

SURVEY OF KEY NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS SUPPORTING LITERARY EXCHANGE AND TRANSLATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

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INTRODUCTION

The majority of EU member states and some candidate countries operate some form of translation grants system and promote their national literature through a variety of measures and activities. Literature Across Frontiers – with the assistance of the Budapest Observatory – approached national organisations in Europe active in providing support for literary exchange and translation to carry out a survey with the aim of obtaining an overview of these organisations' status, size, remit and activities.

Nineteen organisations responded to our invitation to complete the survey questionnaire. All of these support the translation of literary works or are closely connected to such grant schemes in their countries. Eighteen of them are the key national organisations promoting literature – mostly abroad) – and supporting translation and translators. Such organisations were first established in Nordic countries in the early 1970s – for example Norwegian Literature Abroad (NORLA) and Finnish Literature Exchange (FILI); others followed through the 1980s and 1990s in Central and Eastern Europe, where such organisations were mostly set up around the year 2000.

Status and remit

Three organisations are part of the culture ministry; two (both in Catalonia) are closely connected to the government, one dealing with literature internally, the other one covering external promotion of literature. Twelve are publicly funded independent organisations based on some form of the arm's-length principle. One of them, the Next Page Foundation, is funded both privately and from public sources, and has a regional remit. Another one is an NGO which promotes Slovenian Literature abroad through projects (workshops, reading tours, publications), while translation grants and bursaries, mobility grants and official promotion of Slovenian literature and books at book fairs are functions of the recently established Slovenian Book Agency.

Twelve are organisations specifically dealing with literature and translation, while the remaining seven have broader remits, mostly as general cultural organisations or bodies with a literature section within their structure. An exception to those organisations that are responsible for the organisation of activities abroad as well as at home is the Institut Ramon Llull, with a clear external remit, having been set up to match the activities of cultural institutes similarly named after classics, such as Cervantes or Goethe. Since the survey was conducted, the Basque Etxepare Institute was set up along similar lines.

Policy context

The majority of surveyed organisations operate within the scope of their country's cultural policy, and most have a policy supporting minorities and minority-language literatures.

Funding

The majority of surveyed organisations are funded on an annual basis, and less than a third reports on-going guaranteed funding from year to year. More than a half have to apply for project funding separately from their operational costs.

Human resources

Whether independent or part of a larger structure, the surveyed organisations generally have a small number of staff. The Literarne Centrum (LIC - Centre for Information on Slovak Literature) and the Dutch Literature Foundation are exceptions: having an international remit as well as a domestic one, both organisations are resourced better than the rest in terms of human resources, and in the case of the Dutch Literature Foundation in terms of funds.

Table 1: The organisations surveyed

	Institution	Country	Since	Website
1	Books from Lithuania	Lithuania	1998	www.booksfromlithuania.lt
2	Centre for Slovenian Literature	Slovenia	1999	www.ljudmila.org/litcenter
3	Departamento de Cultura - Gobierno Vasco	Basque Country	1977	http://www.kultura.ejgv.euskadi.net/r46-704/es/
4	Direcção-Geral do Livro e das Bibliotecas	Portugal	1997	www.dglb.pt
5	Dutch Foundation for Literature	Netherlands	2010	www.nlpvf.nl
6	Estonian Literature Centre	Estonia	2001	www.estlit.ee
7	FILI-Finnish Literature Exchange	Finland	1977	www.finlit.fi/fili
8	Hungarian Book Foundation	Hungary	1992	www.hungarianbookfoundation.hu
9	Icelandic Literature Fund	Iceland	2007	http://bok.is/english/
10	Institució de les Lletres Catalanes	Spain	1987	http://www.gencat.cat/cultura
11	Institut Ramon Llull	Spain	2002	www.llull.cat
12	Latvian Literature Centre	Latvia	2002	www.literature.lv
13	Literárne informačné centrum	Slovakia	1996	www.litcentrum.sk
14	Malta Council for Culture and the Arts	Malta	2002	maltaculture.com
15	Ministerstvo Kultury ČR	Czech Rep.		www.mkcr.cz
16	National Culture Fund	Bulgaria	2000	ncf.bg
17	Next Page Foundation	Bulgaria	2001	www.npage.org
18	Statens Kunstråd	Denmark	2003	www.kunst.dk
19	Wales Literature Exchange	Wales	2000	www.walesliterature.org

Scope of activities

All the organisations – except the Malta Council for Culture and the Arts – are closely connected with a programme of translation grants and the majority administers such grants and bursaries directly, as well as managing mobility funds for authors and translators. These activities are part of their remit to promote national literature abroad.

The surveyed organisations are more likely to support translators of their literature and their own authors, and have less to do with provision of facilities for foreign writers. There is a clear connection between promotion of literature and authors, literary translation, and contact with the book sector and trade professionals. Projects focusing on creativity and creation of new original work, as well as providing access to literature for the general public directly, rank lower among the activities they are typically engaged in.

