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Use of the European Culture Programme for translation between Irish and English

1 Background: The Culture Programme 2007–2013

The Culture Programme is now well-established as one of the European Union's (EU) flagship initiatives. The current Culture Programme, which runs from 2007 to 2013, has a total budget for the period of approximately €400 million, providing generally between €43 million and €58 million each year¹. The programme covers all cultural activities, except for audiovisual activities which are covered instead by the EU Media Programme. The Culture Programme has three objectives:

- To promote **cross-border mobility** of those working in the cultural sector
- To encourage the **transnational circulation** of cultural and artistic output
- To foster **intercultural dialogue**

The programme seeks to achieve these objectives by providing funding through a series of grants programmes, and fostering collaborative links between member states.

¹ European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture. 6.5.10. *Culture Programme 2007–2013: Programme Guide*: p14: <http://nia1.me/he>

The programme is structured around three strands. These are as follows:

- **Strand 1:** Support for cultural actions
- **Strand 2:** Support for cultural bodies
- **Strand 3:** Support for analysis and dissemination activities

2 Use of the Translation Strand between Irish and English

Strand 1.2.2 is entitled 'Literary Translation', the purpose of which is:

...to stimulate the widest circulation of European literature among European citizens by supporting the translation of high-quality European literature into the different languages of the countries participating in the Programme.

Proposals can be made for between one and ten works of fiction to be translated from one European language (the source language) into another European language (the target language).

Only works of fiction are eligible, including works of any genre, such as novels, plays, poetry or comic strips. Applications can be made from public or private publishing houses, or publishing groups, and must be registered in one of the countries taking part in the programme.

Eligible languages are the official languages of the countries taking part in the programme, plus Latin and ancient Greek. The official languages referred to in this case are 'the official languages as defined by the Constitution or by the basic law of the respective country'. Thirty-two European languages are listed as 'eligible', including both English and Irish (referred to as Gaelic)².

The Culture Programme documentation states that translation of national literature from one into another official language of the same country is not eligible. It therefore follows that in the Republic of Ireland, since Irish is named as the national and first official language in Article 8 of the 1937 Constitution with English as the second official language, that works cannot be translated between the two languages. Indeed, the programme documentation mentions this example specifically in stating that³,

For example, the translation into Irish Gaelic by an Irish publisher of a book written in English by an Irish author would not be an eligible project.

² EU Executive Agency: Education, Audiovisual and Culture. 'Strand 1.2.2: Literary translation projects': <http://nia1.me/hg> Accessed 14.10.11.

³ European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture. 6.5.10. *Culture Programme 2007–2013: Programme Guide*: p14: <http://nia1.me/he>

This prohibition would be the same for other member states which have more than one official language such as Finland (Finnish and Swedish), Belgium (Dutch, French and German), or Malta (Maltese and English).

However, the situation for applications coming from Northern Ireland is different from the Republic of Ireland. As Irish is *not* named as an official language in the UK (including Northern Ireland), applications will be eligible for consideration between Irish and English⁴. It should be noted that a number of other criteria must also be satisfied, including the following:

- Only translation expenses are eligible.
- The original works must be written by authors who are nationals of, or residents in, a country taking part in the programme.
- Works must have been previously published.
- Works must not have been previously translated into the target language.
- Selected applicants will have to demonstrate that they own the rights to the literary work(s) proposed for translation.
- The duration of the project shall not exceed 24 months.
- The grant amount requested for a project must be between €2,000 and €60,000.

⁴ This conclusion has been confirmed by the EU Cultural Contact Point UK, based at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London, during a telephone conversation on 13.10.11.