

SURVEY OF KEY NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS SUPPORTING LITERARY EXCHANGE AND TRANSLATION IN EUROPE

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Making Literature Travel

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Introduction

The majority of EU member states, as well as some candidate countries, operate some form of translation grants system and promote their national literature through a variety of measures and activities, and in the past have benefited from being able to learn about each other's approaches to pursuing the same goals. For this reason, Literature Across Frontiers, with the assistance of the Budapest Observatory, started conducting comparative surveys of national organisations in Europe which provide support for literary exchange and translation with the aim of obtaining an overview of these organisations' status, size, remit and activities. The first survey was carried out in 2006, the second in 2010, and the third and current survey in 2012.

We focused on organisations which can be usefully compared to one another in the sense that whether they are part of a larger governmental structure such as a ministry of culture or an arms-length type of organisation financed by the government but independent of it, their aims and ways of operating are similar. On the other hand, large structures promoting the culture and language of their country, such as the British Council, Goethe Institut or Institut Français are in a different league and each works in a very different way when it comes to promotion or literature and support for translation. While the British Council ceased to support literary activities in Europe some time ago and has never supported the translation of literary works into other languages, support for promotion and translation of French literature is channelled through the cultural services of French Embassies around the world.

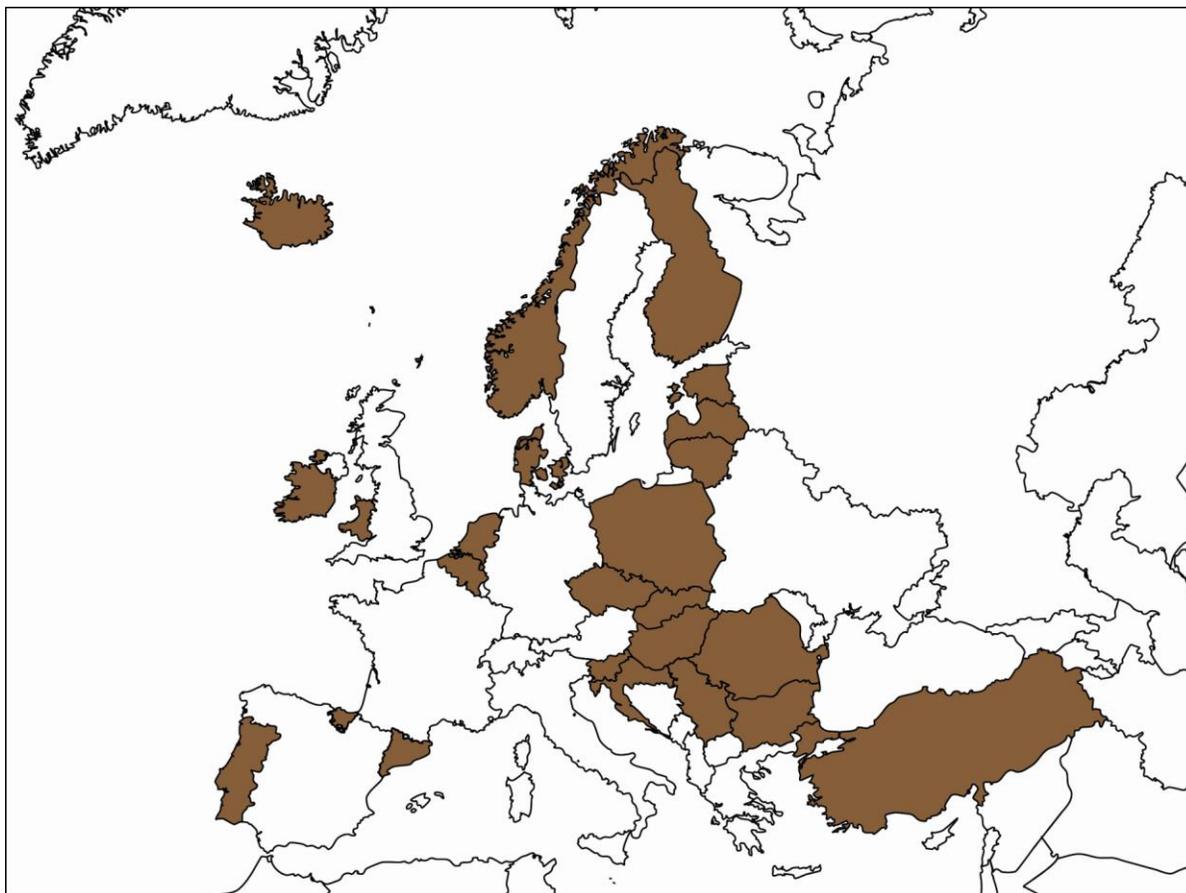
Goethe Institut operates a programme of translation grants for the dissemination of German literature abroad, and in some cases cooperates with the Austrian government and Pro Helvetia to promote German language literature jointly. The Goethe Institut awarded 286 grants totalling 610,138 Euro in 2010 and 288 grants totalling 567,692 Euro in 2011. Support for promotion and translation of French literature is channelled through the cultural services of French Embassies around the world.

The organisations invited to complete the survey are part of an informal network brought together in various meetings and conferences, and some of them are affiliated with Literature Across Frontiers. They belong to member and candidate states of the EU, with the exception of Norway.

Survey respondents

Twenty two out of twenty five organisations responded to our invitation to complete the survey questionnaire online. All of these respondents support the translation of literary works or are closely connected to such grant schemes in their countries. Seventeen of the twenty two organisations come from sixteen member states of the European Union; Spain is represented by two centres, in the Basque Country and Catalonia. The remaining five organisations operate in countries in the process of European integration.

Twenty of these organisations are the key national agencies 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.



The column ‘Since’; in the table indicates the date since when the organisation (or its predecessor) began to operate in its current form. The organisations will be referenced in some of the diagrams using the abbreviation in the column ‘Code’.

