

## Tough times bring new reality to profession

**T**he economic downturn is bringing a new reality to the profession according to industry insiders.

In a series of off-the-record briefings given to Communicate by leading figures in the Association of Translation Companies, a number of key changes appear to be taking place as a result of the economic downturn.

Unsurprisingly ATC members are reporting that it is becoming increasingly difficult to extract payment from clients. One industry insider said: "We had to turn away a job recently from a regular customer because they had failed to pay a long outstanding invoice."

"We felt we had no alternative, even though it might damage the relationship in the short term. Our view is that translation companies need to become tougher in their approach to debt control and you get no Brownie points being at the back of the queue should a customer go down. It is always the taxman that will collect before anyone else - certainly way ahead of translation companies!"

One positive trend that appears to be emerging is a refreshing spirit of cooperation



*The recession is forcing a new reality on translation companies and their suppliers*

between freelance translators and translation companies.

"I have been told by a number of our members that both sides of the profession are recognising that cooperation can reap rewards," said ATC General Secretary, Geoffrey Bowden. "There was a time when freelance translators saw translation company owners as the 'enemy' and, to a certain extent, vice versa."

"The ATC has always promoted the synergies that exist between TCs and freelancers and now that conditions are favouring the purchaser more people are seeing the benefits of working more closely together."

A number of translation com-

pany owners have told Communicate that they are examining their systems to ensure that they are operating to maximum efficiency.

Investment in project management tools and other software solutions appear to be gaining ground with a number of ATC members. Some admitted that they had been putting off such decisions, but a cost benefit analysis approach is emphasising the benefits.

Overall the mood is gloomy though. Many translation companies spoken to by Communicate are worrying whether they will survive the downturn.

## ATC annual conference returns to SOAS in 2009

**T**he Association of Translation Companies annual conference will return to the School of Oriental and African Studies this year.

The date for the annual conference, which traditionally attracts delegates from all over the world, will take place on Wednesday, 23rd September.



ATC General Secretary Geoffrey Bowden said:

"I am pleased that the Association will be returning to its traditional home for our showpiece conference. Last year's event, attended by record numbers was staged at the CBI headquarters, as SOAS was unavailable."

The theme for the event has yet to be fixed, although it is likely to focus on business issues affecting the efficient operation of translation companies in difficult economic times.

"As usual I rely on those in the frontline of operating and delivering translation services to suggest excellent speakers and topics ideas to be explored at the conference. So this is a plea for readers of Communicate and EUATC News to email me with your suggestions," said Geoffrey Bowden.

Email your conference ideas to: [generalsecretary@atc.org.uk](mailto:generalsecretary@atc.org.uk)

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## View from the chairman



*Liz Robertson, chairman of the Association of Translation Companies*

**I**t's tough out there for translation companies and there is no doubt that some may find survival a real challenge in the current climate.

But should we be battenning down the hatches and assuming that to survive we are going to have to lay off staff, reduce our prices and cut out all 'non-essential' expenditure?

Setting aside how you define what is 'non-essential', there are strong arguments that now is the time to invest in technology to make your operations more efficient, staff training to ensure the service you give your customers sets you apart from the herd and marketing to keep your brand upper most in the purchaser's mind.

The weakness of the Pound against the Euro in particular presents unexpected opportunities. Those UK-based translation companies that have fixed price lists in Euro will now be looking extremely competitive to continental purchasers and if companies have accounts set up in Euroland transaction costs are minimal for both taking in money and paying it out to suppliers.

Another opportunity that will arise out of the current economic crisis is one for expansion through acquisition. Like it or not there will be translation company owners looking for an exit and, provided due diligence is undertaken, there will be some company owners in a position to purchase other operations - perhaps at extremely competitive rates.

I know of a number of deals in the making where ATC members are in advance stages of negotiations to acquire other translation operations. Essentially they are expanding their turnover through the purchase of established client lists and looking to make savings on back office services such as accounts, as well as shedding support staff that are doing identical jobs. Sounds harsh, but sometimes it pays to be realistic - especially when the economy is forcing everyone to focus on strategies for both survival and future prosperity.

[chairman@atc.org.uk](mailto:chairman@atc.org.uk)

## ATC changes its processes for admitting new members

**T**he Council agreed that it needed to change the application process to safeguard both existing members and others in the profession.

"In the past much was left to trust," said Anthony Withers, a member of the ATC's Membership Committee, "for example, we are now insisting that applicants take out full professional indemnity insurance, and provide a copy of the certificate with their application."

Other additional documentation required, before an application will be processed, are a translation company's abbreviated accounts for the last three trading years and a signed declaration that none of the directors of the company have County Court Judgements against them. In addition to all references from clients and freelance suppliers have to be supplied on letterheads and not via email.

"The ATC Council has been conscious of a number of translation companies that seem to have emerged and then just as quickly disappeared - sometimes leaving suppliers high and dry, added John Lord. By applying more rigorous application procedures, we believe that we will



*Anthony Withers, top, and John Lord, bottom, members of the ATC's Membership Committee*

be upholding and enhancing the reputation not only of the ATC itself, but more importantly of the translation industry as a whole in the UK".

The new admission process was introduced on 1st January and applied to all applications that were in the pipeline, as well as new ones received since the beginning of the year.

## China trade awards backed by The Translation People

**A**TC members The Translation People sponsored a regional UK initiative to encourage greater trade with China.

The company supported the GO CHINA Chinese New Year dinner and Greater China Awards, organised by the North West International Trade Team of government agency UK Trade & Investment.