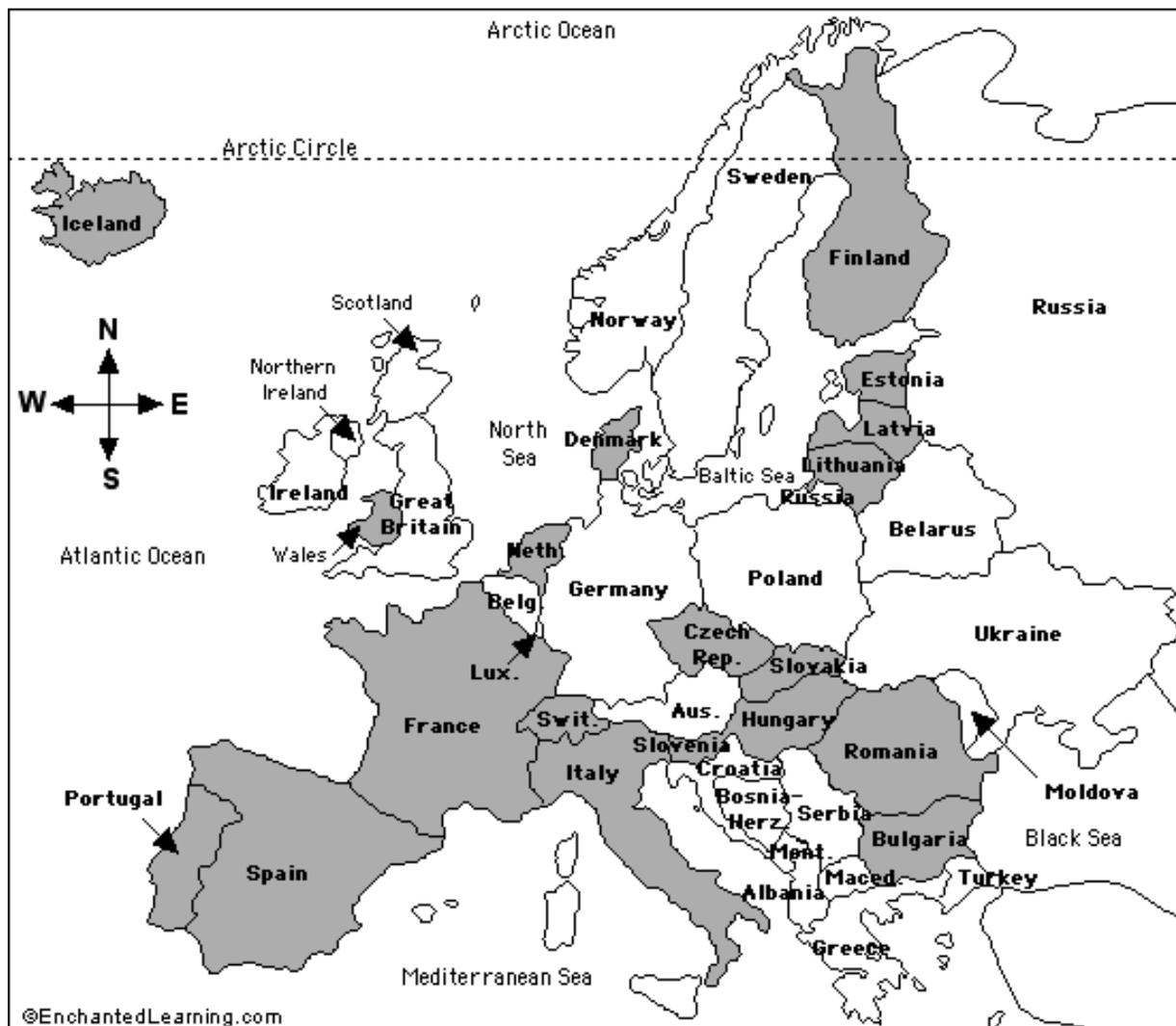
Key importance of book fairs

As for their external activities, presence at international book fairs is clearly a key instrument in promoting their literature/s and activities, followed by the organisation of workshops and seminars. Such workshops, which are mainly for translators, as well as seminars presenting authors, for example, to foreign publishers or literary journalists, rank highest among domestic activities. The support or organisation of authors' appearances at home and abroad- rank second and third respectively. Many authors take part in book fair programmes planned and implemented by the same organisations, whether abroad or at home.

SUMMARY

On the whole, an overwhelming majority of organisations and bodies surveyed operate under the aegis of culture rather than foreign relations and they are either specialised organisations, or at least have a specialist unit and staff dealing with literature and translation. It is clear that specialist expertise is crucial in dealing with the complexities of the international book sector and its translation activities. Book fairs play an important role in the activities of these organisations and all of them attend major international book fairs. Some of the organisations questioned even organise book fairs at home, with a clear emphasis on literary translation and publishing as opposed to more widely cultural activities such as literary festivals and readings. They also mostly support the mobility of authors, often in connection with the publishing of a book in translation.

Image 1: The countries of the organisations



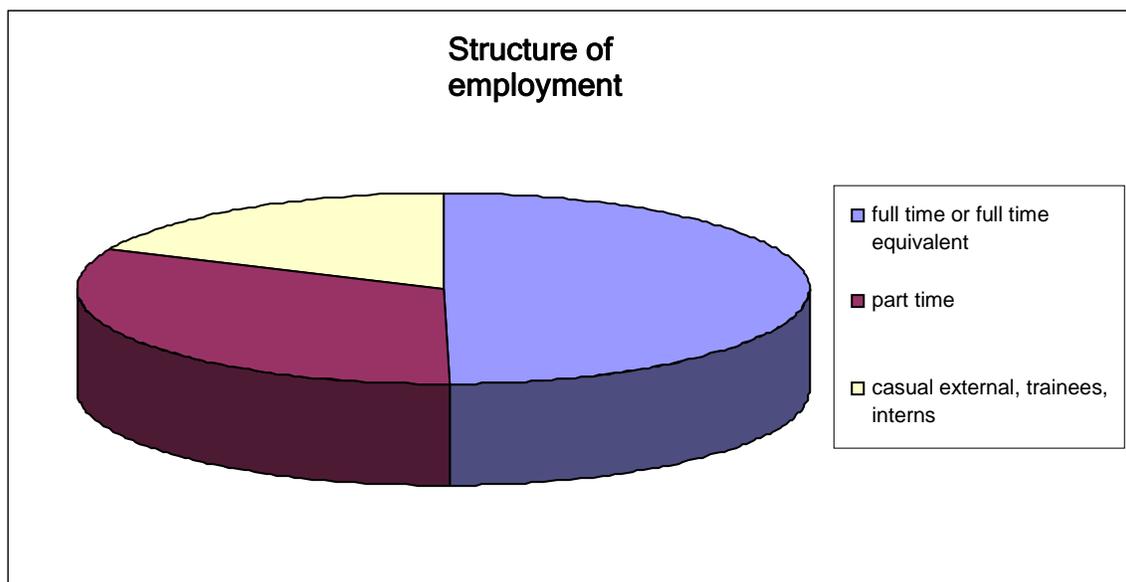
GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Organisations from fifteen EU countries responded, as well as one organisation from an EFTA country which has recently applied for EC membership (Iceland). This is a little over half of all EU member countries. The countries missing from the survey are Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, Norway, Sweden and Poland. Spain is represented by the Basque Country and Catalonia, while the United Kingdom is represented by Wales, the only region in the UK to have an organisation with a systematic programme of international literary promotion and a translation grants scheme. The Dutch Literature Foundation recently merged with the Flemish Literature Fund, which means that it partially represents Belgium as well.

Staffing

Out of the nineteen organisations, an average of 4.5 people per institution work full-time (or full-time equivalent) on promotion and support for translation (Diagram 1). This averages cover seventy-seven full-time workers, which is 62% of the total employees, forty-seven part-time workers (38%) and twenty-six casual external, trainees and interns (20.9%). As a general average, this employment structure appears to be acceptable: full time staff making up less than 50% of the total would be critical.

Diagram 1: Staffing the organisations



Remit

Practically all of the institutions fulfil the function of supporting the translation of literature. The second and third main functions reported by these institutions are the promotion of literature and of individual authors, and the provision of information and advice. Half of them engage in research and in the collection of data and information, which would imply a higher rate of response about formulating policy analysis and advice (four organisations only).

Support for publishing is done also by every second respondent: a surprisingly high proportion, especially as support for the creation of literature is a less frequent function (42%). Assistance provided to large sectors like libraries and distribution is predictably only delivered by a small number of organisations (4 and 2 organisations respectively).

Among the additionally formulated functions, the organisations mentioned various *activities*: organising conferences, book fairs and literary festivals – reported by one agency each. For our purposes,

however, these activities do not really count as functions – activities are the subject of a later question.

Table 2: The functions of the organisation

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
support for the translation of literature	94%	18
provision of information and advice	84%	16
promotion of literature and individual authors	84%	16
promotion of books and reading	68%	13
research and collection of information and data	52%	10
support for publishing	52%	10
support for the creation of literature	42%	8
policy analysis and advice	21%	4
support for libraries	21%	4
support for book sales and distribution	10%	2
other (please specify)	31%	6
	answered question	19
	skipped question	0

Policy context

The vast majority of institutions' policy is formulated primarily as part of the country's cultural policy (78.9, Diagram 2). A few institutions report attachment to other important policies such as foreign policy (15.8%) and education and training policy (10.5%). There are no institutions that would constitute part of the economic and employment policy. Three agencies, however, added policies related to ethnic and linguistic minorities to their policy setting.

Ten out of the nineteen organisations answered positively to the question about dedicated policy support for ethnic or language minorities (Diagram 3). Only four of them reported having policies in favour of diaspora authors (supposedly writing in the national language/s) abroad. Five organisations are international, with no domestic or national minorities to support, but supporting literatures written in less-widely used languages is part of their mission.

