



Over the years the European Union has evolved from a predominantly political and socio-economic enterprise and become increasingly proactive in the area of justice, the so-called 'Third Pillar'. The *Maastricht Treaty* (1993) introduced justice and home affairs as «matters of common interest» for the EU but it was the *Amsterdam* (1999) and *Nice* (2000) *Treaties* which really set out the ambition to shape the EU into «an area of freedom, security and justice». Following the *Amsterdam Treaty* (1999), the European Council laid down the priorities for Justice and Home Affairs in three subsequent five-year programmes ('Tampere', 'The Hague' and 'Stockholm'). From the beginning the issue of access to and quality of interpreting (and translation) featured as one of the major fundamental rights and procedural safeguards to be ensured in criminal proceedings.

The end of 2014 marks a turning point as the *Stockholm Programme* comes to an end. Therefore, it seems the time has come to take stock. This contribution surveys 15 years (1999–2014) of European and national legislation, of academic activity in training and research and of professionalization of the legal interpreting and translation community, charting important objectives that have been achieved.

KEY WORDS legal interpreting, interpreting research, interpreting profession, European Union.

Looking back while going forward: 15 years of legal interpreting in the EU

Quince años de interpretación jurídica en la UE: balance y perspectivas

Con los años, la Unión Europea (UE) ha pasado de ser un proyecto esencialmente político y socio-económico a participar cada vez más activamente en el ámbito de la justicia, el "tercer pilar". El Tratado de Maastricht (1993) ya consideró la justicia y los asuntos de interior como temas de interés común de la UE, pero fue en los tratados de Ámsterdam (1999) y de Niza (2000) en los que se plasmó la ambición de hacer de la UE un "espacio europeo de libertad, seguridad y justicia". Tras el Tratado de Ámsterdam, el Consejo Europeo estableció las prioridades para Justicia e Interior en tres programas quinquenales ('Tampere', 'La Haya' y 'Estocolmo'). Desde el principio, las cuestiones del acceso a la interpretación (y traducción) y de la calidad de las mismas aparecieron como uno de los derechos fundamentales y una de las salvaguardias procesales que debían garantizarse en los procedimientos penales.

El vencimiento del Programa de Estocolmo a finales de 2014 marca un punto de inflexión. Parece, pues, momento de hacer balance. Esta aportación repasa 15 años (1999–2014) de legislación europea y nacional, de actividad académica en formación e investigación, y de profesionalización de la interpretación en el ámbito jurídico, señalando algunos objetivos importantes que ya se han logrado.

PALABRAS CLAVE: interpretación jurídica, investigación en interpretación, la profesión de intérprete, Unión Europea

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Looking back on 15 years of legal interpreting in the EU in 2014, the year in which all of Europe is commemorating the outbreak of World War I – the ‘Great War’ – is admittedly a bit of a skewed and disproportionate remembrance effort. It has a ring to it of Gulliver on Brobdingnag. Be that as it may, there is a feeling in the legal interpreting research and professional community that a phase of development and implementation has been accomplished and that it is possible to look back now and take stock of what has been achieved since the EU summit in October 1999 in Tampere, Finland, which we take as our starting point. We believe it is possible now to chart some important objectives that have been achieved in legal interpreting, most noteworthy in the area of legislation, professionalization and research as well as in the extension from its initial focus on court interpreting to virtually all fields of the judiciary.

LEGISLATION

In all democratic countries, legislation is the cornerstone of a just and fair society. International legal instruments such as the *European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, in combination with national legislation ensured that there was –or is– no EU Member State that did not have provisions in the law to guarantee the other-language speaker involved in a (usually) criminal procedure –be it as a defendant, witness or victim– the right to an interpreter. However, also in the area of justice and fundamental rights, needs do change over time. For instance, more cooperation and mutual trust was needed between Member States in the face of new threats such as terrorism, organised crime, human trafficking, etc., and the increased mobility throughout Europe, reflected another

concern in the number of EU citizens, migrants and immigrants involved in legal procedures in another EU country. But issues like trust and cooperation ultimately rest on the quality and reliability of communication, thus also on the quality of interpreting or translation. Moreover, everyone involved in a criminal procedure should have their right to a fair trial and their fundamental rights as enshrined in Articles 5 and 6 of the *European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* protected across languages and cultures, which was clearly not the case given the embarrassing string of decisions by the *European Court of Human Rights* against EU Member States, quite a number of them on issues of translation or interpreting. Protection of the rights of victims, suspects and prisoners in the EU, even if they cross borders, and the right to a fair trial no matter where you are in the Union, thus became the lofty objectives of the so-called ‘Third Pillar’ of the EU Commission (Reding 2010). Another, though not final, concern about interpreting in criminal proceedings involved the considerable cost of the service, but one, as more Member States came to realise, that came without any quality assurance.

