

Feasibility Study for Actions to Support the Mobility of Literary Translators

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Executive Summary

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The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the European Commission.

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1 Foreword

In 2009, Directorate-General for Education and Culture decided to commission an exploratory study that would gather relevant information in order to design a set of actions to support the mobility and training of literary translators, and that would collect examples of best practice and any other useful elements to guide the Commission's future policy and activities in this field. The main aim of the study was to assess the feasibility of launching a mobility scheme for literary translators by evaluating its underlying intervention logic through consultations with the envisaged key players and to propose a system of mobility grants with an appropriate funding framework.

The tender to prepare the feasibility study was awarded to Consulmarc Sviluppo srl (www.consulmarc.it), a private consultancy established in 1979 with the aim of providing value-added international integrated services to its clients. Today, Consulmarc Sviluppo is a service provider to public bodies, associations and enterprises (mostly SMEs), especially in terms of 'capacity building'. Its activities include pre-feasibility and feasibility studies focused on organisational structure analysis, legal/policy context, business strategy, partnerships scenarios, facilities and filtered financial aids, risk management¹.

The present feasibility study required in-depth desk research and detailed field-work, conducted by means of a questionnaire, interviews and a workshop, and exploring the main features and characteristics of the literary translation field in order to understand and highlight the difficulties inherent in drawing up an adequate mobility system that would consist of several different actions with specific features, aimed to meet the expectations and requirements of the entire literary translation field. The study therefore had to address all the features of the literary translation field and its problems, such as the lack of training and lifelong learning opportunities for professional translators, and their weak position in the market in spite of the importance of their profession and their indispensable role as mediators in today's intercultural and multilingual society.



The outcome of the study is a proposed system of mobility grants for literary translators, for which the authors suggest the name Mercurio, after the Graeco-Roman mythological messenger of the gods, patron of travellers and facilitator of communication.

¹ In 1990 Consulmarc Sviluppo created an **European Projects Division**, to inform and assist companies and public bodies in European Union policies and programmes, and other funding schemes.. The Company attaches considerable importance to VET initiatives, in particular those concerning the mobility of trainers and trainees. The programmes covered are the LLP - Grundtvig (multilateral projects, learning partnership, workshops and in service staff training measures), Youth in action (i.e. Youth exchange measure), Culture 2007-2013 (cooperation projects) and Leonardo da Vinci programme (multilateral actions). The Italian head office consists of 3 senior partners with more than 20 years of experience in the field of international cooperation and human resources management and 15 consultants, all with an international academic background. The Belgium branch, based in Brussels, has two permanent staff members and hosts trainees from different countries.

2 Rationale and purpose of the feasibility study

The European Union acknowledges the key role of literary translation in the intercultural processes of Europe's multilingual society, considering it to be the main mediation instrument facilitating dialogue and the circulation of ideas, cultural products and knowledge in the countries inside and outside Europe.

'Translation plays an important role at many levels of European society. In addition to its role in formal political structures, it can also strengthen a sense of common European identity founded on cultural diversity, is an instrument of intercultural dialogue and plays a relevant role in the preservation and diffusion of the European literary heritage. The cultures of Europe have resulted, in part, from a continuous process of translation that has produced our common cultural ground. In particular, literary translation is central to the process of European integration, because it allows Europeans to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers and become acquainted with the works and traditions of their neighbours. For these reasons, the literary translators play an essential role in European integration and the European Commission considers them to fulfil a crucial place in its multilingualism policy framework' (ref. No EACEA/2009/02 - Feasibility Study for Actions to Support the Mobility of Literary Translators - Tender Specifications).

The Council endorsed the key role of translation also in the second work plan for the 2011-2014 period, to contribute to the implementation of the 'European Agenda for Culture', with priority areas such as cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and accessible and inclusive culture, skills and mobility, and cultural heritage. Furthermore, in accordance with the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, which is part of the *acquis communautaire*, the enhancement of the literary translation sector is a way to facilitate the promotion and safeguarding of cultural and linguistic diversity. The 2008 Council resolution on EU strategy for multilingualism recognises that translation 'establishes links between languages and cultures and the broad access to work and ideas', emphasising the role of national and EU schemes in support of literary translation. The Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth also recognises the importance of literary translation as a key input into creative industries and a vital link in addressing the challenge of cultural and linguistic diversity that makes the circulation of ideas and works of literature possible.

In this framework, mobility is essential to literary translation activity, facilitating the interaction of cultures, and the sharing of ideas and values, as the understanding that emerges from such interaction represents a central contribution to the flourishing of culture in Europe. For translators, contact with the source-language country and its culture, and with peers and colleagues is therefore fundamental.

3 Methodology

A mixed approach was developed with respect to the study methodology, combining desk research, literature review and data collection with field-work incorporating a questionnaire, interviews, case studies and a workshop assessing the achieved results and the process designed to address the operational realities of the literary translation field. Beginning with an initial review of literature related to the literary translation environment and the mobility of translators, as well as the identification of the key actors in the sector, the study team implemented field-work based on a questionnaire and interviews targeting the four main categories of stakeholders: individual translators, residential centres² – publishers and universities. In addition, a review of the existing practices and mobility schemes at local and national level was carried out. The main findings were then discussed with key representatives of the sector during a face-to-face workshop held in December 2011 and further virtual meetings were held in order to assess the proposed intervention logic against operational realities. Sustained interaction with individuals and organisations involved in the translation sector was central to the methodological approach.