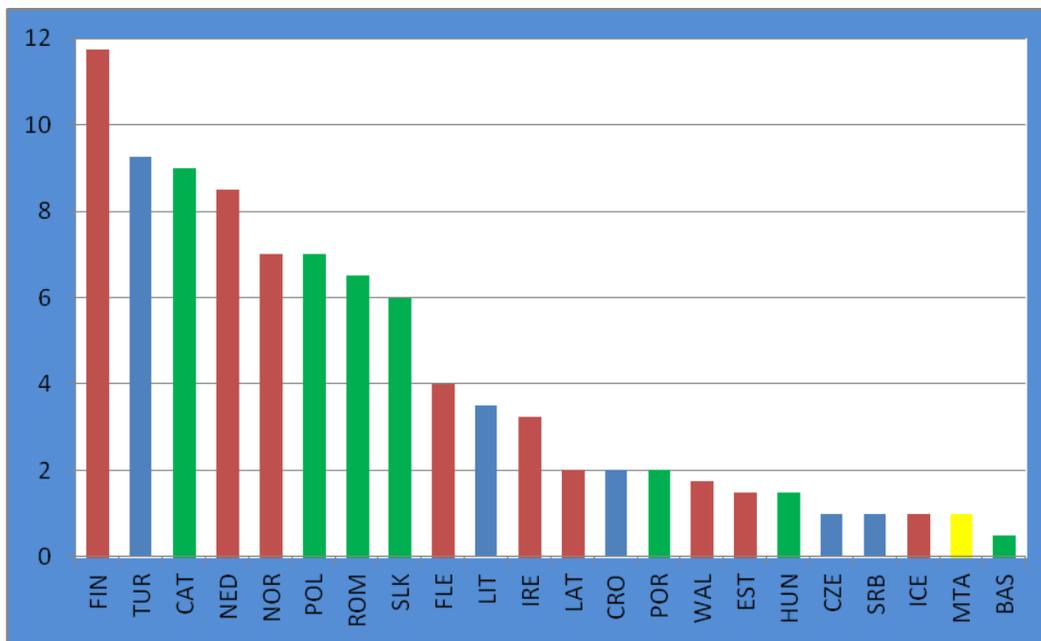
Table 1: The organisations in the survey

	Institution	Country	Code	Since
1	Cyfnewidfa Lên Cymru / Wales Literature Exchange	UK	WAL	2000
2	Direcção-Geral do Livro e das Bibliotecas	Portugal	POR	1997
3	Estonian Literature Centre	Estonia	EST	2001
4	Etxepare Basque Institute	Spain	BAS	2010
5	FILI - Finnish literature Exchange	Finland	FIN	1976
6	Flemish Literature Fund	Belgium	FLE	1999
7	Icelandic Literature Fund	Iceland	ICE	2007
8	Institut Ramon Llull	Spain	CAT	2002
9	Instytut Książki / The Book Institute	Poland	POL	2004
10	International Cultural Programme Centre	Lithuania	LIT	2008 (1994)
11	Ireland Literature Exchange	Ireland	IRE	1994
12	Latvian Literature Centre	Latvia	LAT	2002
13	Literárne informačné centrum	Slovakia	SLK	1996
14	Malta Council for Culture and the Arts	Malta	MTA	2002
15	Ministry of Culture of Republic of Croatia	Croatia	CRO	1991
16	Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic	Czech Rep.	CZE	1993
17	Ministry of Culture, Media and Informatic Society	Serbia	SRB	..
18	Nederlands Letterenfonds / Dutch Foundation for Literature	Netherland	NED	2010 (1960,1991)
19	NORLA	Norway	NOR	1978
20	PIM - Hungarian Books & Translations Office (former Hungarian Book Foundation)	Hungary	HUN	2011 (1997)
21	Romanian Cultural Institute	Romania	ROM	2005
22	TEDA Translation and Publication Subvention Program of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey	Turkey	TUR	2005

Five organisations are part of their respective countries' culture ministry; twelve are publicly funded organisations based on some form of the arm's-length principle; five have independent status and one identifies itself as an arm's length agency of the government.

The legal status does not appear to determine the size of the organisation, as shown in Diagram 1.

Diagram 1: Full time equivalent staff size and legal status of twenty organisations



Red = independent non-profit organisation or centre funded by the government

Blue = public body such as a ministry

Green = public body supported directly by the government

Yellow = arms' length agency of government

Calculation of staff size: Full-time equivalent number of staff members, where part-time workers were counted as 0.5 and others (interns, trainees etc.) as 0.25 of a full-time staff member.

With 11 full-time, 1 part-time and 1 'other' staff members, Finnish FILI is the largest among the twenty two organisations, with the full time equivalent of 11.75 staff. At the opposite end of the scale the Basque centre reported that one part time staff member is responsible for the promotion of Basque literature in foreign languages: that is equivalent to 0.5 full time staff.

The last case illustrates the difficulty in determining the size of the agency. The thirty-member Board of Trustees on the website of Etxepare Basque Institute suggests a sizable organisation, where the one part-

time worker is defined strictly as being in charge of promoting translation. In other instances the staff as recorded in the survey also includes persons who are indirectly involved in this task.

FILI of Finland is one of the few organisations that figured in both of our earlier surveys. They are also the only organisation that kept growing over time. Calculated in the same way, FILI had 5.5 people in 2006 and 8 in 2010. The downward trend seen at the Catalan Institut Ramon Llull may reflect a more exact conception of staff in charge of promoting translation:

Table 2: Staff sizes in three surveys (full time equivalent)

	2006	2010	2012
CZE	1	1	1
EST	1,5	1,5	1,5
FIN	5,5	8	11,75
HUN	1	1,75	1,5
LIT	3	2	3,5
POR	2,5	2	2
WAL	1,5	2,25	1,75

Missions, functions

The promotion of their national literature abroad figures in the definition of the main mission of all twenty organisations. NORLA and TEDA appear to have the most generic job description: both report focusing on support for the translation of (Norwegian and Turkish) literature. The great majority listed three functions, the most frequent combination (seven organisations) being the promotion of authors and organisation of literary events, after the basic function of support for translation. These three functions dominate the total picture of the twenty two respondents. *Table 2* shows the frequency distribution of the ten functions that altogether occurred 71 times in the twenty two responses.