All of the above are some of the reasons why in the 1990s the EU –the Commission, Council and Parliament– became increasingly proactive in the area of justice. The *Maastricht Treaty* (1993) introduced justice and home affairs as “matters of common interest” for the EU while the *Amsterdam* (1999) and *Nice* (2000) *Treaties* laid the foundations of the EU as “an area of freedom, security and justice”. The culminating political expression of this development was the *Charter of Fundamental Freedoms of the EU* (2000), which in Chapter VI Justice, Articles 47 and 48, deals with the ‘right to an effective remedy and to a fair trial’ and the ‘presumption

of innocence and right of defence'. The first concrete action to translate the justice and home affairs principles in the *Treaties* into practice was the special Tampere European Council in October 1999. Some of the priority fields in which joint action was to be taken by the then 15 Member States were equal access to the courts and to legal protection anywhere in the EU for EU citizens and others legally in the EU –justice across borders– and, secondly, the recognition and protection of the fundamental rights of everyone in the European Union. Thus 'Tampere' became the first of three subsequent five-year action programmes in the area of justice: 'Tampere', 'The Hague' and 'Stockholm' (Tampere 2002).

At that point in time, the Commission launched the long process –through consultation rounds, experts' meetings, White and Green Papers and a number of DG Justice granted projects– to strengthen the procedural rights of suspected or accused persons in criminal proceedings, including the right to interpretation and translation. This led to a first 'Framework Decision' on five procedural rights in April 2004, a framework decision being the most binding legal instrument possible in the field of Justice but requiring unanimous agreement among the Member States. Failing to get that unanimity in 2006, a new 'roadmap' strategy was devised in 2009 which set out to deal with the procedural rights separately and step-by-step. This strategy resulted first in a new proposal for a 'Framework Decision' though this time exclusively on the right to interpretation and translation in criminal proceedings (2009). But when the *Treaty of Lisbon* came into force later that same year, fully establishing the EU as an "area of freedom, security and justice" and now allowing the Council to legislate and act by a qualified majority (and no longer by unanimity) also on issues of Justice, a number of Mem-

ber States, with the support of the Commission and the Parliament re-submitted a revised version of the Proposal for a 'Framework Decision' as a 'Directive' in March 2010. This meant that when passed, there would be a legal instrument that would be binding on the Member States and that would have to be transposed in the legislation and procedural practices of the by then 24 Member States.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of *Directive 2010/64/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2010 on the right to interpretation and translation in criminal proceedings* (Official Journal of the European Union, L 280/I, 26.10.2010). Limiting ourselves here to the most important provisions on interpreting: interpreting must be provided from the moment one is made aware by the competent authorities of a Member State that one is suspected or accused of having committed a criminal offence, up until the conclusion of the proceedings, as well as for communication between suspected or accused persons and their legal counsel. Video-conferencing, telephone or the internet may be used unless the physical presence of the interpreter is required to safeguard the fairness of the proceedings, and appropriate assistance should be provided for persons with hearing or speech impediments. Member States shall ensure that a procedure or mechanism is in place to ascertain whether suspected or accused persons speak and understand the language of the criminal proceedings or whether they need the assistance of an interpreter. They shall also take concrete measures to ensure that the interpretation provided meets the quality required and that the suspected or accused persons have the right to challenge a decision finding that there is no need for interpretation and the possibility to complain if the quality of the interpretation is not sufficient.





In order to promote the adequacy of interpretation and efficient access thereto, Member States shall endeavour to establish a register or registers of independent interpreters who are appropriately qualified and who are required to observe confidentiality. Member States shall also request those responsible for the training of judges, prosecutors and judicial staff involved in criminal proceedings to pay special attention to the particularities of communicating with the assistance of an interpreter and they shall, of course, meet the costs of interpretation.

Member States should have implemented this Directive into the national laws, regulations and administrative procedures by October 2013. On the EUR-Lex Archive site¹ one can survey the diversity of actions taken (or not taken) by the Member States and which will form part of the reports that have to be forwarded to the Commission by October 2014, the time of writing. A few examples must suffice: The Netherlands, for example, have passed a new law with regard to the implementation of Directive 2010/64/EU: *Wet van 28 februari 2013 tot implementatie van richtlijn nr. 2010/64/EU van het Europees Parlement en de Raad van 20 oktober 2010 betreffende het recht op vertolking en vertaling in strafprocedures*,² as well as a decision –*Besluit van 21 juni 2013 tot vaststelling van het tijdstip van inwerkingtreding van de wet van 28 februari 2013 tot implementatie van richtlijn nr. 2010/64/EU van het Europees Parlement en de Raad van 20 oktober 2010 betreffende het recht op vertolking en vertaling in strafprocedures*– concerning the entry into force on 01/10/2013 of the

