**INTERVIEW OLIVIA**

*Kim:* Well, first of all, thank you very much for participating. I know that your time is valuable. So, it means a lot that you are willing to participate in my thesis. Do you maybe have any questions beforehand, before we begin?

*Olivia:* No, I don't have any.

*Kim:* Alright*.* Yeah, just as a disclaimer, of course, since I have my questions in front of me, I will be looking down, but I will be listening as well. And then the first question I would like to ask you is how did you get into the Parliament?

*Olivia:* Yes, well, actually, I got into the whole EU institutions thin when I was still studying at the university. I did, like, a practice project for my studies, and we got a list, and in the list, there was this terminology project from the European Commission at the Dutch translation unit. And I applied for that position. I got accepted. And then from a colleague there, I heard that oh, they're organizing trainees, traineeships I mean, for the institutions. So then I applied for the blue book traineeship at the Commission here in Luxembourg. And then yeah, one thing led to another I competed, I did the CAST exam, I succeeded and then I got onto a list. I think it took, yeah after the traineeship I went back to Belgium, it took me three months. I did an interim position there, and then the head of unit from Directorate B calls me, he said, we have a position free for you, if you want it, but it's in Luxembourg. So yeah, that's how I got here. Yeah.

*Kim:* Interesting. Could you maybe describe a little bit how the European Parliament uses technology within the translation process?

*Olivia:* I think we use a lot of technology, and we also really depend on it, because we have a very high workload and there are a lot of documents and translations that come in. So, we have a lot of tools. Yeah, one to prepare the translations and to translate and then to process the translations as well. For example, we have Studio Twist, in which we can upload then the translation memories, etc. And then yeah, for translation we usually use SDL Trados Studio, with which we also use machine translation, the machine translation of the Parliament itself, which is integrated into the tool. Yeah, we also have these dictionary tools like IATE. We also use that a lot. Euramis as well, where we have this, the previous translations of other translators that you can see and then compare with other, with the translations that we're doing right now. That's actually the main tool that I use as a translator. But probably there are a lot more when we're talking about assistants and so on.

*Kim:* And what about your personal, like, workflow? Could you explain a little bit about that?

*Olivia:* Well, I work as a matrix, so my workflow really depends on the directorate that I'm in. For Directorate B, everything goes through Tflow. So, our head of unit just assigns you a translation, you can see it in Tflow, in your list. Yeah, then you just start the translation. Actually, it's pretty easy in Directorate B. You don't have to do a lot of things. You don't have to save all the documents etc. You don't have to upload translation memories yourself. In Directorate D it's a completely other way. You have to do a lot more. Yeah, we get our task usually through mail and also through Tflow. Not so much to through Tflow. But usually, we also just create a project ourselves, add the translation memory and then we start translating. Then it also goes to revision also for the same in Directorate B and then you process, post-process the translation.

*Kim:* Alright. And within this workflow, would you say that you use the MT-proposal a lot?

*Olivia:* Yeah, I do. We have this option in Studio Twist that you can click on machine translation. And then for every project that you create, or that is created, the machine translation will automatically be involved in your translation. So, with every segment that you click on, there will be a text generated by machine translation. And yeah, I have to say, I always use it and especially Directorate B, machine translation is really a great support. Because there are so many texts and all these legislative texts, with, they all have the same structure. Especially the resolutions, human rights resolutions, for example, you always have these, the same structures, like ‘the Parliament notices that’, ‘the Parliament underlines that', ‘considers that’, yeah and it goes on.

*Kim:* I can imagine.

*Olivia:* So, yeah, it's really a great support. Also, the thing with legislative texts is they... you can translate them more literally, because you don't need that much room for interpretation. So, it's better to be on the safe side and just do a literal translation than translate freely and have, yeah, the readers, give the readers a wrong interpretation. So, that's why machine transition is really important in Directorate B, I think. Also, you have these very long sentences. It's really, it goes on. You think it stops, but it keeps going. So yeah, also machine translation really helps there, because for me as a human it's sometimes difficult to understand, wait, what part of the sentence belongs to what. And with the machine translation it's much more easy to understand and it saves you a lot of time as well. And in Directorate D, yeah, I always have the machine translation, but it's more to just get me inspired, to boost my inspiration. Because the texts in Directorate D, they are also much shorter, they are for citizens, regular citizens, and they need to be in clear language with the short sentences, not too difficult, and sometimes they're also more creative with wordplay, irony. Also, sometimes sensitive subjects, sensitive language. And with machine translation, often, we keep a list of this, because we have a good laugh with what the machine translation generates. It's too stiff, it's too formal. There's no human feeling, human touch to it, no flow. It's better to, as a translator in Directorate D, to see how can I structure this sentence better? Like, it's more easy to read.

