



Conseil des traducteurs,  
terminologues et  
interprètes du Canada

Canadian Translators,  
Terminologists and  
Interpreters Council

## CTTIC response re OTTIAQ

CTTIC would like to expand on the response submitted following OTTIAQ's request to become a regular member of FIT, independently of the CTTIC umbrella.

First and foremost, according to the FIT website, under the heading "Become a member", it is clearly stated that: *Your association can join FIT as regular member when its members are individual professional translators, interpreters or terminologists. This excludes organizations having students and corporations as regular members.* As OTTIAQ does admit student members, this alone would disqualify OTTIAQ for regular membership within FIT.

Furthermore, article 3 of the FIT by-laws states: *The purposes of FIT shall be solely professional, cultural and scientific. FIT shall be non-political and shall not have any religious affiliation.* In Canada, professions are governed provincially pursuant to section 92 of the Constitution Act 1867. Those professions that are exercised throughout the country, however, such as engineers, lawyers, and accountants, just to name a few, all have national governing bodies to ensure that the requirements to exercise a profession remain consistent across the country. Indeed that is also an important element of the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT), an intergovernmental trade agreement signed by Canadian First Ministers that came into force in 1995. Its purpose is to reduce and eliminate, to the extent possible, barriers to the free movement of persons, goods, services, and investment within Canada and to establish an open, efficient, and stable domestic market. All Canadian provinces are signatories to and bound by this agreement. In considering the admission of OTTIAQ as a regular member of FIT, independently of CTTIC, the association is treading perilously closely to a decision that could well be considered political in nature.

While it is true that other countries have more than one member association of FIT, a cursory review of the mandates of these organizations reveal that they represent different interests and different aspects of the language professions. In France, for example, The Société française des traducteurs (SFT) is a union of professional translators and interpreters while the **UNETICA** represents court translators and interpreters exclusively.

Indeed, Canada also has two national organizations already represented at FIT: CTTIC and the Literary Translators Association of Canada (LTAC), whose vocations are very different. CTTIC represents provincial associations which, in turn, represent translators,

interpreters and terminologists while LTAC exclusively represents literary translators and advocates for their interests in a very focused and targeted fashion. Consequently, there is no conflict in the expressed mandates of the two associations.

Currently, among the North American regular members of FIT, the different associations each have very specific mandates to represent very different interests and aspects of the language professions. Should OTTIAQ be accepted as a regular member, it would be in direct conflict with CTTIC.

Note that, at the same time as OTTIAQ is distancing itself from CTTIC and its member associations, it is very keen to maintain the Mutual Recognition Agreement concluded between CTTIC member organizations over a decade ago. Under the Agreement, certified translators of any association can become members of another association without having to go through a second certification process. The inconsistency is clear and would have serious negative repercussions on CTTIC's efforts to uphold the principle that all provincial associations should be represented and should work toward common goals to benefit the language professions with one voice at the national level.

While it is true that upon becoming a professional order in the province of Québec under the jurisdiction of l'Ordre des professions the requirements for certification became different from the requirements imposed by the Société des traducteurs du Québec (STQ), OTTIAQ remained an active member of CTTIC and members of OTTIAQ have been either President or Vice-President of CTTIC for many years. It is only recently that OTTIAQ expressed a desire to leave the CTTIC fold while insisting that the Mutual Recognition Agreement remain in force in its current form.

OTTIAQ currently certifies its members upon graduation from a post-secondary institution following a six month period of mentorship. This flies in the face of the practice of the other provincial associations who grant certification of professionals in the field following a formal national examination or independent evaluation process of the applicant's work and experience on-dossier. For example, this means that in the case of interpreters and terminologists, there is no formal evaluation of the quality of work before certification is granted. Furthermore, contrary to other CTTIC organizations, OTTIAQ merely grants the title of "certified interpreter" contrary to the other associations who grant certification for "certified conference interpreters", "certified court interpreters", and "certified community interpreters". Given that OTTIAQ no longer proceeds by way of formal examinations, it is difficult to see how certification can realistically be granted as there are no recognized training programs in interpreting in the province and we are of the view that this represents a disservice to the interpreting professions and creates confusion in the mind of the public as to which type of interpreter is best qualified to offer their services in different settings, which constitutes a disservice to the interpreting profession as a whole and fails to protect the public, a key part of OTTIAQ's mandate. It should be noted that many other professions subject to the requirements of l'Ordre des professions in Québec do require a compulsory formal examination before professional title is granted. OTTIAQ has always claimed that the option was refused by l'Ordre, it is difficult to understand why it was refused for

language professionals and yet is compulsory for professions such as nursing, engineering and accounting. Instead of recognizing OTTIAQ as a regular member of FIT, OTTIAQ should rather be encouraged to modify some of its governing terms and return to the official examination and/or independent evaluation model, under the national CTTIC umbrella, to ensure that all language professionals in Canada are recognized and assessed according to the same standard.

In addition, OTTIAQ now grants certification to professors and project managers who are not translators, yet another dangerous precedent with possible negative repercussions on the perception of the language professions. In today's increasingly globalized marketplace and with the proliferation of on-line translation tools such as Google translate, it is becoming more difficult than ever to explain to potential clients and users of translation services that translation and interpreting are both an art and a science and that proper training and experience is essential in order to convey the message correctly from source to target language. Had OTTIAQ perhaps created a category to clearly represent either professors of translation or project managers, while problematic for other reasons, at least the distinction would have been clear, although the creation of such categories would also fly in the face of FIT requirements for membership as stated earlier.

Rather than recognizing OTTIAQ as a regular member of FIT, OTTIAQ should be strongly encouraged to seek to modify some of its governing terms, an effort which would be fully supported by CTTIC and its member associations, and return to the official examination and/or independent evaluation model, under the national CTTIC umbrella, to ensure that all language professionals in Canada are recognized and assessed according to the same standard. This would be entirely consistent with the principal objectives of FIT as stated in article 4, paragraphs d) and g): *(d) to develop among all member organisations such harmony and understanding as will promote the interests of translators, and lend its good offices, whenever desirable or necessary, in resolving any differences that may arise between the various organizations;* *(g) to promote the harmonisation of professional standards.*

**Consequently, CTTIC, in the unanimous opinion of its members, feels strongly that rather than being allowed to become a regular member of FIT, OTTIAQ should be strongly encouraged to rejoin the CTTIC fold to continue to work together on our shared mandate to develop the language professions, obtain professional recognition for its members and be able to speak with one voice nationally in defense of these principles. OTTIAQ should also be strongly encouraged to align itself as much as possible with the nomenclature of the other provinces even if it means that an application would have to be made to l'Ordre des professions for changes to their structure, a move which would have CTTIC's full support.**