new law.³ While mostly concerned with the for them new requirement to translate the essential documents enumerated in the Directive, the law does reiterate the absolute necessity to provide for interpretation in case the accused or defendant does not understand the language of the proceedings, including explicitly the right to an interpreter in counsel-client consultations or in the case of suspects with hearing or speech impediments. Germany passed a *Gesetz zur Stärkung der Verfahrensrechte von Beschuldigten im Strafverfahren vom 2. Juli 2013*⁴ and Austria the *Bundesgesetz, mit dem die Strafprozessordnung 1975, das Strafregistergesetz 1968 und das Sicherheitspolizeigesetz geändert werden (Strafprozessrechtsänderungsgesetz 2013)*.⁵ Ideological pressures and budgetary constraints will certainly tempt some Member States to try and convince the Commission that their national legislation already meets the provisions. However, there is continuing evidence that the interpretation needs and rights of suspects, defendants or victims are still not properly assessed by police officers or provided as a matter of course for meetings between lawyers and their clients. The insufficient provision of mechanisms through which suspects and defendants may complain about the quality of interpretation remains further cause for worry as well as the fact that Article 3(7), which allows for an oral rendering, even a summary, to be provided instead of a written translation, may become the rule rather than the exception. There is further

³ Official Journal, number: 268, Publication date 02/07/2013.

⁴ Official Journal: Bundesgesetzblatt Teil 1 (BGB 1), number: 34, Publication date: 05/07/2013, Page: 01938-01939, Entry into force 06/07/2013.

⁵ Bundesgesetz, number: I Nr. 195/2013; Official Journal: Bundesgesetzblatt für die Republik Österreich (BGB 1). number: I Nr. 195/2013, Publication date: 23/09/2013, Entry into force 01/01/2014.

¹ Information published by the European Commission on National Execution Measures.

Accessible on: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:72010L0064:EN:NOT>.

² Official Journal 2013/85, Publication date 12/03/2013.

concern about the independence of interpreters, particularly those who are employed by the police, about the inadequate supply of interpreters working in less common languages and about the quality of interpretation which still suffers from inadequate qualification requirements (Fair Trials International 2014: 17-18).

In the meantime, two other Directives of the procedural ‘package’ have been passed: *Directive 2012/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on the right to information in criminal proceedings*⁶ and *Directive 2013/48/EU on the right of access to a lawyer in criminal proceedings and on the right to communicate upon arrest*.⁷ Another Directive which is relevant in this context is *Directive 2012/29/EU establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA*.⁸ Just two examples of the fact that these Directives are linked in the ‘mindset’ of the Commission: a) the reference in Recital 25 of the Directive on the right to information that “Member States should ensure that, when providing information in accordance with this Directive, suspects or accused persons are provided, where necessary, with translations or interpretation into a language that they understand, in accordance with the standards set out in Directive 2010/64/EU”, and b) Recitals 34, 35 and 36 and Article 7 (Right to interpretation and translation) in the ‘victims directive’, though adapted to the specific legal situation, also clearly draw on Article 2 and 3 of the 2010 *Directive* on the right to

interpretation and translation for suspects and accused persons.

These legislative measures need to be abided by at the risk of financial penalties imposed by the Commission for not meeting the transposition deadline and, ultimately, infringement proceedings before the Court of Justice in Luxembourg. As Vice-President Viviane Reding, and until 2014 the EU’s Justice Commissioner, stated in her press release:

The Commission is delivering on its promises to strengthen citizens’ rights everywhere in Europe. I expect Member States to deliver too. The European Commission will soon report on who has done their homework. We will not shy away from naming and shaming –after all, this law goes to the very heart of citizens’ rights. (Reding 2013)

On the ground, however, in the Member States it will essentially be the responsibility of judges —as ultimate guardians of the proceedings in court and now bound by a European law to ensure that the quality of interpreting safeguards the rights of defence— as well as that of the defence lawyers to ensure and monitor the adequate provision of interpretation. But looking back from 1999 to the present day, and whatever the varying degree of implementation of these Directives in the Member States may be in the short term, it is clear that legal interpreting today possesses a number of strong legal instruments to ensure the provision and quality of interpreting in criminal proceedings.⁹

SCOPE

A second development over the past 15 years that merits our attention is the widening of

⁶ Official Journal of the European Union L 142/1, 1/6/2012.

⁷ Official Journal of the European Union, L 294/1, 6.II.2013.

⁸ Official Journal of the European Union, L 315/57, 14.II.2012.

⁹ For more information on Directive 2010 and the implementation strategies needed, see Hertog 2014, forthcoming.





the scope of interpreting for the judiciary. Until the beginning of the 21st century, the focus of the field –the training, the research– was very much on interpreting in the courts. Understandably so, as court interpreting was so prominent and important at the ‘modern’ beginning of the discipline –viz. the Nuremberg trial– and continues to be so to the present day in international courts such as the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Court (ICC), both in The Hague, or in European courts like the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in Luxembourg, or the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in Strasbourg. However, all courts, on all levels, are seen as the apex of the justice system, where final decisions are rendered and justice is done, and seen to be done. Thus courts were not only the most visible but also the most accessible settings for researchers, and they still are, the ‘locale’ where the interpreters and their performance can be observed and studied in the least obtrusive way. All this reflected itself in the research on the history of legal interpreting, which tends to focus on courts (Morris 1999), in encyclopedic entries (Stern 2011, Russell 2012) as well as in the literature on interpreting competences and training. Indeed, in many languages one still refers to interpreting in the legal system as ‘court’ interpreting, for instance, *Gerichtsdolmetschen* or *Gerechttolken*.

