

# **THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR TRAINING LEGAL, ECONOMIC AND COURT TRANSLATORS AND INTERPRETERS AS A MEANS OF FORMING A STATE OF LAW**

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The problem of human rights in contemporary Russia is of crucial importance because all decisions concerning our life, as a rule, depend on it very much. It is particularly important for the status of translators and interpreters in our country.

The reasons for which this problem has not been resolved in the Russian Federation, up to the present day, are numerous. They include, first of all, unsystematic work on protection of human rights in Russia in the field of the legislative activity of the State Duma (the former Supreme Soviet) and other government bodies. "Ombudsman" – an authority protecting human rights – has not been appointed either.

Activities on protection of human rights are not co-ordinated because too many different governmental departments are engaged in dealing with such problems. Protection of human rights in courts has not been introduced in practice. Nor was the registration of citizens abolished, still substantially restricting personal freedom of individuals.

For example, I, myself, don't know what my citizenship is, because my Birth Certificate is Georgian, my General Certificate of Education is Latvian, my mother is a Pole, my nationality registered in my passport is Armenian, I live in Russia and teach the English language to the Russians, holding a passport of the USSR.

The regulations developed within the framework of the Helsinki Final Act on Security and Co-operation in Europe and Human Rights Charters of Paris, Madrid, Moscow and Vienna have not been respected. As for the European Convention of Human Rights signed in Rome in 1950, the Government of the Russian Federation has not ratified it yet.

The recent reforms seriously affected the financial position of our translators. Fees paid to them are very low. In the firm where I have been working for the last seven years there were about 3000 translators in our card index. Now, 50 per cent of the translators have migrated from Russia for ever. Due to the disintegration of industries and scientific institutions our Association, now affiliating about 400 translators, has not practically received any commissions for a year. The Translators' Union of Russia in Moscow is in a similar situation.

Our present fees for translator's services are as follows:

1. The languages of the first group: one standard page, 2400 characters – 4 dollars.
2. The languages of the second group: multiplied by 2.
3. The languages of the third group: multiplied by 3.

The translator is paid only 50%, but in some translation agencies the translator gets only 30%. As to the interpreting:

one hour of negotiations of average difficulty – 5 dollars, one hour of difficult negotiations – 8 dollars.

During the last two years I was developing an educational programme for the training of so-called "sworn", i.e. legal, economic and court translators and interpreters. During one year I was gathering materials at the Law Faculty of St. Petersburg University and for half

year – at the Economic faculty and at the State Patent Department. At the same time I was working as a court interpreter in the Armenian and Georgian languages (for about 2,5 dollars per hour).

I have invited many specialists in different fields to develop this educational programme. Among them there were many holders of D.Sc. and M.Sc. degrees. I have analysed a lot of materials from all over the world, translated them into Russian and developed a new educational programme for the training of so-called "sworn" translators and interpreters. I drafted a code for the court translators and interpreters of Russia (about 200 typed standard pages) and I've received a positive opinion about it from the leading specialists in jurisprudence and linguistics from Moscow and Saint-Petersburg. I have also selected a big amount of methodical material in Russian and English from many English-language countries. This programme is of an international nature as it enables to study the Russian language and legal system by students from other countries. It is intended for philologists and linguists, lawyers and economists, who have a sound command of English.

There is a strong demand for training court interpreters and translators. In 1993, alone, in the whole territory of the CIS there were more than 250 thousand offences (civil and criminal) committed by citizens of other countries. But quantities of goods stolen and sold at reduced prices outside the territory of the former USSR are unknown. Highly qualified translators, acting as government officials with the rights of public notaries, would be indispensable for solving such problems.

In December 1992, an official letter concerning this problem together with the developed regulations were presented by our Association to the Department of Foreign Trade and Economics of the Saint-Petersburg Municipal Council in the hope that the Head of the Mayor's Administration, Mr. Sobchak, who is a lawyer by profession, would become personally interested in this programme.

Soon after, I was officially invited to the Higher Administrative School at the Municipal Council where my concept was considered and approved by the Academic Board. There were not, however any subsequent measures taken for its implementation.

The Administration for Higher Education opened a new translators faculty where my concept was again partly used in the educational programme. I talked about this programme with a Chairman of the City Court and a Public Prosecutor. They approved of my programme and told me that there is a lot of work now in courts where translator's services are needed very much.

At present, the President of Translators' Union of Russia, Mr. Leonid Gurevich, is engaged in discussing this problem at the governmental level in Moscow. He is going to work out relevant documents to be presented to the State Duma in the near future.

Here is a brief presentation of the programme, its basic and complementary subjects.

### **The Basic Programme of the Training Course for "Sworn" (Court) Translators and Interpreters**

1. Introduction to the profession of the "sworn" (court) translators and interpreters (40 hrs in Russian)
2. The theory of translation (40 hrs in Russian)
3. The Course on jurisprudence:
  - a) the structure of governmental office-work: the documents of governmental administration and legislation (civil cases)
  - b) the legal proceedings (criminal cases) and court documents (22 hrs in Russian)

4. The principles of foreign trade activities (40 hrs in Russian)
5. The legal protection of intellectual and industrial property (30 hrs in Russian)
6. The practical training in translation of different kinds of documentation (100 hrs on the basis of English)
7. The practical training in interpretation for court consecutive and simultaneous interpreters (100 hrs on the basis of English).

The programme of additional subjects and classes for "sworn" translator/interpreter in pre-graduation rotational period include the use of typewriters or computers, general principles of shorthand writing, ethics and rules of behaviour during the legal proceedings, the art of speaking in public, etc.

The practical experience would be acquired during the probational period at different translation agencies, bureaus and courts where a trainee would be expected to perform different practical tasks.

The graduation work may include the translation into a foreign language of a text on translation theory, judicial document or a legislative act of the Russian Federation.

The introduction to the profession of a "sworn" (court) translator/interpreter includes The Code of a Court Translator and Interpreter of the Russian Federation, historical information about the institution of "sworn" translators and interpreters abroad and in the pre-revolutionary Russia, professional ethics, formal-legal rules for translating documents, etc.

The legal language as a subject of our interest could include the methodology of work: basic principles of the two different legal systems, definitions of particular administrative and judicial institutions in a given foreign country, comparison with similar Russian institutions, legal phraseology and specialized terminology of economics, insurance, finance, banking, medicine, etc.

All seven main disciplines of this educational programme are developed in detail in the Russian language and I have offered a copy of it to my friends from TEPIS.

The weaker part of this educational programme from my point of view is the training course for the consecutive and simultaneous court interpreters.

In order to make such course a success it would be necessary to get familiar with some unavailable publications, such as "An Introduction to Court Interpreting, Theory and Practice" by Elena A. de Jongh, the legal interpreter orientation course recorded on video cassettes by Legal Interpreter Service in Australia under the titles "Moot Court" and "Mock Hearing", the BBC's educational programme entitled "Your Verdict", "Today in Parliament", etc.

For the last two years I've sent many letters to various countries with a request to help me get the necessary materials. Unfortunately, the only response came from TEPIS. This is why I feel obliged to thank both the TEPIS Society and TEPIS Publishing House for their helpful hand.

Nevertheless, I am still counting on the solidarity of our colleagues in exchanging information on the development and improvement of translators' training programmes. I also hope that the period of "kaleidoscopic mess" in Russia will soon cease and that our programme will be approved by the government before we meet at the next Forum.