Four bodies fulfil more than three functions; the Portuguese DGLB (Directorate of Books and Libraries) listing as many as nine, ranging from policy analysis to support for libraries. All this, however, remains in the broad domain of books, while in the case of Malta the promotion of translation takes place in an organisation, the Council for the Arts and Culture, whose function embraces a much broader scope: to “champion, develop and fund cultural events, activities and art forms”.

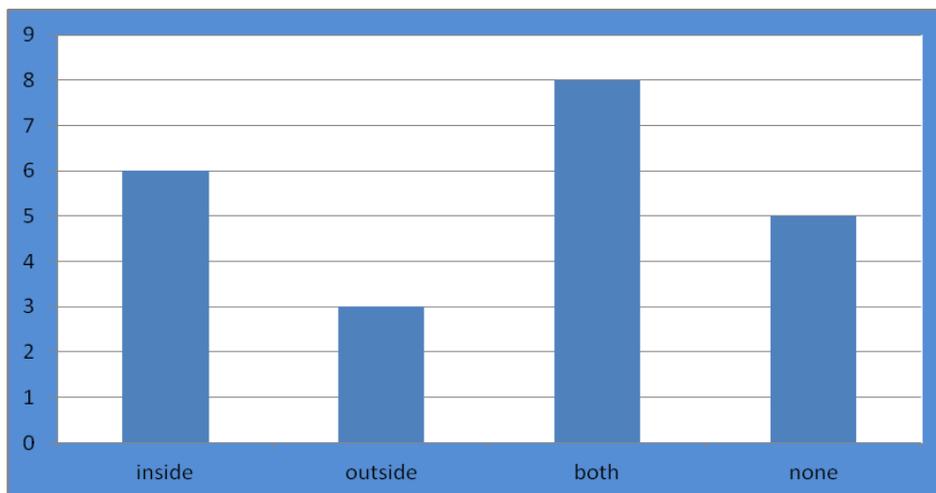
Table 3: Distribution of functions

Function	Number of organisations
Support for the translation of literature	22
Promotion of literature and individual authors	16
Support for, and organisation of literary events	13
Provision of information and advice	5
Promotion of books and reading	4
Support for domestic publishing	4
Research and collection of information and data	2
Support for libraries	2
Policy analysis and advice to government	2
General cultural promotion and development	1

Policy context

The policy of all twenty two organisations is formulated as part of their country's cultural policy; five of them, however, also indicate an affiliation to the foreign policy of the country. No organisation reported an affiliation to the country's education or economic policies, despite the increasing amount of attention paid to the economic importance of the creative sector, and the selling of rights to foreign markets.

Diagram 2: Support to translating literature with a minority status



inside = ethnic or language minorities inside the country

outside = authors of the same culture outside of the country (minorities, diaspora)

both = supporting literatures in minority status inside and outside the country

none = not having a policy of support for minority literature

In responding to the question to which governmental sector the activities are primarily affiliated, two organisations (FILI and the Icelandic Literary Fund) emphasised their autonomy in defining their policies.

In the context of policy orientation issues of minorities were asked about. Thirteen organisations (65%) support minority literatures in their countries. Eleven (50%) sponsor authors (of their culture) with minority or diaspora status outside of their country. (The latter includes the special case of African authors writing in Portuguese, entitled to translation grants from the DGLB in Lisbon.) Altogether, seventeen bodies have a dedicated policy of supporting one of these support schemes, and six of these sixteen follow both practices (one more indicated this as a likely future policy). These are rather high figures, pointing at the importance that culture policies attach to literatures in minority status.

Translation grant policies

All twenty two organisations administer translation grants to foreign publishers. Indeed, this is the basic function that is shared by all. Exactly half of them (11) accept applications from publishers in their own country. Translators can apply directly to nine of these organisations.

The most typical variant is shared by eight centres which limit their translation grant activity to publishers operating in foreign countries. Six organisations serve all three kinds of partners in literary translation: publishers at home and abroad, as well as translators.

Table 4: Distribution of twenty two organisations by scope of offer

Activity	Organisations
Support to foreign publishers only	8
Support to publishers both abroad and in own country	5
Support to foreign publishers as well as to translators in direct	3
Support to publishers both abroad and in own country, as well as to translators	6

Facilities for translators and writers

The provision of facilities for translators and writers is one of the recognised forms of indirect support for the creation of new works, whether original literary works or translations, as well being a method of supporting translators and writers when bursaries, fellowships or stipends are attached to this provision. Typically, free accommodation is provided, and sometimes other funds are provided to cover travel and subsistence. Facilities such as writers' and translators' houses exist throughout Europe, but most are administered by a separate organisation, sometimes with close ties to the centres surveyed.

Out of the responding twenty two institutions the major part (73%) provide facilities in their country for translators from abroad - this is somewhat higher than what we found in previous surveys. Three

organisations arrange for assistance in the opposite direction, too, they send translators from their country to work or collect information and experiences abroad.

Given that two organisations (operating in Wales and the Netherlands) provide facilities both at home and abroad, there remain six centres that do not provide either of these services (as yet). However, a few responses made mention of plans to expand functions in the future.

Table 5: Number of organisations providing facilities for translators

Facility	Number of organisations
Facilities for translators from abroad	15
Facilities abroad for translators of own country	3

Table 6: Distribution of twenty two organisations by scope of offer

Facility	Organisations
Facilities only for translators from abroad	13
Only facilities abroad for own translators	1
Both abroad and in own country	2
No such facilities (as yet)	6

These organisations focus primarily on translators, which can be seen in the next two tables. Half of them cater for writers, too. The Dutch and Welsh organisations do so both abroad and in their own country.

Table 7: Number of organisations providing facilities for writers

Facility	Number of organisations
Facilities for writers from abroad	7
Facilities abroad for writers of own country	6

Table 8: Distribution of twenty two organisations by scope of offer

Facility	Organisations
Facilities only for writers from abroad	5
Only facilities abroad for own writers	4
Both abroad and in own country	2
No such facilities (as yet)	10

Travel grants

The majority of the facilities shown above contribute to the mobility of literary actors, being offered in places other than their country of residence. Shorter term international mobility is provided in the form of travel grants to international events. Authors are the main beneficiaries of this service, and all seventeen centres that administer travel grants do so for authors. Literary organisers, publishers or artists are rarely taken to such events (book fairs, literary festivals etc.) by the institutions covered in the survey.

