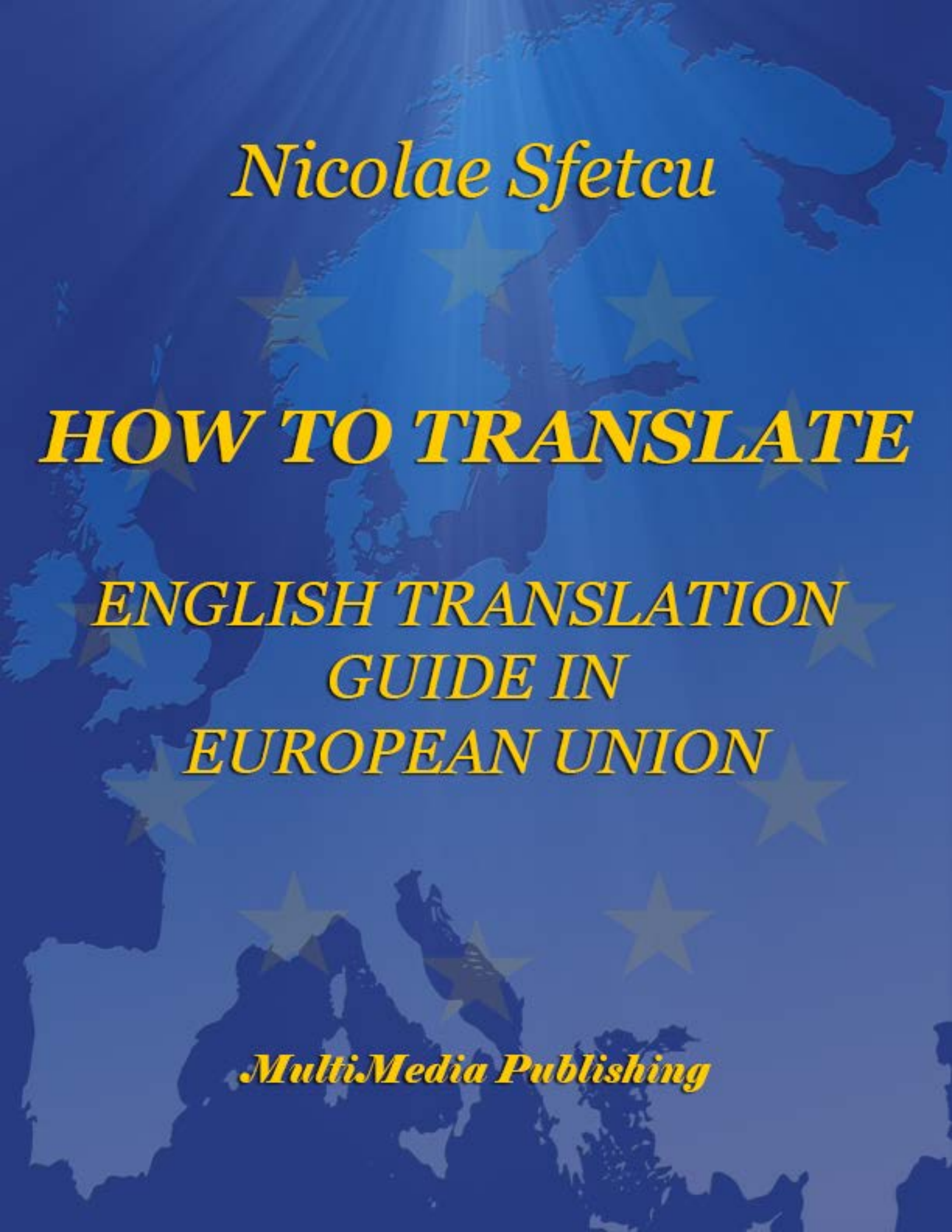




Nicolae Sfetcu

HOW TO TRANSLATE

ENGLISH TRANSLATION GUIDE IN EUROPEAN UNION

MultiMedia Publishing

How to Translate

English Translation Guide in European Union

[Nicolae Sfetcu](#)

Published by Nicolae Sfetcu

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BOOK PREVIEW

Translation

Translation (in its main meaning of interlingual translation) is the fact of getting a text written in a language (“source language”) in a text written in another language (“target language”). It connects at least two languages and cultures, and sometimes two times.