Diagram 2: Policy context

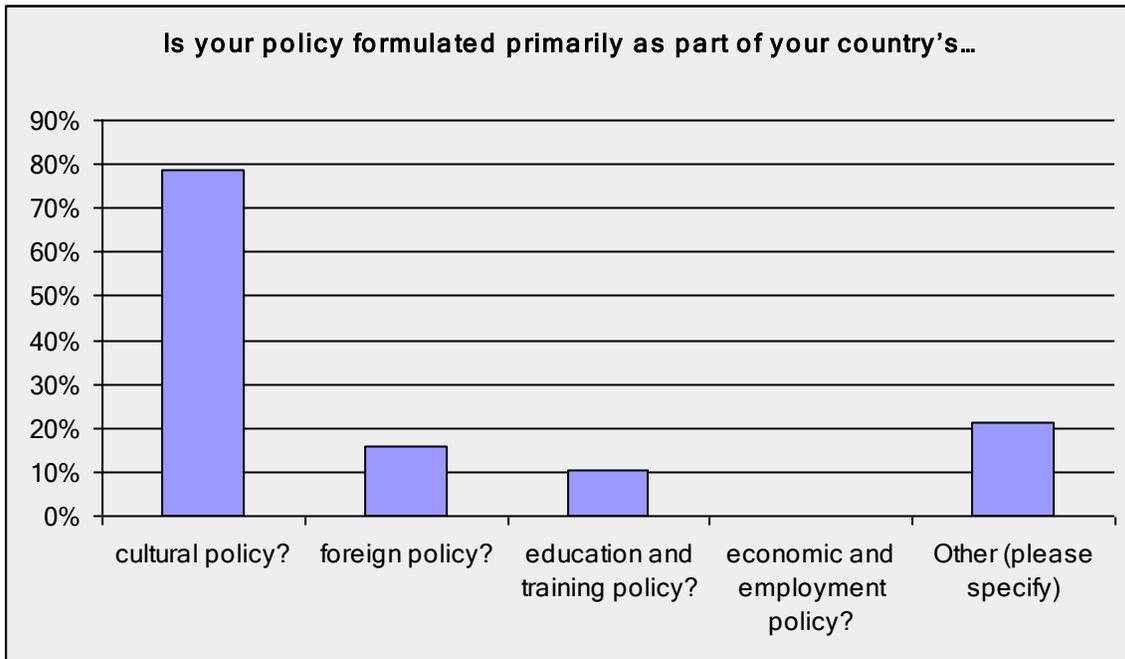
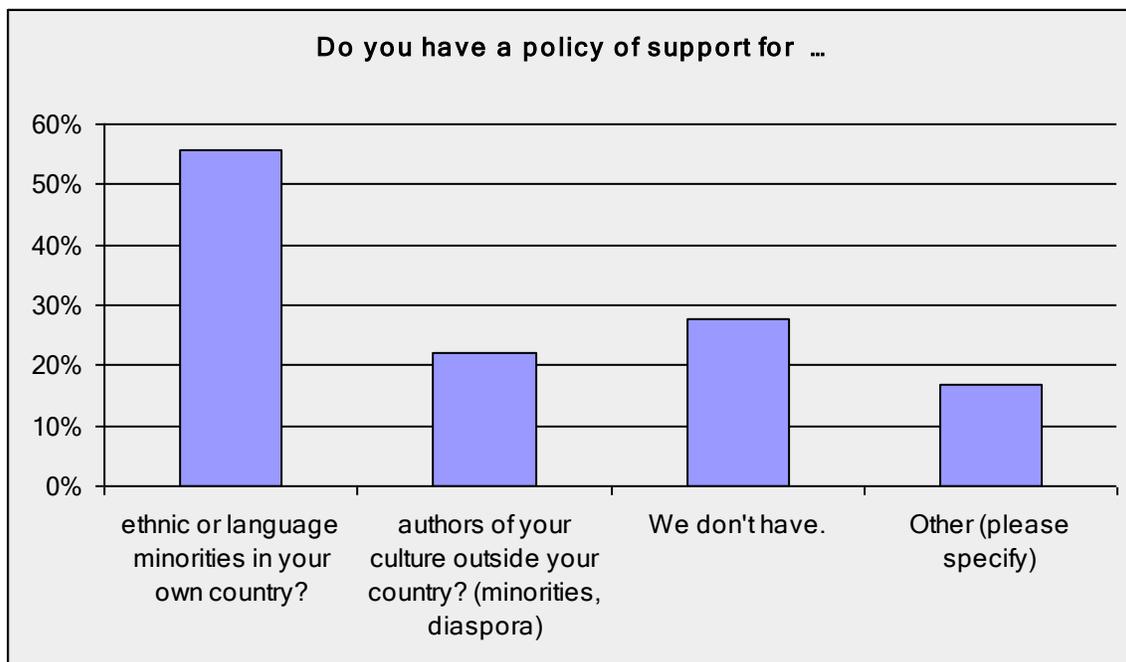


Diagram 3: Dedicated policy support



FUNCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

The remit of all the responding organisations is predominantly international and this is reflected in the activities they are engaged in. Provision of translation grants is the main form of intervention by means of which the surveyed organisations back their promotional activities, and the majority of their work is located abroad or targets international professionals or audiences abroad. Such activities are connected with international book fairs or literary festivals, and may include the coordination of a season or series of events abroad.

Activities organised in own country

Only some of the surveyed organisations are active in their own country organising domestic literary and translation events and engaging with inbound translation. Some clearly see this as being closely related to their international work. In some countries domestic promotion of literature, books and reading is the brief of a specialized body, which run readings, authors in schools programmes or literary festivals. Among additional activities organisations mentioned projects such as running a book fair, publishing books, running reading promotion campaigns, organising exhibitions and memorial events. For one agency, on the other hand, it was a policy guideline to move away from organising events.

Diagram 4: Type of activities that the institutions are actively involved in their countries



Activities organised abroad

Most of the institutions organise book fair stands abroad (93.3%, Diagram 5), but there are other important events too, such as workshops or seminars (60%), authors' readings (60%) and national focus festival or season. As indicated by these data, a vast majority of these institutions are engaged in transmitting culture beyond borders by organising activities or events abroad. Apparently, this is a way of their establishing and maintaining good relationships with other countries' institutions.

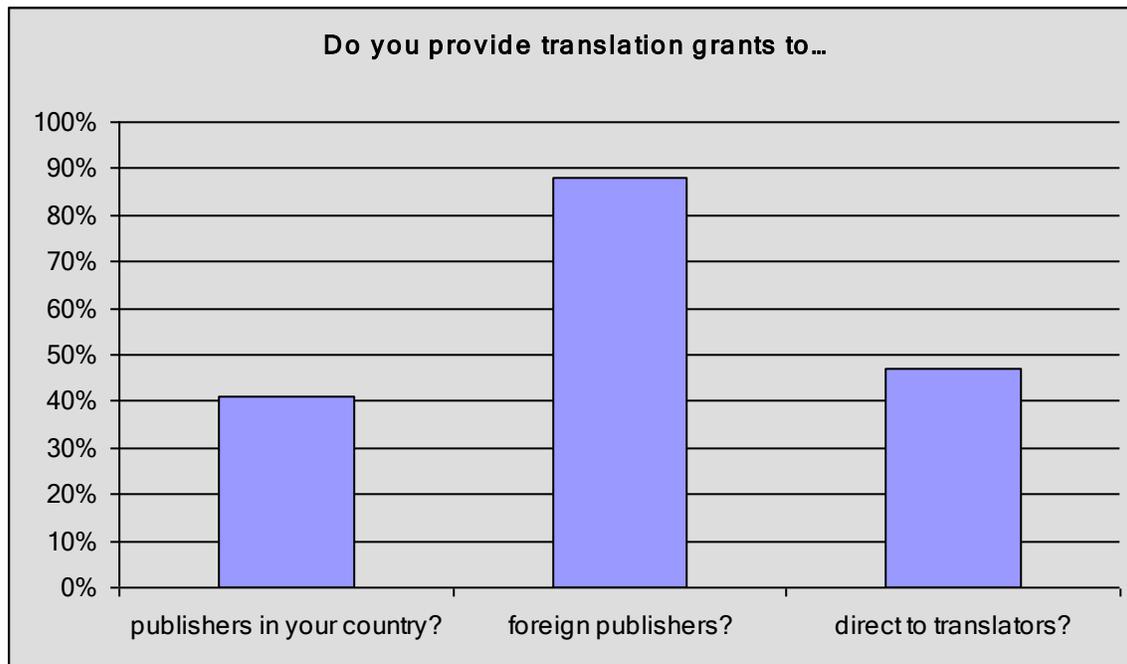
Diagram 5: Activities/events organised abroad



Translation grants

Translation grants are provided for foreign publishers by most of the respondents (88.2%, Diagram 6), while publishers in the institutions' own country and translators get grants from less than half of them – only 41.2%. This shows that exporting the institutions' own national literature is considered more important than helping with the translation of books from foreign languages into their own languages. Almost half of the institutions provide translation grants direct to translators (47.1%), but it is still significantly less than the grants they provide for foreign publishers. This may be because there is a great transactional cost of searching out individual translators and providing them translation grants one by one. Providing these grants to institutions is more efficient, supposing that quality and organised work is granted, including the mechanisms of helping the way of the translated literary works to the customers and readers.