Table 9: Number of organisations offering various travel grants

Grant recipients	Frequency
Authors	17
Translators	10
Literary organisers	5
Publishers	4
Artists	1

As stated, seventeen organisations (77%) responded positively to the question on travel grants. Most of them limit this to authors only but there are four which offer them to a broad range of literary actors.

Table 10: Distribution of twenty organisations by scope of offer

Grant recipients	Organisations
Authors only	7
Authors and translators	4
Broader range	4
No travel grants	5

Although selection methods were not enquired after, the Lithuanian centre described the system as a contest, where all information, including documents, is presented to a five-strong expert council who decide about the grants.

The Irish organisation co-operates with Trinity College Dublin. They cite a successful Irish-Russian collaboration: during the four-month residence the translator co-edited an anthology of contemporary Irish literature. He had time and money to develop the project, access to Irish writers, had a strong professional support structure in place, and he could commission translations from colleagues in Russia.

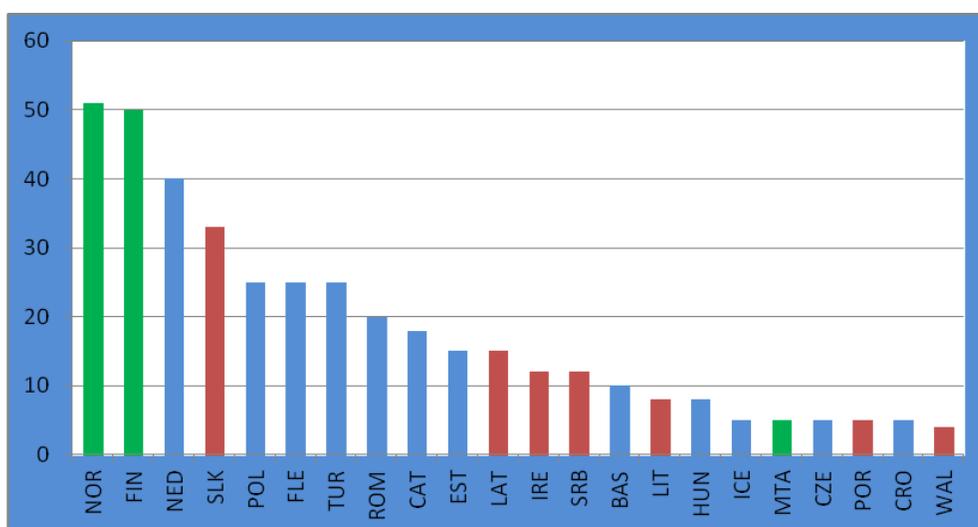
Some centres offered new opportunities in 2012: the Catalonians have extended travel grants to translators, and the Finns offer grants for foreign publishers (and festivals) to invite translated Finnish authors.

Staff mobility

The very nature of the operations carried out by the twenty two organisations makes foreign travel essential to the successful delivery of their brief. The responses to questions relating to staff members' business trips offer a varied picture. Figures in *Diagram 3* represent the average number of trips abroad in a year: one staff member's trip counts as 1, three staff travelling to a book fair counts as 3.

There is significant variation in the amount of trips taken by the officials of the twenty centres, ranging from 4 (the Welsh) to 51 (the Norwegians). A slight correlation may be discerned between the frequency and increase in the number of trips: centres that travel more than fifteen times a year have increased their number of trips, or this has remained unchanged - except for the Slovak case. The overall trend is expressed by the fact that seven organisations reported a decrease in travel, against the three which reported an increase. (In 2010, in our former survey, equal number of centres reported rising and declining travel staff figures.)

Diagram 3: Number and trend of staff trips abroad



Green = the number of such trips increased in the past two years

Blue = the number remained unchanged

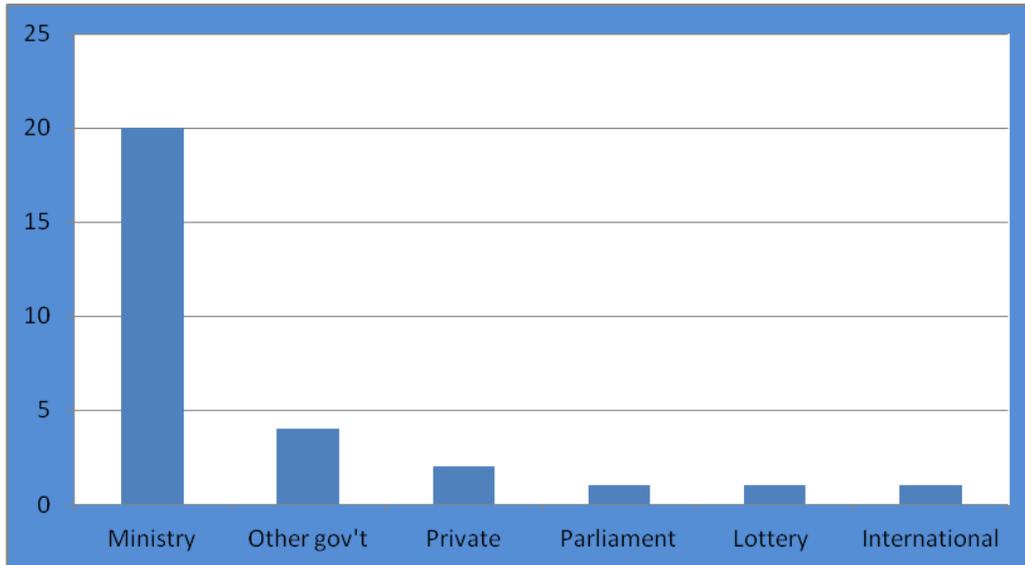
Red = the number decreased

Sources and modes of funding

Fifteen organisations (75%) receive their basic funding from a single source; in thirteen cases it is a ministry, in the fourteenth (Iceland) the national parliament, and in Wales another body (the Arts Council). Three agencies are financed from two channels, and the remaining two organisations are financed by three channels.