Translation represents always an original text (or “original text”, or “source”). It involves a degree of equivalence, although the concept of strict equivalence between languages is now exceeded in translation. The concept of translation has long been based on dichotomies such as “loyalty” versus “freedom”, “fidelity à la lettre” versus “fidelity in the spirit,” “source-oriented translation” versus “target-oriented translation” etc.

So far, the translation remained an essentially human activity. However, attempts have been made to automate and computerize the translation (machine translation) or to use computers as a medium of human translation (computer-assisted translation).

The translation takes into account a number of constraints (context, grammar, etc.) to make it understandable for people with no knowledge of the source language and that do not have the same culture and the same baggage of knowledge. Translating involves controlling the source language, but also the target language, which is usually the mother tongue. A good translator has more than language skills: it has something of the writer, analyst or journalist, etc.. To translate the scientific and technical literature, it is sometimes needed to have also strong technical skills and master the technical jargon in both languages.

Assessment of the amount of translated texts

There are no comprehensive statistics, mainly because of a large number of translations made in the gray literature or disseminated via the Internet without going through the traditional networks.

Worldwide, the most translated document would be, according to the Guinness Book of Records, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, with 406 translations, although the Bible is deemed translated into more than 2,000 languages and the prayer Our Father in 1698 languages.

Translation and interpretation

These two concepts differ, the translator translates the ideas expressed in writing from one language to another, and the interpreter translates the ideas expressed orally, or through the use of body parts (sign language) of a language to another.

The interpretation can be considered a subfield of translation in terms of processes implemented (translation studies), but in practice these activities require very different skills, and also a report to different time.

Translation documents

Translators suppose to master at least two languages, but also to have access to the text to be translated (or its copy), during the time required for its translation, and possibly face an original (possibly annotated) rather than copy or translation already done in another language.

Or, the works have long been long time ago copied and recopied by hand. Sometimes they are rare or unique.

Libraries and archives places (municipal, royal, religious, industrial, etc.) contain rare books and heritage collections, teaching and / or research and public reading book collections. They have a priori been important places for translators. Today, it is not always possible to take out or touch a book or photograph or microfilm. Libraries have been long time places where students, teachers, researchers and other professionals came and still come to translate elements of books or old books. For the philosopher Robert Damien, beyond a place of juxtaposition of authors and languages, texts and knowledge, the translation is – as a library, a “place of connections.”

Translation theories

In terms of contemporary theories of translation, it is generally found that there are six mainstreams:

Practical / communicative approach

Interpretive mainstream: theory of the meaning of TISS, based primarily on the practice of conference interpreting. In their book *Interpreting for translation*, D. Seleskovitch and M. Lederer consider that you need to translate the meaning and not the language. This is simply a carrier of the message. The language can be a barrier to understanding. This is

why you should always avoid transcoding and proceed to deverbalisation in any translation process.

Approaches of literary theories

It considers that the translation is not a linguistic operation but rather a literary operation (Edmond Cary). In other words, to translate poetry, it must be a poet (Ezra Pound, Walter Benjamin, Henri Meschonnic, Antoine Berman).

The concept of energy in language: Words are, somehow, a crystallization of the historical experience of a culture, which gives them strength and it is this energy that must be translated.

Sociolinguistic mainstream

It is the social mold that determines what is translatable or not, what is acceptable or not (selection, filtering, censorship ...). The translator is the product of a society and is translated according to its own socio-cultural background (School of Tel Aviv: Annie Brisset, Even Zohar, Gideon Toury).

The concepts of dynamic equivalence and formal equivalence in Nida and Taber: The most important for any translational act is to ensure that the effect left on the reader by the translation is identical or similar to that left by the text source. To do this, we must adapt, acclimatize and get equivalences (Jean Claude Margot, *Translating without betraying*).

Approaches based on linguistic theories

Structuralism, linguistics, pragmatics, language text. It is a mainstream that consider the word, phrase and sentence as translation units. (Georges Mounin, Vinay and Darbelnet, J.I Austin).

Approaches based on philosophical and hermeneutic concepts

The leader of this movement is George Steiner. The real translator must be able to put themselves in the shoes of a writer to capture and understand the intention (the “mean”) of the author of the original text. He sees the translation process as a movement in four steps: Trust (trust / belief), aggression, incorporation and restitution.