Diagram 6: Translation grants



Facilities for translators

Provision of facilities for translators and writers is one of the recognised forms of indirect support for creation of new works, whether original literary works or translations, as well being a form of supporting translators and writers when bursaries, fellowships or stipends are attached to this provision. Typically, free accommodation and sometimes other costs – travel / stipend – are provided. Facilities such as writers’ and translators’ houses exist throughout Europe, but are mostly administered by a separate organisation, sometimes with close ties to the organisations surveyed.

Translators houses in Europe are members of RECIT, the European Network of Translators’ Centres, while houses for writers are members of the HALMA network. Some, such as the Ventspils House in Latvia or Ty Newydd in Wales accommodate both, the latter having taken on translation-related activities under a programme run in partnership with Wales Literature Exchange as Ty Cyfieithu Cymru – Translators’ House Wales.

Out of the responding eighteen institutions exactly half provide facilities in their country for translators from abroad, 16.7% arrange for assistance for translations abroad from their country, and 38.9% of the institutions don’t provide anything for translators (Diagram 8). Besides the dissemination of information about their national literature, these organisations apparently mainly provide facilities to translators working in the country where the organisation is based.

Diagram 7: Facilities for translators

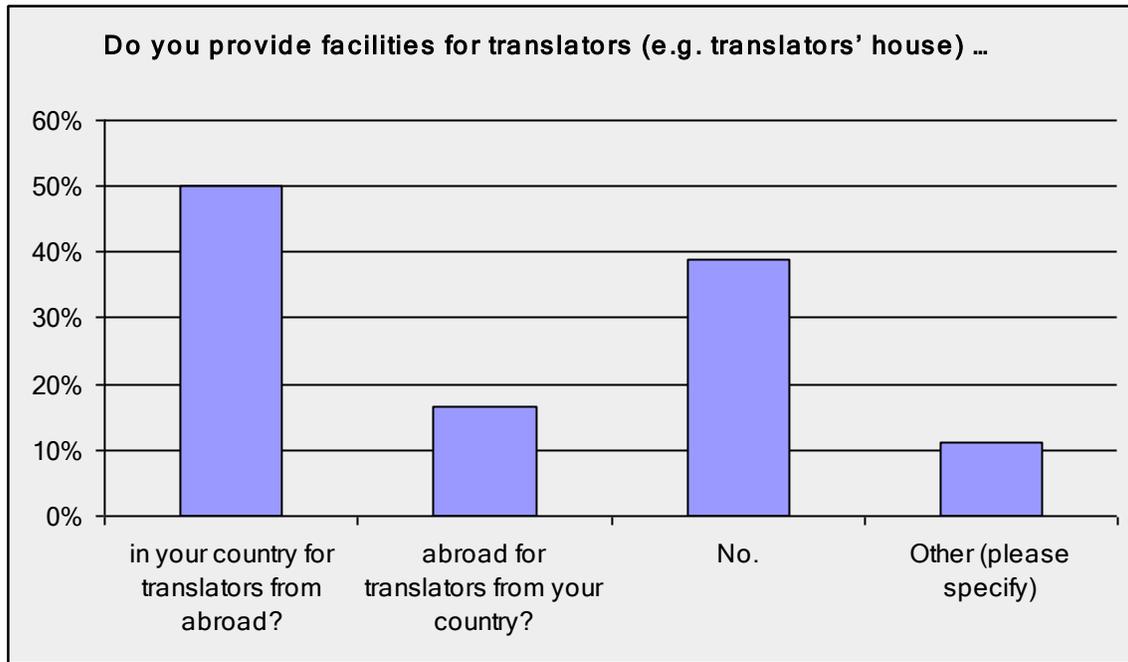
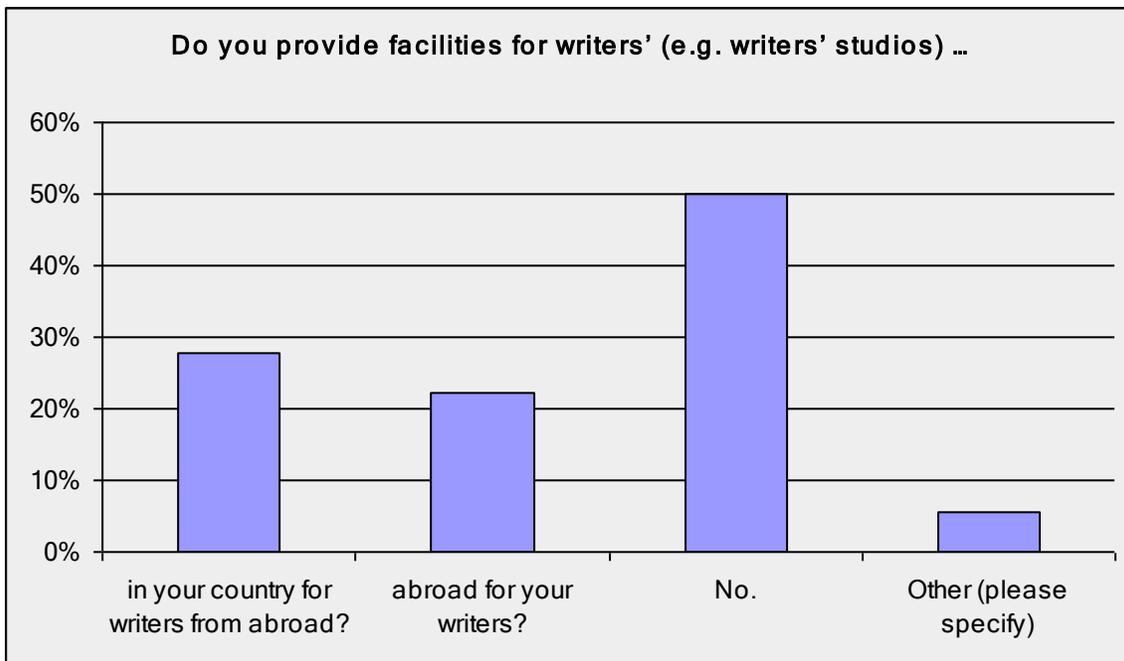


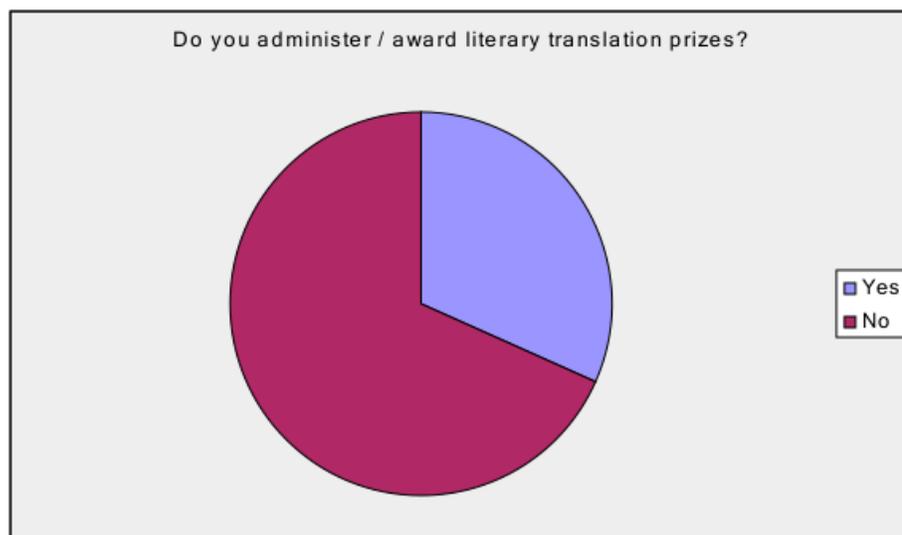
Diagram 8: Facilities for writers



Awarding of Prizes

The remit of most of the responding 19 institutions is not sufficiently widely spread to be able to award literary translation prizes (Diagram 9). It is however done by almost a third of them (31.6%), yet data indicate that running translation awards is apparently an accessory function.