The awards dinner, which took place at Haydock Park Racecourse, Merseyside, at the beginning of February, promoted the successes of North West businesses in mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

The event coincided with the start of the Chinese New Year - the Year of the Ox - and around 200 people attended the event.

Steve Wilde, Managing Director of The Translation People, said: "We were pleased to have been able to support the event, which helped raise awareness in the regional business community of the growing export opportunities in China."

Other supporting organisations of the event included: the North West Development Agency, Finnair, China-Britain Business Council, ChinaLink and the Consultancy Company. [www.thetranslationpeople.com](http://www.thetranslationpeople.com)

## Petition plea for reform of VAT law

**G**avin Wheeldon, Chief Executive of Applied Languages, has started a new campaign for a change in the way small firms pay VAT. This change, which costs nothing for the Government to spend (or borrow!!) would see all SMEs pay VAT only when they have received payment.

“Currently, any company that makes more than £1.65 million per year must pay VAT even for invoices that haven’t been paid,” says Gavin.

This is exactly what the petition aims to change – so that companies aren’t having to borrow money (yes, borrow!) just to pay their VAT bill...provided they aren’t refused credit of course, a problem which the last bail-out promised to fix!

With the imminent announcement of another taxpayer funded bail-out for the banks, it’s time to make the Government listen to the needs of small businesses,

by campaigning for a change in our antiquated tax laws.

Please sign the petition and pass it on to your friends, family and acquaintances. It has already won the support from the Daily Mirror, The Forum of Private Business, as well as Immigration Minister and MP for Oldham and Saddleworth, Phil Woolas – so it already has some momentum behind it.

“If you all send the petition on to everybody you know including staff, colleagues, friends and family it will have a massive impact on allowing companies like ours to continue to grow and provide employment. This really will be significant for small businesses, on employment and the economy. This could be the difference between people losing their job or additional jobs being created. So please pass this on,” urges Gavin.

[gwheeldon@appliedlanguage.com](mailto:gwheeldon@appliedlanguage.com)

The screenshot shows the Number10.gov.uk website with a petition titled "Extend Cash Accounting eligibility to all SMEs in the UK". The petition was submitted by Gavin Wheeldon of www.appliedlanguage.com and has 246 signatures as of 16 January 2010. The sign-up form includes fields for name, email, and UK postcode. A list of current signatories includes Gavin Wheeldon, Louise Wood, Matthew Cunningham, Abdullah Rhodes-Taylor, and Mr Paris.

*Sign Gavin Wheeldon’s petition  
by clicking on this link:*

<http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/CashAccounting/>

## The Translation People grows Scottish team

**T**ranslation specialist The Translation People has increased its Scottish team with the appointment of Fiona McGhee as Account Manager.

Twenty-four-year-old Fiona has an MA (Hons) in French and Hispanic Studies and has worked and studied in France, Portugal and Gran Canaria.

Before joining The Translation People, she worked as a multilingual tour guide at a specialist whisky distillery outside Glasgow – providing French and Span-



ish translations of the distilling process to visiting tourists.

As an Account Manager at The Translation People’s Glasgow office, Fiona manages a wide range of projects for clients including global drinks brand Diageo and clinical trials specialist

QCTR Ltd, based at Stirling University’s Innovation Park.

Fiona said: “This new role has given me the opportunity to combine my passion for languages with my strong personal commitment to excellent customer service. I’m really enjoying it!”

## 2009 ATC Council Meetings: dates announced

The General Secretary reported that he had booked all the dates for 2009’s Council meetings all to be held at the Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, London.

<http://www.quaker.org.uk/Templates/SubSiteInternal.asp?NodeID=149700&int1stParentNodeID=149765&int2ndParentNodeID=149766&int3rdParentNodeID=149700>



The 2009 dates are:

- ♦ Wednesday 11 February
- ♦ Wednesday 22 April
- ♦ Wednesday 24 June
- ♦ Wednesday 11 November

## Prioritising: key in face of economic downturn

**N**egative world economic prospects are a great opportunity for focusing on business aspects that are usually given second priority. So says Penny Marinou, President of the European Union Association of Translation Companies, who outlines below how prioritisation can increase comparative advantage during these tough times.

We might not have as much business in 2009 but we will probably have more of a rare and valuable asset, that is, time, which can be spent on all the things that we usually set aside simply because we are short of time. Some of the aspects that suffer in a business due to time shortages include marketing and certification, which in the long run can help companies to improve their services, grow and expand.

In terms of marketing, I believe that LSPs should step up their promotion activities. A recession is THE time when businesses need to increase their efforts in this field. Instead of cutting back on marketing expenses, one should

focus on fixing income leaks that are usually overlooked when times are good, and outsourcing certain tasks that can be accomplished more cost effectively by outsiders. Given sufficient thought and imagination, all the staff in a business can contribute to the marketing process.

With respect to certification, a time-consuming endeavour per se, I believe that a recession is perfect for spending time on drafting procedures, producing a manual and undergoing the EN 15038 third-party certification process. Certification might appear to be a luxury but it is, in fact, a mark of excellence. In other words, it is a comparative advantage in today's changing business environment, and the best way to improve company processes and thereby efficiency, which ultimately saves time and resources.

History shows us that downturns don't last forever so my recommendation would be: make sure that you are well prepared for the next economic boom by increasing your comparative advantages through marketing and certification.

