



Good afternoon,

First of all, I would like to thank

Ms Lyse Hébert, Director of the School of Translation at Glendon College, for inviting the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario to take part in the International Translation Day celebrations.

or

Mr. Jean Quirion, Director of the School of Translation and Interpretation of the University of Ottawa, for welcoming the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario to the International Translation Day celebrations.

We are always pleased to meet future translators as well as translators who are engaged in this wonderful profession.

I would like to start by explaining where ATIO fits within the network of organizations whose purpose is to promote translation as a profession. ATIO, like the other six provincial translators and interpreters' provincial associations outside Quebec, is a member of the Canadian Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters Council. It is CTTIC that organizes the certification exam that is held every year in various cities across Canada and that enables successful candidates to obtain the reserved title of Certified Translator, which denotes professional status. In turn, CTTIC belongs to the International Federation of Translators (FIT). By the way, OTTIAQ is also a member of FIT.

FIT is an international organization created in 1953 to promote professionalism in the translation sector, to improve conditions for the profession in all countries and to uphold translators' rights and freedom of expression.

FIT launched the idea of adopting September 30, date of the death in 420 of St. Jerome, patron saint of translators, as the day on which to celebrate translators. 2017 marks a significant milestone in these celebrations, as International Translation Day was officially recognized by the United Nations General Assembly on May 24, 2017, when it unanimously adopted Resolution A/RES/71/288 recognizing the role of professional translation in connecting nations, and fostering peace, understanding and development.

I am often asked what the difference is between an ordinary translator and a certified translator. It is really a question of professionalism. Certified translators are professionals, while ordinary translators are simply specialized workers.

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This distinction is quite significant, as it explains much of the history of the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario. ATIO was created on November 10, 1920, when Parliamentary translators, who a year before has joined together as the Cercle des traducteurs des livres bleus [Blue Book Translators' Circle], decided to bring together all the translators in the federal administration, as well as civil servants who worked in French. The group was named the Association technologique de langue française [French Language Technological Association].

The recognition of translation as a profession was the subject of a long struggle that initially started with recognition of translation as a professional occupation within the federal administration, following the demands of Parliamentary translators in Ottawa. This struggle reached an important milestone in 1928, when the Professional Institute of the Civil Service of Canada welcomed within its ranks twenty-two translators who formed a new group, that of technical translators, within the Institute.

However, it was not until the middle of the twentieth century that translators began to raise the issue of a professional status recognized in law. In the early 1960s, ATIO members began to discuss the creation of a college of translators that would have the authority to deliver professional competency certificates to Ontario translators. With this in mind, the Association, which up to that time had consisted mainly of federal government translators, decided to invite all translators in the province to join its ranks. In 1970, a bill that would have granted the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario the authority to control the profession was tabled in the Ontario legislature. But circumstances were not conducive for such a project. The McRuer Commission, in its recommendations on professions to the Ontario government, was of the opinion that professions had too much power. From then on, professional associations would have to provide evidence that the protection of the public required that professions be controlled.

Far from giving up, ATIO went back to the drawing board. Following passage of the *Official Languages Act* in 1969, demand for competent translators had skyrocketed. ATIO therefore embarked on a media promotion campaign. Its newly found notoriety, so to speak, enabled it to find political allies who were able to promote the protection of the public that a reserved title would bring with it.

Finally, in 1989, the *Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario Act* was tabled in the Ontario Legislature by the MLA for Prescott-Russell, Jean Poirier, who also happened to be Deputy Speaker. This bill finally provided the Association the right to grant a reserved title to those of its members that could meet its standards for professional recognition, rather than an exclusive jurisdiction over the profession.

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I began my remarks by stating that what distinguishes certified translators from ordinary translators is professionalism. What exactly does this distinction consist of? Generally speaking, the main characteristics that are found among occupations universally acknowledged as professions, that is, medicine, law, etc., are the following:

- Mastery of a body of knowledge within a structured domain that requires extensive training at the university level – translation studies
- Legal authority to control the profession
- Control of admission criteria to the profession through a certification process
- Presence of a code of ethics enforced by the profession on its membership
- Compulsory professional development so as to maintain an adequate level of competency
- Recognition by society at large that the occupation constitutes a profession

Apart from the fact that a profession controls access to its ranks, I am of the view that it is the presence of a code of ethics that members are bound to adhere to that is most significant with respect to their conduct, not only toward the public, but also toward the community of practice made up of their colleagues.

ATIO's Code of Ethics can be found at Appendix 1 of its By-Laws. The Code “sets out ethical principles and standards of professional conduct, the objects of which are to ensure professional accountability and quality of service, protect members of the public, promote the profession and foster a spirit of solidarity and co-operation among members of the Association.”

Among other things, the Code specifies that members “shall not knowingly take any action that is detrimental to the Association, its members and/or the profession.” (1.1.1) The Code also states that “members who use the services of other language practitioners shall call on professionals with equivalent qualifications in the required category.” (2.3.2) Moreover, “members shall refrain from any activity that could tarnish the image of their profession or the Association.” (4.1.2)

Consequently, the Code reinforces the spirit of collegiality that is one of the most significant characteristics of a profession and that results from the members' obligation to support and help each other and to welcome new members within their ranks. I would therefore like to mention the names of candidates who recently obtained their certification and to offer them my congratulations!



Siu Hien Rebecca Ng C. Crt. Int. ZH-EN, C. Comm. Int. EN-ZH  
Bing Qi C. Crt. Int. ZH-EN  
Cynthia Martel C. Tran. EN-FR  
Paula Marques C. Tran. EN-PT  
Victoria Radvan C. Tran. EN-RU  
Cenk Haznaci C. Tran. EN-TR  
Wenhai Gao C. Tran ZH-EN  
Mark Jessop C. Tran FR-EN  
Maria Armesto C. Tran ES-FR  
Iryna Butsenko C. Tran UK-EN  
Irina Filippova C. Tran. EN-RU  
Margarita Vlasova C. Tran. EN-RU  
Xianjun Liu C. Tran ZH-EN  
Hsio Tsai C. Comm. Int. EN-ZH  
Saleh Alathamena C. Tran EN-AR, AR-EN  
Rula Hijazeen Karam C. Tran AR-EN  
Nathalie Leclair C. Tran. EN-FR

Thank you and happy International Translation Day.

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