimes long) journeys interpreters have to undertake to get to the place of work

***Guaranteeing and supporting the quality of social translators and interpreters***

Social translation and interpreting is a profession. To perform well as a translator and interpreter, it is essential that social translators and interpreters not only have a good command of the languages but also a whole array of other skills (developed through training and experience) and an ethical mindset.

Social translators and interpreters are assisted by social translation and interpreting services that assign them the job with the service providers or social workers. It is also important that the social translation and interpreting services apply certain quality standards.

Service providers or social workers who use social translators or interpreters must also correctly assess and value the role and function of the interpreter. The need of **qualitative** translation and interpreting assistance is still recognised too little by service providers and social workers due to a lack of awareness and training.

There is still a large informal circuit of active translators and interpreters. Certain social workers are so bold as to employ highly simplified language, signing or a third language, or to use an occasional interpreter (children, family members, another client), but often do not realise that these stopgap solutions can result in serious misunderstandings that make the service provision useless or even generate negative consequences (from extra financial costs in the long term to life-threatening situations).

**Certain standards need to be defined to guarantee and support high-quality performance by social translators and interpreters:**

***Recommendation 3.1***     ***Define a European professional profile for social translators and interpreters***

A professional profile defines **the duties, knowledge, skills and attitudes** that characterise a profession. The recognition of European professional profiles would define and delineate the professions of social translator and interpreter. This would also constitute a major step towards the recognition of the two professions.

Social translators and interpreters must have a certain knowledge to do their job properly, which also enables them to develop their skills, particularly their spoken language skills, reading and writing skills, information search practices and techniques, fields of action, ethical principles, translation and interpreting techniques, verbal and non-verbal communication, and intercultural communication.

Furthermore, social interpreters must adopt a certain attitude, characterised by assertiveness and self-confidence, professional ethics and sense of responsibility, empathy, willingness to interact and respectfulness. Social translators and interpreters must exhibit the following qualities: sense of organisation, loyalty, openness to professional improvement at all times, flexibility, well-developed resistance to stress, discretion and respect for the confidentiality obligation, perseverance, accuracy and strictness.

***recommendation 3.2***     ***define a european code of ethics for social translation and interpreting***

Service providers and social workers can be sure that a social translator or interpreter observes a certain code of ethics, and that he or she -besides having a very good command of the relevant languages- also has a number of skills and assumes a professional demeanour before, during and after the assignment.

The sector requests recognition of the values that form the basis of the two professions: the application of ethical principles influences the demeanour of both parties vis-à-vis the interpreters and is a guarantee of an interpreter's professionalism. These values constitute a guideline whatever the situation and by observing them, interpreters assume a demeanour and attitude necessitated by the job, the more so because the context in which interpreters work has an emotional dimension.

Social translators or interpreters must always observe at least the following ethical rules:

- An objective, full and faithful rendering of the message: translators or interpreters must translate everything without adding, taking away or changing anything. The translation must be extremely accurate and precise.
- Non-intervention: translators or interpreters only provide language assistance. They do not provide advice or mediation services.



- Impartiality: translators or interpreters are neither on the side of the service providers or social workers nor on that of the client. They must respect both parties. They must never make value judgements.
- Confidentiality obligation: translators or interpreters observe professional confidentiality. Everything they hear during the job remains confidential.
- Social translators or interpreters must also know their limitations and may refuse a job if the quality cannot be guaranteed or if the minimal code of ethics cannot be observed.

**Recommendation 3.3**      ***define a european quality standard for social translation and interpreting studies***

- **Developing basic and advanced courses of study for social translators and interpreters**

The sector strives for the official recognition of a basic course of study that leads to the award of a certificate in social translation or social interpreting. This not only guarantees the basic quality of translation and interpreting, it is also a cornerstone in the professionalisation and recognition of this occupation.

- **Formal recognition of the course of study by the competent authorities**

The course of study must be recognised and integrated in the regular education system, at least at bachelor level.

The recognition and valuation of the course of study and the profession entails the following:

- The public administration recognises and subsidises the basic course of study for social translators and social interpreters in the short term within the regular education system
- The public administration recognises and establishes courses of study for social translators and social interpreters, at bachelor level at least.

The basic course of study and the ethical framework are not enough: the profession also demands permanent training and specialisation training. The appropriate resources must therefore be guaranteed for the establishment of advanced courses of study for social translators and social interpreters.

- **Guarantees that only trained interpreters and translators are used**

The social translation and interpreting sector wants to guarantee the quality of all language assistance provided vis-à-vis all users and involved public administrations. In the future the sector should therefore work only with **trained social translators and interpreters**.

- **The public administration facilitates access to the course of study by recognising qualifications and/or competencies acquired elsewhere**

**Recommendation 3.4**      ***define a european quality standard for social translation and interpreting services***

The social translation and interpreting service is necessary to bring together the service providers and social workers on the one hand and translators or interpreters on the other. The social translation and interpreting services have an important quality assurance function:

- They attract suitable aspiring translators and interpreters with a wide range of languages.
- They identify and use the most suitable translators and interpreters in response to the request of service providers and social workers.
- They assure the quality of the language assistance through an evaluation procedure and (permanent) training of translators and interpreters as well as service providers and social workers.
- They raise awareness among user services of the importance of intercultural communication.