4 Defining the literary translation

Literary translators

Several definitions of literary translators are used, but in general, the notion of ‘professional literary translator’ applies to all translators who earn their living mainly from literary translation and occasionally from literary translation-related activities (lectures, talks, readings, book publishing, literary criticism, etc.), but rarely have literary translation as their sole occupation.

The feasibility study makes reference to the following definition: literary translators ‘are translators of any work published in book form and protected by copyright, including translators of non-fiction, essays, scientific books, text books, travel guides, indeed any work of literature in the broad sense’³.

Within this definition, active literary translators are those who publish at least one literary translation every two to three years, while professional literary translators publish from 3 to 4 books a year⁴.

Mobility

For the purpose of the study, mobility of literary translators is understood as temporary, individual cross-border travel allowing the translator to be in contact with the source-language country and culture, to carry out translations (sometimes in consultation with authors), conduct research in libraries, exchange knowledge and experience with colleagues from other countries, and generally to be immersed in intercultural exchange. Mobility for the purpose of translation work can be combined with a programme offering experienced translators the option of refresher courses and ‘on-the-job training’.

² Residential centres are places rich in documentary resources, which organise workshops, conferences, as well residences for literary translators from different countries on the basis of grants and bursaries. They promote the work of translation and assist translators in finding much needed resources and lodgings. (For more details, see Final Report - section 4.1.1 Best Practice 1 – Residential centres).

³ CEATL 2008 Survey

⁴ The estimation of the number of active literary translators in Europe is based on two sources: the 2008 CEATL survey and Wischenbart’s Diversity Report, both of them producing the same outcome (For more details, see Final Report section 7.6.3 Rationale for the Identification of the critical mass).

5 Literary translators' needs and potential solutions

Two different categories of needs are addressed and affected by mobility actions:

Sectorial: involving working environment and context

- the organisation of work: literary translators often have more than one occupation and work under time pressure; when in residence, they can distance themselves from everyday life and constraints, and concentrate exclusively on a translation project, so that high quality work is produced;
- working time and work-life balance: literary translators make a living under conditions imposed on them by the 'market'; in many countries their situation is quite difficult and is affected by many factors that the translator can't control or manage, but this could be partially improved by means of residencies and attached salaries.

Individual: involving professional development

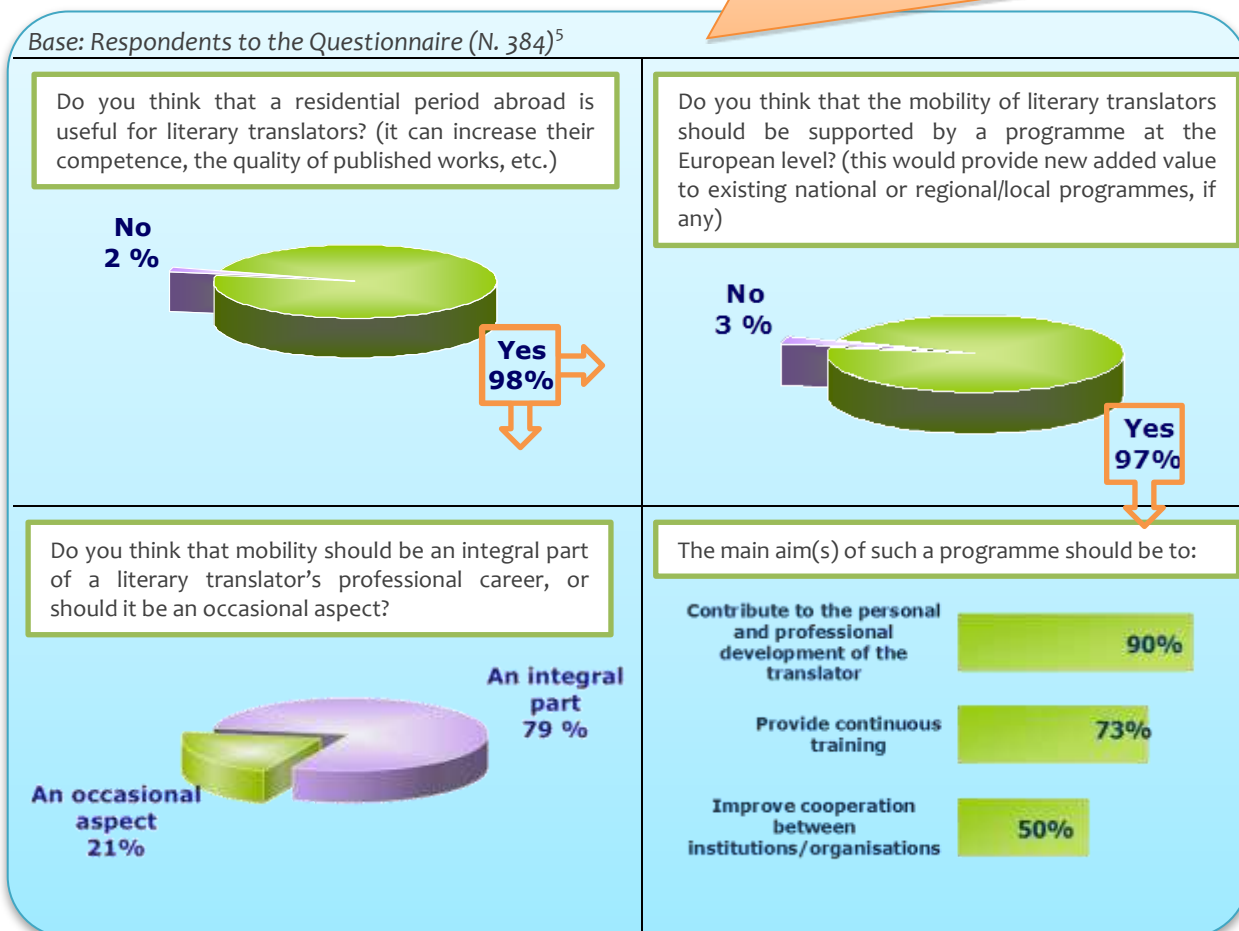
- training and developing skills and competencies – individual translators suffer from isolation and a lack of information, and express a strong need to have access to on-going and in-depth training, which can combine the exchange of opinions and ideas with peers and colleagues, learning about new techniques, theories and experimenting new methodologies;
- visiting the source-language country – due to the generally low income derived from literary translation, translators find it difficult to afford time and money to spend in the source-language country, experiencing daily life, keeping in touch with socio-cultural developments, being in contact with writers and the publishing industry, as well as improving their language skills and keeping abreast with the development and evolution in the language and communication codes of two different cultures.

