

**COURT TRANSLATOR-INTERPRETERS IN FRANCE
ARE THEY TRUE EXPERTS?**

Since Act n°71-498 of 29th June 1971, Court translator-interpreters in France have been integrated into the body of experts appointed by the court.

Although we would like to see these provisions extended on a European scale, we would like to point out that this title is the only way in which the position of Court translator-interpreters has been enhanced.

Court translator-interpreters are bound to translate written text and speech faithfully and loyally. However, they are never called on for any expert assessment, be it speech assessment or textual linguistic assessment. By assimilating Court translator-interpreters with experts appointed by the Court, legislators quite rightly realised that they had unearthed a vast area to explore.

Unfortunately, and probably because the spirit of the text was not taken into consideration, the vision of the first legislator was not reflected in practice either in the implementing decree or through circulars specifying the circumstances and nature of language expertise.

Indeed, at a time of mass migrations and unauthorised residents without proof of identity, the authorities need to know where these people originate from. If Court translator-interpreters were allowed to play their role as experts, there would be no need for long, exacting investigations. Expertise in language may be required in myriad situations and by all jurisdictions.

Exception made of makeshift interpreters who, unfortunately, are often called upon by the authorities, the translator-interpreters duly registered on the lists of the courts of appeal and the supreme court possess a broad range of skills.

The CRETA shall place all possible means at the service of the judicial and administrative authorities on both a national and European level, to implement an expertise in language which could significantly improve investigation procedures in the general interest and in the interest of Justice.

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