

Interpreting and
translating for

Europe



What is the Interinstitutional Committee for Translation and Interpretation ?

The Interinstitutional Committee for Translation and Interpretation is the forum for cooperation between the language services of the European Union institutions and bodies and deals with numerous issues of common interest to the various translation and interpretation departments.

More information can be found at:

europa.eu

www.facebook.com/Interpreting.for.Europe.SCIC

[facebook.com/TranslatingForEurope](https://www.facebook.com/TranslatingForEurope)

www.youtube.com/user/DGInterpretation

www.youtube.com/user/DGINTE

ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation

www.facebook.com/pages/EU-Careers/298387676087

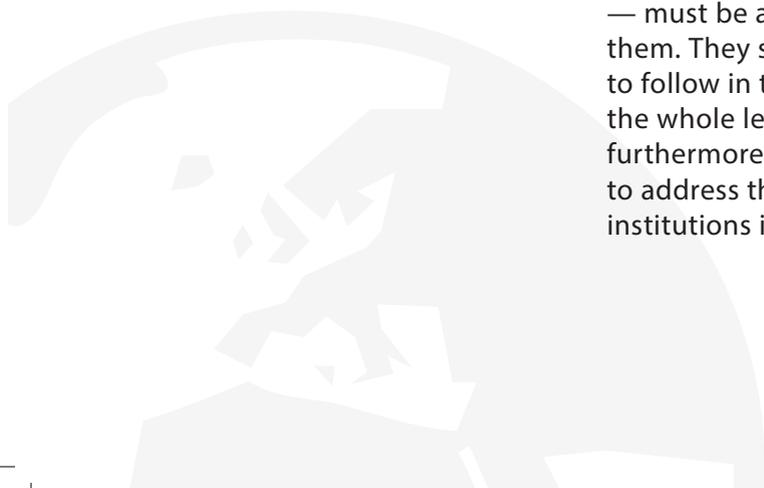
Languages in the European Institutions

The European Institutions started with four languages in 1958 and now work in 24 official and working languages plus, in some cases, a number of regional languages from different Member States, and other languages (Russian, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, etc.).

As a democratic organisation, the EU has to communicate with its citizens in their own language. The same goes for national governments and civil services, businesses and other organisations all over the EU. Europeans have the right to know what is being done in their name in order to be able to play an active part.

Giving everyone at the table a voice and a document in their own language is a fundamental requirement of the democratic legitimacy of the European Union. There should be no obstacle to understanding and putting views in meetings. The citizens of Europe should not have to be represented in Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg by their best linguists: they can send their best experts. EU interpreters make sure they understand each other.

EU translators make documents available in all official languages since the EU institutions pass laws that apply directly to everyone in the EU. Everybody — individuals, organisations and the courts — must be able to understand them. They should also be able to follow in their own language the whole legislative process and furthermore have the possibility to address themselves to the institutions in their own language.





Interpretation

International meetings and conferences are attended by people from different backgrounds and cultures who often speak different languages. It is always preferable to have the right professional support present rather than people who just happen to be good at foreign languages. Conference interpreters help stakeholders communicate with each other, not by translating every word they utter, but by conveying the ideas which they express. They maintain complete confidentiality concerning what they hear and see.

Interpreters are at the front line of multilingualism, working to ensure that language is no barrier to understanding. The interpreting services of the European Union are the world's largest employers of conference interpreters. Whereas translators deal with the written word, interpreters make sense of the spoken word. They understand what is being said in one language and render that same message accurately and almost instantly in another. By enabling communication and facilitating dialogue, interpreters act as a bridge between cultures and often find themselves at the very heart of the decision-making process.

There are two main techniques in interpreting.

The first is consecutive interpreting, where the interpreter uses a special form of note-taking while the speaker is speaking and then gives back the speech in another language as soon as the speaker has finished.

The second, which accounts for over 90% of all conference interpreting, is simultaneous interpreting, where the interpreter listens to the speaker and interprets at the same time whilst keeping pace with the speaker. This form of interpreting requires meeting rooms specially equipped with soundproof booths for the interpreters and electronic equipment for sound amplification, transmission and - often - recording.

The language arrangements for international meetings vary considerably from consecutive interpretation between two languages, for which only one interpreter may be required, to simultaneous interpretation at EU meetings into and out of 24 or more languages, which requires at least 72 interpreters.

Translation



Translators are people capable of building bridges between language communities. Their ambitious objective is sometimes seen as the art of the impossible: to reproduce in one language ideas originally thought and written in another, duplicating a way of using language that, by definition, is uniquely shaped within the confines of a different culture.

Even if there are theoretical difficulties, translation is an efficient communication tool. It allows citizens of an increasingly interconnected world to interact and have a say in shaping their common future without the need to give up their language - an integral part of their identity.