All of the above lies at the heart of translation work and represents the fundamental informal training translators need to have access to, in order to maintain and develop the skills and knowledge necessary to produce high quality work. Literary translation is a complex, multilevel process for which the mere knowledge of the source and target languages is not sufficient. A mobility system can address its difficulties, issues and requirements by placing translators in a socio-cultural context where they can encounter and acquire new work techniques, theories and problem-solving skills through the on-going development and growth of their competencies and knowledge - in short, through advancing their professionalization. In addition, the improvement of literary translators' skills and competencies will contribute to the competitiveness of the European cultural sector through the production of higher-quality works, and also by promoting mobility to encourage translation from under-represented languages into the most dominant ones. In the long term, this will help address any market limitations affecting transnational activities and geographical imbalances, while promoting cultural and linguistic diversity.

The figures below, based on results from the desk research as well as the field-work and the workshop, show the positive impact that a period of mobility could have on the literary translation sector, addressing the various difficulties and issues that a professional literary translators have to cope with.

The first figure highlights the advantages and benefits of a residential period abroad, spent at a dedicated facility and undertaking different activities, aimed to improve the quality of translators' work and their overall professionalization.

A residential period abroad is considered as useful by almost all respondents (98%), up to the point that it should be an integral part of a translator's career (79%) and it should be supported at European level (97%). It is so, since respondents think that it can highly contribute to the personal and professional development of the translator.