Diagram 9: Literary translation prizes



INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY

Mobility is a topic which increasingly dominates the debate about international and European cultural exchange and cooperation, both in terms of financial support and of the cultural and foreign policy of EU countries.

However, only fourteen institutions answered the question about international mobility (Diagram 6), so this data might not be thoroughly representative. All of the responding institutions provide travel grants for authors to attend international events, but only 50% of them provide it for translators, 28.6% to organisers and 14.3% to publishers. Therefore they achieve the aim of “making literature travel” mostly by funding translations and authors’ travel to promote their work, as well as to take part in projects, workshops and so on.

It comes as no surprise that the surveyed organisations see foreign travel as being essential to a successful delivery of their brief. So despite the economic crisis, 35.3% of the organisations report an increase in the number of staff trips abroad in the past three years (Diagram 11). 29.4% of the institutions keep the amount of these travels on a steady level, and 35.3% have reduced them. The decrease in foreign travel by the staff in some institutions can be explained by the global recession –

which has unfortunately had an even more significant impact on public spending budgets since our survey was completed.

Funding for professionals' (authors, translators, publishers) foreign trips has been fairly even over the past few years (Diagram 10). 31.3% of the institutions spend the same amount of money as before on such trips, 37.5% spend more, and 31.3% of them spend less. It appears that staff have more opportunities to travel abroad, while the number of professionals' trips is being cut down. This may suggest that marketing abroad is considered more important for the promotion of literary translation than integrating literary professionals into an international environment, but it also reflects the increasing importance of professional networking for the organisations and their staff who participate in a greater number of regional and European level policy conferences and meetings than used to be the case some years ago.

Diagram 10: Travel grants to attend international events

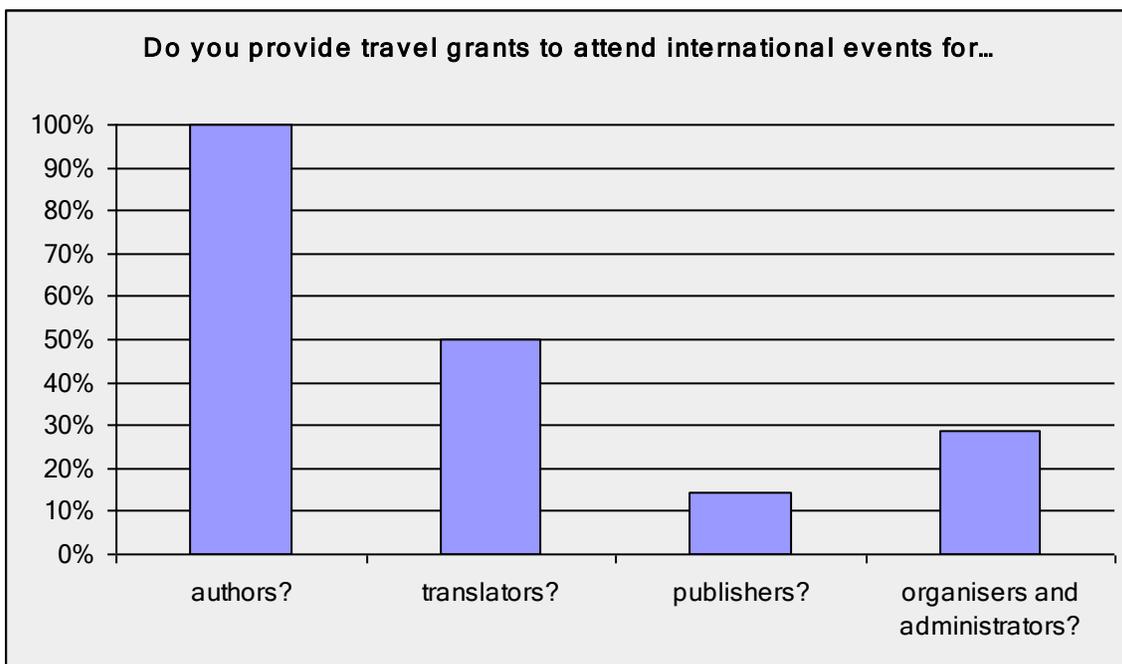


Diagram 11: Number of trips (for professionals)

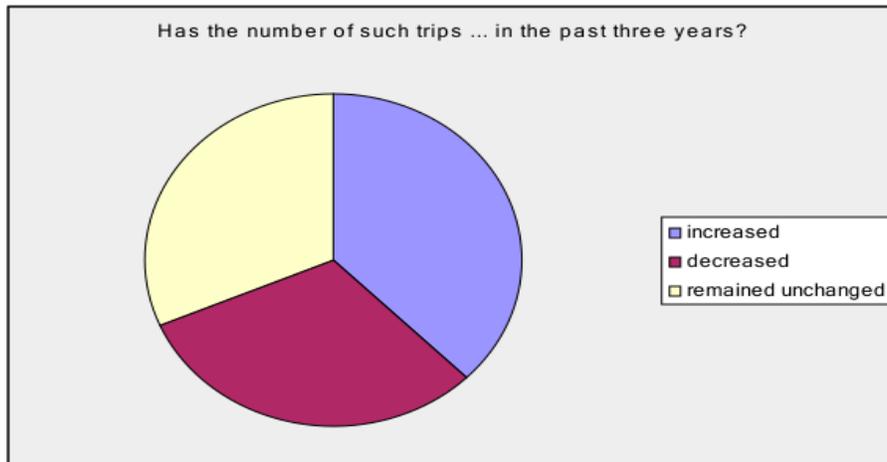
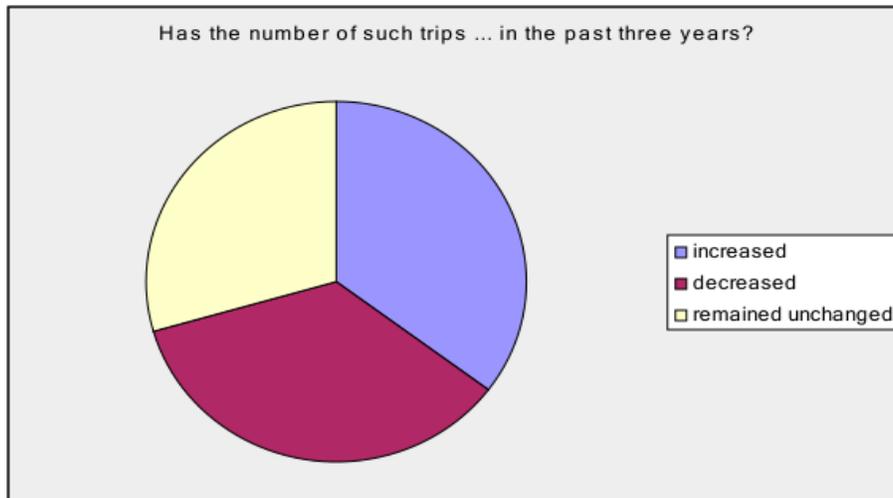


Diagram 12: Number of trips (staff to foreign countries)



SOURCES AND MODE OF FUNDING

The vast majority of the institutions (83.3%, Diagram 13) are financed by a national government ministry or department, and 16.7% receive funds from the national lottery and gambling taxes – a way of redistributing state resources from a specific source. Those organisations in the final column, which are funded in another way, specified either the private sector or an institution that is relatively close to the government.

Of the eighteen institutions that provided details about the mode of funding, less than a third (27.8%, Diagram 14) are provided with funding that is on-going, guaranteed and automatic. Whilst this clearly implies financial insecurity for the majority of the organisations, it might nevertheless suggest ongoing

monitoring and supervision to ensure efficiency, with subsidy provision linked to performance.