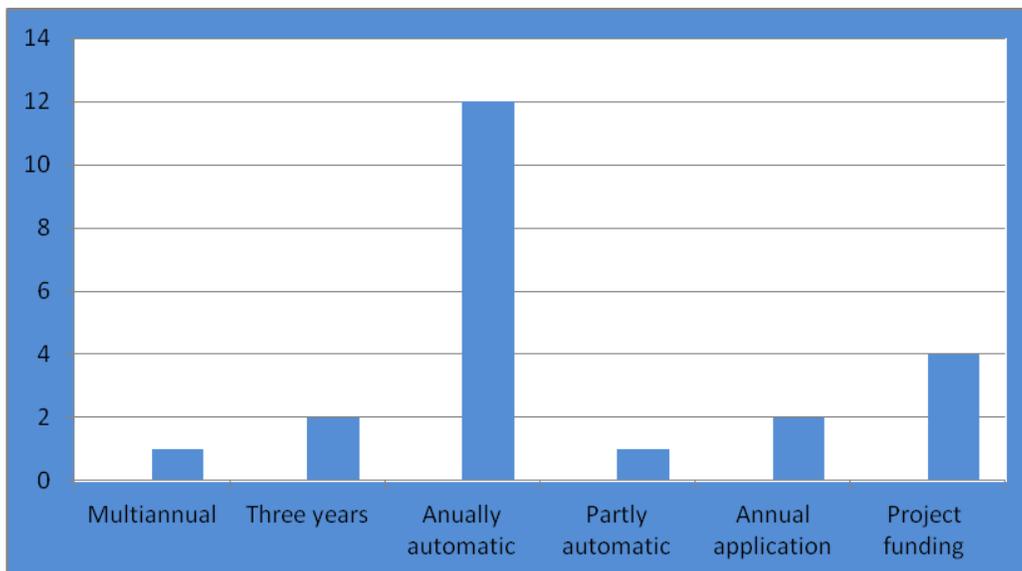
A total of 27 channels fund the twenty two organisations. Diagram Four presents the frequency of the various funding sources. “International” refers to the Nordic Council of Ministers, providing regular funding for the Finnish organisation FILI.

Diagram 4: Sources of funding



Ministry = national government ministry or department / Other gov't = another body funded by the government / Private = private sponsorship and foundations / Parliament = national parliament / Lottery = national lottery and gambling taxes / International = international public body

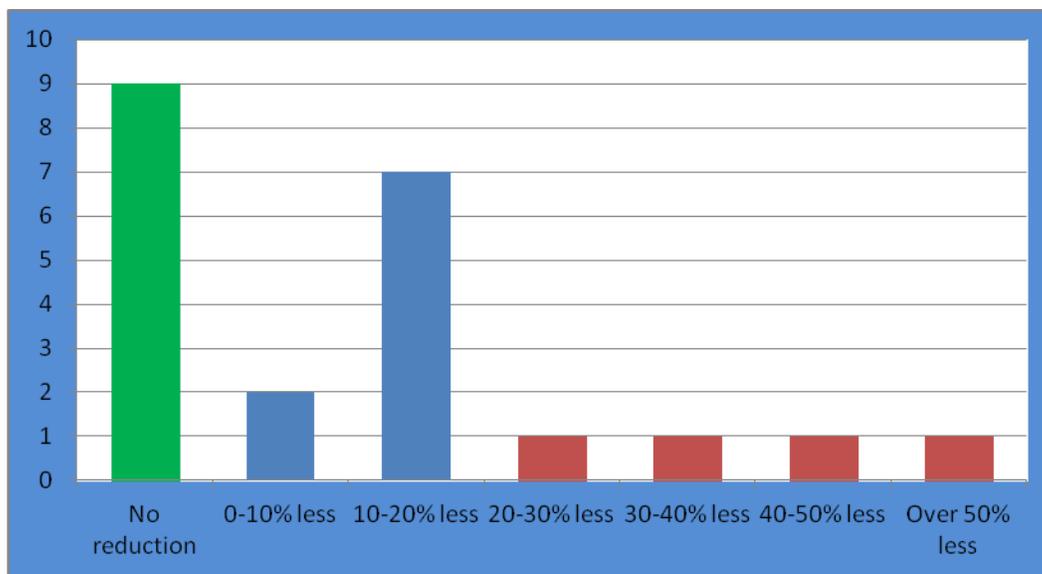
Diagram 5: Predictability of funding



The issue of the security of basic funding is complicated. Twelve organisations responded that there was on-going, guaranteed and automatic funding. In 2010 only 28% gave an affirmative answer. The great majority of the respondents were the same in both surveys and the question was formulated identically. The huge difference excludes measurement error. One explanation may be that literary promotion organisations (and programmes in large structures) have managed to convince the decision-makers about the importance of continuity, and that examples of other countries' best practices has played a role.

There may, however, be considerable differences in the degree of predictability and reliability between centres whose funding is guaranteed, and between those obliged to follow the route of project funding. The ability to implement longer term strategic planning of activities is really at stake. The Dutch organisation represents a unique case whereby they apply every four years; thus, at least at the beginning of a period, offering planning security for such a time span. (The Latvian and Welsh organisations have somewhat similar schemes covering three years.)