In the past decade, however, the term ‘Legal Interpreter/Interpreting’ has gained wide currency. This term is more inclusive than ‘court interpreter’ and includes –in the letter and spirit of the *Directive*– interpreting in all settings and at all stages of the criminal law procedures, from a search warrant, the arrest, the police or investigative judge’s interviews, the lawyer-client meetings, through all interim hearings until *res*

judicata, the final decision in court. After all, the legal process consists of a series of interdependent procedures involving a range of legal services and, as far as interpreting is concerned, the chain is only as strong as its weakest link, as one has come to realise. Hence, interpreting in the police station has the same weight and importance and should be carried out according to the same quality standards as interpreting at the final stage of sentencing, say before a judge and jury in a trial court. Moreover, the practice of legal interpreting shows that today it stretches far beyond the police and the courts. Interpreting is needed in prisons and probation services, in immigration hearings, during depositions when personal statements such as a witness report or expert testimony documents need to be interpreted, in mediation and conflict resolution settings and, of course, also beyond criminal procedures, in juvenile and custody hearings or civil and commercial law disputes (Hertog 2013). Legal interpreters also increasingly assist in communication between legal services across national borders, e.g. in judicial collaborations to prevent terrorism or trafficking in drugs or people. Consequently, the *European Arrest Warrant* procedures and cases are a specific remit of *Directive 2010/64/EU*. As a matter of fact, in a recent report by the Legal Experts Advisory Panel for *Fair Trials International*, one in five of the people who contacted Fair Trials International from EU countries in 2011–2013 reported being denied access to an interpreter or to translations of key documents (*Fair Trials International* 2014: 17).

Finally, over the years, a greater awareness and sensitivity has developed for the specific interpreting needs of vulnerable groups. Youngsters, victims, refugees, prisoners, deaf people, asylum seekers, etc., all of these present particular challenges to interpretation. Article 3 of

Directive 2010/64/EU, for instance, specifies that “The right to interpretation under paragraphs 1 and 2 includes appropriate assistance for persons with hearing or speech impediments.” Recital 21 of *Directive 2012/29/EU* (the ‘victims directive’) stipulates that:

Information and advice provided by competent authorities, victim support services and restorative justice services should, as far as possible, be given by means of a range of media and in a manner which can be understood by the victim. Such information and advice should be provided in simple and accessible language. It should also be ensured that the victim can be understood during proceedings. In this respect, the victim’s knowledge of the language used to provide information, age, maturity, intellectual and emotional capacity, literacy and any mental or physical impairment should be taken into account. Particular account should be taken of difficulties in understanding or communicating which may be due to a disability of some kind, such as hearing or speech impediments. Equally, limitations on a victim’s ability to communicate information should be taken into account during criminal proceedings.

Two final examples must suffice: the *Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on procedural safeguards for children suspected or accused in criminal proceedings*¹⁰ lays down in Article 4, 20 that although “This Directive should be implemented in accordance with the standards set out in Directive 2010/64/EU on the right to interpretation and translation in criminal proceedings”, nevertheless “an individual assessment is needed in order to identify the child’s specific needs ...to determine if and

to what extent he or she would need special measures during the criminal proceedings. The personal characteristics of a child, his or her maturity and economic and social background may vary significantly” (Article 7, 30). Similarly, in asylum hearings many authorities and indeed interpreters themselves have become very much aware of the power imbalances at stake and in particular of the consequences of gender (a)symmetry in the Official-Applicant-Interpreter triad. Many asylum authorities now have a gender issues monitoring officer and provide special training for interpreters so that refugees running from unspeakable horrors or applicants who have been the victims of horrific sexual humiliation receive the appropriately sensitive interpreting they deserve.

A concurrent development which has characterised the extended scope of legal interpreting over the past years is the increased use of technology. Some courts in the EU are introducing or experimenting with the use of interpreting booths or portable sets (the *bidule*) to allow for simultaneous interpretation. Usually this trend is driven by cost-efficiency concerns (time saved). Although it is obviously common practice in international and European courts, as well as in other countries such as the United States, going down this road will have serious repercussions, perhaps not so much on the cost of infrastructure as on recruitment, training and professionalization –including remuneration– of the interpreters. Another development is the interpreting and transcribing of telephone taps, which is fast becoming one of the most needed –and certainly most expensive– interpreting skills. But it is video, or remote interpreting –quickly replacing telephone interpreting– which is increasingly becoming common practice in criminal proceedings. Strong arguments in favour are the efficiency and speed of setting



¹⁰ 2013/0408 (COD) Brussels, 27.II.2013, COM(2013) 822 final.



up a video-link and the cost factor –saving on time and travel– as well as the security issue –no need to transport a high-risk prisoner to court for what is a mere perfunctory hearing. As reliability and security of the connection improve and technical standards of image and sound become better, interpreted video-links will continue to increase as a result of more cases involving other Member States or far-off locations and the scarcity of specific language combinations, particularly with languages of lesser diffusion.

