

THE BOOK PLATFORM  
**DECLARATION**  
on encouraging and promoting translations

Translation is an indispensable means for the circulation of ideas and literary works across languages and cultures. It is also much more than simply a tool for transferring texts from one language into another; literally, translation is an art and a creative work in and of itself. Translations are key to the ongoing enrichment of any language and culture, and they remind us of the interrelations of literatures and cultures across the world.

Translating and publishing from the languages of “lesser-known” literatures, such as Armenian or Georgian, into the other languages of the world is part of the drive to further develop our literatures and cultures. Through literary translation national literatures become international, and our classical and contemporary literature can be accessed across linguistic and cultural borders. Translations contribute to making our cultures, economies and countries more visible and recognizable internationally. Support for translations abroad contributes to the local economic development of the publishing industry; a more internationalized literary dialogue also contributes to the development of our contemporary literary field at home.

Presently, however, a series of factors make it impossible for most quality literature to get translated without additional support.

I. Therefore, we appeal to the public bodies in our countries - primarily but not exclusively the Ministries of Culture, as well as publicly supported organizations in the field of books, publishing and translations, to adhere to a policy of encouraging translations abroad, which conforms to the following principles:

I.1. is long-term, transparent, inclusive and is a result of discussion with the book sector where the necessary professional expertise lies.

I.2. is decentralized and independent in terms of functions, management, activities and funds from national authorities, that is - encourages initiatives by non-state actors such as those based on the "arm's length principle," involving private and independent organizations that have specific expertise and experience in the field.

I.3. is open to cooperation, both domestically and internationally, with partners working in the area of "cultural export". This also includes studying and analyzing models for translation support from other countries, such as Poland, the Netherlands, Norway and many others.

II. Specifically, as professionals in the book sector, we recommend that such a support policy:

II.1 strives for a better balance between supporting the translation and dissemination of our literary heritage and of contemporary, current literary works by living authors.

II.2 targets reading audiences in the recipient language of translation and therefore gives a priority to translations published in the target country, rather than to the ones published "at home"; takes into account the context of the recipient country.

II.3 considers the fact that the complexity of the field of literature (with its various traditions and aesthetics), the demands of the different international book markets and reading audiences require differentiated strategies.

II.4. takes into account that international interest towards our literatures is in direct correlation with our own openness to international cultural dialogue in terms of publishing translations, hosting international events, etc.

II.5. acknowledges the key role of translators as intermediaries in making our literatures accessible to the world, and therefore provides special incentives for quality translators.

III. We endorse the attached recommended ***Policy Instruments for Encouraging Translations*** as described in the policy studies<sup>1</sup> of the Book Platform project, which can be applied as a whole or individually, namely: 1) support for a specialized agency for the promotion of translations; 2) grants for international publishers; 3) incentives for translators, such as awards, training seminars, etc.; 4) literary hospitality measures; 5) mobility programs; and 6) informational resources directed at the international market, including support for sample translations.

IV. In our professional work in the field of books, literature, publishing and translations, we remain committed to continue working for the inclusion of our literatures in the international cultural dialogue.

---

<sup>1</sup> Pages 29-35 of *Translations from Armenian after 1991. Facts, Trends Recommendations*, Yerevan, 2013 (also available in Armenian as «Թարգմանունը յայտարարված 1991-ից: Փաստեր, միտքեր և առաջարկներ», հանձնարարված 1991-ից), <http://bookplatform.org/en/activities/51-study-translations-armenia-en.html>

*Discussed and endorsed during the international conference on the Promotion of Translations (Yerevan, 21-22 February 2014) organized by the Book Platform project in the framework of the EuroEast Programme of the European Union. Open for endorsement by all other cultural actors in the European Neighbourhood countries.*