Diagram 6: Changes in funding in the past two years

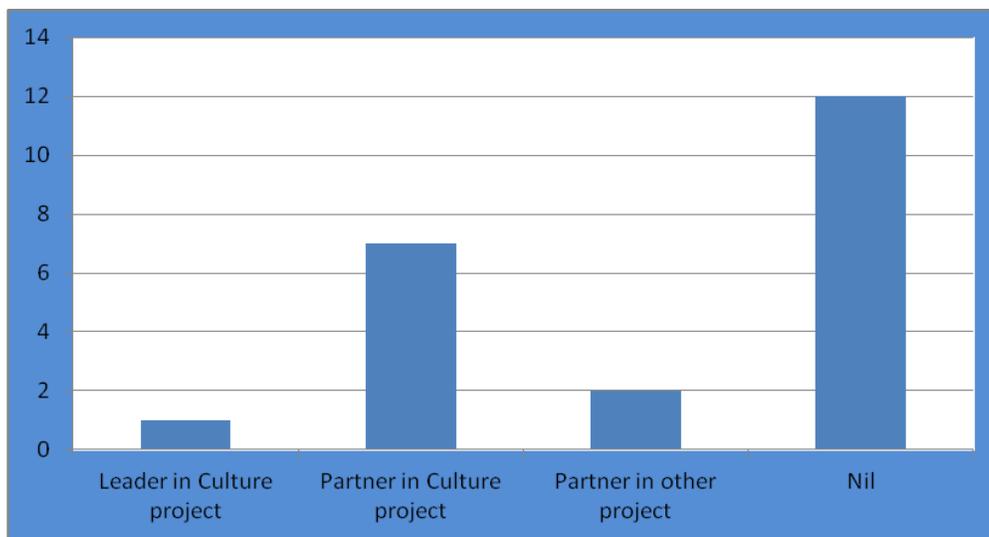


Predictability applies to the security of funding but not to the amounts. The financial crisis that currently plagues Europe has brought about austerity measures in the public sphere across the continent. These have hit the public cultural sector particularly hard. Against this background, is it therefore particularly reassuring to see that on *Diagram 6* the tallest column is formed by the nine organisations that have not undergone reduction in their funding over the two years since the outbreak of the financial crisis. Not one of them could, however, claim to have received increased resources in the past two years, except for minor adjustments due to restructuring or reorganisation, involving additional or one-off projects which rarely represent a real increase.

Nevertheless, thirteen other organisations have reported reductions of various amounts. This group includes organisations whose status has changed as a result of restructuring prompted by financial cuts to the culture budget: the Dutch (a slight reduction), the Lithuanian (over 20% less), and the Hungarian centre, whose budget has shrunk by more than 50%. The remaining ten organisations with reduced funding, could however continue working with the same legal status. Altogether, four institutions have had to cope with funding cuts in excess of 20%.

Various schemes from the European Commission are available as additional sources of funding. Half of the responding organisations have made use of these opportunities in the past two years. This does not include the literary translation strand of the EC Culture Programme which provides the same service, and for which the national organisations are virtual “competitors”. The eight centres that have been funded by the Culture Programme participated in cultural co-operation projects promoting literature in general and translation in particular (one of them, the Dutch centre as leader of such an international project). Two more organisations were involved in similar collaborations in other EU programmes.

Diagram 7: Participation in EU programmes



The essence of this kind of involvement in EU programmes is not the acquisition of additional financing. The funds of the Commission are not spent on the core national functions of the organisations but cover the additional activities that they fulfil in conjunction with promoting European literatures. (The Croatian response made a specific point about the multiplicative effects of increased participation in multilateral projects.)

Translation grants

Seventeen organisations reported figures regarding applications and awards in 2010 and 2011. Out of the 3536 applications 78.6% were awarded, with little overall difference from one year to the next (although not without individual changes, highlighted in *Diagram 8*).

The changes in *Diagram 8* can only be assessed in light of absolute numbers (see *Diagram 9*). The Dutch centre supported the largest number of titles, reaching more than 500 in two years; Lithuanians awarded the fewest. (NORLA, the Norwegian centre, provided data for 2011 only, with 383 grants making them the leader for that year.) Adding up the output available from 18 centres we came to an odd average: no change, as seen in both diagrams.

Diagram 8: Changes in awarded grants from 2010 to 2011

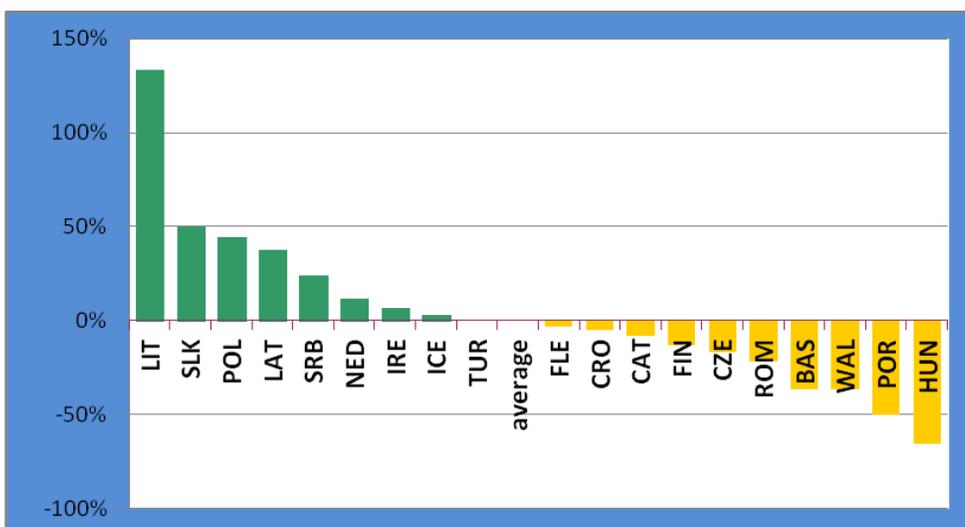
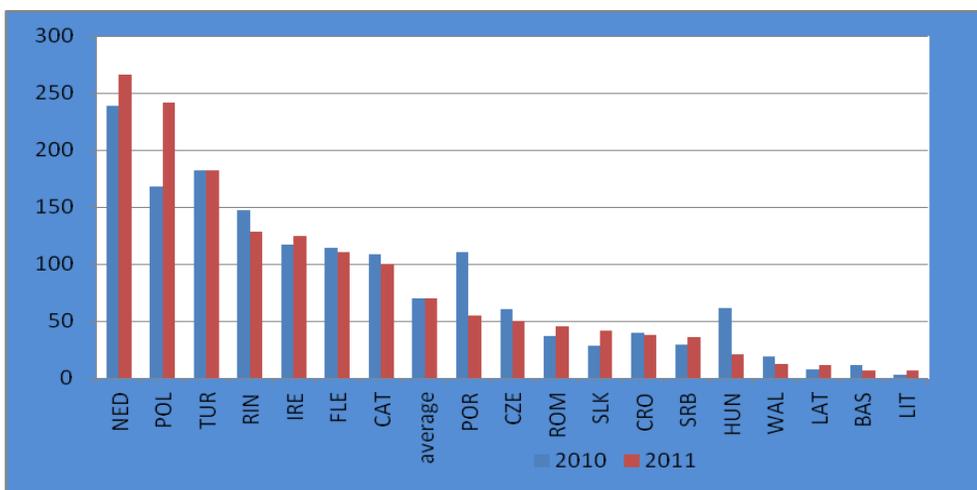