### VOX POPS

#### **PENNY MARINOU, LITTERAE TRANSLATIONS - PUBLISHING:**

*"The translation sector will feel the economic slowdown like all other sectors. It is not easy to say by what percentage especially as this depends on the niche market of each translation company."*



*The main opportunities are the chances to gain market share through marketing. Several studies have shown that firms maintaining their advertising expenditure usually achieve higher growth both during a recession and 2-3 years later compared to those that eliminate or decrease advertising."*

#### **COLIN SMITH, INTERNATIONAL TRANSLATIONS:**

*"There is no doubt the UK market is tough at present. But, as our company has a long-established Euro price list and an equally long-established bank account based in Germany, it means that we are benefitting from the weakness of the Pound against the Euro. Many of our clients in Euro-land are other translation companies, who are beginning to see that purchasing from us makes economic sense and gives them a competitive edge. We, of course, receive more Pounds once we transfer funds into our UK bank, which is no bad thing."*



*Having a Euro-zone bank account not only greatly streamlines receiving in payment from clients on the Continent, it also makes payment to our freelancers far more efficient and less costly. If I were to offer any advice to others thinking about what strategies they should be adopting during the downturn, then I would certainly suggest that they look at the most effective ways of taking advantage of the Pound's current weakness and the advantages of opening up a bank account in a Euro-zone country. You need to comply with various regulations of course, but once you have navigated the bureaucracy, it is well worth it."*

#### **MILA TOVA, MILATOVA INTERNATIONAL TRANSLATIONS:**

*"In view of the current worldwide economic crisis, I believe that businesses will look in all directions to exploit any and all opportunities. This will result in looking beyond borders and increasing the need for professional translations."*



*Successful decision makers know that clear communication is the key to success, hence an increased need for quality translation when dealing with foreign business partners or potential clients. They also know that "when you pay peanuts, you get monkeys" and take that into account when prioritising their shrunken budgets.*

*This should lead to an increased demand for quality translations, and boost the business of translation companies able to guarantee an impeccable translation. At Mila Tova, we already see the first signs of this tendency."*



## Making the most of untapped international markets

**L**event Yildizgoren, MD TTC Language services, offers his insight into making the most of overseas opportunities in the face of economic downturn.

In these dire economic times, it is tempting for many businesses to shore up their finances and avoid taking what would be perceived in sounder times as run-of-the-mill financial risks. But while many businesses are battenning down the hatches and trying to "wait it out" for a better economic forecast, they have failed to realise that in today's global economy, eager customers and partners for their business may be closer than they can possibly imagine.

That is why, when your competitors are treating the current economic situation as a crisis, as a savvy businessperson, you can use this time to expand your business by reaching out to new, untapped international markets.

Chances are that your business is examining every aspect of its operations to cut costs or discover new sources of income. What you might not have considered is that an overseas supplier may be able to replace one component in your supply chain at a much lower cost, or that customers in another part of the world might pay a premium for your products or services. Perhaps you already work in a multicultural, multilingual organisation, or wish to open a base of operations in another country. It is often said that, with the advent of technology, the world is much smaller now than ever before. That is true, but no matter how small the world may seem, it can still be very daunting to reach across borders, cultures, and language barriers to find the absolute best solution for your business needs. But say you have identified an opportunity, or a part



*Levent Yildizgoren, MD TTC Language services*

of your business that you think could benefit from a change. So how do you start?

First, a review of your current international communications strengths is in order. You will likely find that many of your staff and business contacts have some international experience. They may know a foreign language, or have spent significant time in a different culture. You may even already be an international business with staff members stationed in countries around the world. It is important to note that, while having a staff member who is conversant in another language can be useful for details such as processing simple e-mail requests, it is always important to use services of a professional translation company for formal business communications. Not only will the translation company certify their work, but they will truly understand the customs and business etiquette of the culture with which you are making contact.

### **International communication plan**

After completing your review of your current international communications experience, the next step is to create an In-

ternational Communications Plan. In this plan, first identify skill gaps within your organization and pinpoint areas in which you need assistance or improvement. You will often find that you have untapped resources, or at least resources that can be repurposed toward international communication. This is also when you should identify what types of services, such as translation and interpretation, you will need to adapt to the culture with which you plan to work.

Finally, you must decide on your course of action. While international business is often very lucrative, it is sometimes easy to forget the extensive preparation that must go into making contact. For example, you will need a translator who truly understands the culture you are working with to prepare your business communications and also interpret returning communications from your new international partner or customer. The biggest benefit of teaming up with a professional translator is that you will have access to their experience and business savvy. For example, if you are in manufacturing, you will want someone who is knowledgeable about the terms, trends, and nuances of manufacturing in both languages and cultures.

Translation companies like TTC Language Services Limited provide professionals who can guide you through the vagaries and nuances of international communications. We have all seen ludicrous examples of overly literal or poorly thought out translations. But did you consider that even some images could create a nonsensical or even offensive view of your company to people from other cultures? Not only will investing in a professional translation company ensure that you do not make any serious gaffes that could un-

dermine your credibility, but it will also enhance your business communications resulting in a more professional image for your business, and smoother streamlining of your business processes.

When choosing a translation company, also be aware of when and how you will utilise their services. Perhaps you will only need them once in awhile, to interpret letters or emails. On the other hand, you may need them with you to translate conference calls or even to travel with you to meetings. Further, you will likely need to employ a translation service like TTC to assist with adapting your current business model, marketing materials, best practices and corporate culture to connect with that of your new business partners or customers. You would not go into an important meeting without preparation, and neither should you go into business with international partners without a professional translation company.

Conducting business internationally could very well be the jumpstart your organisation needs to stay ahead of the competition, get out of a rut, or simply beat the current economic downturn. Do not let fear of the unknown hold you back from what could be a lucrative opportunity. Strategic partners such as TTC are always ready and available to ease your transition by handling all of your international business communications needs.