*Kim:* I can imagine. There was a question where I was like, now I can ask this question as a follow-up, but now I'm like, what was it again? You mentioned a little bit about the different aspects of texts that would make it easier or less easy to use machine translation, but are there specific types of texts that you would generally tend to use machine translation or ones where you would rather stay away from it?

*Olivia:* Yes, like I said, human rights resolutions, it's. The machine translation, sometimes I really don't have to change the sentence at all. It's so good and it saves a lot of time. So, for these types of texts, also for amendments, I would rather use machine translation. Sometimes it also takes into account other translations from other translators that are in the translation memory. But for creative texts, I would definitely avoid it. It can help you as an inspiration, but I wouldn't depend on it.

*Kim:* Alright, alright. And yeah, a more general question. What do you usually think about the quality of the machine translation here?

*Olivia:* I have to say, sometimes I'm not very satisfied. For example, we also have these in Directorate B, these petitions. They are called *'verzoekschriften’* in Dutch. And these are basically questions from citizens, on which the European Commission answers or provides an answer. and the European Parliament has to translate them. And for that I usually also use machine translation. But the problem with these petitions is that they are citing legislation and, yeah, because of that, you have these very long sentences and the text becomes, what was supposed to be a text read by citizens becomes a very stiff and formal text. And sometimes it's almost impossible to make it better.

*Kim:* Oh, yeah, I can imagine. So, yeah, what would you say are then the greatest disadvantages of machine translation?

*Olivia:* The disadvantages? I would say that for creative texts it becomes too literal. Also, what I also noticed is when we have not so common abbreviations the machine translation doesn't connect, doesn't make the connection with the abbreviation and the context of the text. So, then it starts to make its own abbreviation which really doesn't have any in common with the text. We also have a list of that, yeah, we had a very funny one. But I don't know if I can tell you..., I will tell you later. That's maybe not appropriate to tell it right now.

*Kim:* Now I'm very intrigued.But yeah, I can imagine that yeah, those types of things can be kind of tricky. And then on the other hand, what do you think are the most..., the advantages?

*Olivia:* Sometimes it's just easy to put the text in the machine translation and then have already a basic, a basis that you don't have to start from scratch and sometimes that can really, save, yeah help you to save time. Especially when, in very busy times, like we had last month. So yeah, I would say that that is a very big advantage of machine translation. Yeah, for me, like I said before, it really sparks your inspiration, really boosts your inspiration sometimes. It gives you an idea that you didn't think of before and then pushes you towards another direction or another perspective. And yeah, then you can create a nice text, a nice translation.

*Kim:* That's good. That's good. And is there maybe a thing that you would like to change about machine translation, or add to its function?

*Olivia:* The machine translation from the Parliament, or in general?

*Kim:* Yeah, the machine translation here.

*Olivia:* Yeah, for example, what I like about DeepL, the machine translation, is that it gives you more options. When you click on a word, it can give you more options. And sometimes I really need that, because, yeah, you can see it in the whole sentence. And then you don't have to look it up in synonym dictionaries or etc. And yeah. I really like DeepL as well. But don't say it to anyone here.

*Kim:* Yeah, I can imagine that that would be useful actually.

*Olivia:* Sometimes I'll also use it for Directorate D texts, DeepL, just to give me inspiration, like to see what other words are available?

*Kim:* Oh, yeah. Alright, alright. And do you translate from multiple languages? I guess more in Directorate B?

*Olivia:* Not so much. Most of the texts are from English to Dutch. I only got one, one or two Spanish text. And that's it, so not so much actually.

*Kim:* Okay. I mean, even though you don't have a lot of, like, information maybe to go off, but did you see a difference between the machine translation when you've translated from Spanish compared to translate it from English.

*Olivia:* I can't really answer that one, because it was still during my, yeah so, my very first months. And as a good student as I was, I didn't use machine translation back then, because I really wanted to see what I could do myself. So, yeah, I can't answer that, I'm sorry.

*Kim:* No, fair enough. That's, I mean, that's good that you tried it without machine translation as well. Yeah, then I have just, like, a general question. Would you say that you like using machine translation? I think you in your questionnaire or you also ticked some different boxes?

*Olivia:* Yeah, I know my opinion on machine translation, it's maybe a bit controversial, still. But yeah, I mean, in these modern days, you really have to keep up with the workload and therefore you really have to use machine translation and embrace it as well. Sorry, what was the question again?

*Kim:* If you generally like using machine translation?

*Olivia:* Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, just because it saves time a lot. And it gives you a certain idea and keeps you going.

*Kim:* So, really an idea to work on*.* Alright. And would you say that it can hold you back in some ways?

*Olivia:* Sometimes yeah, when the machine translation is not so good. Then sometimes I really think oh, I shouldn't have read that, because now I think about it a lot and now it restricts me in this thinking, and I have to think outside the box, which is more difficult when you have already read a sentence. So, in that way, I would say it can really be a restriction on your creative thinking.