Diagram 9: Number of awarded translation grants

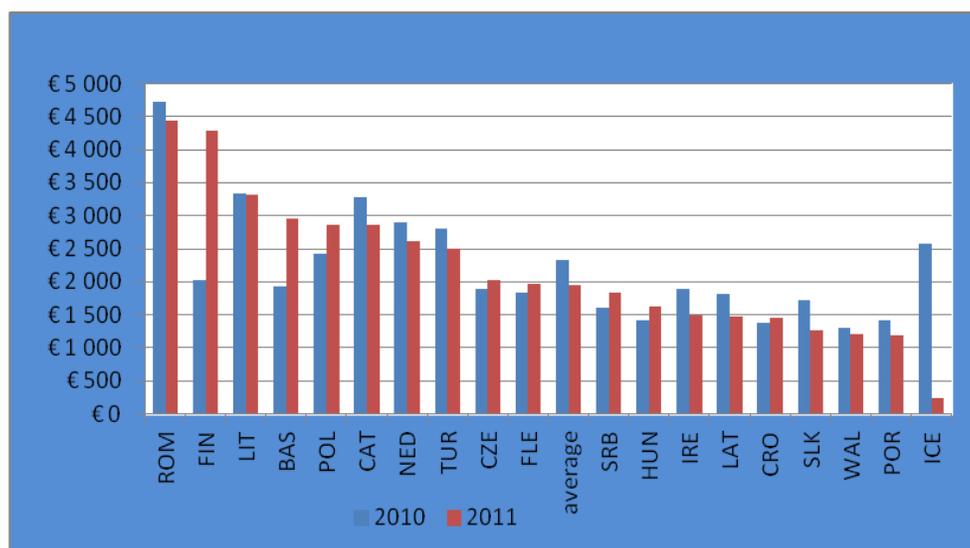


As to application success rates, the Basque organisation accepted 100% of requests in both years, and the Dutch rate was over 98%, too. At the other end of the scale Lithuanians and Latvians could fund only 30% of the applications in 2010 - this rate grew to 35 and 46% respectively by 2011.

In spite of the visible oscillations in the figures of the seventeen organisations on *Diagram 10*, the total sum awarded increased by four percent from 2010 to 2011. Behind the average are decreases in nine cases on the one hand, and the sharp increases in Finland, the Basque Country and, to a lesser degree, Poland.

From the overall numbers, the average size of grants can be also deduced. This has slightly decreased, from €2336 in 2010 to €1951 in the following year. The averages awarded by the Croatian, Portuguese and Welsh centres remained below €1500 in both years; and the unit expense of the translation grants in Lithuania should be seen together with the extremely few titles supported in 2010-2011.

Diagram 10: Euro amount of awarded translation grants



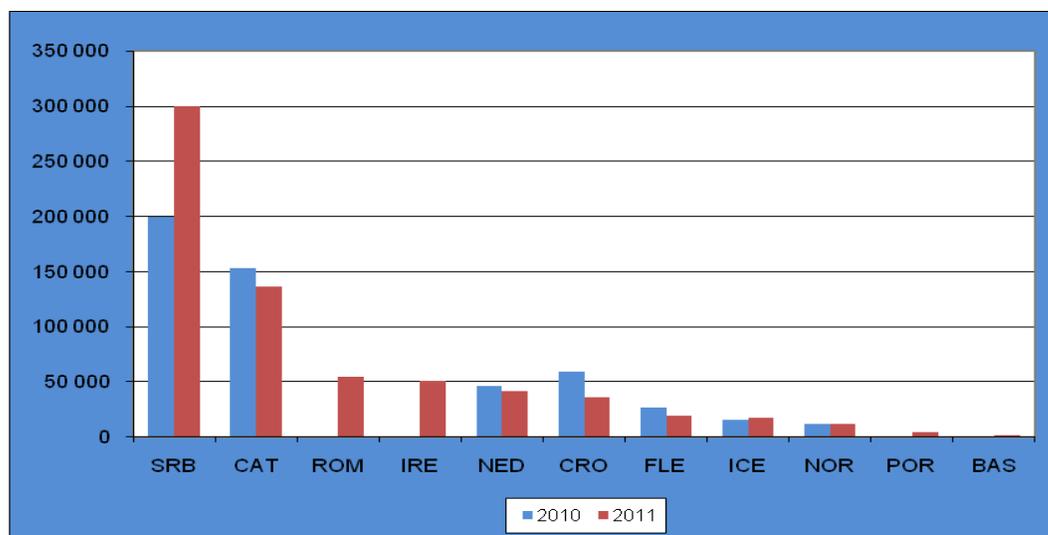
The services of the national literary promotion centres also include the financing of sample translations. Four organisations have, however, provided data on both years and on each aspect of this activity. The Finnish, Norwegian and Polish organisations appear to focus on sample translations. We received complete figures from Cracow only: the Book Institute spent approximately €15 000 on samples in both years, financing 96 cases with an average of €320.

In 2011 seven organisations reported paying altogether €56 600 in grants for 202 sample translations, which represents a unit expense of €275.

The last diagram shows the amounts spent on promotion. The Serbian Ministry of Culture has confirmed that the relatively high figure includes amounts that include expenses spent on promotion (including

authors travel, marketing of books etc.) beyond translation grants. The differences in the numbers call for more precise specification of this budgetary item in the future.

Diagram 11: Euro amount of promotion expenses



Looking into the future

The last questions in the survey enquired about the organisations’ expectations with regard to the near future, and were answered by sixteen organisations. They were confronted with the following statement: “Some think the worst cuts are still coming. With regard to your organisation this is...”. Only two responded with “...fully true.” Three other agencies were slightly concerned about their financial prospects, while nine (a slight majority) expressed careful optimism.