Semiotic approaches

Semiotics is the study of signs and systems of meaning. For Peirce: The process of meaning (or semiosis) is the result of cooperation of three parts: a sign, an object, and its interpretant. As well. a semiotic point of view, any translation is considered as a form of interpretation that focuses on texts with different encyclopedic content and a particular sociocultural context.

The translation process

The translation process can be divided into three successive phases:

1. *Understanding*: assimilation of the meaning conveyed by the text, the meaning of a writer, etc.;
2. *Deverbalisation*: forgetting words and conservation of meaning: "the process by which the subject becomes aware of the meaning of a message losing consciousness of the words and phrases that gave content";
3. *Reexpression*: reformulation of the meaning in target language; back to words.

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Internationalization and localization

The internationalization of software (abbreviated as *i18n*) is to prepare its adaptation to different languages and cultures. Unlike regionalization, which requires especially language skills (translation), internationalization is essentially a technical work of programmers. The goal is to produce a program that can be immediately deployed in different languages by simply adding a new translation file.

Example

The following C program is not localized:

```
printf("Fatal error: %s\n", msg);
```

To translate the message, you should edit the source code and modify the string.

For cons, the next version of the program is located, with the *gettext* library. The program will search its files regionalization (localization), a character string corresponding to "Fatal error:% s", for the language of the current user:

```
printf(gettext("Fatal error: %s\n"), msg);
```

gettext uses as key (index in localization files) the default version of the message. Other programming environments can be used, for example, a number (like was in the case of Mac OS), or rely on a dynamic configuration parameter (e.g. *I18n.translate* method of a Ruby on Rails app).

Internationalization and localization

Internationalization is a prerequisite of localization. It is to separate, in the source code of a program, which is independent of the language and culture of which is dependent (usually in files called translation tables). But internationalization does not require a work

on text messages. It is also sometimes possible to change the color codes (whose meaning can change depending on the crop), graphics (including the names of icons, some icons may also contain the written text to be translated), the format of dates or numbers, the writing direction (from right to left in Arabic, for example), the size of the graphic elements (German text is longer than in English, which can modify layout, etc.) to the way of granting plural words after a number (we will write "0 tâche fille" in French, but "0 *children* processes" in English).

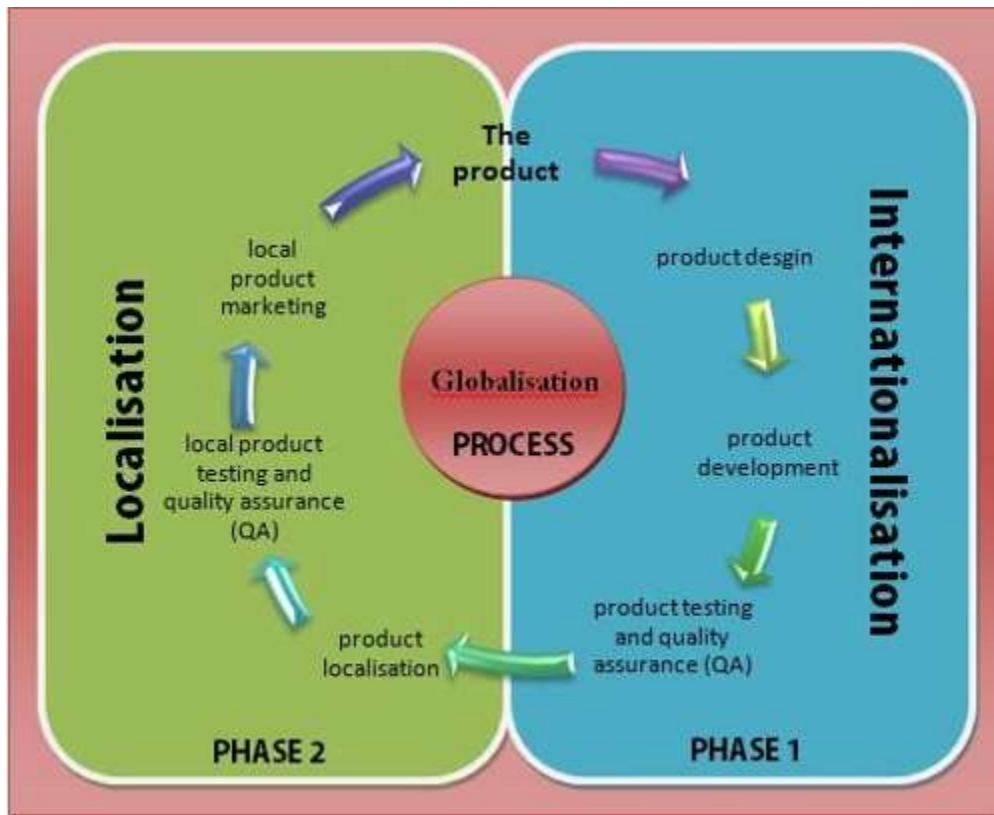
Internationalization is the set of technical mechanisms that allow the end user to choose the language of its interface and achieve sustainable results, linguistically speaking. However, it may not be sufficient to address "any language" that the program uses a limited set of characters, or some special fonts, or because the user does not have the right keyboard for entering data in one or another language. Migration or the inclusion of a wider set of characters may be needed especially to complete internationalization. Extensive games are offered, first in the ISO-2022 family, and secondly as Unicode, especially with UTF-8 / UTF-16. This step, more or less independent of internationalization (it can be done at the same time, before or after) is called "*multilingualization*." The terms are often written in abbreviated form **i18n** (18 number refers to the number between the first *i* and last *n* letters of the word "*internationalization*", an use invented by Digital Equipment Corporation in the years 1970 and 1980) and **L10n** for the word "*localization*" due to the length of the words.