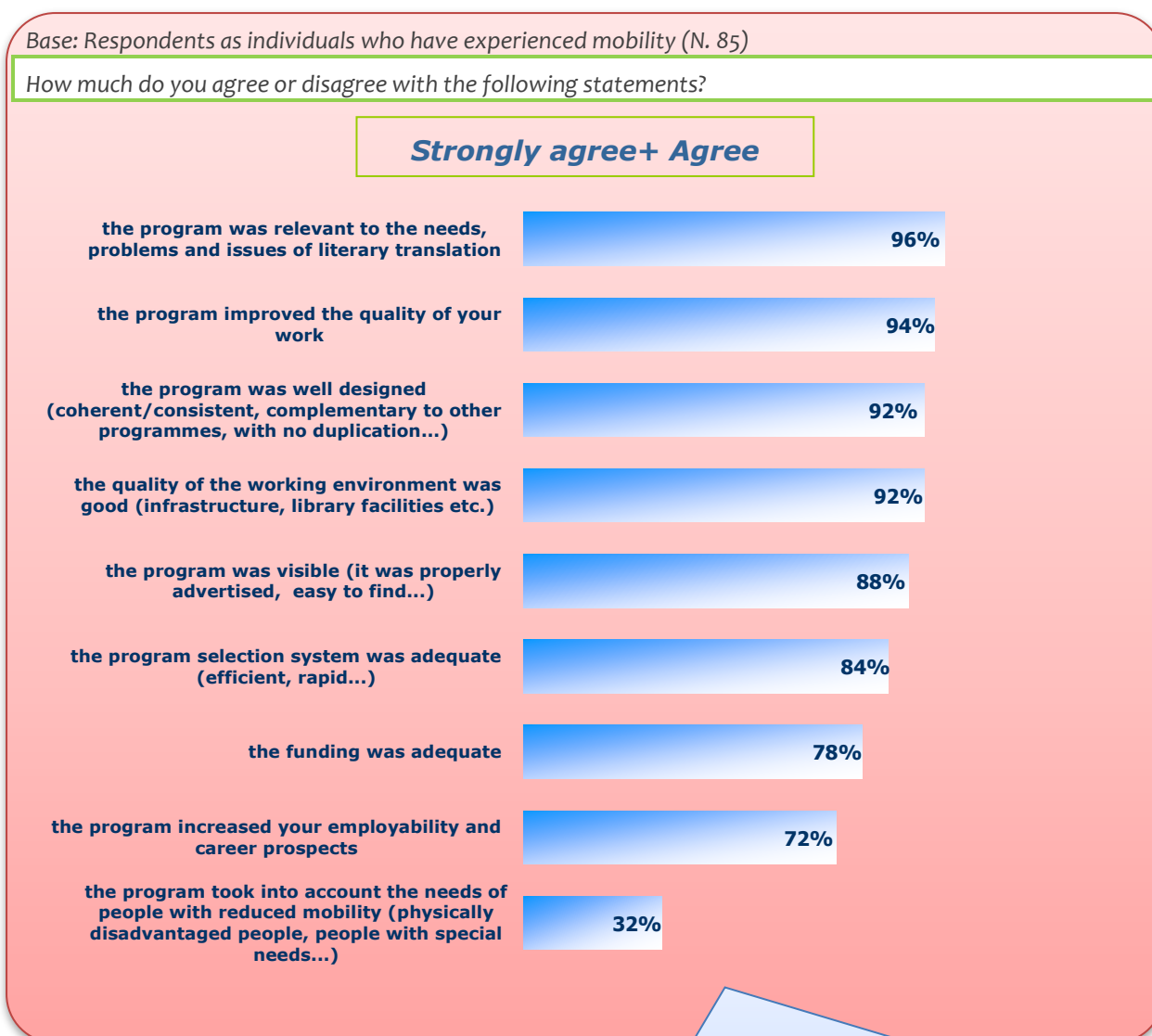


Source: Questionnaire (Annex 4)

Figure 1. Advantages of mobility and residential periods abroad

⁵ 384 are the literary translators respondents to the Questionnaire – consultation with all the stakeholders, which has been the first step of the field-work developed for the implementation of this study (For more details see Final Report Annex 4 – The Questionnaire). Geographically, respondents were to be mapped in 33 countries, and they presented linguistic and cultural differences, as well as a variety of country-specific situations. The questionnaire has been sent to all the 2126 components of the “stakeholders’ list” (For more details see Final Report annex. 1 – Stakeholders’ list): Literary translators resident in the 33 European countries covered by the study.

The second graph highlights the positive results of completed mobility experiences (below-mentioned programs) and at the same time confirms the necessity to create a system of mobility grants at European level.



The graph makes reference only to the percentages relative to the 'strongly agree and agree' statements, all the other possible statements - disagree/strongly disagree/ no opinion - are grouped in the remaining residual percentages. The programmes have been evaluated in a very positive way, with percentages which are very close to unanimity: programmes are judged as adequate to the needs of literary translators (96%), apt to increment the quality of their work (94%), well organised, (92%) and well communicated (88%). A lower percentage, which is nonetheless significant, (72%) indicates that the programme increased the employability and careers prospects of participants. The only percentage below the majority of the respondents (32%) indicates that the only aspect, which was unsatisfactory for respondents was the adequacy of the working environment (infrastructures, logistics etc.) to the needs of people with reduced mobility.

Figure 2. Mobility experience assessment

6 Lessons learned from existing information provision

Generally, the review of existing information provision (see Final Report – Annex 2 - Desk research – Assessing the current state of play regarding mobility and other opportunities for literary translators) pointed out that it does not address the comprehensive needs of literary translators. The desk research made it clear that the possible sources of mobility funding are numerous and that they differ from country to country. In many countries, mobility for translators is a tool to promote the culture of the country abroad and to export culture. In some cases, the existing schemes aim to promote networking activities and the professional development of translators. Sometimes, grants are available from national or regional authorities to foreign publishers to cover (in part or in full) translation costs. Other sources of funding might support a fusion of translation and publishing activities through a co-financing scheme, as in Germany and France; or might be the result of a partnership, often based on a joint effort of ministries, foundations and associations, where institutional stakeholders can be numerous. Most of the time, such co-funding is derived from public sources.

As for residential centres (see footnote n. 2 for definition), these often function with part-time and volunteer staff, and the activities use mostly project-based public funds awarded by ministries of culture and local entities, as well as fees from members and subscribers. Unfortunately, these funds are not sufficient to establish a structure with a permanent base.

The field-work revealed imbalances between the supply and demand of mobility programmes: mobility funds are insufficient to cover the full range of expenses associated with mobility. There is also a significant imbalance in the number and scope of support schemes between countries and regions, as well as between source and target languages, with a correspondence between the diffusion of a source language and the number of translations made from it.

However, the majority of funding schemes depend on unstable funding sources, with an uncertain future, considering the current difficult economic situation in Europe today. A standardised, central system of funding, managed by the European Union would allow the relevant organisations/institutions/centres to have positive prospects based on secure funds, giving them the opportunity to organize and plan activities and actions, and benefitting translators and translation in the long term.

Further, in all researched cases, effective mobility experiences, whether at European, national or regional level, benefit from the same features. They:

- are driven by real needs of the literary translation actors;
- are managed by residential centres, providing expertise that understands and interprets literary translators needs and provides information to the host organisation;
- utilise a network of agents in all participating countries;
- have a thematic focus or specific priorities, giving special attention to translators of the hosting country/region's literature, with a focus varying according to the financial year;

- introduce knowledge and experience, but without interrupting the free flow of dialogue, network control, and the evolution of practice, when benefiting from European Commission facilitation (in the form of grants) – i.e. RECIT, Literature Across Frontiers.

In relation to the possible roles and responsibilities, three levels emerged as the most significant:

- **European Commission**, in recognising that literary translation needs dedicated support in the form of grants, in improving information provision by coordinating and supporting information provision at all levels, and in supporting mobility by including it in a comprehensive policy framework with clear objectives and policy tools;
- **National Authorities**, which could increase and improve data collection at a national level, in order to produce an adequate snapshot of mobility in the field of literary translation. They could also support local, regional and national professional organisations to coordinate with partner organisations in their own country, and in other countries, to achieve better coherence in data collection. Often, only partial information is collected and it is limited to specific projects or suits specific (local) policy needs;
- **Professional organisations and networks** (such as residential centres, translators' associations and networks, and other related networks, etc.) which could further promote dialogue and cooperation within the cultural sector, engage in the identification of solutions to fill current gaps, enhance their capacity-building potential in order to create a constant and systematic dialogue with the EU and national authorities on mobility and information provision, and support to raise the sector's capacity to deliver mobility and to provide adequate information.