However, accountability and security of funding should ideally go hand in hand, and it can be argued that delivery of a brief is adversely affected by lack of long-term funding, which in turn allows for long-term strategic planning. In addition, the annual funding mode appears to have more to do with the ways in which cultural organisations are dependent on the mechanisms determining the culture budget, often not settled until the end of the fiscal year before it is distributed. As a consequence, many annually funded organisations cannot be sure of their annual budget until early in the year, something that has a detrimental impact on their ability to plan, form partnerships and make financial commitments. Some organisations are in fact legally restricted to making commitments lasting no longer than 12 months. This is clearly at odds with the necessity of planning in the long term but also with the funding requirements of the Culture Programme of the EU which provides funding for up to five years.

Diagram 13: Sources of funding

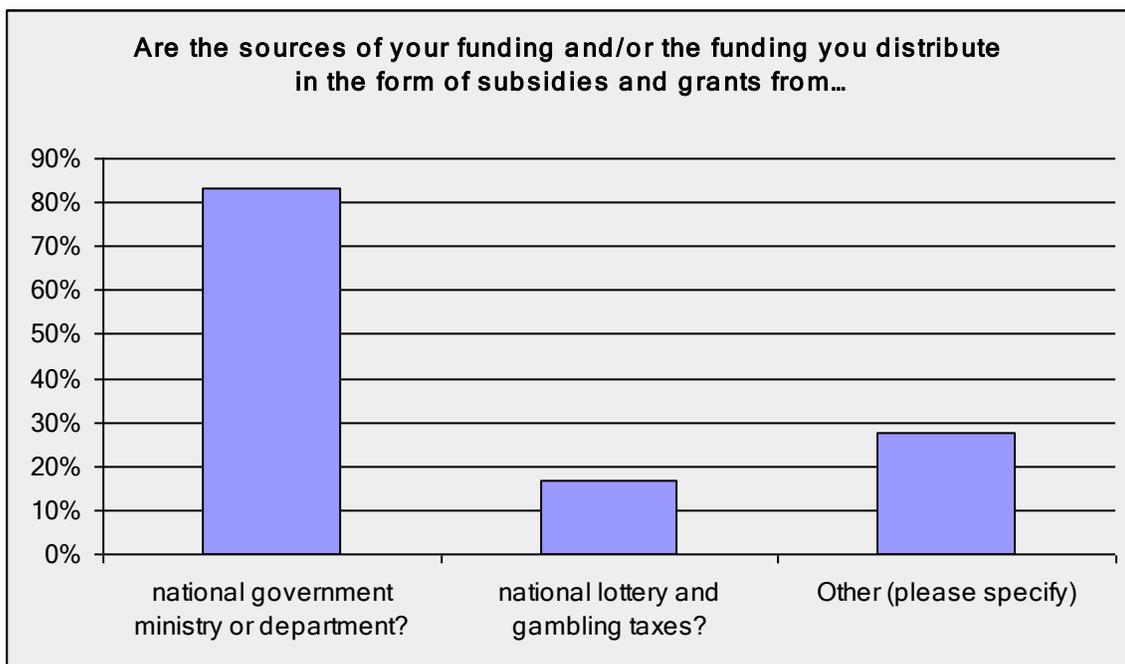
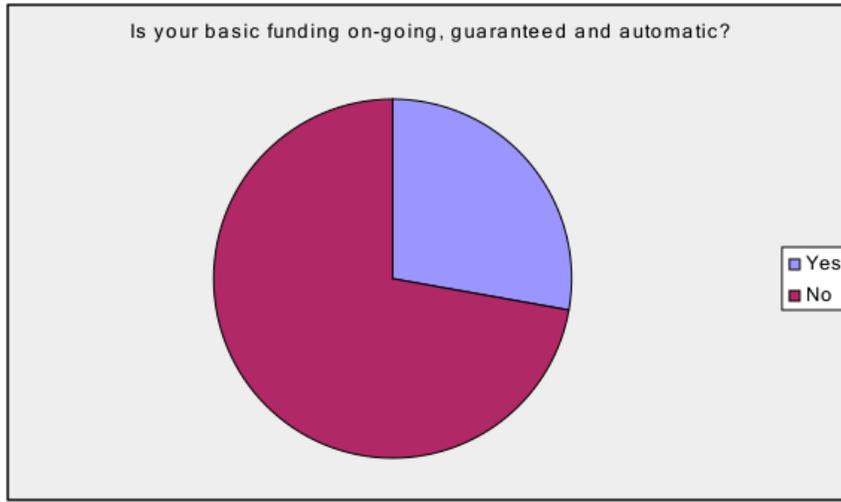
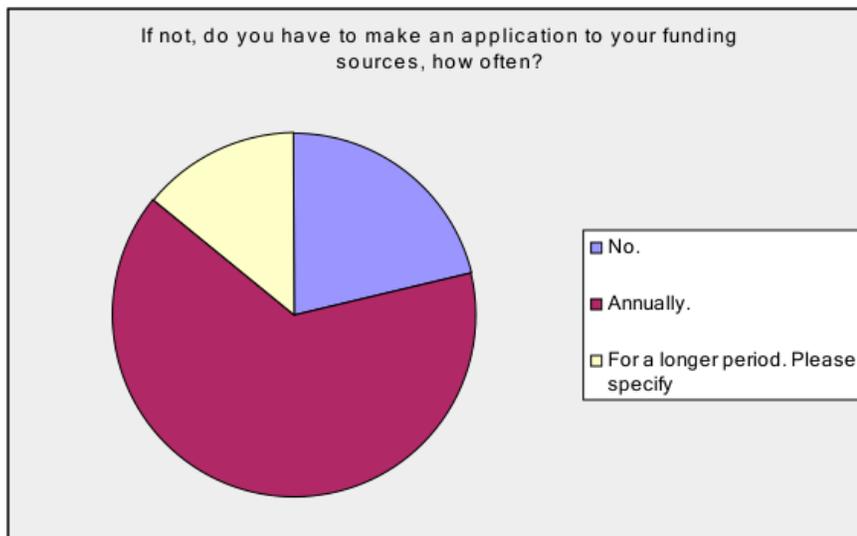


Diagram 14: Mode of funding



Although the next question – How often do you make an application? – applied to the thirteen organisations that responded “No” to the question about regular, guaranteed funding, fourteen organisations provided information here (Diagram 15). 64.3% of them need to make an application annually in order to gain their funding sources, while two agencies are supposed to make an application for their funding sources every second or third year.

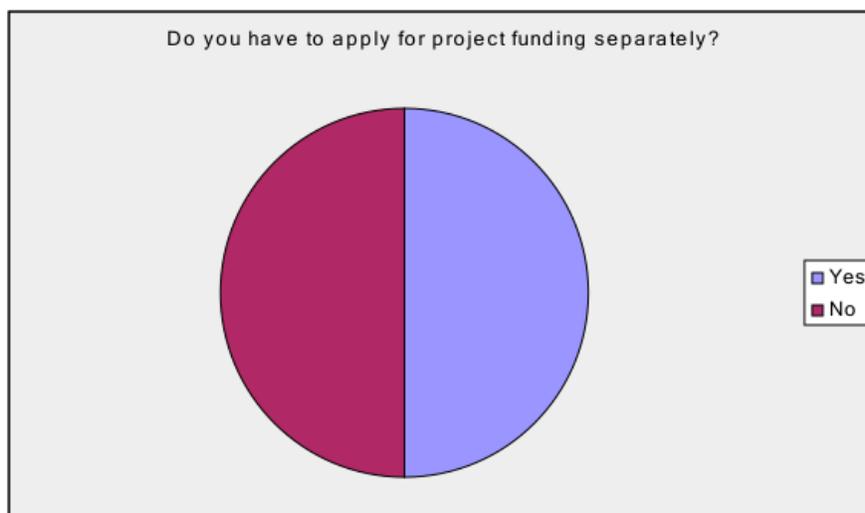
Diagram 15: Application to funding sources



While one organisation skipped the question relating to project funding, the remaining eighteen were divided exactly by half (Diagram 16). Nine institutions receive core operational funding and are compelled to (regularly) apply for money dedicated to specific projects. Consequently, such

procedures imply considerable transactional cost and give funding bodies the power to control and determine the destination and use of cultural funds in great detail.

