EP translators

In no other institution are the requirements regarding the combination of IT-literacy, mental flexibility, linguistic diversity, speed in translation and familiarity with current affairs as demanding as in Parliament. The role of a Parliament is to amend legislation: a large majority of the source texts are presented in the form of amendments and they usually have short deadlines. This brings additional challenges, since the translator needs to be able to understand the context rapidly and to see how the amendment fits into that context.

Our translators are typically people with **sound foreign language skills and a perfect command of their mother tongue**, but not necessarily with the professional background of a linguist. Many of our translators have studied other subjects and come from very different professional backgrounds, which provides us with highly appreciated expertise when translating texts on all possible subjects.

Relay-language system

Parliament's translators translate all types of documents from various source languages into their mother tongue. However, with the increase in the number of language combinations to 552, it is not always possible to translate directly from all source languages into all target languages, especially where lesser-used languages are concerned. To address this situation, since 2004 the European Parliament has been using a system of 'relay' languages: **the text is first translated into English, French or German** and then from that language into the other languages. Other frequently used EU languages, namely Spanish, Italian and Polish, could also become relay languages in due course.

Outsourcing

To cope with the ever-increasing level of demand, DG TRAD has recourse to **external contractors for non-priority text**s. The outsourcing of translation assignments is based on document type and workload. Documents of the highest priority, i.e. legislative documents and documents to be put to the vote in plenary are, as far as internal resources permit, translated in-house. Other types of documents, especially administrative texts, are frequently outsourced. Around 30 % of documents requested for translation are translated externally.

Technology at the service of translation

Parliament translators have a **wide range of tools and technologies** available to them, which are speeding up the translation process, reducing the risk of human error and improving consistency through the use of translation memories and reference to documentary and terminological databases. New tools are developed regularly to respond to the requirements of a modern translation service and to further increase the quality of translators' work.