Takeaways from the Translating Europe Forum 2019

As in previous years, the Translation Centre attended the 6th Translating Europe Forum organised by the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Translation (DGT) in Brussels on 7 8 November 2019. Around 500 professionals from the language industry, academia and the public sector attended this event, which was titled ‘translation all around us’.

The panel discussions centred on areas where translation plays an invaluable role, such as healthcare, crises and disaster relief, and tourism and entertainment, and speakers from various sectors also shared their recent experiences of translation.

Two Directorates-General of the Commission, DG GROW and DG JUST, presented the translation projects for their web platforms, namely the [*Your Europe* information web portal](https://europa.eu/youreurope/index.htm) and the [Online Dispute Resolution platform](https://ec.europa.eu/consumers/odr/main/?event=main.trader.register) (translated by the DGT and the Translation Centre).

The Banque Cantonale Vaudoise (BCV) talked about how they have included translators in their communication process. For the target text to be turned into good content, translators need to have the necessary background information and be fully involved in the communication workflow – not just right at the end.

In the discussion *How public institutions and civil society benefit from translation*, Amnesty International described some of the challenges they face in their translation work, such as 80+ formats, non-final versions of documents sent for translation (corrections/updates made to texts during translation) and a lack of key information (e.g. gender, references etc.).

Microsoft, which relies heavily on machine translation, said that the technology was very fast reaching human parity. However, in their view, what is still missing compared with true human parity is document context, real-world knowledge and non-zero chance of catastrophic mistakes.

During the session*New frontiers in language technologies*, university researchers explained how they are currently exploring options for automatic meeting summarisation (minuting) and optimisation of real-time continuous transcription for interpreters. In *Translation in the entertainment sector*, Ubisoft looked at video game localisation, where statistics reveal 2.3 billion gamers globally.  ‘Triple A’ (or AAA) games can be likened to bestseller films, and are now localised in 20 languages and dubbed into nine.

Multilingualism also forms the basis of *arte*, the European culture TV channel, where intensive use is made of subtitling, voice-over and dubbing, and translators working in-house are also journalists.

The conference was rounded off by a presentation given by Farid Tabaraki, trend watcher and futurist, who believes that by understanding each other, we create a better society. He stated that ‘change is the only permanence and uncertainty is the only certainty’, and that as a society, we are moving from hierarchy to hubs, process to play, scarcity to abundance, entrepreneurs to intrapreneurs and ego to eco.

In our rapidly changing world, the Translating Europe Forum 2019 was a great opportunity to reflect on the role of translation and its impact on society. Translation is indeed all around us, and the good news is that there is a bright future for high-quality professionals in the sector, provided they take stock of the fact that new skills and technologies are an indispensable part of the profession today.

**Useful information**

You can watch the recordings of the Translating Europe Forum sessions on the DGT's YouTube channel ['Translating for Europe'.](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLLqIRaiVCGCSWX9VcG94D0q3hFA5tqQIj)