7 Conclusions

Multilingualism and intercultural dialogue / exchanges are both pillars of Europe's cultural heritage. The circulation of culture and ideas is encouraged and facilitated through the circulation of works requiring translation in all the European languages, in order to preserve linguistic and cultural diversity.

Within this framework, the key actors are the individual literary translators who implement this process in practice. However, the quality of their work closely depends on their working conditions, as well as on their linguistic/cultural skills and competencies, and their familiarity with the relevant country and culture in a context of intercultural exchange. In addition to producing new translations, translators are also required to update existing translations to keep in step with the changing cultural context of both the target and source language.

So far, the sector is characterized by lack and gaps at many levels: lack of financial support for translators and for translator's facilities such as residential centres; lack of support infrastructure for translators and lifelong learning opportunities; lack of translation flows between certain European countries and pairs of languages.

There is also a deep discrepancy between the theoretical and practical status of literary translators and the publishing chain: on the one hand, they are seen as transmitters of culture, having the same status as authors (under the terms of copyright law), on the other, they are considered a replaceable 'mechanical translation tool'. Evidence for this can be found in the 2008 survey by CEATL on literary translators' working

conditions in 21 European countries, which is currently being updated. In spite of the growing professionalisation and integration of the translation industry, most literary translators still work in isolation.

Although literary translation is a lively and growing industry, according to the research findings, it is an occupation with a high 'drop-out' rate, especially among beginners, who find it difficult to obtain their first assignments and are at the same time not eligible for subsidies, while having no professional networks to refer to.

Many residence centres devoted to literary translation are very active in providing mobility opportunities, organising training workshops and other events. A period of time spent in a residence centre is a form of lifelong learning for literary translation professionals, who can benefit from opportunities to attend courses, meet writers and other translators, and exchange ideas and best practices.

Therefore, the proposed mobility programme responds to the challenges identified above, which have also emerged in the last few years during international debates on literary translation. The mobility programme can be combined with a programme offering experienced translators the option of refresher courses and 'on-the-job training', as a form of lifelong training, resulting in an effective insertion of literary translators into the cultural context of Europe and other regions as promoters of language skills, culture and knowledge. This would also potentially lead to organising actors and activities towards the foundation of a European literary translation space.

Mobility could enhance training and improve the quality of translations and the function of translators in the market, as well as enhancing the activities of residential centres and the role of publishers in the diffusion of translated books, and promoting more qualified publishing choices.

In addition, the promotion of partnerships between translation centres, foundations and other public or private organisations would facilitate the diversification of the many translation programmes currently operating across Europe and provide translators with lifelong learning opportunities at a time of fast technological and intellectual change for the profession. Envisaged partnerships should include publishers, especially from countries with a restricted linguistic distribution, to acquire a better understanding of the complexities of the business and to spread best practices in their respective countries.

The programme should also include measures to encourage talented translators to stay in the profession, such as translation-specific language-learning courses, especially for languages suffering limited diffusion, and grants and residencies not only for professional translators but also for beginners, as well as exchange programmes through the network of literary translation centres, associations, universities and stakeholders.

As the feedback from stakeholders illustrates, the creation of a mobility programme for literary translators will be strongly welcomed by the sector. The final conclusion is therefore to underline the importance, as well as the practical justifiability of fostering and developing a sector that stands at the centre of European cultural diversity, as an important instrument of intercultural dialogue.

8 The recommended solution

In order to develop a solution to the problems and issues set out above, the following guiding principles have been identified, based on the results of the desk research and discussed with the key actors of literary translation during the field-work:

The proposed solution should:

- build on the rich landscape of existing actions and stakeholders;
- commit the management of the programme to the European Commission's own services or agencies, to allow a more systematic collection of data;
- commit the management of the proposals/projects to translators' associations / professional bodies / centres and other key actors of the literary translation field, excluding individual translators as direct applicants for mobility grant projects to the Commission;
- take into account the core differences between the types of needs to be addressed;
- incorporate networking opportunities for literary translation professionals as an integral component, in order to create a community functioning as a reference point for the whole professional sector;
- be open to literary translators working between European and non-European languages regardless of their nationality, so as to spread European culture outside Europe, and to further promote the principles of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue between European and non-European countries.

The ultimate aim is to build up a central, standardised mobility system for literary translators that could address the needs of literary translation in all the countries inside and outside Europe, while meeting the requirements of a developing profession with growing importance.

Therefore the recommended solution is a mobility programme addressing six main objectives:

1. encourage European cultural unity and integration by fostering cultural diversity and cultural exchanges;
2. further literary translators' ability to act as cultural mediators within the multilingualism and integration policies' framework;
3. enhance the capacity building of literary translation's main organisations to support mobility;
4. enrich the participants' knowledge, linguistic/cultural proficiency and their familiarity with a relevant country or culture through mobility in a context of intercultural exchange;
5. contribute to the creation of a European Literary translation space;
6. facilitate mobility for literary translators from different countries and promoting the circulation of works and knowledge.

