**THE TRANSLATION MATTERS:**

**DO WE ALSO CARE ABOUT THE TRANSLATORS?**

Prague 26 September 2022 | PRESS RELEASE

**In recent years, there has been a lot of talk in literary circles about the position of literary translators. Their work is invisible to readers, essential to publishers and fundamental to the spread of world literature. However, the conditions under which Czech literary translators work are often disadvantageous. This situation was captured in detail and with the support of specific figures as part of a project supported by a grant from the EEA Funds 2014–2021 by Czech Translators of the North along with their Czech and Nordic partners. They also met at a round table with publishers, thus opening a dialogue on the current situation of both parties, organised an international conference where translators exchanged examples of good practice with Nordic partners, and added workshops for translators to improve their skills or management workshops for the running of professional associations. The project, aptly named the Translators’ Gym, will now complete its campaign that should introduce the role and conditions of translators to readers.**

Under what conditions do Czech literary translators work? On the basis of a questionnaire survey, in which 330 translators from more than 30 languages ​​took part in October and November 2021, the publication [***Mapping the contractual conditions and amount of fees of Czech literary translators***](https://prekladateleseveru.cz/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/broz%CC%8Cura-WEB_FINAL.pdf) was created. “The findings that can be summed up in one sentence include, for example, that three-quarters of literary translation is carried out by women in our country, that more than a third of respondents work with two or three languages, and that literary translation is the main source of income for only a quarter of respondents,” says Kateřina Krištůfková, president of the Czech Translators of the North association. According to the results of the analysis, the median fee in 2019 and 2020 was CZK 180 per standard page, while the answers regarding the time spent on one standard page of the text show that its translation, including subsequent adjustments, takes an hour on average.

At the same time, translating fiction is a highly professional job that translators should not do only for the love of literature. Paraphrasing the words of the Portuguese Nobel Prize winner for literature José Saramago, we can say that while individual authors create national literatures, translators create world literatures. It is precisely the literary translators who convey foreign culture to their compatriots, from the point of view of an informed reader and connoisseur of the original life and institutions. “A literary translator is not just someone who has learned a foreign language. He is an attentive reader who has read the work several times and interprets it on multiple levels. He is an expert on culture and the milieu in which the original work was created,” adds Kateřina Krištůfková.

“Our effort is to make the work of a literary translator more visible. Much is improving in this direction; for example, some publishing houses already include the name of the translator on the cover of the book, so we don't have to look for them on the copyright page,” explains the translator from Finnish and present of Scandinavian House Michal Švec. “Readers may not even know that the translator is a co-author of the given work, that his work is subject to copyright law. The translated work is therefore his property, which he disposes of according to the law, for example, he grants a license to publish and release it.”

The Czech Translators of the North have now launched a campaign to support interest in translator’s work, the main points of which have been summarized at the website <https://prekladateleseveru.cz/naprekladuzalezi/>.

“We are primarily going to deliver leaflets to libraries highlighting the work of translators and why it is worthwhile to monitor the quality of translated books – for example through translation prizes and anti-prizes. We would like to establish a dialogue with libraries about what criteria should be followed when purchasing new books and what role the quality of the edition and translation also plays. We would also like for the people who recommend books or write about them on social networks or talk to friends to not forget to mention the authors of the translations. When publishing reviews on social networks, they can use the hashtag **#NaPrekladuZalezi**, i.e., #TheTranslationMatters, which we have chosen as the motto of the campaign, because the translation really does matter. And maybe even more on translators,” concludes Kateřina Krištůfková.

**More information about the project:**

<https://prekladateleseveru.cz/posilovani-kapacit-oborovych-organizaci-ceskych-literarnich-prekladatelu-a-jejich-clenu/>

The project is implemented as a part of the [Cultur](https://eeagrants.org/)e programme, which is co-financed from the [EEA Funds 2014–2021](https://www.fondyehp.cz/).

**Photographs for download:**

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Ecb0XZxNVVJdCGX00yh4-EqAYWcfEmGd?usp=sharing>

**Contact for the media:**

Martin Severýn  
E/ [info@prekladateleseveru.cz](mailto:info@prekladateleseveru.cz)

**Implementer and partners of the project:**

* [Překladatelé Severu](https://prekladateleseveru.cz/) (Czech Translators of the North)
* [Obec překladatelů](http://obecprekladatelu.cz/) (Czech Literary Translators’ Guild,)
* [Jednota tlumočníků a překladatelů](http://jtpunion.org/) (Union of Interpreters and Translators)
* [Norwegian Association of Literary Translators (Norsk oversetterforening)](https://oversetterforeningen.no/)
* [Norwegian Association of Audiovisual Translators (Norsk audiovisuell oversetterforening)](https://www.navio.no/)
* [Norwegian Non-Fiction Writers and Translators Association (Norsk faglitterær forfatter- og oversetterforening)](https://nffo.no/)
* [Norwegian Association of Professional Translators (Norsk fagoversetterforening)](https://norfag.org/)
* [Icelandic Literature Center (Miðstöð íslenskra bókmennta)](https://www.islit.is/)
* [The Icelandic Association of Translators and Interpreters (Bandalag þýðenda og túlka)](https://www.thot.is/thot.is/index.html)