Thus the growing awareness of the interdependence of legal procedures and stages, the diversity of the settings, the impact of technology and the specific needs of the different users and of interpreting all account for the fact that the expression ‘legal interpreting’ has by now firmly established itself as the more useful term, rather than, say, ‘court’ interpreting. Moreover, a reverse trend, a fragmentation of legal interpreting into more subordinate terms such as ‘police’ or ‘immigration’ interpreting would trigger perceptions of a quality hierarchy in the legal system and a correspondent professional status, which is to be avoided at all costs. Few legal interpreters can limit their activities to only one section of the legal system anyway.

RESEARCH

From the very beginning of the period surveyed until the present day, progress in legal interpreting has been greatly enhanced by a number of projects funded by the Directorate-General Justice of the European Commission. These projects were, and still are, carried out by a consortium of, on average, four or five partners from different Member States, usually made up of both academic institutions and professional associations. Often the partner-

ships are interdisciplinary, consisting not only of (legal) interpreting trainers and practitioners but also of legal professionals such as lawyers, judges or police officers. As a matter of fact, the European Criminal Bar Association (ECBA) and the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) are two of the partners that have participated in these projects on a fairly regular basis. To the best of our recollection, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom have at one time or another participated in one or more of these projects. Collectively, these projects have thus disseminated an invaluable amount of good practice in legal interpreting throughout the EU and one can identify their influence in many publications, training programmes, conferences and professional activities. Their continuing relevance and importance can be traced by the increase in the number of projects granted over the years. A brief summary of all these projects, with a link to the report and project’s website can be found on <http://eulita.eu/european-projects>. For history’s sake, however, and in an attempt to chart the logical sequential development the following survey could be useful.

Under the first DG Justice action programme –*Grotius*– the *Aequitas* project (98/GR/131) analysed the components throughout the professional chain of legal interpreting, from the competences required, the selection of students, the curriculum, the assessment and certification, the training of trainers and the code of ethics to the guidelines of good practice and the working arrangements with the legal professionals. Its sequel project, *Aequalitas* (2001/GRP/015), strengthened the legal framework on the basis of, *inter alia*, relevant landmark case-law of the

European Court of Human Rights, and at the same time disseminated the *Aequitas* recommendations to representative colleagues –interpreters, but also lawyers, judges, police officers, and so forth. Both projects were instrumental in the drafting of the sections on interpreting in the *Green Paper on Procedural Safeguards for Suspects and Defendants in Criminal Proceedings throughout the European Union* (2003) which was to pave the way for the first Framework Decision Proposal (2004).

Grotius was succeeded by the *Agis* programme and the next project *Aequilibrium* (2003/AGIS/048) focused in particular on the interdisciplinary working arrangements with other legal professionals and on standards and codes which are needed and can be trusted to ensure professional, reliable interpreting. The long, protracted and difficult negotiations on the Framework Decision Proposal, led to the *Agis* project *Status Quaestionis: Questionnaire on the Provision of Legal Interpreting and Translation in the EU* (JLS/2006/AGIS/052) which was intended to provide detailed and objective information on the existing provision of legal interpreting throughout the EU, thus revealing the discrepancies in standards between the Member States.

The *EULITA* project (JLS/2007/JPEN/249) was the first carried out under the new *Justice* programme, in response to the need to have a representative voice speaking for the legal interpreters and their associations in the various EU fora. The project led to the establishment of the *European Legal Interpreters and Translators Association* (EULITA), in Antwerp on 26 November 2009. A second project, *Building Mutual Trust* (JLS/2007/JPEN/219), developed and disseminated best practices in training by drawing up an extensive and practical treasure-trove of teaching and training materials

which could serve as templates for similar materials in different languages. After all, consistency of training would enhance consistency of standards across the EU. *AVIDICUS* was the first project (JLS/2008/JPEN/037) to research the technical requirements (sound, image, etc.) and interpreting strategies in videoconferencing in criminal proceedings. As some of its outcomes, it provided training programmes and recommendations on how to work efficiently, reliably together with the legal professionals under these conditions. Meanwhile, the *Trafut* project (Training for the Future, JUST/2010/JPEN/AG/1549) intended to provide the relevant stakeholders in the Member States –the Ministry of Justice, the judiciary, the bar and police associations– with experts’ advice on the issues raised in the recitals and articles of the new Directive in order to facilitate the correct, efficient but full transposition of Directive 2010.