Thus, the full set of objectives can be depicted as follows:

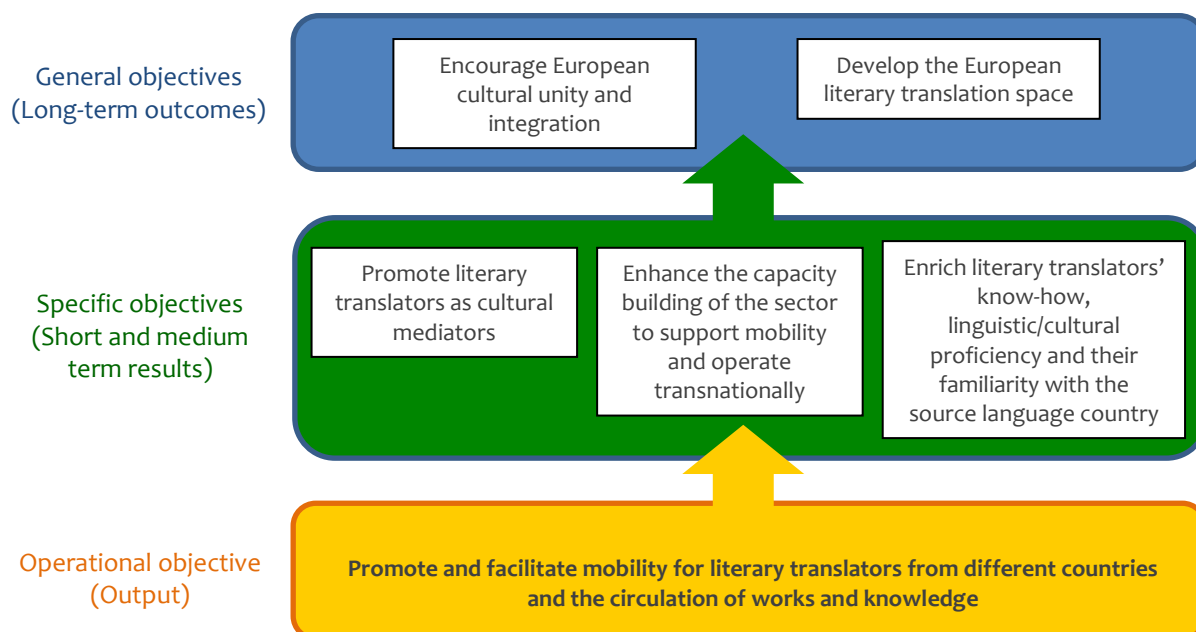


Figure 3. Mercurio Mobility Programme general, specific and operational objectives

8.1 The proposed funding scheme and practical measures for implementation

The proposed programme consists of two broad types of actions and one complementary action, addressing the need to optimise support for literary translation through a targeted approach:

- **A. Mobility Actions:** Mobility for translation activities and training;
- **B. Partnership Actions:** Mobility for capacity building and networking activities;
- **C. Complementary Side Actions:** an additional activity proposed to complement Mobility and Partnerships Actions through dedicated dissemination and awareness raising activities.