Some companies, such as IBM and Sun Microsystems, use the term "*globalization*" to define the combination of internationalization and localization.

Microsoft defines internationalization as a combination of the expression "World-Readiness" and localization. World-readiness is a task for the developer, and allows to use a product with many characters and writing many cultures (globalization) while separating the user interface in a localized resource file (abbreviated **L12y**).

This concept is also known as "*NLS*" ("National Language Support" or "Native Language Support")

Challenges



(The internationalization and localization process (according to a charter of LISA web site, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Globalisationchart.jpg>))

Internationalization and localization efforts have to focus on the following characteristics:

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Annexes: Translation in EU

Translation Guide

Think before you write

Clear writing starts with and depends on clear thinking. Ask yourself:

Who will be reading the document?

Three main groups of people read European Commission documents:

- EU insiders - colleagues in the European Commission or other institutions
- outside specialists
- the general public - which is by far the largest group.

Most European Commission documents are now on the internet and available to everyone. Everything we write and publish as part of our work for the European Commission inevitably affects the public image of the EU.

What are you trying to achieve?

What is the purpose of your document? After reading it, what will your readers have to do?

- make a decision?
- handle a certain situation?
- solve a particular problem?
- change their attitude towards something?

What points must the document cover?

- Decide on your message.
- Make a list or bubble diagram containing all the points you expect to make, in no particular order.
- Cross out the irrelevant points.
- Link the remaining points into related groups.
- Fill any gaps in your knowledge: make a note of facts you will need to check and/or experts you will need to consult.

This approach applies to practically all non-literary texts: memos, reports, letters, user guides, etc. For formal documents such as legislation, specific drafting rules

must be followed.

An alternative is the **7 questions approach**. This is a structured method of covering relevant information:

1. **WHAT?** My essential message
2. **WHO?** Persons concerned
3. **WHEN?** Days, hours, timelines, deadlines
4. **WHERE?** Places
5. **HOW?** Circumstances, explanations
6. **WHY?** Causes and/or objective
7. **HOW MUCH?** Calculable and measurable data.

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Clear English Tips

Here are some tips to help translators avoid copying structure and wording from other languages that would be awkward in English. They should be useful to non-native speakers, but may serve as handy reminders for native speakers too.

English prefers to be simple, concise and concrete.

Use simple words where appropriate.

