

NOTES FROM EUROPE: SERBIA

Protecting translators' rights

Vladimir D. Janković

The Association of Literary Translators of Serbia ([Udruženje književnih prevodilaca Srbije – UKPS](#)) was founded in 1951 in Belgrade, the capital of Serbia and then Yugoslavia. From the very beginning, and in the following decades, ALTS was the leading association of literary translators in Yugoslavia. It was at the initiative of the ALTS that in 1953 the Federation of Literary Translators of Yugoslavia was founded. Its first president was Živojin Simić, then president of ALTS. This federation became a member of the International Translators' Organization – FIT ([Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs](#)).

The Association of Literary Translators of Serbia is a not-for-profit trade organization whose main goals are the promotion of literary translation, the protection and representation of literary translators and their copyrights, as well as the exchange of experiences, and developing and fostering connections with cultures and translators of other nations.

Changing challenges

Facing both extremely difficult economic circumstances as well as unfavourable social conditions since the early nineties, ALTS' role and work have become not only more delicate but also more important and thus more visible. The collapse of the value system has resulted in a radical deterioration of the environment in which all artists, including literary translators, live and work, as well as further aggravating their position – even though this position ought to be guaranteed both by domestic and international legal acts defining the rights and the obligations of literary translators.

As an institution primarily oriented towards the protection of the rights of its members, but also of other literary translators, those who are not members of ALTS, our Association is also focused on the treatment of literary translators in the media. Unfortunately, it is not unusual that the names and the creative integrity of literary translators are utterly ignored in media presentations. ALTS therefore constantly takes the



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appropriate measures in order to prevent or remedy the consequences of some media professionals' incorrect and unprofessional attitude towards the art and the importance of literary translation.

Publishing and gatherings

Today, the Association has about 350 members. Despite many difficulties, it has been maintaining its publishing activities, acclaimed by its elite literary translation magazine *The Bridges* (*Mostovi*). In addition to *The Bridges*, there is also *The ALTS Bulletin*, a regularly issued publication with the latest information on the Association's activities.

Among other regular activities of the ALTS, the traditional Belgrade Translators' Meetings (*Beogradski prevodilački susreti, BEPS*), which take place every year and bring together distinguished translators and Slavists from Europe and the world, are of particular importance. The ALTS also organizes a regular panel – the Translators' Salon. At these gatherings, the work of renowned

literary translators and exceptional translation projects are presented to both professionals and the general public.

Under the auspices of and in collaboration with the ALTS, many prestigious prizes in the field of literary translation are awarded. Particularly significant are those named after renowned literary translators Miloš N. Djurić, Branko Jelić, Radoje Tatić, Jovan Maksimović, Ljubiša Rajić, Mihajlo Djordjević, as well as the ALTS Lifetime Achievement Award.

The governing bodies of the ALTS consist of the Managing Board, the International Cooperation and BEPS Committee, the Status Committee, the Supervisory Board and the Court of Honour. Since January 2018, the most senior positions in the Managing Board have been held by Duško Paunković (President), Vladimir D. Janković (Vice-President) and Neda Nikolić Bobić (Secretary General).