**TTC is a member of Essex Chambers of Commerce and can be contacted at:**

■ 01245 216930

■ [info@ttcltd.com](mailto:info@ttcltd.com)

# Project Management Guide: meeting objectives

**T**he term Project management is often used without real understanding of what the process actually entails. Here Levent Yildizgoren, MD TTC Language services, outlines the relevant definitions and his top ten tips for project success.

## Project:

The definition of a project is a temporary organisation that is needed to produce a unique result at a specific time using predetermined resources. Not to be confused with operations, which are functions in place to perform ongoing tasks, a project is a one-time entity put in place only to produce a unique outcome.

While both projects and operations require resources, knowledge, and equipment, and both are managed, they are distinguishable by the fact that a project is a temporary and unique one time organisation while operations are ongoing and repetitive. For example, setting up a data centre is a project, while running the data centre is an operation.

## Project management:

Project management is the use of knowledge, skills and tools to manage a project from start to finish with the goal of meeting the project requirements using appropriate processes. Projects, by definition, bring about change, and project management is viewed as the most efficient way to bring about that change. And in order for the project managers to be successful they need to possess certain skills.

## Project manager:

A project manager must possess excellent communication skills. It is likely that he or she will be working with peo-

ple, data and other varied resources. He or she also needs negotiation and influencing skills. Problem solving skills will come in handy to the project manager when the project hits those inevitable snags, and awareness of factors such as unique customs, important holidays, and other cultural modifiers are essential in today's global society. Leadership ability is, of course, imperative for a project manager, who will have to use all the communication, negotiation, influencing, problem solving, and cultural awareness at his disposal to successfully complete the unique project by a specific time using the predetermined resources.

Fortunately, with knowledge, planning, and the proper resources, project managers can avoid these pitfalls. See opposite for my top ten things to do for a project success.

## Measuring success:

If you follow all these steps your project is sailing along smoothly. How will you measure success? A traditional metric to calculate a project's success is proving that it is arrived on time, on budget, and as defined. But sometimes success is not all that simple.

The major purpose of a project is to deliver success to the client via the project. No matter how well executed the project may be, if it fails in that objective, it is still a failed project. It is important to keep in mind that the project manager is responsible for every aspect of his or her project, from planning to outcome. And that no matter how well a project is managed, delivering a completed project that benefits the client is the most important objective of all.



*"If you do not know where you are going, it's impossible to get there," Levent Yildizgoren advises.*

## TOP TEN TIPS FOR PROJECT SUCCESS

- 1** . Define the project clearly – If you do not know where you are going, it's impossible to get there.
- 2** . Plan the project – Do not confuse a project plan with a project schedule. A good project plan should include scheduling, but also many other points.
- 3** . Account for contingencies – Include options for instances when things do not go according to plan.
- 4** . Create a communication plan – Communication is key for any project. Establish communication parameters from the very beginning.
- 5** . Create a quality plan – Knowing what constitutes acceptable quality is the only way your project will succeed.
- 6** . Define responsibilities – Clearly define the project manager's role, as well as the role of those working on the project.
- 7** . Manage the project plan – During execution, it is easy for the project to get off track. Consult the plan often so that your project is not derailed from its overall goal.
- 8** . Manage risks and issues – A good project manager has already worked risks into the project plan. Be sure to stay on top of these issues as they arise.
- 9** . Monitor quality – Do not let the day to day execution of the project trick you into forgetting the ultimate quality goal.
- 10** . Be prepared – No matter how much experience you have as a project manager, or how much planning went into the project, things can still go wrong.

## XTRF response to financial crisis: no licence fee

**A**s their response to the financial crisis, XTRF are offering their Translation Company Management System on a Software as a Service (SaaS) basis - meaning only a monthly fee, with no licence fees to pay.

The subscription service is aimed at small and medium sized companies who want to avoid having to install the system on their own servers and avoid the additional costs of a licence fee.

Users subscribe to the service and access it via an internet browser with specific login



details. Data transferred in encoded for security in the same way as internet banking.

Responsibility for server management, data backup, system updates and upgrades and hosting rests with XTRF. Companies taking up the offer can save money otherwise spent on administrative staff

and also on purchasing software.

The monthly cost of using the system on this SaaS option is 59 Euros, plus the cost of the hosting server. The total cost includes: system use, technical support, management and software upgrades.

The latest version - 1.6 - is now available for purchase and the SaaS option.

New functionality of the XTRF 1.6 includes: template creation for repeatable projects, system of current operations monitoring, actual view of logged on users and improved procedures of quote request.

Version 1.6 is also now available in Spanish, Latvian and Belarusian interfaces.

Additional information of the SaaS and XTRF 1.6 at:

[www.xtrf.eu](http://www.xtrf.eu)

## SDL report above expected profits for year end December 2008



Good news from SDL, and flying in the face of current economic crises reported elsewhere, the company has announced that revenues and profits for the year ended 31 December 2008 are expected to be ahead of analyst expectations.

Revenue is expected to be in the range of £157m to £158m (2007: £117.4m) compared with analyst consensus expectations of £151.8m. Profits before taxation and amortisa-

tion of intangible assets ("PBTA") for the period are expected to be in the range of £25m to £25.5m (2007:£17.0m), compared with analyst consensus expectations of £23.9m.

Mark Lancaster, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of SDL commented: "The strong performance in the year was achieved as a result of the company continuing to deliver on its vision to help global companies such as

Dell, HP, Canon and Philips deliver content and product in multiple languages faster and more efficiently."

SDL expects to announce preliminary results for the year ended 31 December 2008 on 24 February 2009, when further details will be given.