The translation services of the Union institutions are the largest in the world in terms of size and variety of languages and themes covered. They offer excellent career prospects at the heart of European integration

Beyond the European institutions, translation operations are at the centre of a thriving industry with activities ranging from globalisation of websites to localisation of handbooks and video games, from legal translation to subtitling of films and videos.

Progress in translation activities has gone hand in hand with the development of new computer-based tools. Translation memories are now well-established and are complemented by Euramis, the EU's interinstitutional translation memory repository. The European Union has also developed IATE, a database for all EU-related terminology containing 8 million terms and covering the 24 official EU languages.

While computers provide powerful means of increasing productivity and improving quality and consistency, the human touch remains irreplaceable at the core of this difficult art.



How can you become an interpreter?

A postgraduate-level programme is considered to be the most appropriate way to train high-quality conference interpreters. One benchmark is the European Masters in Conference Interpreting.

Many people believe that to be an interpreter you need to be bilingual or to be fluent in half a dozen languages. This is a myth: the majority of conference interpreters interpret only into their mother tongue!

Career opportunities with the interpreting services

The European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) centralises the inter-institutional selection procedures for both permanent and contract staff. Keep an eye on their website for details of forthcoming interpreter competitions:

europa.eu/epso
www.eu-careers.eu

The European Parliament, the European Commission, and the Court of Justice of the European Union each have an interpretation service but recruitment of staff interpreters and selection of freelance interpreters is carried out jointly.

If you wish to work for the European Institutions as a freelance interpreter, you must first pass an inter-institutional accreditation test. If you pass the test, your name and contact details will be entered into the joint EU database of accredited freelance interpreters. See: europa.eu/interpretation/index_en.htm

For details of the skill-sets sought by the European Institutions, see the pages on admission on the European Master's in Conference Interpreting website: www.emcinterpreting.org

How can you become a translator/lawyer linguist?



To become a translator, you must have a perfect command of your main language, as a rule your mother tongue, so that you can render every possible register and subtlety of the original texts.

In addition to an excellent knowledge of the languages from which you translate and of the related cultures, you will also need project management, thematic and intercultural skills and an aptitude for searching for information and terminology.

If you want to translate as a lawyer linguist at the Court of Justice, you must hold a suitable legal education qualification from a Member State. This will ensure that you have adequate knowledge of the national law and legal system of this Member State. You will have a perfect command of the language in which you studied law and related legal terminology. Furthermore, you will have a thorough knowledge of 2 other official EU languages. A good knowledge of French would be an asset.

Career opportunities with the translation services

The European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) centralises the inter-institutional selection procedures for both permanent and contract staff. Keep an eye on their website for details of forthcoming competitions:

europa.eu/epso
www.eu-careers.eu

Please note that the European Investment Bank, the European Central Bank and the Luxembourg Translation Centre have their own recruitment procedures. Most institutions also have recourse to temporary staff and freelance translators. Check the links provided in this brochure to find out more.

For details of the skills sought by European institutions, see the pages on the European Master's in Translation at:

[ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/
programmes/emt/](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/programmes/emt/)



The European Commission

Interpretation



The Directorate General for Interpretation (DG Interpretation) is part of the European Commission, the executive organ of the European Union headquartered in Brussels. DG Interpretation provides quality interpretation in meetings organised by the Commission and the other Institutions it serves, and is also a conference organiser for Commission services.

The Council of the Union, the Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Investment Bank, and the agencies and offices in the Member States are all supplied with interpreters by DG Interpretation. The European Commission aims to

serve the actual need for interpreters and provides interpreters worldwide. Long-standing training schemes with universities and authorities of Member States and non-Member States (e.g. Turkey, USA, Russia, China) contribute to a steady supply of interpreters around the globe.

DG Interpretation has 560 staff interpreters and provides some 100 000 interpreter days per year, of which about half are freelance days.

More information can be found at:

ec.europa.eu/dgs/scic/index.htm



The European Parliament

DG Interpretation and Conferences



DG Interpretation and Conferences (DG INTE) supplies interpreters for all the European Parliament's meetings, as well as for other services outside the EP including the Court of Auditors, the Committee of the Regions, the European Ombudsman, the European Data Protection Officer, the European Commission in Luxembourg and the Translation Centre. An increasing number of the Parliament's meetings are broadcast live on the internet. As well as travelling to Strasbourg every month for the plenary sessions, the EP's interpreters travel all over the world, accompanying delegations to overseas conferences, on visits to other parliaments and on election observation missions.

Meetings using all 24 official languages are held on a regular basis and other languages such as Russian, Arabic and Chinese are also often needed. DG INTE has close links to universities training interpreters.