More recently, the partners in IMPLI (*Improving Police and Legal Interpreting*, JUST/2010/JPEN/AG/1562; in this volume) assessed the current state of police interpreting in their countries. The project analysed the various strategies for questioning and the interpreting strategies used, presenting their recommendations in the form of six didactic films. A similar project, *Building Mutual Trust 2* (JUST/2010/JPEN/AG/1566), provided five training videos in three languages designed specifically for law enforcement and judicial professionals, user-friendly for the non-linguist, suitable for use by trainers or as self-study materials and demonstrating best practices when working with suspects, defendants and witnesses through a spoken language interpreter. The follow-up video project, *AVIDICUS 2* (JUST/2010/JPEN/AG/1558), disseminated the emerging knowledge about the uses of videoconference and remote interpreting in





criminal proceedings and further investigated how the combination of technological mediation through videoconference technology and linguistic-cultural mediation through an interpreter affected the specific goals of legal communication and how to elicit adaptive strategies to mitigate potentially undesirable effects.

In 2011 *Qualitas* (JUST/2011/JPEN/AG/2889) wanted to provide further support to the transition process of Directive 2010 by further ensuring the quality of legal interpretation through valid and reliable testing methods of all relevant competences and through recommendations on solid certification procedures. The book in print and an on-line helpdesk provides a direct consultation service to anyone seeking specific information about testing and certification.¹¹ In the same period, two projects focused on interpreting for different vulnerable groups. The *Co-Minor-in Quest* project (JUST/2011/JPEN/AG/2961; in this volume) investigated the necessary co-operation between professionals in interpreter-mediated questioning and interviewing of minors, while the *SOS-VICS* project (Speak Out for Support of Victims, JUST/2011/JPEN/AG/2912; in this volume) –an oddity in this list as the only ‘national’ project, carried out by one Member State only, i.e., Spain– analysed the specifics of interpreting for victims, focusing on the target group of women who had become the victims of gender or domestic violence, another of the EU Commission’s priorities.

Three criminal justice projects are currently, at the time of writing, under way. The third video-link project, *AVIDICUS 3* (JUST/2013/JPEN/AG/4553), conducts a comprehensive assessment

of the systemic suitability of the conceptual design specifications of video-link solutions used in different settings and different types of legal institutions across Europe. The partners will ascertain whether these solutions are suitable for bilingual, interpreted communication. A related aim is to make the training solutions developed in *AVIDICUS 1 and 2* more accessible and develop a method for using the medium itself to deliver training. A handbook on bilingual videoconferencing should supplement the general manual available in the e-Justice portal. The *TraiLLD* project (Training in Interpreting in Languages of Lesser Diffusion, JUST/2013/JPEN/AG/4594) sets out to tackle the complex issue of providing interpreters while safeguarding quality in languages which are of lesser diffusion in a particular Member State or region. The *LIT Search* project (The Legal Interpreter and Translator Search database, JUST/2013/JPEN/AG/4556) is responding to the issue and need of a national register, or registers, of qualified interpreters mentioned in the *Directive*, thus paving the way for an EU-wide register needed in a European Union of ever closer judicial co-operation. It is an objective shared by the working parties on e-Justice¹² and will require studying and recommending requirements of equivalence among Member States and existing registers –such as the scope of application of the register (courts, police, immigration, etc.); the admission procedures; the general requirements (nationality, age, absence of criminal record, security vetting, etc.); the specific requirements (languages, translation and /or interpreting, training, experience, specialisation(s), etc.); the requirements for entry into the register (oath,

¹¹ A similar project *Qualetra* (JUST/2011/JPEN/AG/2975) was carried out concurrently on legal translation training, competences and resources in response to the translation issues (e.g. translation of essential documents, European Arrest Warrant, etc.) raised by Directive 2010.

¹² See e-Justice document 13949/12 of 27 September 2012 on ‘Translators and interpreters databases’ and ‘Find a legal translator or interpreter’ on <https://e-justice.europa.eu>.

seal, code of conduct, etc.); the duration and renewal of registration; complaints and disciplinary procedures; the accessibility of the register (courts, police, lawyers, general public, etc.); the administrative management of the register—before one can arrive at such an EU database.

The last project in this survey is also the first to take the issue of legal interpreting into civil justice, a trend that will forcefully emerge over the next years as the Criminal Justice programme has now come to an end and a merger is envisaged from 2014 of all ‘Justice’ grant programmes. *Understanding Justice* (JUST/2013/JCIV/AG/4684) investigates the practice of interpreting in mediation sessions, a civil proceeding in which one tries to resolve conflicts between parties in order to avoid having to go to court. The usual set-up of a mediation session—with one or two mediators and each party often bringing along a ‘confidant’, with the parties often breaking up for separate consultations—sets in motion a dynamics which is quite complex and becomes even more so when interpretation is needed.

Turning now to more academic and individual research and notwithstanding some early research in Europe (e.g. Driesen 1985), the first flurry of academic activity in the field seems to have taken place in the U.S., Canada and Australia. But roughly from the mid-nineties and certainly from year 2000 on, one can trace the emergence of a rapidly expanding research activity on legal interpreting in Europe as well. This is not the place to survey the research topics and methodologies in any detail—the forthcoming *Encyclopedia of Interpreting Studies* will no doubt do so— or to present here a roll-call of important scholars or institutions. The reference section tries to illustrate the remark by listing a representative sample of European research in the field.

