

# The CEATL Companion:

## *A new online idea hub*

### *Iztok Ilc*

In January 2022, the [CEATL Companion for Literary Translators' Associations](#) was officially launched. It was conceived in Bucharest by CEATL's Best Practices working group way back in 2018 as an openly available resource tool for emerging or existing literary translators' associations, as well as a platform for exchanging ideas and experiences that might help translators and their associations not just in Europe but also worldwide.

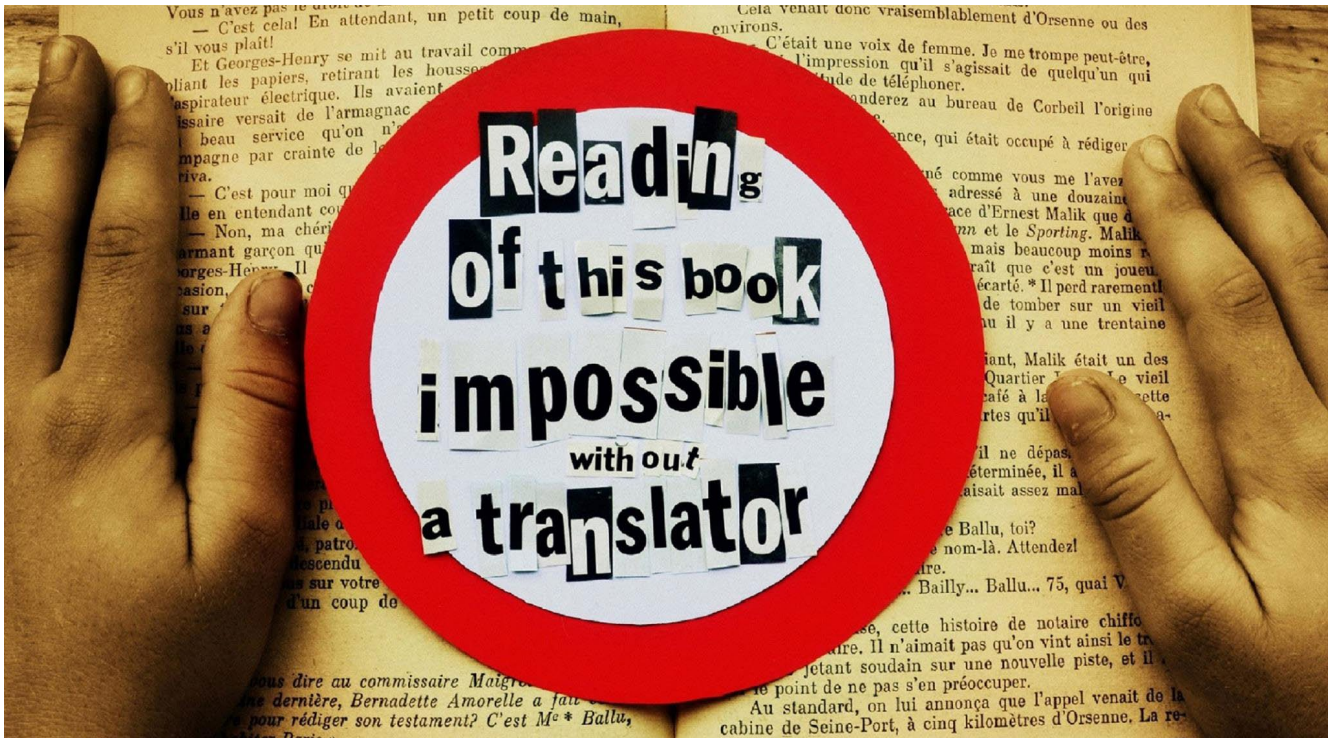
Literary translators' associations may vary in size and experience, but tend to share common goals and carry out similar activities. Some have long, distinguished histories and access to financial and other resources, whereas others might be relatively new and small, running largely on their members' enthusiasm and passion. They all aim to improve the working conditions for translators and to raise professional standards in the field, relying on creativity and ingenuity to combat the challenges the profession is increasingly facing in a world in which the merits of culture are largely viewed through a strictly commercial lens. This is where CEATL's Companion

for Literary Translators' Associations steps in as a repository of good practices and an online idea hub intended to boost associations' efforts and even expand their collaborative networks.