Three national organisations showed confidence about their future (“the worst is definitely not coming...”). Here is the essence of the most positive comments:

- We shall be guest of honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2014.
- The increase in the export of literature in recent years may result in an increase in governmental funding.
- Our government has confirmed its confidence... we think that the future looks quite bright, and we don’t expect to make reductions in 2013 and later.

or simply:

- We expect to provide more grants for translating from our literature.

Phrases that suggest careful optimism:

- We hope that everything will remain as before.
- Perhaps we will have a bit less money, but not much.

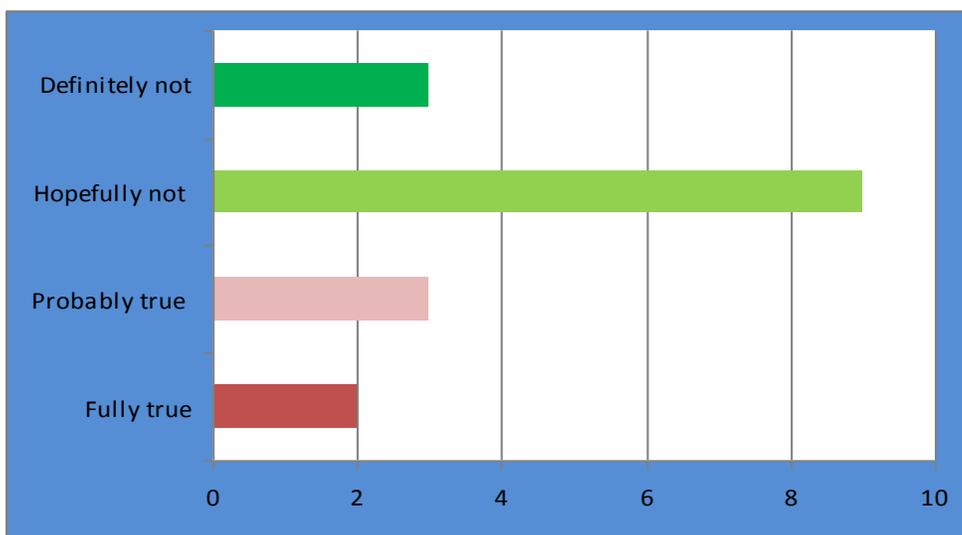
However, even the cautiously optimistic expressed concern:

- There will be legislative elections, and the situation may change.
- We will be in a position to work with smaller funds.
- The budget in 2013 will be reduced by some 15%.
- Reductions will be made in staff size / personnel and in authors' grants.

Finally, expressions of the darkest prospect:

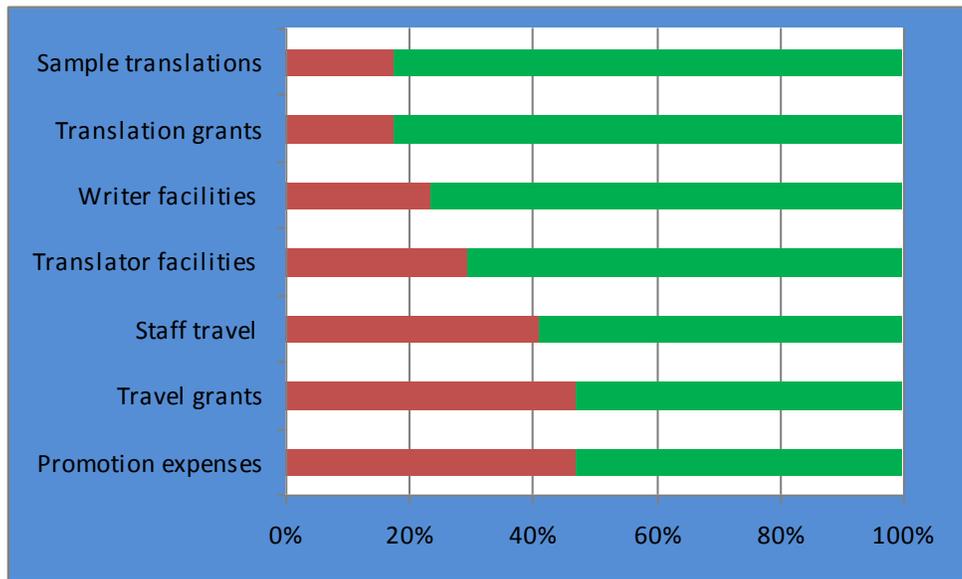
- We are facing a rapidly and deeply changing situation, and we must rethink our aims and tools from A to Z.
- We will see staff reductions of 28%, equalling a loss of 9 full-time jobs.
- We expect not only cuts, but complete annihilation.

Diagram 12: Organisations' comments on "The worst is still coming"



Nearly half of the sixteen organisations (47% in *Diagram 13*) believe that budget cuts will result in reductions in promotional expenses and the number of travel grants that they can offer to translators, writers or publishers. Almost as many (seven, i.e. 41%) expect reduced opportunities for staff travel. Five and four organisations think translators' and writers' facilities respectively will have to be reduced. The vast majority hope to be able to maintain the level of their core activity: support for translation.

Diagram 13: Services where reduction is expected in 2013



Conclusions

The small sample involved in the earliest survey in 2006, and the partial concurrence (15 organisations in this survey participated also in 2010) allows for some conclusions about trends. The recurrent LAF surveys show that although austerity measures in public funding (and the likely shrinking of book sales) have resulted in decreases in some aspects of the activities of literature promotion centres in Europe, the past few years have nonetheless seen institutional consolidation and certainly a diversification of their operations.

Slight decreases are recorded in the number of staff travels and in the average size of translation grants given to a publisher (still the most frequent and typical “unit” of the operation of these centres). Most often the effect of the crisis is manifested in stagnation in funding, which in turn is likely to affect travel and promotion expenses.

On the other hand the increasing predictability of public funding suggests a growing consolidation of this kind of institution across Europe. Even more apparent are the tendencies of diversification in the operation of the surveyed organisations. A few years earlier the provision of information (with an accent on the publishing printed material) was in focus, whereas now a more complex and dynamic set of activities is the norm. In addition to foreign publishers and translators, the range of beneficiaries and stakeholders is broader, with increased attention to local publishers, provision of facilities to writers (both local and foreign), and organisation of events, as well as support for literature with a minority status.