To view the full press release visit:

[www.sdl.com/en/events/news-PR/sdl-plc-trading-update-jan-09.asp](http://www.sdl.com/en/events/news-PR/sdl-plc-trading-update-jan-09.asp)



**ATC 2009 Annual Conference  
Wednesday, 23rd September 2009**

**School of Oriental and African Studies,  
University of London**

Eve of conference reception - 22 September 2009 (venue to be advised)

SUBMIT PAPERS AND IDEAS: [generalsecretary@atc.org.uk](mailto:generalsecretary@atc.org.uk)

Representy translation company associations in:

Austria ♦ Belgium ♦ Bulgaria ♦ Czech Republic ♦ Finland ♦ France ♦ Germany ♦ Greece ♦ Hungary ♦ Italy ♦ Latvia ♦ Netherlands ♦ Poland ♦ Portugal ♦ Romania ♦ Spain ♦ Slovakia ♦ Switzerland ♦ Turkey ♦ United Kingdom

## New President and board for EUATC

**A** new EUATC board has been elected and took over at the beginning of the year.

Penny Marinou, Vice President of the Greek association, the Hellenic Association of Translation companies, was elected as President during the general meeting of the EUATC in Paris in November. She succeeds Liz Robertson, chairman of the UK's Association of Translation Companies.

Eva-Maria Leitner, chair of Austria's Fachverband Druck Arbeitskreis Sprachdienstleis-

ter, was elected to the post of Vice President, while Kamil Kartal, chairman of Turkish Association of Translation Companies, was elected as the EUATC's new treasurer. He takes over from Michel Vrisekoop, President of the Netherlands Association of Translation Agencies.

Commenting on her election Penny Marinou said:

"It is a privilege to have been elected and to follow in the footsteps of Liz Robertson. She successfully steered the Association through an impor-



*The EUATC board - left to right, Eva-Maria Leitner, Penny Marinou and Kamil Kartal pose after their election in Paris*

tant transition to become a non-profit 'Association Internationale Sans But Lucratif (AISLB)'. The change from a European Economic Interest Grouping will allow us to admit members from outside

the EU and become genuinely more representative of the European translation company sector. The importance of a strong voice for the sector during the current economic difficulties is crucial."

## Portuguese association celebrates 10th anniversary under a new board

**A**PET, the Portuguese Association of Translation Companies, celebrates its 10th Anniversary in 2009 under a new board presided over by Marta Aragão.

The new leading team is strongly committed to taking the Association's goals ever higher. Over the next two years, a set of new projects will be further developed and implemented.

### University training

APET is one of the driving forces of CNT (National Council for Translation), a body that brings together Translation Companies, freelance translators, and public and private universities. The CNT's main goal is to speak in a single voice and bring translation education closer to market requirements.



For some years now, Marta Aragão has also been involved in translation education and has been teaching subjects related to the translation market and project management at the University of the Algarve. Other universities are also being encouraged to contract translation professionals who can help university lecturers to teach their students in accordance with

market's current and emerging needs.

Another initiative is the creation of the "APET/Universities Conference Cycle" where the same conference programme and technical workshops are taken to different universities across the country over the course of the year, again strengthening the ties between universities and translation companies.

### Training and consultancy

APET is also putting together a database of qualified trainers who can offer specific training to universities, translation companies and freelance translators who need to optimise their resources and skills. Consultancy services will also be available soon to both established and recently formed companies operating in the sector with the aim

of providing instruction on good translation practices based on the principles of EN 15038.

### EN 15038 certification

Having developed a document *continued next page*

## EUATC ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2009 - SOFIA BULGARIA

The next EUATC annual conference will take place on 15th and 16th October and will be hosted by BAPITA, the Bulgarian association of translation companies, and take place in Bulgarian capital Sofia.

Ideas for speakers and papers should be emailed to the President Penny Marinou: [penny@litterae.gr](mailto:penny@litterae.gr)

## President's statement



*Penny Marinou, President of the European Union Association of Translation Companies*

Following the approval of Switzerland's application for membership at the Paris 2008 General Meeting of the EUATC, the association is starting 2009 with a strong membership of 20 national associations and prospects for further growth.

Being an international non-profit making association, the EUATC will step up its efforts to develop relations with translation stakeholders throughout the world in view of increasing the translation industry's visibility and image at a global level. World trade and international institutions depend heavily on the translation industry and this should be brought home.

In line with this philosophy, the EUATC's annual rendez-vous is in South-Eastern Europe this Autumn. Our international conference will be hosted by BAPITA, the Bulgarian association of translation companies, in Sophia, one of the oldest cities in

Europe. Its architecture is a combination of Neo-Baroque, Neo-Rococo and Neoclassicism, with a Vienna Secession influence. A number of ancient Roman and Byzantine buildings have also been preserved in the city and its outskirts. Most notably, the 10th century Boyana Church, one of the UNESCO World Heritage protected sites.

This event will provide a wonderful opportunity for networking, which is one of the secrets of success in business, and exploring one of the newest members of the EU (Bulgaria joined in 2007).

Nothing can replace face-to-face communication as a sound basis on which to build cooperation agreements and business partnerships. More information about the conference will soon be available on the EUATC website ([www.euatc.org](http://www.euatc.org)).

*Penny Marinou  
President*

## APET celebrates a decade

*continued from page one*

detailing the required certification procedures to be used by its member-companies as a guideline in drawing up their own certification manuals, APET is now ready to help certify its members and engage in active promotion of EN 15038. The final stage before implementation of the norm is approval by Bureau Veritas of the above mentioned Procedures Manual, which is the exclusive property of APET.

