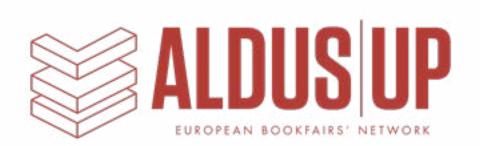# TRANSLATIONS IN EUROPE: STATE OF THE ART

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The present report explores the state of art of the surveys on translations in Europe, with the objective to investigate whether and how data on translation flows and data on selling and buying translation rights are collected in Europe. Finally, it provides a first evaluation of the data collected in view of identifying possible areas where a common methodology for the collection on data on translations at cross-country level could be developed. A dedicated chapter explores the role of grants in promoting translations.

The report results from a study developed in agreement with research leaders and partners of Aldus Up in the countries represented in the project's consortium and in the network of the Federation of European Publishers (FEP), representing 29 publishers' associations in the EU-EEA area. It analyses the data from 23 countries (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, UK) collected through an online survey and further integrated via desk analysis and supplementary documentation provided by the respondents.

Translation flows and the import-export of translation rights are two sides of the same coin. There cannot be translation without licences – excluding books not covered by copyright – and licences are bought in order to translate. Nevertheless, it may happen that the acquisition of a licence is not followed by a translation. With surveys on translation flows we mean the existence of data concerning the number of works translated from a certain language, or country, into others, and the other way round. The research shows that these data are more often provided by public institutions as National libraries and National institutes of statistics. They cover a wider sample, but they are not always able to go in depth and to offer granular information. The analysis of translation flows on the basis of the languages of translation is the most widespread practice, though there are some exceptions.

With surveys on import-export of translation rights we mean data concerning buying and selling translation licenses, that can be based either on the languages of translations or on the countries where data are bought or sold. In this case, our research showed that overall there are less surveys addressing this phenomenon, insofar as they are most commonly collected by publishers associations, and probably they cover more restricted samples that the

previous ones. These surveys can offer more meaningful results on translation trends in Europe, being designed by publishers in line with the business practices of the sector, and more granular information on translation trends, taking into account either the languages or the countries where/from rights are traded.

Basing on the outcomes of the present report, it has been possible to define the next steps: in the first place, it will be necessary to carry on a more detailed analysis of the survey criteria adopted in countries that already collect data on buying and selling rights to identify possible areas where a comparative analysis can be performed and possible criteria that can be proposed to make national surveys more homogeneous and comparable. After that, it will be possible to define a common matrix, namely a model that could be proposed for implementation also by publishers' associations in the countries that don't perform this kind of research yet, with the objective to extend the survey on translations to an increasing number of European countries.

The first chapter of the report describes the methodological approach adopted in the present research on the state of art of translations in Europe: namely, the design and implementation of the online survey, desk analysis and the channels that were activated for collecting information.

The second chapter analyses data obtained on translation flows, while the third one analyses data on the purchase and sale of rights.

The fourth chapter aims to offer a general overview of grants available in the European countries surveyed. The fifth chapter provides some general considerations on the research outcomes, criticalities and opportunities emerged for the collection of more harmonised data at cross country level.

The appendixes provide, respectively, the summary cards for each country covered by the report and the questionnaire adopted for the online survey.

1. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

1.1. Development of the survey

The research consisted of two main steps. First, an online survey prepared by AIE and validated by JGU was sent to the Aldus Up partners and to the FEP members. After that, data collected were elaborated by AIE and integrated through desk analysis materials provided by JGU. The survey was carried out in English and created as an online questionnaire with the SurveyMonkey tool. The Aldus Up consortium as well as the members of the Federation of European Publishers (FEP) were contacted on 16th of February 2021. The objectives of the survey were divided into three parts: translation flows; buying and selling rights; grants. The first two parts were identical: if data on trans-

lation flows (or buying and selling rights) were available in the country, the survey investigated what they were based on (language, country, or both), sources, frequency of collection, languages and/or countries taken into account, market segments considered, use of subject schemes and what the final use of data is. In these two parts, multiple-choice was the preferred type of question, although in many cases it was possible to add further information. The third part of the survey aimed to investigate grants: here answers were open, and due to the great heterogeneity of cases it was possible to insert a link to external pages.

1.2. Composition of the sample

The report analyses the data from 23 countries, collected either directly through the survey or by implementing information from the desk analysis or supplementary documentation provided by respondent.