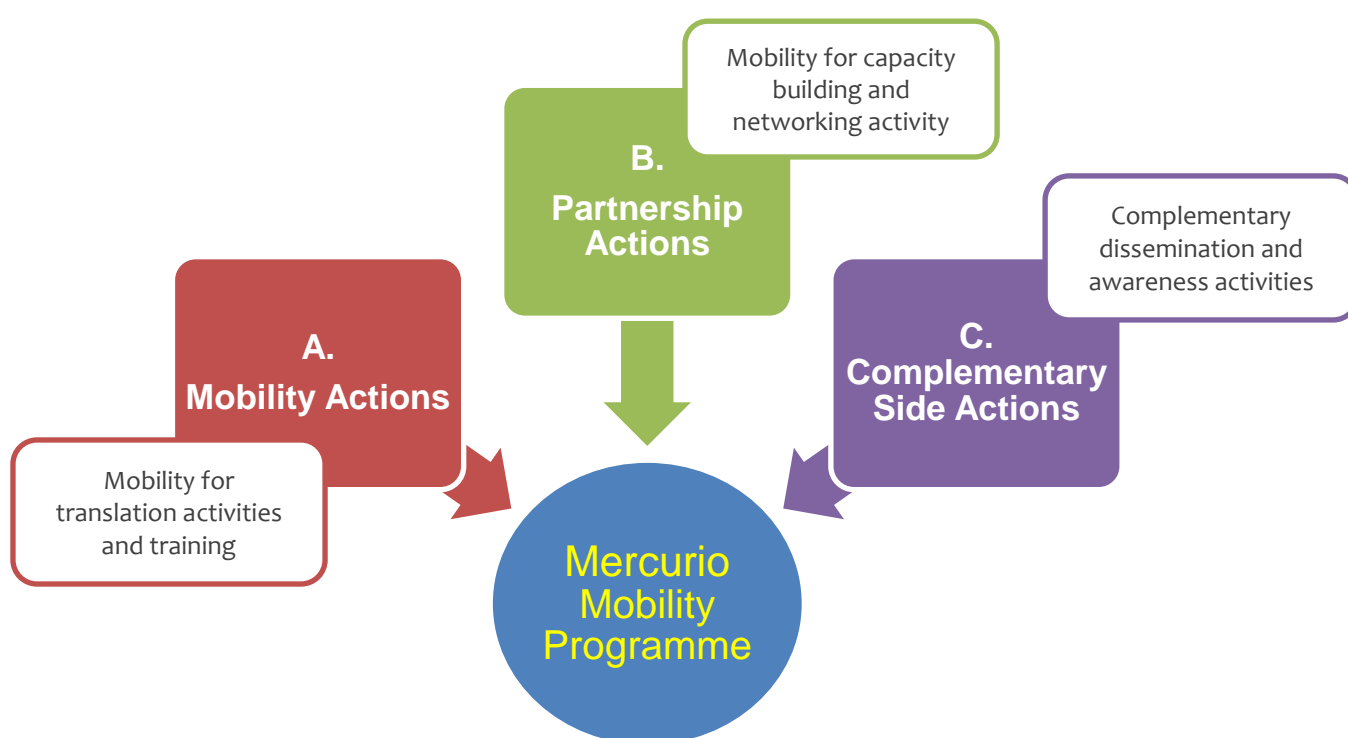


Figure 4. Actions of the Mercurio Mobility Programme

In detail:

Action A. Mobility has been proposed to answer the need to enhance and promote peer learning, systematizing approaches to training, performing, meeting, cooperating and improving literary translators' skills and intellectual capacity for professional purposes, thus innovating the sector by creating cooperation among organisations which usually work individually, fostering knowledge transfer. Mobility should become therefore an integral part of literary translators' training and of their regular working life:

- A.1 Lifelong Learning: mobility for experts' training;
- A.2 Initial training with apprenticeship option: mobility training for beginners;
- A.3 Mobility for translation: for translators with publisher contracts.

Action B. Partnership has been proposed to respond to the need for capacity building of those active in associations and organisations in the literary translation field, in particular managers, supervisors and administrators. It also supports the exchange of experience, expertise and good practices between those active in literary translation organisations, as well as activities, which may lead to the establishment of long-lasting, high quality projects, partnerships and networks.

Action C. Complementary Side Action aimed at promoting the visibility and awareness of literary translation and disseminating outputs and examples of best practice, through various activities and methods, such as workshops and conferences. The Side Action may complement both Mobility and Partnership Actions.

It is proposed to set up an experimental programme for the duration of two years before establishing the final programme features. The two years piloting should focus on:

- analysing the improvements initiated by the mobility programme;
- analysing the validity of the rationale for the calculation of the critical mass;
- assessing the adequate critical mass;
- adjusting the number of grants awarded per action type;
- building awareness of the proposed mobility system, its aims and modalities;
- creating capacity-building for potential applicants and coordinators;
- facilitating interaction between Mercurio and other related initiatives at national and international levels.

A coherent system should be set up to guarantee access to high-quality information related to mobility opportunities through the development of on-line tools and database gathering information on good practices, as well as to facilitate the dissemination of programme information, to promote the programme's accessibility and monitor and assess the results of the experimental implementation.

8.2 Eligible promoters and partners

It is proposed to award the grant to those key entities that will act as promoters, and would then select the direct beneficiaries of the mobility grant. Eligible promoters are public or private bodies with legal status and a proven experience of at least 2 years (in the case of applicants only) in the cultural area of literary translation, with a registered legal base in one of the 27 EU Member States, the EEA countries, Switzerland, Turkey and Croatia.

Depending on the type of mobility programme, different stakeholders could be involved as applicants. In general, they should have the same characteristics as the following stakeholders, who have much experience in the organisation of mobility actions:

- Réseau Européen des Centres de Traducteurs littéraires (RECIT);
- Residential centres for literary translators and translators' houses;
- Conseil Européen des Associations de Traducteurs Littéraires (CEATL);
- International organisations specifically dealing
- Networks of centres and platforms strictly related to literary translation;
- Associations/organisations specifically dealing with literary translation (festivals, fairs, publishers, dubbing and subtitling agencies, theatres) as identified by the tender;
- Cultural institutes, NGOs (e.g. artist-led

with literary translation (UNESCO Clearing House, DG EAC Culture Unit);

- All literary translators who are members of professional organisations, either CEATL or other representative associations affiliated to literary translation;

initiatives, professional associations), independent and private foundations;

- Educational, research, training or policy institutions specifically dealing with literary translation.

As partners, when feasible, the following actors may be involved in addition to those mentioned above:

- **Publishers:** The participation of publishers in the mobility system could provide an appropriate balance between authors' and publishers' rights as equal partners, given that translation quality strongly depends on the working conditions of translators. In addition, many publishers, especially from countries with a restricted linguistic distribution, lack the professional training that would enable them to acquire a better understanding of the complexities of the business and to spread best practices in their respective countries;
- **Universities:** The participation of universities could support training or activities related to translation theory or 'translation studies', given that the proposed mobility system is addressed to active and professional literary translators (whether beginners or experienced), who have already acquired the essential linguistic and literary training and qualifications at tertiary institutions.

8.3 Eligible individual beneficiaries of the mobility

It is proposed that the promoters (applicants and partners when feasible) have the liberty to choose and fix the quality criteria for their project.

The level of experience for accessing the mobility grant varies according to the specific action of the programme:

- A.1- Lifelong Learning:** mobility for experts training - literary translators with a minimum experience of 3 years or 3 performed/published works;
- A.2- Initial training with apprenticeship option** - Mobility training for beginners: literary translators without any restriction;
- A.3- Mobility for translation: for translators with publisher contracts** for acquiring new literary experiences, skills and know-how: literary translators with a translation contract.