DG Interpretation and Conferences has 294 staff interpreters and provides some 110 000 interpreter days per year, of which about half are freelance days.

More information can be found at:

www.europarl.europa.eu/interpretation



The Court of Justice of the European Union



The Court of Justice in Luxembourg is the judicial authority of the European Union and, in cooperation with the courts and tribunals of the Member States, it guarantees the uniform application and interpretation of European Union law. In order to ensure equal access to justice at EU-level, it is essential to enable the parties to express themselves in their own language. The Court's Interpretation Directorate provides simultaneous interpreting during the public hearings before the Court of Justice, the General Court and the Civil Service Tribunal.

The number of languages used varies from one hearing to another, depending on the needs of the parties, the Judges and the official languages of the Member States involved. The rules of procedure require the Judges to deliberate in closed session, and interpreters are not present at deliberations.

French is the common language in which the Court, by custom, deliberates and drafts its judgments.

Conference interpreters must have a thorough knowledge of all their working languages, but the ability to analyse and understand the speaker's argument is equally important. At the Court of Justice precision is essential, and prior study of the case-file, which is prepared in the language of the case and French, is an integral part of an interpreter's work. Knowledge of French is usually necessary to study case documents, since some texts may not be available in other languages.

The Court of Justice of the EU currently has 70 staff interpreters and employs around 300 freelance interpreters each year for an average of 45 interpreter days per working week.

More information can be found at:

www.curia.europa.eu



The European Commission

Directorate-General for Translation



The European Commission is the executive body of the European Union. Its Directorate-General for Translation (DGT) - split almost equally between Brussels and Luxembourg - provides high-quality language services, from standard translation to editing, localisation and translation for multilingual websites.

The European Commission is the engine-room of the legislative process, keeping the Council and Parliament supplied with proposals. Together with correspondence with citizens, national authorities and stakeholders, these legislative acts make up the bulk of the texts translated at the Commission.

EU legislation must be translated and published in all the official languages before it can enter into force. Politically important documents must also be made accessible to everyone, in print or on the internet, to cement the democracy, transparency and legitimacy of the EU institutions. Quality control puts strong emphasis on accuracy, consistency and meeting deadlines.

DG Translation employs about 1 600 translators, 700 support staff and uses all kinds of new technologies to translate approximately 2 million pages per year, of which some 500 000 are handled by external contractors.

More information can be found at:

ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation



The European Parliament



The European Parliament is elected by direct universal suffrage. Its 751 Members, who represent nearly 500 million citizens, are elected every five years by voters in the 28 Member States of the Union.

Parliament legislates together with the Council of the Union in the vast majority of policy areas, the impact of which is felt more and more strongly by Europeans in their daily lives; they include environmental protection, consumer rights, equal opportunities, transport, and the free movement of workers, capital, services and goods.

Laws that affect people's lives must be available to them in the language of their country. As a legislator, the European Parliament must be sure that the texts it adopts are of optimal quality in all 24 official languages of the Union.

There are currently 660 translators and 280 assistants, all contributing to meeting Parliament's translation needs. They work in language units, using advanced technological tools and applications, including the latest translation memory software.

More information can be found at:

www.europarl.europa.eu/translation



The European Council and the Council of the European Union



Council of the European Union
General Secretariat

The translation service at the General Secretariat of the Council provides both the European Council and the Council of the European Union with translations of the documents they need for their proceedings. Most of them are policy documents which the European public can access as soon as they are approved, or pieces of legislation that apply to EU citizens either directly or after becoming law in the Member States.

The role of the European Council (of heads of state and government) is to provide the Union with the necessary impetus for its development and to define its general political directions and priorities.

The Council (of ministers), on the other hand, legislates in most cases jointly with the European Parliament, including setting the budget, and carries out policy-making and coordinating functions.

As a rule, at Council and European Council level, documents on which decisions are based must be available in all official languages. The translation service is organized in 24 units, one for each language, with some 688 translators and 262 assistants in all.

More information can be found at:

www.consilium.europa.eu



The Court of Justice of the European Union



The Translation Service, shared between the Court of Justice, the General Court and the Civil Service Tribunal, is responsible for the translation of the documents related to the proceedings brought before the 3 EU Courts. Translation is carried out under mandatory language rules and covers the official languages of the EU.

Given that documents to be translated - such as pleadings and judgments - are all legal texts which are highly technical in nature, only fully qualified lawyers can translate and work as lawyer linguists.

Some 600 lawyer linguists take care of the daily translation needs. Throughout the proceedings, they play an important role in the communication between the parties and the judges.

The Directorate-General for Translation is the institution's largest service. It includes a language unit for each official language into which the Court's case-law must be translated, and 3 functional units coordinating all translation requests and providing research, documentation, terminology, translation-specific IT tools and training.

