



Conseil Européen des Associations de Traducteurs Littéraires  
European Council of Literary Translators' Associations

BRUSSELS, 14 July 2008

Press release

### **EUROPEAN CULTURE, A BOOK COVER WITHOUT A BOOK?**

The European Union (internal translation budget estimated at €1 billion) has rejected a joint application for multiannual funding by seven translators' centres. These centres offer residencies to literary translators and play a key role in enabling translators to work in the countries of the authors they are translating and gain a deeper knowledge of the language and culture, to take part in translator training initiatives and public events, or simply to concentrate unhindered on their very demanding task. The EU "Culture 2007-2013" programme has an annual budget of more than €400 million for culture. In the past, the translation centres have usually received EU support; the 7 centres had applied for funding amounting to €1.6 million over 5 years.

The European Council of Literary Translators Associations (CEATL) is shocked and outraged by this refusal, which is in blatant contradiction with the very idea of a multilingual, multicultural Europe, where the work of literary translators is fundamental for mutual understanding, not only in literature but also in the fields of philosophy, science, the social sciences, fine arts, cinema and theatre.

The same EU proclaimed 2008 as the "year of intercultural dialogue" and is planning to devote a major symposium to literary translation as a "special expression" of this dialogue, in early 2009. CEATL emphasises the fact that the international centres for literary translators – modern-day Schools of Toledo and conveyors of European culture *par excellence*, the first of which was created 30 years ago by Elmar Tophoven, one of the greatest translators of Samuel Beckett – are at the hub of intercultural dialogue and as such should be granted unconditional structural funding by the European Union. Otherwise the very idea of European culture and intercultural dialogue is merely a book cover without a book.

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