- *Change* > **to**
- **initiate** a programme > **start** a programme
- apply for **employment** > apply for **a job**
- **activities of a criminal nature** > **crime**
- **contribute to constructing** Europe > **help build** Europe
- **require assistance** > **need help**
- **request remuneration** > **ask for a fee**
- **specialised methodologies** > **special methods**
- an **agricultural holding with caprine animals** > a **goat farm**
- **with a possibility of dissemination** to producers > **and may be sent** to producers
- **in view / light of the fact that** fees are high > **because / as** fees are high
- **pursuant to / in accordance with / within the framework of** this Law > **under / according to** this Law
- **for the purpose of** protecting consumers > **to** protect consumers
- **for the purpose of its use** as a guide > **to be used / for use** as a guide
- important **from the point of view of** producers > important **for** producers
- the Directive **concerning / regarding / relating to** financial services > the Directive **on** financial services / the Financial Services Directive
- **despite the fact that** resources are limited > **although** resources are limited
- **prior to / subsequent to** the Council Decision > **before / after** the Council Decision
- **at the time when** the application is submitted > **when** the application is submitted
- **until such time as** a decision is taken > **until** a decision is taken
- **on the occasion of its accession to** the EU > **when it joined** the EU / **on joining** the EU / **upon accession to** the EU
- Action is needed **at the present time.** > Action is needed **now.**
- Help is needed **in the near future.** > Help is needed **soon.**
- updated **on a daily basis** > updated **daily**
- the study **demonstrates / indicates** that > the study **shows** that
- the Commission is **aware of the fact that** > the Commission **knows** that
- **in the event of** an emergency > **in** an emergency
- **in the same context,** it is necessary > it is **also** necessary
- **equal or superior to** EUR 10 000 > EUR 10 000 **or more**
- She **suffered an armed attack.** > She **was shot.**
- It is **inadvisable to be in control of a moving vehicle when suffering from fatigue.** > **Do not drive if you are tired.**

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English Style Guide

This Style Guide is intended primarily for English-language authors and translators, both in-house and freelance, working for the European Commission. But now that so many texts in and around the EU institutions are drafted in English by native and non-native speakers alike, its rules, reminders and handy references aim to serve a wider readership as well.

In this Guide, ‘style’ is synonymous with a set of accepted linguistic conventions; it therefore refers to recommended in-house usage, not to literary style. Excellent advice on how to improve writing style is given in *The Plain English Guide* by Martin Cutts (Oxford University Press, 1999) and *Style: Toward Clarity and Grace* by Joseph M. Williams (University of Chicago Press, 1995), and the European Commission’s own [How to write clearly](#), all of which encourage the use of good plain English.

For reasons of stylistic consistency, the variety of English on which this Guide bases its instructions and advice is the standard usage of Britain and Ireland (for the sake of convenience, called ‘British usage’ or ‘British English’ in this Guide).

The Guide is divided into two clearly distinct parts, the first dealing with linguistic conventions applicable in all contexts and the second with the workings of the European Union — and with how those workings are expressed and reflected in English. This should not be taken to imply that ‘EU English’ is different from ‘real English’; it is simply a reflection of the fact that the European Union as a unique body has had to invent a terminology to describe itself. However, the overriding aim in both parts of the Guide is to facilitate and encourage the writing of clear and reader-friendly English.

Writing in clear language can be difficult at the Commission, since much of the subject matter is complex and more and more is written in English by (and for) non-native speakers, or by native speakers who are beginning to lose touch with their language after years of working in a multilingual environment. We must nevertheless try to set an example by using language that is as clear, simple, and accessible as possible, out of courtesy to our readers and consideration for the image of the Commission.

In legislative texts, accuracy and clarity are of course paramount. But legal or bureaucratic language that we might regard as pompous elsewhere has its place in both legislation and preparatory drafting, though the specialist terms must be embedded in rock-solid, straightforward English syntax. In some cases — departmental memos or papers for specialist committees — we may regard ‘Eurospeak’ as acceptable professional shorthand; searching here for ‘plain English’ periphrases wastes time and simply irritates readers.

By contrast, in-house jargon is not appropriate in documents addressing the general public such as leaflets or web pages. Information of practical use, e.g. on rights, applying

for jobs or accessing funding, must be immediately understandable even to those unfamiliar with the workings and vocabulary of the EU. This also means, for example, using short paragraphs, simple syntax and highlighting devices such as bullets. For more information on writing web pages in particular, see the ‘[Writing for the web](#)’ section of the Commission’s [Information Provider’s Guide](#).