It was possible to collect information in all the 10 countries that are represented in the Aldus Up consortium. In eight cases information were gathered directly from

the online survey while in 2 cases written documents were provided. Thanks to the collaboration of FEP, it was possible to collect answers from 10 countries that are not represented in Aldus UP consortium. In addition, data of 2 countries have been collected via desk analysis. One country was involved directly via Aldus Up network.

1.3. Desk analysis

Desk analysis was undertaken to gain a broad understanding of the field of literary translations as well as selling and buying rights within Europe by identifying and reviewing data from already existing findings. For the purpose of relevance the research object was limited to studies not older than five years depicting the situation in countries, or language-defined regions of these countries, which are EU member states or – in some cases – adjacent countries. The analysis itself consisted of two parts which looked at the topic from different points of view and were carried out during separate phases of the research.

The first step of the desk analysis aimed to find relevant information on an international scale rather than on a national level for individual countries in order to get a general overview about translation and rights flows in Europe and make use of this insight in regard to the development of the questionnaire. Therefore, surveys as well as other data sources – both from an academic and a more industry-related background – were taken into account. This offered an international perspective and allowed to examine the translation and rights business in different European countries and language areas respectively.

The second part of the desk analysis was conducted after receiving the answers to the above-mentioned questionnaire from the participating European nations. It specifically looked to identify studies for individual countries not yet represented in the initial survey. Of particular interest for this more in-depth research were publications of national publishers', booksellers', authors' or translators' associations, literature foundations, national libraries, national statistics offices or other government institutions as they tend to be the organisations who collect specific data on translation flows and on aspects of buying and selling rights.

One limitation is that, even when there are surveys on translation trends, they are often difficult to locate or access by researchers as well as relevant players from the industry or governments. Two main factors contribute to this problem: on the one hand, findings in many cases are only published in the local language so machine translation has to be used to gather information. On the other hand – although the problem arises less frequently than the language barrier – the data is collected and sold by commercial companies and is not therefore publicly available.

2. DATA ON TRANSLATION FLOWS

2.1. Countries analysed

Most of the countries that have been analysed (18 out of 23) has data on translation flows. 5 countries lack these kind of data; though no statistically meaningful conclusions can be drawn from 5 countries but the main reason seems to be the lack of a central system to collect and process data.

2.2. Classification of data

It is necessary to make a preliminary remark. Regarding translation flows, the research investigates which languages of translation from/to national languages that are considered in national surveys. The classification of data on translation flows is mostly based on languages of translation (13 out of 18) or both on languages and countries (4 out of 18). Only one nation bases its data on countries only. This can be useful information for nations who have not started collecting data yet: to analyse translation trends on the basis of languages is the most widespread practice.

2.3 Sources of the data

Data sources are heterogeneous, even if national libraries are a source in a relevant number of cases (8 out of 18). In any case, the highest common denominator seems to be the presence of public institutions rather than, for instance, publishers' or translators' associations.

Sources of translation flows. Multiple answer	
Source	**Number of countries**
National Library	8
National Institute of Statistics	4
Publishers Association	3
Books in Print (BIP)	1
Translators Association	1
Foreign literary agencies	1
Other*	9

* other public cultural institutions are mainly indicated here

2.4 Data update

Data on translation flows are recent. The last year that was analysed is 2019 in 9 out of 18 countries, 2020 in 5, 2021 in 1. This should make possible an analysis between comparable situations. In the majority of cases (14 out of 18), data are collected every year. Only one country collects them twice, while 2 countries employ constant monitoring. In one case the database is updated under the availability of the information.

2.5 Data homogeneity concerning countries and languages

12 out of 18 countries monitor all the languages of translation: this means that, insofar as a book is translated into another language (or, more commonly, from another language), the data is detected. This makes more difficult to draw conclusions about which are the main languages of translations surveyed in each country. Something very similar can be said about the surveys based on the countries of translation: in this case, all countries are monitored in 4 cases out of 9.

2.6 Market segments

Regarding market segments, 3 countries analyse all of them. In one case fiction and popular non-fiction are considered together, while in another non-fiction is divided into different segments. Excluding these exceptions, the segments mostly monitored are fiction and children's/YA (13 out of 18), followed by popular non-fiction (11 out of 18). Surprisingly less importance is given to professional books (7 out of 18): it is possible to infer that it is more common to read this genre in the original language. Comics are equally underrepresented (7 out 18); something similar happens for academic books (6) and textbooks (5).

2.7 Subject schemes

7 countries out of 18 do not use subject schemes, while 10 out of 18 declare that they do not know if they are used or not. The only exception is one country: it uses the Dewey classification, due to the fact that data are mainly based on the National Bibliography.