Universities are also hearing about EN 15038 in conferences, seminars and talks, and this is one of the topics covered by the programme of the "APET/Universities Conference Cycle".

### APET website

APET's revamped website will soon be online and will be translated into a number of other languages.

### Court charges - translation fees

On 26 February, Decree Law



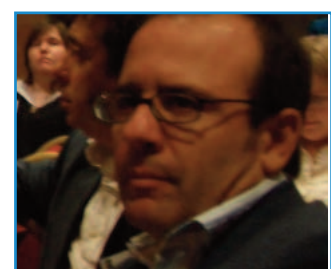
No. 34/2008 governing the Regulation of Court Charges was published. This law lays down a system of simplified costs, bringing together in a single document all the normal procedures relating to liability for court charges (comprising judicial fees, charges and associated costs), encompassing amounts charged for judicial, administrative and fiscal procedures. However, simple in this case also means unworkable.

The fee of €6.40 per translated page established by the law makes it economically impossible for translation companies to work for the courts. APET is making every effort to contest the law in question and is striving to find a solution that works both for the judicial system and for TSPs.

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## Spanish association elects new Chairman

The Spanish association of translation companies, ACT, has elected Javier González to its new chairman. He takes over from Ritxi Lizartza, who was acting Chairman following the resignation of Heinz Rudolf at the end of 2008.



## Finns elects new Vice-President

Janna-Mari Ala-Korpi, pictured right, from Translatum Oy has been selected as the new vice-president of Finnish association, Suomen käännoistimistöjen liitto, SKTOL.

Janna-Mari in her newly elected post, will join Anja Sukkinen, President of the Finnish Association of Translation Companies as its representative at EUATC meetings.



<http://www.sktol.org>

# Payment delays tip of iceberg PASMEE survey reveals

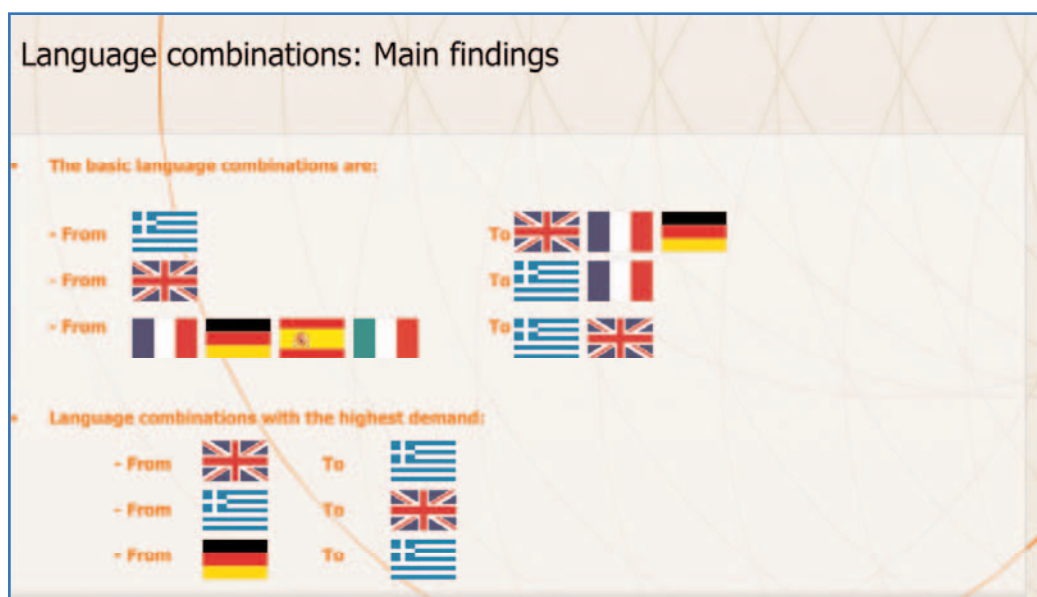
The Hellenic Association of translation companies (PASMEE) commissioned an in-depth study of the translation sector analysing various prevailing business strategies in Greek translation companies. Opinions expressed about financial transactions with customers are of particular interest. Although most companies cooperate with Western Europe, although not exclusively, delay in payment is but the “tip of the iceberg”, the study reveals.

The study was carried out by Gfk Hellas, one of the leading market research companies in the world, using an online survey. The study population consisted of translation companies of various legal forms from a PASMEE list. The study was carried out between 18 March and 8 July 2008 and the final sample consisted of 69 businesses.

Specifically, the objective of the study was to record:

- The number of employees per job position within companies
- The languages with the highest demand for translation
- The various costing methods used for translation services
- The areas of specialisation
- The use of CAT tools
- The difficulties encountered by businesses cooperating with companies abroad
- The degree of customer solvency and invoicing problems
- Quality certification
- The way freelance translators/revisers are selected and cooperation conditions
- The advantages of being a member of an association.

More detailed findings highlighted that, from an organi-



Theodoros Christodoulou, Gfk Hellas, Gioula Galiatsatou, Gfk Hellas, Despina Chryssafi, President of the Hellenic Association of Translation Companies (PASMEE) and Penny Marinou, Vice President of the HATC participate in the meeting organised to present the results of the study produced by research company Gfk Hellas on behalf of the Association



sational point of view, the structure of companies in the sector appears to be rather “open” as the majority of companies in the sample use freelance translators/revisers.

Further findings include:

- Quality certification is another issue as few companies are certified and even fewer are EN 15038 certified.
- Translations provided cover the main European languages mainly. The respondents referred to language combinations indicating market trends in general.
- Respect to pricing, the

“word” appears to be the most popular unit.