Employment opportunities

Permanent Staff: europa.eu/epso

Contract Staff and Traineeships: www.curia.europa.eu (see Jobs and Traineeships)

Free-lance Translation: www.curia.europa.eu (see Invitations to tender)

More information can be found at:

curia.europa.eu/jcms/jcms/Jo2_10742



European Court of Auditors - ECA



The Translation and Language Services Directorate at the European Court of Auditors is a multicultural department with some 140 staff from all the EU Member States.

The translators work in 23 translation teams covering all EU official languages. Assistants are pooled and perform support tasks. There is also a Coordination and Planning team.

The core activity of the ECA is to audit the EU's finances, and it is the mission of the Translation and Language Services Directorate to ensure that audit findings can be read in all the EU official languages. We produce high-quality translations of documents drafted within the ECA for internal purposes and for publication, as well as correspondence with the EU Member States.

Translators also provide on-the-spot linguistic assistance for auditors on mission in various EU countries. The terminology used is varied, but is mostly based on the language of auditing, finance and economics.

For permanent positions, the Translation and Language Services Directorate recruits through EPSO competitions; however, we may also offer short-term contracts and traineeships.

More information can be found at:

www.eca.europa.eu



The European Central Bank - ECB



EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK

EUROSYSTEM

The European Central Bank was established in 1998 and is located in Frankfurt as the hub of the European System of Central Banks and the Single Supervisory Mechanism. The ECB, with some 2 500 staff, has the maintenance of price stability in the euro area as its primary objective, and works to safeguard financial stability and promote European financial integration. The ECB also supervises banks in the euro area.

The ECB communicates in 23 official EU languages with its external audiences – the international financial markets, European citizens, European and national authorities, the media and the banks that it supervises.

The ECB employs lawyer-linguists to prepare its legal acts, and translators to edit English-language documents produced in-house and to translate, revise and proofread those of its

reports, official publications and other materials which are issued in the official EU languages.

The ECB's linguists use computer-assisted translation tools and are supported by specialists for terminology and language technology. They collaborate closely with the linguists and experts working at the central banks and banking supervision authorities in the Member States and at the other EU institutions. Lawyer-linguists and translators rely on the support of freelance consultants, whose services are procured through competitive tender procedures.

More information can be found at:

www.ecb.europa.eu



The Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union



The Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union was established in 1994 in Luxembourg to provide translation services to the other decentralised EU agencies and to assist those EU institutions and bodies which have their own translation services in times of peaks in workload. Today, with 200 staff, it translates for 61 EU agencies, institutions and other bodies. Output in 2015 was 730 000 pages of translations.

Its second main task is to contribute to interinstitutional cooperation between the EU's various translation services with the aim of rationalising working methods, harmonising procedures and making overall savings in the field of translation.

One of the most striking achievements of that cooperation was the launch by the Translation Centre of the IATE project (Inter-Active Terminology for Europe). The IATE terminology database has been open to the public since 2007 and brings together the terminological resources of all the EU translation services. With 8 million terms, IATE is the biggest terminology database in the world today.

More information can be found at:

www.cdt.europa.eu



The Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions



European Economic and Social Committee

The Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee are two consultative bodies of the European Union, providing input from European regional representatives and professional organisations on proposed European legislation. They both have headquarters in Brussels and have members from all countries of the European Union. The Directorate for Translation serves both Committees.

The members both draft and receive documents in their own language. Command of less-widely known languages is particularly appreciated among the translators. The directorate has 270 translators.

The subjects covered in translations reflect the full range of European legislation, and so translators are expected to be generalists with good research skills and excellent communication skills, in order to get clear messages across both to the European legislators and to the wider European general public.

More information can be found at:

www.eesc.europa.eu
www.cor.europa.eu



The European Investment Bank



**European
Investment
Bank**

The EIB bank

The European Investment Bank (EIB) is the long-term lending arm of the European Union. It is owned by the EU Member States and finances projects that promote European economic development and integration. Besides supporting projects in the Member States, its main lending priorities include financing sound investments in future Member States and partner countries.

Headquartered in Luxembourg, the EIB has some 30 external offices around the world. It employs some 2 900 persons.

As part of the Secretariat General of the EIB, the Linguistic Services provide the following services to the Bank: translation, editing, proofreading and terminology advice.

With some 30 in-house professional translators (plus support staff) and calling upon external language service providers, the Linguistic Services manage and deliver translations in all 24 official languages of the European Union, as well as in some non-EU languages such as Arabic, Russian and Japanese.

The EIB has its own recruitment procedures and publishes vacancies on its website.

More information can be found at:

www.eib.org

Notes ...









