Hexalogue or Code of Good Practice

The Six Commandments of ‘fair-play’ in literary translation

1. Licensing of rights
The licensing of rights for the use of the translation shall be limited in time to a maximum of five years. It shall be subject to the restrictions and duration of the licensed rights of the original work. Each licensed right shall be mentioned in the contract.

2. Fees
The fee for the commissioned work shall be equitable, enabling the translator to make a decent living and to produce a translation of good literary quality.

3. Payment terms
On signature of the contract, the translator shall receive an advance payment of at least one third of the fee. The remainder shall be paid on delivery of the translation at the latest.

4. Obligation to publish
The publisher shall publish the translation within the period stipulated in the contract, and no later than two years after the delivery of the manuscript.

5. Share in profit
The translator shall receive a fair share of the profits from the exploitation of his/her work, in whatsoever form it may take, starting from the first copy.

6. Translator’s name
As author of the translation, the translator shall be named wherever the original author is named.

Contact details

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Europe: a cultural and linguistic patchwork, joined together by an age-old tradition of intensive exchange. Written texts play an important role in this exchange, because literature (in the broad sense) is the place where living cultures store their capital: if you want to understand another culture, you must read its books. For this reason, literary translation is fundamental to everything Europe represents. In the famous words of Umberto Eco: ‘The language of Europe is translation.’

However, no literary translation is possible without the knowledge, skills and artistic talent of the translator. As a council bringing together 32 translators’ associations from 26 countries, representing a total of some 10,000 individual authors, CEATL is the main European interlocutor in the field of literary translation. Its two principal goals are the exchange of information and best practice between member countries, and the defence of translation quality in a European context.