*Kim:* So, it can kind of be, like, both, it can encourage you to think...

*Olivia:* Yeah, it can go both ways, it can encourage you to think more outside the box, but then if it's not a good machine translation, then for me at least, I feel like I'm a bit stuck inside this perspective. Like, then I'm thinking, okay, but how can I formulate it differently? And sometimes it takes a lot, a lot of time to come up with another solution.

*Kim:* Yeah, I can imagine. Then I have some questions about clear language guidelines. I think in the survey, you said that you applied them sometimes?

*Olivia:* Yeah, the reason for that is because I work very differently in Directorate D and Directorate B. In Directorate D, I always apply these clear language guidelines, always. But that's also because the texts in Directorate D are very small. They're not so big, they're not so long. So yeah, also because if you want to apply these guidelines, it takes a lot of time. You have to think about it, you have to reread it to see if everything goes smoothly. So, that takes a lot of time. And in Directorate, B, usually you don't have the time. And like I said in these petitions that you have from the citizens. It's like a text combined with, clear language combined with legislative citations, which makes it so difficult because you have all these long sentences, and it just takes too much time to really apply all these clear guidelines, language guidelines. I try to but yeah, usually it's also always the same. I try splitting up segments or sentences so it's not too long. So, it's more easy to read. I also try to add more small, more accessible small words. For example, I have to think of an example right now. Oh, yeah. ‘As a consequence of’, which is more formal, you can just change it into ‘because of that’, which is more accessible to citizens. Another example, maybe, you also have ‘regulation concerning’ or ‘regulation on’ and then the subject. You can just change that into ‘regulation about’ or 'regulation of’, which is already, it really changes the mood already. So, yeah.

*Kim:* Alright, and is it really, do you really have, like, guidelines, specific guidelines that someone told you about or is more, like, just thinking about it being clear?

*Olivia:* No, we have guidelines. I think they are available in Directorate D on the website. We also have guidelines on sensitive language. So, people with disabilities, etc, how we have to approach them. So yeah, all these guidelines really focus on how to include people and how to make everything as much accessible as possible.

*Kim:* Alright, and do you usually keep those guidelines, like you really look at them or are they more in your head?

*Olivia:* They're more back in my head. In the beginning I really noted them down, everything, the feedback that I got from our colleagues as well. Yeah, but right now I just, it's a habit, it's become a habit. So, I have them in the back of my head. Sometimes with sensitive language I usually check, because it's a very sensitive subject as well, a delicate subject. So, it's better to check.

*Kim:* And I think some of those terms are also bit more recent, like they change maybe.

*Olivia:* Over time, you mean?

*Kim:* Yeah, yeah. Those, like, those inclusivity types of terminology.

*Olivia:* Yeah. In Dutch, for example, you had these, in the past you couldn't say, black people, you had to say coloured, or something similar. And now you have to use black and white. So that's something that changes over time. So, these guidelines still have to be adapted and updated every time.

*Kim:* And then in relation to machine translation, do you feel like using machine translation affects the way you apply the clear language guidelines or the inclusivity guidelines?

*Oliva:* I would say in a way it does. Yeah, especially also in Trados Studio because the text is really segmented, really split up in different segments and per segment you have machine translation. And yeah, sometimes it's, you can't really see the overall context anymore, of the text. So, then I would say that machine translation really affects it. I think, for example, with the news in brief, we don't translate it in Studio, we translate it in Word, because it's also for people to hear so it needs to be more clear. And then sometimes I totally change the structure of the text. I put sentences more in the beginning of the paragraph or at the end or I add sentences to make it more clear. So, yeah, these segments, and then the machine translation combined, really puts you inside a box that you can't really escape. Yeah, in that way I would say that it affects the translation.

*Kim:* Alright. That's interesting to know. Yeah, what do you think is the most important when applying the clear language guidelines?

*Olivia:* The most important thing? Okay, that's not an easy question. I have to think about it.

*Kim:* That's okay, take your time.

*Olivia:* When I am applying these guidelines?

*Kim:* Yeah, like in general maybe like, what is the goal? I guess.

*Olivia:* Of applying these clear language guidelines? Yeah, I think the goal to apply these clear language guidelines is to really include citizens, especially for the institutions. It's all about legislation about the citizens and for the citizens. So, it's also important that they are included in process, that they can know what is going on, that they can understand what's going on, and that's why it's really so important to adapt your style to the comprehension of the citizens, I think. I hope that answers the question.

*Kim:* Yeah. Yeah, it does. Yeah, then I only have one more question and that is basically if you want to add something that you missed during the interview, or do you have any questions?

*Olivia:* Not that comes to my mind right now.

*Kim:* Alright, then that that was all. Thank you very much again.