Suffice it to point out that crucial issues such as role or ethics, different users’ expectations, methodologies like pragmatics, critical discourse analyses, ostensive-inferential processes, footing and face saving strategies, and the implications and consequences of the prominent intertextuality of many legal procedures have all merited attention. In this respect, it is also interesting to note, firstly, a greater *rapprochement* between the semantic-pragmatic approaches typical of legal interpreting research and the legal-forensic and institutional issues of the event at stake—what are the implications, consequences of interpreting decisions and decisions made about interpreting— and, secondly, to see the widening scope of legal interpreting reflected in the breadth of research. Police stations, prisons, asylum interviews, probation hearings, mediation sessions, lawyers’ consultations, victims testimonies, they have all become prominent topics of research. Consequently, research on the question of how technology impacts on the interpreting performance and quality or what the differences are between audio-visual mediated and non-mediated events, has also become increasingly relevant. Prominent European publishers and academic journals in the field of interpreting now publish many more titles and contributions on legal interpreting than at the outset of our designated period. Conferences like *The Critical Link* (held in Stockholm or Birmingham, among other places), the ‘Alcalá’ conferences on public service interpreting and translation, the annual *EULITA* general assembly cum conference, and passing over the many conferences on specific topics or those of national associations, together have created a dynamics across Europe in bringing the scholarly community together. Different from 1999, we now have a





strong research network and a dissemination platform of invaluable importance in the EU.

PROFESSIONALIZATION

Adequate training to ensure the quality standards and ethics that are characteristic of professionals in the execution of their competences and skills form the core of any profession. Over the years we have seen more and more training programmes in legal interpreting, from Antwerp to Alcalá, Hamburg to Helsinki or Ljubljana to London. They range from ‘professional’ courses by either academic institutions or professional associations to higher education curricula. Without exception they train the core competences: language proficiency including registers, terminology, legal discourse and genres; knowledge of the legal system (structures, procedures, professionals, etc.); interpreting skills; the code of ethics; cultural awareness; interpersonal skills and attitudes; guidelines to good practice and knowledge of professional issues (associations, assignment management, etc., Hertog 2009). Practice-oriented publications assist in this process (e.g. Colin and Morris 1996; Corsellis 2008; Driesen & Petersen 2011; Ortega Herráez 2011; Townsley 2011; Giambruno 2014), complemented by specific guidelines such as the London Metropolitan Police Guidelines on working with interpreters or the Finnish Refugee Advice Centre Guide for interpreters working in the asylum process. It is now commonly accepted that after valid and reliable testing and assessment, the training should lead to a certification procedure accredited by a central authority. In the ongoing process in the EU towards regulated professions and, ultimately, statutory protection of title, the professional qualifications of legal interpreters will also have to meet nationally

and –in the end– EU recognised qualifications. In this respect, as the law, practices and procedures of the legal services are constantly changing, continuous professional development activities on e.g. new technologies, advanced language proficiency or special qualifications will need to sustain the improvement of professional practice.

This is also where professional associations have an important role to play. In fact, the role of professional associations in the development of legal interpreting in Member States and throughout the EU as a whole cannot be overestimated. Associations like the Society of Sworn and Specialised Translators (TEPIS) in Poland, the *Bundesverband der Dolmetscher und Übersetzer* or the Spanish *Asociación Profesional de Traductores e Intérpretes Judiciales y Jurados* (APTJ), to cite only these few national organisations, have all had a major impact on establishing professional standards in their respective countries and defending fair working arrangements and appropriate remuneration. On the principle that there is strength in numbers and faced with the need to come up with a concerted response to the EU Commission’s initiatives and requests for informed advice, EULITA, the European Legal Interpreters and Translators Association, was founded, as mentioned above. As stated in its mission statement:

EULITA aims to bring together in its membership as full members the professional associations of legal interpreters and translators in the EU member states as well as the general associations that include legal interpreters and translators among their membership. As associate members EULITA welcomes all interested organisations, institutions and individuals that are committed to the improvement of quality in legal interpreting and translation. EULITA aims to strengthen

and to represent the interests and concerns of the associations and their members vis-à-vis national, European and international organisations and institutions, to promote the establishment of associations of legal interpreters and translators in member states where as yet they do not exist, to promote close cooperation with academic institutions in the field of training and research and to encourage the establishment of national and EU-wide registers of qualified legal interpreters and translators, while at all times respecting the diversity of judicial systems and cultures. EULITA is further committed to promoting quality in legal interpreting and translation through the recognition of the professional status of legal interpreters and translators, the exchange of information and best practices in training and continuous professional development and the organisation of events on issues such as training, research, professionalism, etc. thus promoting judicial cooperation and mutual trust by the member states in each other's systems of legal interpreting and translation. EULITA, finally, aims to promote cooperation and best practices in working arrangements with the legal services and legal professionals.

Its present-day membership of some 30 associations, its sought after presence in EU fora on all issues related to legal interpreting and translation, its participation in projects and conferences, its international recognition, all testify to the important role this EU association has come to play.