- Six out of 10 companies consider that CAT tools are helpful.
- The three main fields of specialisation are: technical, legal and medical/pharmaceutical.
- Finally, it is interesting to point out that respondents referred to the perceived benefits of being a member of an association of translation companies, which apart from networking can serve the sector’s interests.

The results of the study were presented during an event organised by PASMEE at a central hotel in Athens, 5

December 2008, which gathered together TC owners and translators from all over the country.

The event also featured a Project Management specialist/ member of the Project Management Institute, who spoke to delegates about globalisation and project management a lawyer with a special interest in the new law on translation services. This law has given rise to significant protest from translators in Greece as it creates a “closed profession”. Among other things it sets a limit on the number of sworn translators in Greece, whose numbers are not very high currently as this is a new institution.

Penny Marinou, EUATC President, plans to suggest that the EUATC addresses a letter to the relevant Minister in the form of a complaint, on the grounds of unfair competition, with a copy also sent to the EU Commissioner.

The full study, including detailed information, figures and graphs is available from the PASMEE Secretariat in Power Point format (65 slides) at the price of €500 (study + English translation).

# Spanish survey show recession hitting sales but niche operators fairing better

A survey of members of the Spanish translation company association, ACT shows that the economic crisis is hitting the translation sector hard, according to the latest ACT Bulletin.

Half the current ACT members participated in a telephone survey. Nearly 50 per cent revealed that their sales were down in the second quarter compared to the first.

## No change say half

While 29 per cent said that trading had not changed, just 24 per cent said that they had



The ACT's Heinz Rudolf

experienced an increase in sales during the period. Analysis of the results suggests that this is likely to be as a result of

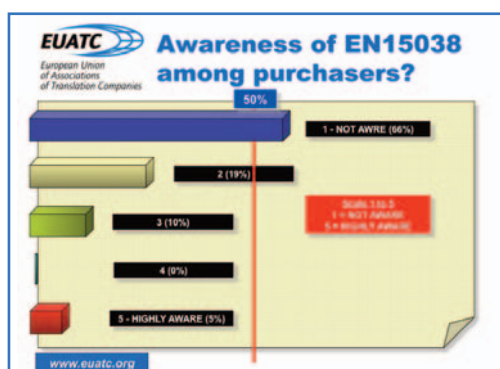
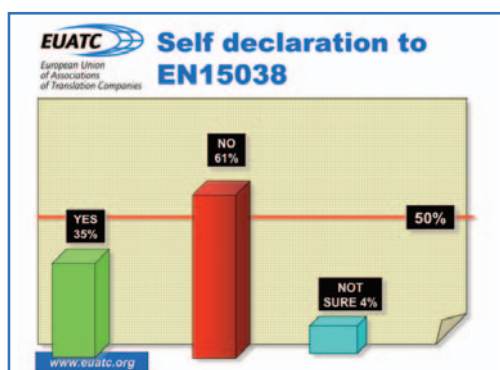
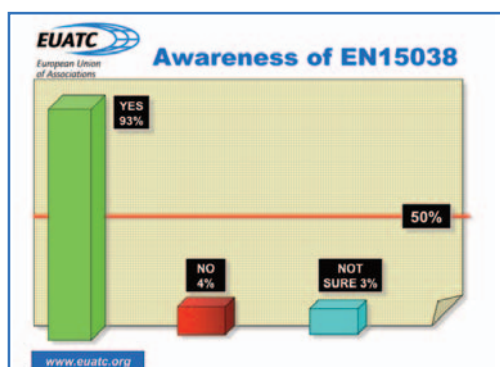
niche or particular sector marketing, which has helped some translation companies expand their order books.

Commenting, ACT's Heinz Rudolf said:

"Despite the world economic gloom most Spanish translation companies that responded to the survey said, although invoicing was down, they felt that their companies are standing up well to the crisis.

Details of the survey published in the ACT's newsletter, can be read by clicking onto this link: <http://www.act.es>

# High awareness of EN15038 but low take up



The EUATC conducted a survey ahead of its annual conference in Paris to gauge awareness and the rate of implementation of EN15038, the translation standard. It also tested awareness of the standard among purchasers.

Survey forms were circulated by national associations belonging to the EUATC.

The results, presented to the Paris conference by Geoffrey Bowden, General Secretary of the Association of Translation Companies, showed a high awareness of the standard. However, it highlighted that only 17 per cent of European translation companies had been certified to

EN15038. Nearly double that, 33 per cent, had self-declared to the standard.

Nearly 50 per cent of companies quizzed that had yet to do so were thinking of adopting the standard. However, the reasons given by those companies for not taking up the standard included such comments as:

*"We have ISO, which is enough."*

*"Customers don't care about EN15038 or ISO - they only care about the price."*

*"Our clients know the very high standards of our translations."*

*"It is a competitive advantage, but it is not required by our current customers."*

Those companies with

ISO accreditation were asked whether they would consider taking up the European Standard too. Two thirds said that they would not consider it.

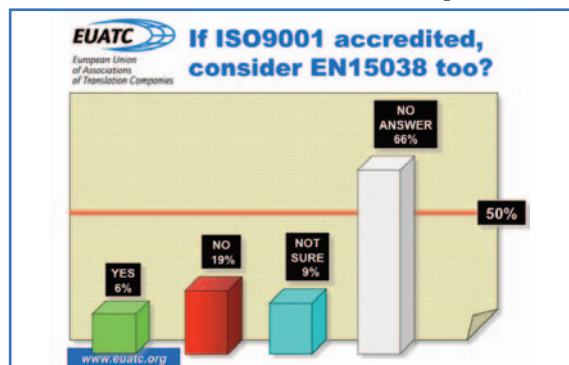
The survey showed that client relationships had improved for those companies that had adopted the standard - just over 50 per cent said that this had been a positive result.

