

Slovak Translators and Interpreters' Associations

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Resumen

El principal cometido y objetivo de la SSPOL es proporcionar las condiciones necesarias para poder trabajar en el campo de la traducción técnica y para que ésta se reconozca socialmente. La SSPOL protege los intereses de los traductores y utiliza sus influencias en la elaboración y cumplimiento de las normas y medidas legales que afectan a las actividades de los traductores. Trabaja insistentemente para mejorar la calidad de las traducciones, los criterios profesionales y la posición social de los traductores e intérpretes eslovacos.

1. Foundation of the SSPOL

The Slovak Society of Translators of Scientific and Technical Literature (Slovenská spoločnosť prekladateľov odbornej literatúry – SSPOL) is a voluntary civic professional organisation for translators of scientific, technical and specialised literature, whose source or target language is Slovak, or any of the languages of the ethnic minorities living within the Slovak Republic. It was officially established in the year 1990 but its activity goes back to the early 70s when the Committee for Scientific and Technical Translation was founded. Its activity started practically simultaneously with the activity of the first graduates of the Department of Translation and Interpretation in the mid-70s. The first 40 translators and interpreters graduated in the year 1975 from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, at Comenius University in Bratislava.

From 1975 up to now, there have been new graduates of this profession every year. Many graduates of the Department of

Translation and Interpretation are permanent members of SSPOL. At the present time it has a membership of about 350 translators and interpreters, who translate and interpret from 25 languages. The Society is a constituent part of the Association of the Slovak Translation and Interpreting Organisations – APTOS unifying, apart from SSPOL, also the Slovak Society of Literary Translators – SSPUL and the Union of Translators and Interpreters – JTP, existing both in the Czech and in the Slovak Republic.

The majority of SSPOL members have university degrees in translation and interpreting, linguistics, law, economics, natural sciences, technical or other subjects. Many of them have academic or scientific titles. For the most part they work as freelance translators or interpreters, as teachers at secondary schools or universities, as translators or editors in publishing houses, as journalists or presenters in the mass media, as linguists, lexicographers and terminologists in research institutions.

2. The main activity of the SSPOL

The main duty and aim of SSPOL is to create the necessary conditions for unrestricted work in the field of technical and specialised translation. The organisation protects the interests of translators and uses its influence during preparation and implementation of all legal regulations and measures concerning translation activities. It works persistently towards its goal of improving the quality of translations, the professional standard and status of Slovak translators and interpreters. Some of the activities of our society are repeated every year.

SSPOL, together with the Literary Fund of the Slovak Republic and the Union of Literary Translators, has for many years been co-organiser of the *Summer School of Translation*. It takes place in the residence of the Slovak Writer's House in Budmerice Castle

(30 km from Bratislava), usually in the latter half of September, and it lasts 3 days. The leading topic of the 25th anniversary edition of the Summer School of Translation was *The Quality of Translation and Competency of Translators*. The main goal of the organisers was focusing on the direct relation between the general preparedness of translators and the quality of the final product of his or her translation work. Attention was paid to the Slovak language and to its individual levels (e.g. word-stock, stylistics, use of synonyms, etc.). Special attention was paid to the Dictionary of the Slovak Synonyms which was presented by its editor-in-chief.

The Translator's Day – is a joint event of our Society and The Union of Translators and Interpreters. It is regularly held at the beginning of October. During this event, the price for the winning publication of the competition is awarded – *The Dictionary of the Year*. It is the joint Czech and Slovak dictionary competition. From 60 to 80 dictionaries are judged by a jury, which consists of Czech and Slovak translators, interpreters, lexicographers, editors and journalists. The last awarded Slovak book was the *Italian-Slovak Dictionary of Economics, Financial and Commercial Law* compiled by university teacher and lexicographer Ján Taraba and his daughter Mária Tarabová. This dictionary obtained even the *Matej Bel Prize*, which is awarded once every two years by the Slovak Literary Fund.

Another very important event is the *University Translation Competition* organised by SSPOL, SSPUL, the Slovak Literary Fund and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences of Comenius University. This competition is stipulated exclusively for those future young translators who are university students (undergraduates) from the whole region of Slovakia. There are two stages of the competition. The first stage is selective and in the second stage students defend their translations, which were selected during the first stage, in the presence of a jury. The winning translations obtain the first, the second and the third financial reward. Since this is the 9th year of the *University Translation Competition*, a lot of previous winner students are now regular members of our Society.

Nevertheless, the main activity of the SSPOL is focused on the organisation of specialised *workshops and seminars* (one or two per year) which deal with the problems in the sphere of terminology unification within the individual specific fields. Special attention is paid to the making and use of terminological, translation and monolingual dictionaries. The society helps to create and establish specialised terminology, especially in such fields as law and public administration, economics, social security, agriculture, medicine, linguistics, as well as many other areas. The last years' workshops were aimed at good co-ordination of terminology within the sphere of translations of legal and economic texts, since it was crucially important for the Slovak accession into the European Union in the year 2004.

These workshops have been organised together with the Central Translation Unit at the Government Office of the Slovak Republic, which is responsible for the translations of the EU *acquis communautaire* and with special assistance from Ľudovít Štúr Linguistics Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. Linguist-terminologists and jurist-linguists repeatedly asked translators not to translate *foreign words and terms* mechanically, which means, not to use too many foreign loans. Experienced translator should decide whether the loan from a foreign language is functional, whether a commonly used Slovak equivalent really does not exist. It was not recommended to use, for example, the English word *developer* instead of the Slovak *riešiteľ*, or *art director* instead of *umelecký riaditeľ*, *chairman* instead of *predseda*, *workshop* instead of *seminár*, *pracovná schôdzka*, etc. Some of the Slovak terms are of Greek-Latin origin and have been used as Slovak terms for several centuries.

Later on this year, the ninth edition of a workshop named *Making and Use of Bilingual, Terminological and Explanatory Dictionaries – Focused on Translations and Terminology of Architecture and Construction Industry* was organized. It took place in the Writer's House in Budmerice on 4th – 5th June 2004. These dictionary workshops are usually attended by 40 – 60 home participants and

also by participants from abroad, and so it was this year. The translators, linguists, lexicographers and language specialists contributed to the co-ordination of the Slovak terminology in this field.

The Executive Committee of SSPOL co-operates with the Committee of the International Federation of Translation (FIT) for the languages of limited diffusion, which at present time has its headquarters in Bratislava. Together with this committee the SSPOL organised the International Conference in Smolenice from 3rd to 7th November 2001 entitled *Translation from/into European Languages of Limited Diffusion*. The proceedings of this conference were published in book form as well as on CD-ROM.

Conclusion

Recently the SSPOL published a special Slovak-English publication named *Directory of Translators of Scientific and Technical Literature*. Included are those SSPOL members who gave permission to quote their data (name, surname, home address, phone, fax, e-mail, education, knowledge of languages, source and target languages of translations, fields of translation, specialisation). *SSPOL's Directory* is supposed to meet the needs not only of home but also of foreign translational institutions, especially the needs of individual EU institutions.

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