Finally, as the legal process is by definition multi-disciplinary, each professional has to know and respect the other's role. Professions come into being where trust is required, primarily because the users are not in a position to judge for themselves the quality of the work of the legal interpreter because they do not speak either of the languages in question. In order to fulfil what is required of them, professions

therefore not only set levels of expertise as outlined above but also perform their assignments in accordance with a professionally established code of ethics. This is in the public interest as well as in the interest of their clients, their colleagues and themselves. Establishing such a code, including its procedural disciplinary measures, is obviously the remit of national or regional professional associations though, again, close approximation with EU models such as the *Grotius* code of ethics (Chapter 7 of the *Aequitas* project and see Corsellis 2008),¹³ or the EULITA code of Professional Ethics¹⁴ is a desirable evolution in the light of the envisaged EU register of legal interpreters.

IN CONCLUSION

Following the *Amsterdam Treaty*, the European Council laid down the priorities for the Justice policy areas in three subsequent five-year programmes, 'Tampere', 'The Hague' and 'Stockholm', with the end of 2014 now marking a turning point as the *Stockholm Programme* comes to an end. As we pointed out above, the Commission as guardian of the *Treaty of the EU* will have the power from 2015 on to take infringement proceedings against a Member State before the European Court of Justice if EU law has not been implemented correctly, including in the area of justice. Moreover, the European Parliament and the Council have now become co-legislators in virtually all areas of civil and criminal matters, and with the *Charter* as the now legally binding compass for all EU institutions, a more political and



¹³ http://eulita.eu/sites/default/files/Aequitas_Acces%20to%20Justice%20across%20Language%20and%20Culture%20in%20the%20EU.pdf

¹⁴ <http://eulita.eu/sites/default/files/EULITA-code-London-e.pdf>



forceful approach can hopefully be expected. We are therefore entitled to expect that the EU will ensure that the Roadmap Directives that have been accepted so far are indeed fully implemented in the Member States and that the Commission will indeed take infringement proceedings when countries fail to respect the procedural rights they protect.

However, the real force for concrete change on the ground over the next few years will probably come from the national courts, from the judges and defence lawyers. As European law supersedes national law, judges and counsel are required to interpret national law in conformity with the purpose of the Directives.

The combination, therefore, of the content of the Roadmap Directives, the role of national courts in conversation with the Court of Justice and the impact of the Charter, will help individual suspects and defendants to uphold their fair trial rights during national criminal proceedings, rather than having to wait some years after their conclusion in order to get a ruling from the ECtHR". (Fair Trials International 2014: 13)

But in the light of budget constraints, the next few years will be crucial. Can the provision of legal interpreting that meets the quality required by Directive 2010 be safeguarded, and can the legal interpreting profession be protected against detrimental outsourcing? A firm stance by all stakeholders concerned –the EU, first of all, but also academia, professional associations, NGOs, and so forth– will be needed over the next few years to continue the efforts to convince the Ministries of Justice and legal professions that quality legal interpreting not only protects procedural and fundamental rights but also, simply enough, helps them to do their jobs in a much more efficient and professional way.

After two years of negotiations, the new *Jus-*

tie Programme and the *Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme* for the period 2014 to 2020 were adopted by the European Parliament and the Council, with their accompanying Action Plans and budgetary provisions.¹⁵ The *Justice Programme* is the successor of three current funding programmes and will *inter alia* promote judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters, help train judges, prosecutors and other legal professionals and support the effective and consistent application of procedural rights and victims' rights. The *Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme* will similarly replace three current funding programmes and is meant to promote specific rights and freedoms of persons, such as gender equality and the promotion of children's rights and the protection against all forms of discrimination and racism, violence against women, etc.¹⁶ In the short run, one can expect new measures to establish further fair trial standards across the EU, including three directives –on legal aid,¹⁷ safeguards for children¹⁸ and on the presumption of innocence–¹⁹ and two recommendations, one of them on vulnerable suspects.

¹⁵ Regulation (EU) no 1382/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 establishing a *Justice Programme* and Regulation (EU) no 1381/2013 establishing a *Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme*. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:354:0073:0083:en:PDF> and <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:354:0062:0072:en:PDF>

¹⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/news/news-letter_new_eu_programmes_2014_en.htm

¹⁷ COM(2013) 824: Proposal for a directive on provisional legal aid for suspects or accused persons deprived of liberty and legal aid in European arrest warrant proceedings

¹⁸ COM(2013) 822: Proposal for a directive on procedural safeguards for children suspected or accused in criminal proceedings

¹⁹ COM(2013) 821: Proposal for a directive on the strengthening of certain aspects of the presumption of innocence and of the right to be present at trial in criminal proceedings

Mutual trust and judicial co-operation between Member States as well as fundamental and procedural rights of EU citizens, migrants and immigrants, all ultimately rest on the reliability of communication. There can therefore be no doubt that legal interpreting, which has really come of age between ‘Tampere’ and ‘Stockholm’, will continue to grow, increase in importance and become even more so the cornerstone of a just and fair society.

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