So ‘style’ is a matter of everyday concern to both authors and translators, for whom we hope this Guide will be a practical source of information and an aid to consistency. We have tried to bring together much that is available disparately in publications such as the [Interinstitutional Style Guide](#) published by the EU Publications Office, the Commission’s Legislative Drafting Manual and the interinstitutionally produced [Joint Practical Guide](#) for the drafting of EU legislation. Needless to say, our Guide does not in any way aim to replace these publications, which are well worth consulting in their own right.

The English Style Guide’s current Editorial Committee is: *Lorence Astwood Sarah Butcher Mireille Cayley Tim Cooper (chair) Sue Dunlop John Fallas Fiona Harris Mark Osborne Jonathan Stockwell Julia Townsend Philip Waywell*

All work for the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Translation.

Many others have contributed their time and expertise over the years, and even though they remain nameless here, they are not forgotten.

The current edition of the Guide is the seventh. The first was published back in 1982. This seventh edition has been slimmed down considerably, since nearly all the annexes have been removed.

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Style Guide for EU Member States

Austria

Full name: *Republic of Austria*. Note that the Austrian *Bundesländer* are called ‘provinces’ in English.

Official language: German.

Geography

Cities

Write *Vienna* for *Wien*. Otherwise, retain the original spelling, including any accents (e.g. *Sankt Pölten*).

Lakes

Write *Lake Constance* for *Bodensee*.

Mountains

Anglicise the *Alps*.

Regions

- **ÖSTERREICH**
 - **AUSTRIA**
- Ostösterreich
 - East Austria
- *Burgenland*
 - *Burgenland*
- *Niederösterreich*
 - *Lower Austria*
- *Wien*
 - *Vienna*
- **Südösterreich**
 - **South Austria**
- *Kärnten*
 - *Carinthia*
- *Steiermark*
 - *Styria*
- **Westösterreich**
 - **West Austria**
- *Oberösterreich*
 - *Upper Austria*
- *Salzburg*
 - *Salzburg*
- *Tirol*
 - *Tyrol*
- *Vorarlberg*
 - *Vorarlberg*

Judicial bodies

- Arbeits- und Sozialgericht Wien
 - Labour and Social Court, Vienna
- Bezirksanwalt
 - District Prosecutor
- Bezirksgericht
 - District Court
- Bundesfinanzgericht
 - Federal Fiscal Court (as of 1.1.2014)
- Bundesvergabeamt

- Federal Procurement Office (obsolete as of 1.1.2014)
- Bundesverwaltungsgericht
 - Federal Administrative Court (as of 1.1.2014)
- Erster Generalanwalt
 - First Solicitor General
- Generalanwalt
 - Solicitor General
- Generalprokurator
 - Procurator General
- Generalprokuratur
 - Procurator General's Office
- Handelsgericht Wien
 - Commercial Court, Vienna
- Landesgericht
 - Regional Court
- Landesvergabeamt
 - Regional Procurement Office
- Landesverwaltungsgericht
 - Regional Administrative Court (as of 1.1.2014)
- Oberlandesgericht
 - Higher Regional Court
- Oberstaatsanwalt
 - Senior Public Prosecutor
- Oberster Gerichtshof
 - Supreme Court of Justice / Supreme Court
- Rechnungshof
 - Public Audit Office
- Sprengelrichter
 - substitute judge
- Staatsanwalt
 - Public Prosecutor
- Unabhängiger Bundesasylsenat
 - Independent Federal Asylum Tribunal (obsolete since 2008)
- Unabhängiger Finanzsenat
 - Independent Finance Tribunal (obsolete as of 1.1.2014)
- Unabhängiger Verwaltungssenat
 - Independent Administrative Tribunal (obsolete as of 1.1.2014)
- Verfassungsgerichtshof
 - Constitutional Court
- Vergabekontrollsenat Wien
 - Public Procurement Review Chamber, Vienna (obsolete as of 1.1.2014)
- Verwaltungsgerichtshof
 - Administrative Court
- Volksanwaltschaft
 - Ombudsman Board

Legal instruments

- Bescheid
 - decision
- Bundesgesetz
 - federal act/law
- Bundesverfassung
 - Constitution
- Durchführungsverordnung
 - implementing regulation(s)
- Erlass (= generelle Weisung)
 - general (administrative) circular
- Gesetz
 - act/law
- (Rechts)bestimmungen
 - provisions (of law)/legislation/laws
- (Rechts)verordnung
 - regulation
- (Rechts)vorschrift
 - (legal) provision/provision (of law)
- (Rechts)vorschriften
 - provisions (of law)/legislation/laws
- Rundschreiben
 - circular
- Weisung
 - administrative circular

For English translations of Austrian acts see: Bundeskanzleramt Legal Information System – Austrian Laws in English.

