

NAIROBI 1976

On 22 November 1976 the UNESCO General Conference adopted the Recommendation on the legal protection of Translators and Translations and the practical means to improve the Status of Translators. Commonly known as the 'Nairobi Recommendation', it was the first official document published by an international organization to raise awareness among the people of all nations of the issues relating to the translator's profession. It advocated 'assimilating translators to authors' and having the name of the translator 'appear in a prominent place on all published copies of the translation'. The full text is available on the website of the International Federation of Translators (www.fit-ift.org), of which the SFT is a founding member.

ABOUT THE SFT

With over 1,600 members, the SFT is the largest professional translator organization in France. It represents the many different professions that make up today's translation market, from salaried and self-employed language service providers to court and conference interpreters, and technical and literary translators.

Serving translators and the translation industry since 1947

ABOUT THE CODE

In 2009, after much reflection involving a large number of its members, the French Society of Translators (SFT) published the definitive version of its Code of Professional Conduct.

All members are now required to respect every aspect of it as they go about their professional activities. The code contains the key principles of good practice to which all translators and interpreters can and should subscribe. It is a statement of intent that describes the principles, obligations and respect that should be expected at every level of the translation industry from both providers and users.

The SFT's Code of Professional Conduct is also available in French, German, Italian and Spanish.

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Code of Professional Conduct

SOCIÉTÉ FRANÇAISE
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Preamble

This code of practice governs the professional conduct of the members of the French Society of Translators, hereafter referred to as the 'SFT'. Members of the SFT, hereafter referred to as 'translators', agree to adhere in every circumstance to this code and the principles, duties and professional standards it contains.

1. General principles

a. Honesty and Integrity

Translators shall carry out their work with honesty and integrity, these two qualities being the foundation of trust between them and their clients.

Translators shall not accept work that would demean them or their profession.

b. Accuracy

Translators shall endeavour to reproduce the message to be conveyed as accurately as possible.

c. Confidentiality

Translators shall treat as confidential and protect the confidentiality of any information or document conveyed to them for the purposes of their work; however translators may breach this rule of confidentiality if the owner authorizes them to do so, if for some reason this is required by law or if they must do so for their own defence.

2. Legal obligations

Translators shall abide by the laws of the country where their place of business is domiciled, in particular those related to social welfare and taxation.

3. Obligations to clients

a. Translators shall at all times honour the trust placed in them by the client. They shall refuse to undertake work which they cannot execute or have executed to a satisfactory standard and they shall inform and secure the approval of their client before subcontracting any or all of their work to other translators.

b. Translators shall refrain from any form of misleading advertising, such as claiming titles, qualifications or expertise they do not possess.

c. Translators shall endeavour at all times to deliver an appropriate standard of work to their clients. To do this, they shall:

- I. translate solely into their native language or a language in which they are fluent;
- II. possess the special knowledge and skills required to complete their work;
- III. research thoroughly the subject of the communication to be translated in order to produce an appropriate translation;
- IV. maintain and develop their knowledge and professional skills on a continuous basis; and
- V. refuse to accept unrealistic deadlines.

d. Translators shall always advise their clients as to the most appropriate manner in which to accomplish the translation.

4. Obligations to colleagues

a. Translators shall recognize all professional translators as their colleagues and treat them fairly and with respect. When working as a team, translators shall respect their colleagues' interests and relationship with their clients.

b. Translators shall be remunerated according to their level of experience, training and expertise, the complexity of the work to be translated, the amount of research required, the deadlines to be met and any expenses, investments and costs that may be incurred. Translators shall refrain from granting rebates or discounts and soliciting or accepting fees that would create unfair competition, except in the case of occasional and voluntary services delivered to charitable works or organizations.

5. Compliance with other codes of practice

Translators shall comply with the Nairobi Recommendation (UNESCO, 1976). Translators shall respect intellectual property laws. Translators are entitled to copyright over their work. Translators shall also comply with any rules governing best practice which may be applicable in the subject field and in the country in which they practise.

6. Respect for the profession and for the SFT

a. Translators shall abstain from any behaviour that may demean their profession or the SFT.

b. Translators shall not accept any instruction from a client or an employer that could be construed as a breach of this code of professional conduct.

NB : This document is provided for information only. The original French version, signed by all members of the SFT, is the authoritative text and can be downloaded from www.sft.fr.