The Companion is divided into eight sections, covering the fundamental steps of founding, maintaining, and growing a translators' association: Getting started, Recruiting and motivating members, Fundraising, Lobbying, Building a dialogue with publishers, Continued professional development, Residences, and Visibility. Each section briefly defines the issue at hand and then offers success stories, or associations' concrete experiences that seem to have done the trick.

#### **Maintaining members**

The [Getting started](#) section outlines the key steps in establishing a new association, and showcases the success story of ARTLIT, the Romanian literary translators' association founded in 2014. For an association to have any impact, however, it needs members, members who will stay long-term and get actively involved. Most if not all associations face the challenge of attracting and



*From the Companion's website*

keeping members, so **Recruiting and motivating members** provides ideas for building an actively engaged translators' community, with success stories from Poland's STL and Italy's AITI, as well as prompts for various forms of gatherings and 'Stammtische' to keep translators connected. It is an uphill battle, but, as the success stories show, one worth fighting.

Money is a burning issue for a fair number of associations, especially the younger and smaller ones. The **Fundraising** section delineates the most common methods of funding an association – such as membership fees or financing from public institutions – as well as suggestions for more creative avenues for securing money for smaller projects, workshops, or publications, be they from public or private sources, collecting societies or lottery funds, depending on what a country might have on offer.

In addition to providing funding, public institutions responsible for culture make key decisions that directly affect translators' livelihoods, so it is crucial for associations to have their say in the decision-making processes. This is where **Lobbying** comes in: associations need a good grasp of the legislation regulating their field, as well as of the tools at their disposal to effect changes in favour of the profession. This task may appear daunting and even futile in countries in which institutions show very little interest, but this is precisely where lobbying and advocacy are most urgently needed.

**CPD: an essential**

The Companion also provides sections aimed inwards, at strengthening the skills and expanding the knowledge of translators themselves, since a large part of the literary translators' learning process comes from practice. **Continued professional development**



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**Iztok Ilc**  
**Photo: Roman Šipić**

helps associations with suggestions and success stories to get actively involved in providing translators with development opportunities outside the formal education system, curated and conducted by seasoned professionals. These may take the form of seminars and workshops, mentorship programmes, or simple peer-to-peer exchanges of knowledge and experience. Among the success stories in this section, one may read of AELC's new consultancy programme for translators working with Catalan, as well as a list of various residential seminars for literary translators.

An association's growth and impact, and all its activities – be they recruiting members, fundraising, lobbying, or networking – is predicated on its **Visibility**. This section is chock-full of ideas and success stories, plenty of them kindly provided by Croatia's DHKP.

### **A collaborative and living document**

This and plenty of other growing content on, for instance, **residencies** or **building a dialogue with publishers**, can be found

by visiting the Companion's website. As the Companion is both a collaborative and living document, the working group will regularly collect similar success stories from CEATL's members, but all associations, whether part of CEATL or not, are also warmly encouraged to send in their own experiences, as well as questions and comments through the page's **contact form**.

The CEATL Companion for Literary Translators' Associations would not have come to fruition without the hard work and dedication of the former and current members of the Best Practices working group (in alphabetical order): Lavinia Braniște, ARTLIT (Romania), Iztok Ilc, DSKP (Slovenia), Kalina Janeva, MATA (Macedonia), Ika Kaminka, NO (Norway), Francesca Novajra, AITI (Italy), Simina Popa, ARTLIT (Romania), Eva Valvo, STRADE (Italy), Ela Varošaneć, DHKP (Croatia), and Shaun Whiteside, TA (United Kingdom).