Diagram 16: Application for project funding



SPENDING BY THE ORGANISATIONS BETWEEN 2003-2007

Only half of the organisations responding to the survey allowed insight into their spending by answering the relevant questions in the questionnaire. This is somewhat surprising as all of them (except one) are publicly funded and information about their expenditure should be, and in some cases is, freely available in the form of Annual Report documents and online.

The relevant questions were about these institutions' support for individual authors' travel, for domestic publishing and domestic translation, for translation of their own literature into other languages, as well as spending on promotion, book fairs and staff travel.

In summary, in the course of these five years nine organisations received an average of ninety-five grant applications from individuals, such as writers or translators, while the usual number of grants awarded was just under fifty, accounting for € 1,241,000 altogether. This means that nearly every second applicant has been successful.

Data indicate, however, that **grants to local publishers for domestic publishing** weighed more heavily in the examined institutions' financial output: they received in average of 622 applications in the years 2003-2007. About a third of these applications were successful, with an average of 229 grants awarded for domestic publishing purposes. The seven organisations that answered this question gave out a total

of €1,431 million in grants in the course of the five years between 2003 and 2007 (average grant €200,000). It needs to be stressed, however, that not all such grants were to support translations: some were awarded for publishing original literary titles.

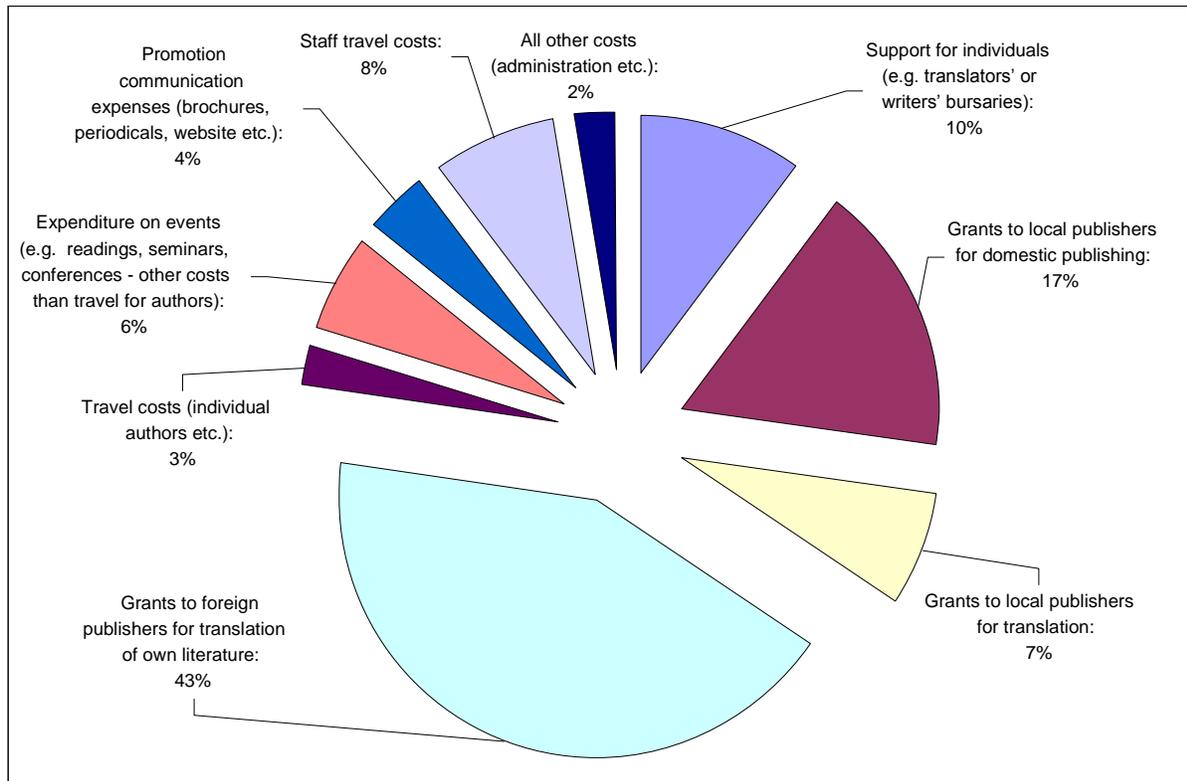
The number of **grants given to local publishers for translation** was lower than the number of grants given to foreign publishers. The organisations concerned received an average of seventy-seven applications and just over half of them were awarded grants. Each of the responding seven institutions spent an average of €15,000 per year on such grants, or a total of €530,000 during the five-year period.

Our enquiry focused on organisations active in the international promotion of literature, for whom financing translation of their own literature is a top priority; they therefore spend four times more on **grants to foreign publishers** – an average of € 519 000 per organisation in five years – than on grants to local publishers for translation of foreign literature. Almost all applications for such grants were successful (96.4%), and in five years altogether €4,151,000 was spent by the eight organisations who answered this question. However, the information on funds provided to domestic publishers gives an incomplete picture, as they may have access to other sources of funding, in addition to grants and bursaries provided directly to translators in some countries.

Other important expenditure items were **staff travel costs** (€95,540 on average per organisation), **authors' travel costs** (less than a third of what was spent on the staff, an average of €30,500 per organisation), **expenditure on events** (approximately €74,100 per institution), **promotion and communication expenses** (on average €44,960), and **finally various other costs** of about €29,720 per organisation.

Cost for five years. Other important expenditure items were staff travel costs (€ 95 540 on average per organisation), authors' travel costs (less than a third of what was spent on the staff, an average € 30 500 per organisation), expenditure on events (approximately € 74 100 per institution), promotion and communication expenses (on average € 44 960), and finally various other costs of about € 29 720 per organisation.

Diagram 17: Structure of expenditure based on selected institutions (2003-2007)



SPENDING IN 2008

After the cumulated figures of the preceding five years, the organisations were required to report about spending in 2008 and 2009 separately.

The surveyed organisations received on average fifty-three **applications for authors' travel costs** in 2008, which is about half the number of applications received throughout all the five years between 2003 and 2007. Similarly to previous practice, roughly half of these grants (an average of twenty-six) were awarded, accounting for about €44,240 per organisation or a total of €354,000 in 2008.

However, unlike during the period 2003 to 2007, both the number of applications and the amount of **grants awarded to local publishers** for domestic publishing somewhat exceeded the **number of grants to individuals**, (around twenty-six to individuals and thirty-nine to publishers, per organisation).