A social translation and interpreting service is the owner of the process that is aimed at:

- conveying oral or written messages from a source language to a target language completely, faithfully and neutrally:
  - in response to a request from a service
  - to provide everyone with access to high-quality, regular social and public service provision and assistance so that everyone is able to guarantee their rights and fulfil their obligations



There are four aspects to the role of the social translation and interpreting service:

- (1) Providing high-quality translation and interpreting assistance
- (2) Matching (handling requests)
- (3) Guaranteeing quality with respect to users
- (4) Guaranteeing quality with respect to social translators and interpreters

Whatever their status, social translators and interpreters must have a contractual relationship with a social translation and interpreting service.

Given the lack of legal recognition and structural embedding of the social translation and interpreting sector most services are in a state of permanent uncertainty with respect to their resources, projects and even their continued existence. Furthermore, the existing resources are not always adequately dimensioned to cover a number of essential duties.

### ***Recommendation 3.5      consultation, awareness raising and training for user services***

Maximum efforts need to be invested to improve the relationship between the service provider or social worker on the one hand and the translator and interpreter on the other, and to promote the profession of social translator and interpreter.

After all, the presence of a social interpreter has consequences. Foreign speakers are helped to understand everything, but the situation of service providers or social workers also changes. They no longer work alone, but with an intermediary who renders their vision and their client's vision. This position demands patience and trust.

The sector expects social translators and interpreters to work in a professional manner. To this end, the users must be given clarity on the role of interpreters and learn to see them as a function and not an interlocutor (the translator's role is typically clearer for the user and more well defined). That is why it is advisable that employees of the user services are trained so that they remain up to date on the possibilities and developments in the sector.

There is a need for structural consultation with institutional users of social translators and interpreters about how they must work together. It is therefore desirable that the expectations and needs of the various players are regularly compared and evaluated.

## **RESOLUTION 4      RECOGNISE AND FUND SOCIAL TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING SERVICES**

Social translation and interpreting has developed into an indispensable tool of an inclusive and integral policy in recent years. The proof is the ever-increasing demand for high-quality language assistance from public and social services and institutions. There is an urgent need of **legal recognition** and **structural embedding** of the social translation and interpreting sector.

### ***Recommendation 4.1      Recognise and structurally embed social translation and interpreting services through legislation and appropriate subsidies***

To guarantee high-quality performance, based on the criteria in recommendations 3.1 through 3.5, recognised social translation and interpretation services must be available.

Social translation and interpretation services must be able to cover the costs of managing and coordinating high-quality work, logistics and infrastructure, overheads and specific expenses. As a consequence, the recognition of social translation and interpreting services must be linked to an **appropriate subsidy**.

### ***Recommendation 4.2      funding for social translation and interpreting work by the various social and public services that use social translators and interpreters***

Just like the language problem, social translation and interpreting touches all aspects and echelons of society. From that perspective, the sector feels that organising social translation and interpreting assistance is a shared responsibility that goes beyond individual public administrations and ministerial competences.

The various public administrations enter into partnerships at EU, national, regional and local level, which makes it possible to establish the financial contribution demanded of all competent public administrations **for the translation and interpreting services provided to their services**.

### ***Recommendation 4.3      recognise and structurally fund education***

From the perspective of integral quality assurance, the qualification of social translators and interpreters is crucial to the achievement of high-quality translation and interpreting.

The sector therefore asks that the competent authorities free up the appropriate resources to enable the educational institutions to develop the modules and organise a course of study for social translators and interpreters, and so guarantee high-quality work.

### ***Recommendation 4.4      recognise the profession of social translator and interpreter***

The presence of a social interpreter guarantees the proper rendering of the interview without involving someone who is not equal to the task or has no business getting involved.

The continued professionalisation of social translation and interpreting must be linked to **the recognition of the profession** of social translator and interpreter, **an appropriate professional statute** and **appropriate remuneration**.

Creating employment for social translators and interpreters is one of the sector's objectives.

The quality criteria are stated in recommendations 3.1 through 3.5.

## **RESOLUTION 5      SUPPORT CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURES AT VARIOUS LEVELS: EUROPEAN, NATIONAL, REGIONAL...**

If the same quality standards (see recommendations 3.1 through 3.5) are to be introduced throughout the EU for both services and for foreign speakers, the social translation and interpretation services must work together. They must also be able to match supply and demand. They must carefully select social translators and interpreters, check the quality of translations, train interpreters and raise awareness among users.

### ***Recommendation 5.1              support consultation***

#### **- Consultation platform at national and/or regional level**

During consultations it is desirable that the social translation and interpretation services are assisted by an advisory and support service, whose remit covers the following areas:

- Quality
- Tools and methodologies
- Influencing policy and raising awareness
- Accessibility and raising awareness

#### **- Consultation platform at European level**

If the same quality standards for language assistance (see recommendations 3.1 through 3.5) are to be introduced throughout the EU, the social translation and interpretation services must also work together at European level and harmonise their practices as far as possible.

The platform offers social translation and interpretation services the opportunity to share information and harmonise their working methods.

#### **- Professional association for social translators and interpreters**

Social translators and interpreters must also be involved in the efforts invested and tools developed on their behalf. They are partners in the process who must be consulted. They are at liberty to organise themselves at the regional, national and/or EU levels.

**The network cannot function efficiently until it is recognised by the EU as the representative of recognised social translation and interpretation services.**



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