Government bodies and administrative divisions

- Bezirk
 - Translate as ‘district’ or ‘district authority’ [an Austrian *Bezirk* corresponds to a German *Kreis* in the NUTS breakdown].
- Bezirkshauptmann
 - Translate as ‘head of the district authority, District of ...’.
- Bundesland, Bundesländer
 - *Bundesland/länder* are the usual terms in Austria and, for Austria, are translated as ‘province(s)’.
- Bundesrat
 - Write ‘Bundesrat’. Where a gloss is considered necessary, add ‘Upper House of Parliament’ in brackets after the first occurrence. Alternatively, consideration can be given to adding the literal translation, ‘Federal Council’, as a gloss.
- Bundesversammlung

- Translate as ‘Bundesversammlung’, adding ‘Federal Assembly’ in brackets after the first occurrence, if a gloss is considered necessary.
- Gemeinde
 - Translate as ‘municipality’.
- Land, Länder
 - See *Bundesland*, *Bundesländer* above.
- Landeshauptmann
 - Translate as ‘Governor’.
- Nationalrat
 - Write ‘Nationalrat’. Where a gloss is considered necessary, add ‘Lower House of Parliament’ in brackets after the first occurrence. Alternatively, consideration can be given to adding the literal translation, ‘National Council’, as a gloss.

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Quotes

Translators are the shadow heroes of literature, the often forgotten instruments that make it possible for different cultures to talk to one another, who have enabled us to understand that we all, from every part of the world, live in one world. ~ Paul Auster

Translation is that which transforms everything so that nothing changes. ~ Grass Günter

Translation is not a matter of words only: it is a matter of making intelligible a whole culture. ~ Anthony Burgess

Translation is like a woman. If it is beautiful, it is not faithful. If it is faithful, it is most certainly not beautiful. ~ Yevgeny Yevtushenko

As far as modern writing is concerned, it is rarely rewarding to translate it, although it might be easy. Translation is very much like copying paintings. ~ Boris Pasternak

Translation cannot be dissociated from the notion of progress, some even maintain that a society can be measured by the translation it accepts. ~ Jean-Francois Joly

Say what we may of the inadequacy of translation, yet the work is and will always be one of the weightiest and worthiest undertakings in the general concerns of the world. ~ J. W. Goethe

If I am selling to you, I speak your language. If I am buying, dann müssen sie Deutsch sprechen. ~ Willy Brandt

The best thing on translation was said by Cervantes: translation is the other side of a tapestry. ~ Leonardo Sciascia