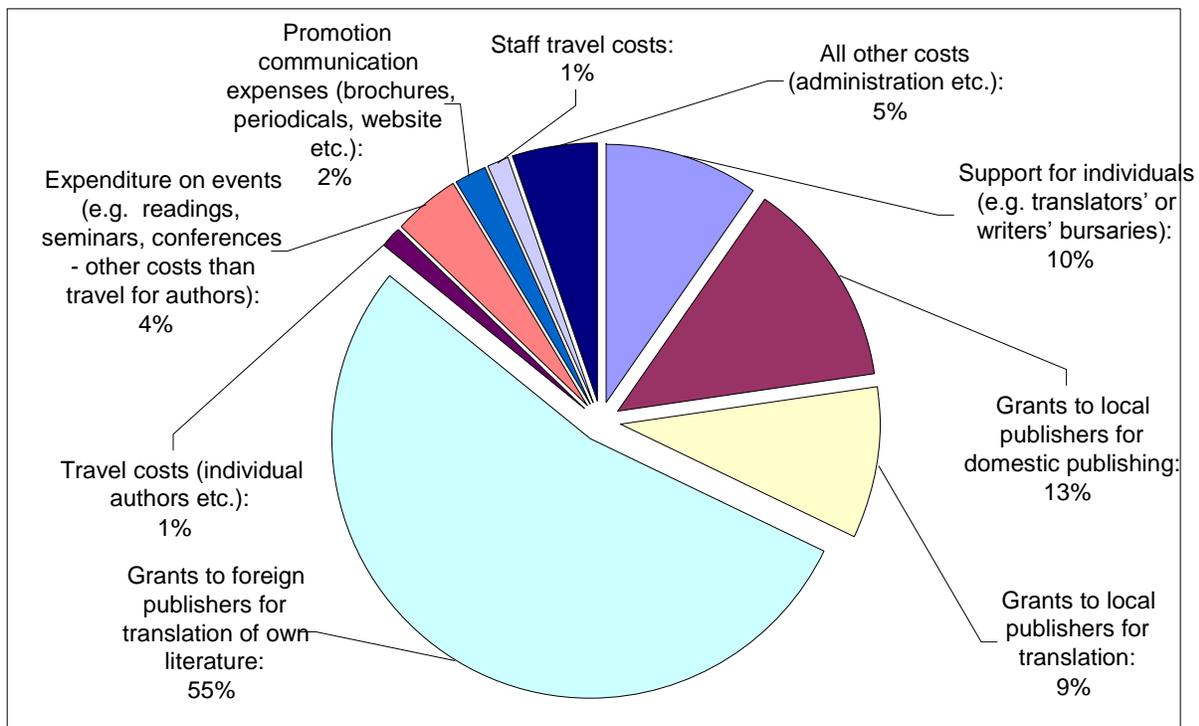
Similarly to previous years, **translation of foreign literature** enjoyed significantly less support from these organisations than **translation of their own literature into foreign languages**: while they spent on average around €42,830 financing translation at home, they gave out an average of around

€244,300 in grants for translation of their literature abroad (adding up to €1,710,000 in total, all ten organisations taken into account).

The data indicate that **translation was a priority in 2008** – in fact, 64% of the budget was spent on translation: 54% by foreign publishers, 10% by local publishers. Travel costs, however, fell sharply both for individual authors (1%) and staff (1%) – by comparison to the 3% and 8% budget share between during 2003-2007.

Other important items in 2008 were, again, **expenditure on events, such as readings and seminars** (around €19,080 per organisation), promotion and communication expenses (€9,570), with their relative share being smaller (4%+2%=6%) than between 2003-2007 (6%+4%=10%). The total budget was on average €454,500 per organisation which is nearly double the average total annual budget per organisation in the years from 2003 to 2007

Diagram 18: Structure of surveyed organisations' spending (2008)



SPENDING IN 2009

The results of our survey indicate a **dramatic fall in expenditure in 2009**, as it could be expected at a time of financial crisis. The total amount of authors' travel grants fell by 22% compared to 2008, from €354,000 to €276,000, and as an average per organisation from €44,240 to €39,430. The number of grants awarded also fell by half in 2009, from an average of twenty-six per organisation to twelve. The difference is great, even if we take into consideration that while ten organisations answered our question concerning the total of such grants in euros in 2008, only nine of them answered the same question with respect to 2009.

The average amount spent on **grants for domestic publishing** decreased as well (€58,950 compared to €45,210). The average number awarded grants, however, was thirty-nine in both years: this means that the same number of publishers received 23% less in 2009. Grants to **local publishers for translations** also fell sharply, from an average of twenty-four grants to nineteen, and from a yearly average of €42,830 to €34,000 per organisation, which means 20% fewer publishers received 20% less on average.

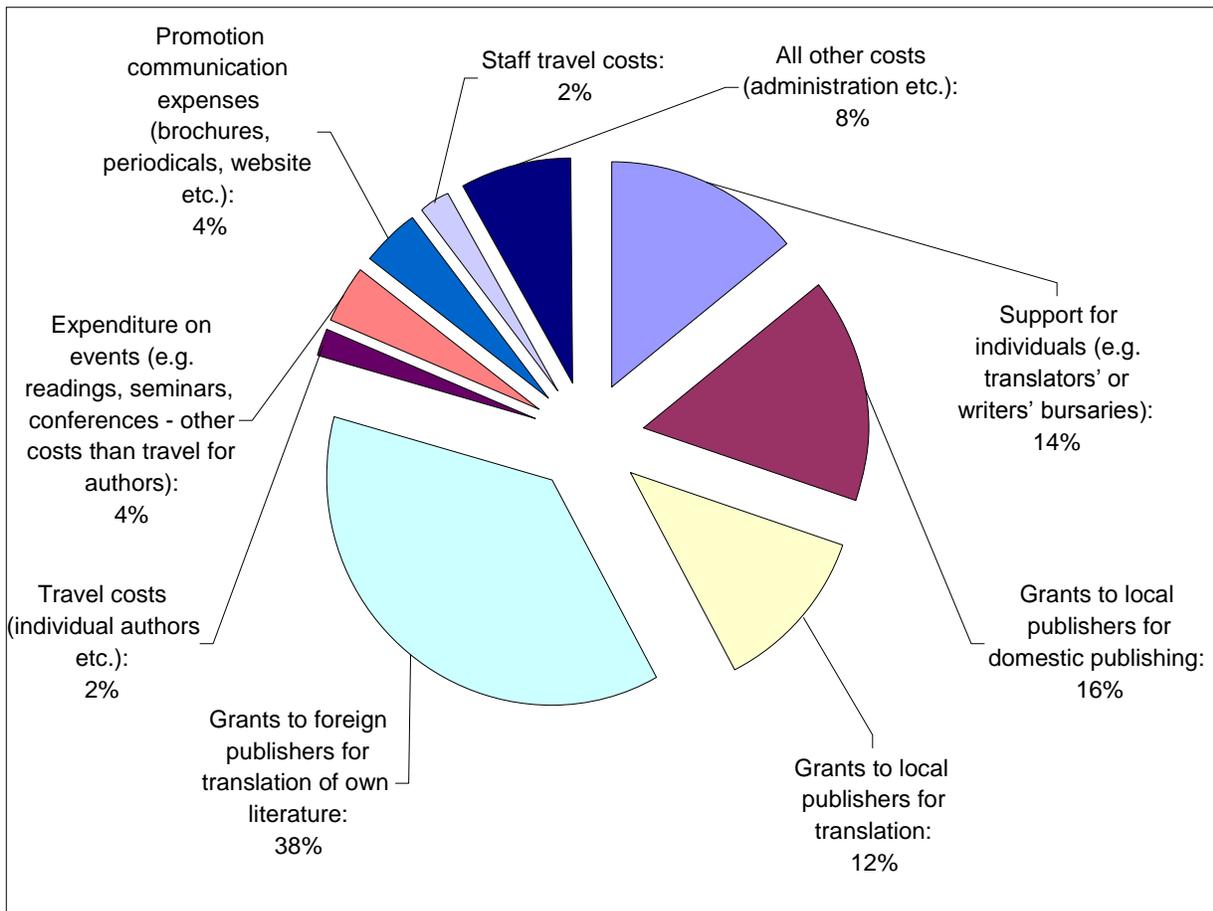
The **sharpest fall could be observed in grants given out to foreign publishers**; while such grants still constituted an important part of the organisations' spending, the average sum spent on grants to foreign publishers fell by more than 80%, from €244,300 in 2008 to €104,720 in 2009. (In total: from €1,710,000 to €628,000).

Roughly the same amount of money was spent on **individual authors' travel expenses** in 2009 (an average of €5,320) as in 2008 (an average of €5,110).

Expenditure on events such as readings, conferences and seminars, however, decreased by a third in 2009 – from an average of €18,080 to an average of €12,040.

The only **rising budget lines were promotion and staff travel**. Promotion rose to an average of €11,440 from €9,570 in 2008 (20% increase), while staff travel remained roughly the same – an organisation spent an average of €6,010 on travel costs for its staff compared to €5,800 in 2008. This could be interpreted as promoting literature via spending on visibility, rather than investing into actual translations.

Diagram 19: Structure of surveyed organisations' spending (2009)



END