2.8 Use of data

Data are collected mostly (15 out of 18) for annual reports, but it is important to stress that, in 4 cases, data are collected just to make them available in public databases. None of the respondents sells data to commercial partners. This means that in the countries surveyed data collection on translation flows is a service done for sharing knowledge in the interests of the publishing industry.

3. DATA ON BUYING AND SELLING RIGHTS

3.1. Countries analyzed

As far as buying and selling rights are concerned, the situation looks quite different from translation flows. In 15 countries out of 23 there are no data, although in one country there is a program to collect them. In this case, it is important to analyse the reason for this lack of data, and many answers are, as one may expect, along the same lines. Lack of entities in charge of data processing or of a central system to collect data are mentioned in 6 cases. Publishers have their own information, but it is confidential.

The following part of this section will therefore consider data coming only from 8 countries, making the analysis less relevant from a quantitative point of view, but still valuable from a qualitative perspective.

3.2. Classification of data

The classification of data on buying and selling rights can be based on language or countries, in 2 cases both at the same time. While the country from which/to which works are translated is rarely considered in the surveys on translation flows, which mainly rely on languages on translations, it appears to be more commonly used in the surveys on buying/selling rights (5 countries out of 8 monitors the countries from/to translations rights are exchanged).

Type of data on buying and selling rights	
Type	Number of countries
Languages	3
Countries	3
Both	2

3.3 Sources of data

Unlike to what happens with translation flows, data collection is performed mainly by associations, such as publishers' association (4 out of 8) as well as literary agencies or platforms whose task is to promote national culture. This last case is an indicator of the relevance of these surveys to assess the success of the national literature production abroad in terms of sales of translation rights.

3.4 Data Update

All data are recent (updated to 2019 or 2020), in line with the fact that data collection is annual or, in one case, constant.

3.5 Data homogeneity concerning countries and languages

1 country out of 5 collect data on all languages of translations; 2 countries out of 5 collect data on all countries involved in importing/exporting rights. One country analyses data from all languages, 2 others from all languages and countries.

3.6 Market segments

Looking to market segments, the situation is more polarized compared to the one concerning translation flows. On the one hand, fiction, non-fiction and children's/YA are categories widely used; on the other hand, textbooks, academic books, professional books and comics, are far less considered in national surveys. However, 2 countries declare they consider every segment. One could ask if the data flow actually correspond to the fact that fiction, non-fiction, children's/YA are the more relevant market segments to be monitored from the rights import/export perspective.

Market segments taken into account. Multiple answers	
Segment	Number of countries
Fiction	6
Popular non-fiction	5
Children/young adults	6
Textbook	1
Academic	-
Professional	-
Comics/manga/graphic novel	1
All	2

3.7 Subject schemes

The dynamics of subject schemes in analysing buying and selling rights are the same as those of translation flows: only one country answers positively that they use a subject scheme. 3 countries do not use subject schemes, while 4 countries do not know if they are used or not.

3.8 Use of data

Also this case, data are collected mostly (7 countries out of 8) for annual reports. 2 countries mention public presentations too. Data can be sold too, as in one case.

4. GRANTS

The most notable aspect highlighted by that the research is that every Country but 2 offers translation grants. Due to the great diversity in responses, the following part will limit itself to some general considerations.

The first distinction concerns the beneficiaries and the suppliers of financial resources. For what concerns the former, the most common answer seems to be foreign publishers, followed by translators. In at least one case grants are explicitly extended to agencies, too. Regarding the latter, as it was to be expected, Governments are the main funders. The Ministry offering the grants may vary, but generally it is the Ministry of Culture or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Clearly, there are many other (mostly public) Institutions.

Grants can cover one or more of these aspects: translation, production, rights. Calls for applications open once per year in most cases, sometimes twice or (rarely) three times. When the translation is funded, sometimes the money goes to the publishers, in other cases it reaches the translator directly. In any case, grants covering translation are the most common type. In second place, we find grants covering production: they can finance several stages of production, among which print, iconographic research, rights for images and even marketing. Clearly, every project details which activities are funded. The most interesting type of grant, even if not so common, involves rights. In some cases, funds cover the acquisition of rights. In this regard, it is important to notice that there is a distinction between countries whose grants cover only works protected by copyright and countries whose grants cover everything.