A third of the companies with the standard in place also said that their processes had been improved as a result.

A key barrier to wider adoption of the standard as revealed by the survey is the very low awareness of the standard among clients.

"The EUATC should be more active in marketing the standard to overcome this significant issue" was a typical comment.

During the EUATC conference, Klaus Ahrend, head of EC's Translation Directorate said that the Commission was considering using accreditation to the standard as one of the determining factors in awarding contracts to translation company suppliers.



# EUATC 2008 Conference photo-report

**T**he EUATC Annual Conference, Critical interfaces for translations companies: Customers, human resources and technical resources (20-21 November) was enthusiastically received by delegates. Results of a post conference survey showed that 87 per cent of the delegates were either wholly or partly satisfied with the conference content and organisation.

The two-day conference was

structured around distinct topic sessions: the global economy, marketing, industry and universities working together and public sector opportunities.

An important feature of EUATC conferences in the past has been the networking opportunities. There were two social events arranged for delegates in 2008.

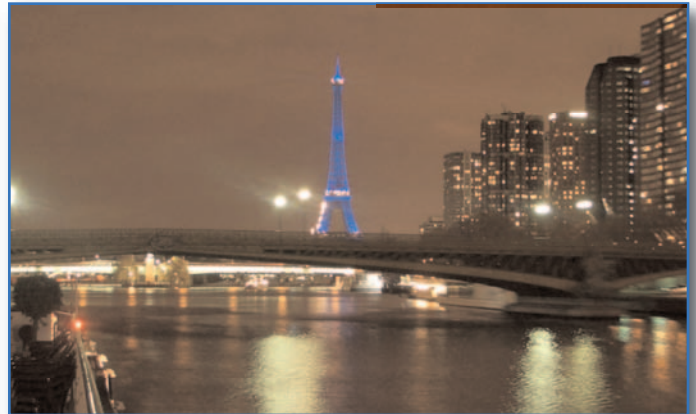
A gala dinner aboard a river Seine boat provided a relaxing

atmosphere for delegates to get to know each other and to see Paris by night. In the evening of the second day the organisers arranged a wine tasting evening for delegates, sponsors and family members accompanying delegates.

The venue for the 2009 EUATC conference will be Sofia in Bulgaria and will be hosted by Bulgarian Association of Professional Interpretation and Translation Agencies.



A Paris college serving the hospitality industry provided the front of house smile at the registration desk. Catherine Granell, second left, from the French association CNET organised the logistics



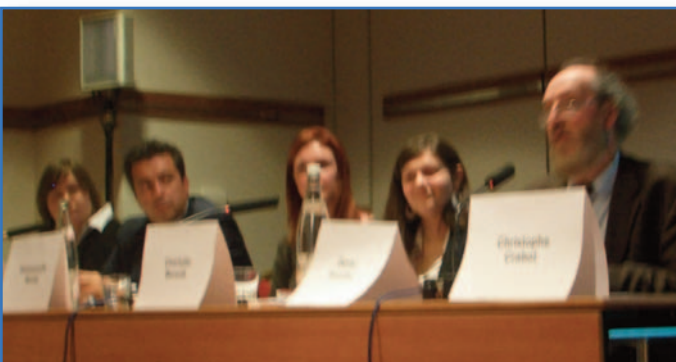
A boat trip along the Seine was the setting for the conference dinner. It provided a perfect backdrop for delegates to enjoy the sites by night and to network



The dinner on the barge on the Seine provided a perfect setting for relaxed networking



Christophe Crabot of the Amiens School of Management spoke on the importance of human resources for translation companies



Daniel Goudec, right, and Juan Jose Arievalilo Duval, second left, led the session looking at training the next generation of translators. The rest of the line up included a freelance project manager and translation degree students giving their perspectives



A debate about the freelance and company dilemma pitted Enrique López-Ebri, from translation company López-Ebri, left, against Terrence Oliver, out-going secretary FIT Europe. In football terms, it was a score draw



*Catherine Chesterman gave a tour de force presentation on the importance of fostering good customer relations*



*Cristina Vilela, from IBM, spoke about strategies to win business in the down times*



*Nickson Cheng, MD and co-founder of Lingua Tech Singapore spoke of the opportunities for translation companies in China and the Far East*



*Klaus Ahrend, head of unit Directorate-General for Translation, European Commission outlined the process used to award contracts to external suppliers*

## **What delegates said:**

*“The networking opportunities were great. I made many great contacts for business in a social environment.”*

*“ I particularly enjoyed the session that pitted the translation company versus the freelance community - very thought provoking.”*

*“I learned a lot from the presentation on searching for business opportunities in the downturn and will be applying some of the techniques highlighted by the excellent speaker.”*

*“I really found the topics oriented to operational issues for translation companies and translating training most useful.”*

*“I was impressed by Catherine Chesterman’s presentation and the ideas on motivating staff - very useful.”*

*“I enjoyed the freelance/ company dilemma, which I found thought provoking and the presentation on how to hold onto your clients gave me much food for thought.”*

*“I enjoyed the presentation on outsourcing in Asia and made me think about the importance of adjusting the way we approach this market - very helpful indeed!”*

*“I appreciated the opportunity to question the head of the European Commission Translation Directorate about some of the issues our company has encountered when trying to win business from EC institutions.”*

*“This was the first conference of this type that I had attended. It gave me plenty to think about and brought me into contact with many useful people in the industry with whom I hope to work in the future. Thank you!”*

# Communicate



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