Literary translators working between European and non-European languages should be equally eligible, regardless of their nationality. Indeed, one of the proposed Mercurio objectives is to support long-distance translations, to spread and facilitate access to European culture, and to further promote cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue between European and non-European countries.

Action B of the mobility system is targeted at the partners' staff, or members who are managers or administrators of those organisations.

Action C - the **side complementary actions** – is a visibility and dissemination action targeted at different kind of actors, thus it is suggested that the grant beneficiary would decide about mobility requirements and action features, if any.

During the first three years there should be no restrictions or balances (such as geographical balances and type of translation); such criteria may be integrated into the assessment after experiences have ended.

Concerning the frequency with which a single translator may have access to the grants, the proposal is that for the first two years (the start-up of the programme) there will not be any restriction on access, whereas from the third year it may be considered appropriate to limit access to the same type of grant in two successive years for action A (mobility).

8.4 The programme potential beneficiaries and the estimated critical mass

The potential beneficiaries of the programme are all literary translators that have all the necessary preconditions to take part in a mobility period abroad (people whose health, family responsibilities and understanding of their work permit them and encourage them to apply). The current practice estimation is about 20% to 25% of the active literary translators⁶ (for more details on how the percentage has been calculated, see Final Report section 7.6.3 Rationale for the Identification of the critical mass).

An increase in the number of potential beneficiaries is an expected outcome of the programme, thanks to: more structural and financial support for mobility, increased access to mobility, the wider diffusion of information, the more organised approach to mobility (managed together by one or more partners).

The critical mass of the proposed Mercurio Programme is identified as the minimum number of individual mobility flows (to be added to the existing flows), which is required to initiate a qualitative change in literary translation conditions. It is therefore calculated with reference to the number of active literary translators (considering the potential beneficiaries) and an estimated number of existing mobility flows⁷. The critical mass over two years' pilot in terms of individual mobility flows of the proposed programme should be organised as follows:

Action type		%	Estimated critical mass (number of persons)
A1	Lifelong Learning - Mobility for experts' training	25	180
A2a	Initial training - Mobility training for beginners	25	180
A2b	Initial training with apprenticeship - Mobility training for beginners	15	108
A3	Mobility for translation: for translators with a contract with a publisher	20	144
B	Partnerships: Mobility for capacity building and networking activity	15	108
C	Mobility side activities		
TOTAL			720

Figure 5. Total critical mass of the proposed mobility programme and critical mass per programme action

⁶ See: Defining Literary translators - footnote 4.

⁷ The estimation of the existing mobility flows is based on the information provided by RECIT (www.re-cit.eu/) - a network of European literary translation centres: on an annual basis, the RECIT centres accommodate some 500 literary translators in residence and involve more than 5,000 participants in events around literary translation, like translation workshops and conferences. For more details see Final Report section 7.6.3 Rationale for the identification of the critical mass.

In line with the increase of potential beneficiaries, the critical mass should also increase after the pilot phase of Mercurio: once the initiative is well known, the number of participants will increase, based on the experiences of national programmes and facilities (see Final Report - Annex 2 Desk research – Assessing the current state of play regarding mobility and other opportunities for literary translators).

8.5 Mobility organisation and programme management

It is proposed that the mobility programme would be organised in projects awarding group-mobility. The advantages of such a choice are several: reduced administrative procedures, capacity building, continuation, and sustainability.

- For the **European Commission's services** the programme management means less administrative burden;
- for the **literary translation organisations**, and other stakeholders acting as applicants or partners of the projects, it means to provide them with a more stable funding for managing mobility and thus to enhance the capacity building process, to provide them with the tools for improving mobility initiatives in a long-term perspective and in a more structured way, making them able to meet the different kind of needs expressed by the sector;
- for the **individual literary translator** it means having a key reference structure taking care of the management and administrative procedures and processes linked to the mobility. Thus they will have the opportunity to focus their attention on their translation work.

As for the **management options**, given the nature and the scope of the mobility system, it seems most appropriate for the Commission to provide the management of the mobility system through its own services, or through agencies that will carry out the selection and allocate financial support to the applicants selected; this would result in lower costs. The fieldwork confirmed that a sufficient amount of time flexibility is required for a successful scheme, as the attractiveness of a mobility scheme awarding funding once or twice per year could be reduced. A way to overcome this obstacle could be to award group-mobility within a single 2 years project.

This will allow:

- a cost-effective management mode for the Commission services that may organise 1 call per year, and maintain control of the awarding process;
- capacity-building for and provision of tools to the beneficiaries (hosting organisations) that will manage long-term projects, stimulating a long and enduring partnership and the capacity to engage in further transnational cooperation and addressing administrative obstacles to mobility.

8.6 The programme cost estimate

This section takes into consideration the estimated overall annual budget for the Mercurio Programme. The figures in the table below have been calculated taking into account three different costs components, whose rationale has been considered and analysed in details see Final Report section 8 – Financial Provisions:

1. The amount necessary for a single grant and the optimum number of grants per year (Grants for Mobility Actions).
2. The mobility system start-up costs including visibility and communication actions (Support Action).
3. The EC management costs.

Mercurio Programme (2 years) cost estimation				
Cost Component		EC funding requirement	Beneficiaries' own funds	Total Cost
		€	€	€
1.	Mobility actions (A, B and C)	3.272.000	818.000	4.090.000
2.	Support Action	300.000	0	300.000
3.	EC Management	409.000	0	409.000
TOTAL COST		3.981.000	818.000	4.799.000

Figure 6. Overall cost estimation for a 2 years piloting of the Mercurio Programme