Mostly, grants finance fiction, non-fiction, children's books and YA, comics, poetry. In order to be considered, works must almost always carry some cultural value. Scholastic, academic and professional books are often excluded. It is interesting to note that several countries foresee a dedicated path for comics, graphic novels and so on. Probably, that is because works of this sort are mostly

more expensive. Nordic countries have a structured project dedicated to them.[1] The same happens with the Baltic Culture fund.[2] Another program which aims to create synergies among countries is Traduki, an European network that connects Southeast Europe with the German-speaking world through the means of literature, namely books, translations, festivals, workshops and residency programmes for authors and translators. Moreover, TRADUKI also connects Southeast European neighbours with each other. [3]

Moreover, grants may include minority languages and groups. Clearly, every Institution has a scientific board that examines the translation project as a whole. By simplifying, aspects which are taken into account are the same everywhere (translator's CV, for instance), even if in some cases the evaluation criteriabecome more specific: in at least one case the value of the editorial project and catalogue are measured.
In the survey, we asked to indicate the maximum annual amount of grants, and the answers are diversified. However, if we look at the single project funded, we

can see that grants may cover a variable percentage of costs, up to a fixed maximum (generally, between 1000 and 3000 €). Works covered by grants must generally include the logo of the Institution and information that the book was published with the support of the Institution; publishers, moreover, must send a few copies to the sponsor.

Finally, it is possible to highlight three worthwhile initiatives. One country offers travel grants for translators, agents, publishers and the press; a special mentor scheme for translators of literature of that nation and, last but not least, a scheme for a translators hotel for translators of literature of that nation. The second initiative is the register of funded books. Many countries (but not all of them) have something similar. It is not merely a proper recognition, but a useful instrument for further research. One country also has a register of translators. The third noteworthy idea provided that, in addition to normal grants, there are additional funds for poetry.

1   Every Nordic country has a section for these kinds of grants;
More information can be found on the page of the Nordic co-operation: https://www.norden.org/en

2   More information can be found here: https://www.kulka.ee/programmes/baltic-culture-fund
3   More information here: https://traduki.eu/home-en/

5. NEXT STEPS

With a view to future cooperation among partners towards the adoption of more harmonised criteria for national surveys, it seems that it is not worth proposing to adopt a pool of shared languages for surveying translation flows in all the countries, nor indicating a set of essential languages to be considered. Diversity is such that it is difficult to find a synthesis. However, it may be always possible to apply further criteria in comparative analysis of country data (e.g. to identify and classify the most translated languages across different countries).

Moreover, the criteria of language of translation – which is the most common criteria adopted in the surveys on translations flow - can't be enough in order to detect the actual trends of translations and to discover where there are emerging opportunities for publishers for buying and selling rights, as some languages (such as English or Spanish) are spoken in a number of different countries. The sole data concerning translation flows may lead to incomplete conclusions about translation trends in a country, in particular regarding the importance of a foreign language in the rights trade and the dynamicity of the national publishing.

Based on these considerations, the next steps will explore more in depth the surveys on buying and selling

rights and the possibility to harmonise data collection in this field. The fact that this is the area where, according to the state of art, several countries didn't collect data yet, is not a limit but rather an opportunity to develop common criteria for a European methodology. It is possible to identify three steps in order to turn this process real, working in collaboration with publishers' associations involved in Aldus Up and in the FEP networks:

1) It is necessary to deepen the knowledge of already existing surveys concerning buying and selling rights: how they are designed, which are the projection methods of data – if any – and to cross-reference database of different countries. Data collection can be conducted through several methodologies: to identify some best practices could bring improvements to everyone. Every country could enrich and refine its survey, by applying some criteria adopted by other partners, and start collecting more homogeneous data to enable a transnational analysis of trends.

2) It will be important to understand if there are margins to achieve a greater uniformity for what concerns timeframes. Data are comparable if they are presented in similar periods and, most importantly, if they relate to the same

period. All the countries with data on buying and selling rights have indicated 2019 or 2020 as the year of the last publication available: it shall be checked if these data refer to the year of the survey (and if so, to the whole solar year) or to the previous one.

3) According to the knowledge obtained from these steps, it will be possible to propose a common survey scheme, designed by Aldus Up and made available to countries who still are not collecting data on buying and selling rights. At implementation level, in accordance with the second step indicated, it will be important to define a common time-frame to collect data.

The state of art on import-export rights showed no clear preference between data collection based on languages and on countries: however, especially in those countries that didn't' initiate data in this field yet, it would be advisable to start with collection based on countries, for the reason that these data offer a more granular analysis of the translation trends. To create a standard methodology also imply to establish a common - criteria for classifying translated titles in market segments. Using the same categories for all over Europe would allow comparisons to be made.

The first outcome of these activities will be made available in the next report that will be produced by Aldus UP. This could be the very first step for the creation of a time series for data on buying and selling rights in Europe.

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