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- - - ... and Simple:
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- - Cut out excess nouns - verb forms are livelier
- - Be concrete, not abstract
- - Prefer active verbs to passive
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- - Beware of false friends, jargon and abbreviations
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- - - Avoid or explain jargon
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- - Revise and cheque check
- Clear English Tips
- - English prefers to be simple, concise and concrete.
- - - Use simple words where appropriate.
- - - Prefer a verb to an abstract noun
- - - Prefer a gerund to an abstract noun
- - - Prefer participles to relative clauses
- - - And eliminate participles entirely if appropriate.
- - - Use the passive voice sparingly
- - - Consider replacing negatives with positives
- - - Consider short forms and pronouns to avoid repeating full names ...
- - - Express conditions, including hidden ones, with 'if' ...
- - - In general, cut out extra verbiage.
- - English prefers straightforward syntax
- - - Keep the subject close to the beginning of the sentence
- - - Avoid splitting up subjects, modals, verbs and direct objects
- - - If a sentence is too long, pull information out into separate sentences.
- - - Use topic-introducing phrases sparingly.
- - English may use different number, articles, gender or words from other languages
- - - Keep uncountable nouns in the singular.
- - - Use 'a' rather than 'the' for members of a class.
- - - Do not use gender pronouns for entities.
- - - Consider alternatives to 'of'.
- - - Finally, avoid 'false friends' in translation.
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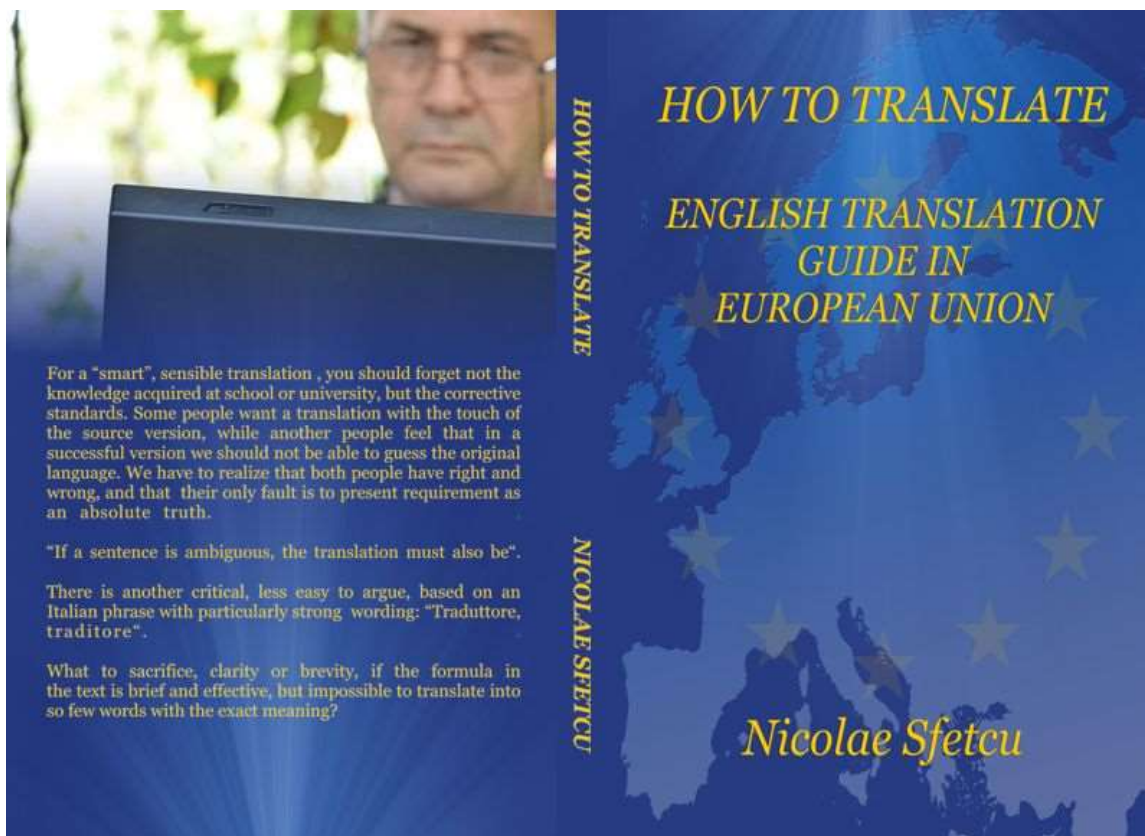
Quotes

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About the author

- Nicolae Sfetcu

Book



A guide for translators, about the translation theory, the translation process, interpreting, subtitling, internationalization and localization and computer-assisted translation. A special section is dedicated to the translator's education and associations.

The guide include, as annexes, several independent adaptations of the corresponding European Commission works, freely available via the EU Bookshop as PDF and via SetThings.com as EPUB, MOBI (Kindle) and PDF.

For a “smart”, sensible translation , you should forget not the knowledge acquired at school or university, but the corrective standards. Some people want a translation with the touch of the source version, while another people feel that in a successful version we should not be able to guess the original language. We have to realize that both people have right and wrong, and that their only fault is to present requirement as an absolute truth.

Teachers agree at least on this principle: “If a sentence is ambiguous, the translation must also be“.

There is another critical, less easy to argue, based on an Italian phrase with particularly strong wording: “Traduttore, traditore“. This critique argues that any translation will

betray the author's language, spirit, style ... because of the choices on all sides. What to sacrifice, clarity or brevity, if the formula in the text is brief and effective, but impossible to translate into so few words with the exact meaning? One could understand this criticism that it encourages us to read "in the text." It seems obvious that it is impossible to follow this advice into practice.

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