

**TRAFUT**  
**(Training for the Future)**

On 15 and 16 March 2012 our Board Member Vânia Costa Ramos participated in the second TRAFUT workshop in Madrid.

The event was part of an EU-financed project coordinated by EULITA (European Legal Interpreters and Translators Association) and Lessius University College Antwerp. Its aim is to address the urgent challenge to implement substantial changes in their national systems for the provision of translation and interpreting in criminal proceedings, following of the approval of Directive 2010/64/EU.

This workshop was aimed at translators, interpreters, lawyers, judges, prosecutors, judicial and governmental staff from Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Malta, Portugal, Romania, and Spain, but there were also people from other countries participating.

The various aspects covered by the Directive (namely Articles 2, 3, 5 and 6) were covered in the different modules. The implementation problems and possibilities were discussed by representatives of the Commission and the Council, the Case-Law of the ECtHR was presented (click [here](#) for a list of case-law summaries), there were many modules on different models of translators/interpreters registries and also on technical aspects of translation and interpretation (with practical exercises). There were also interventions from the perspective of the defence.

Vânia Costa Ramos presented a contribution (which will soon be available on our website) entitled “Training for effective communication through legal interpreters and translators (Article 6) – The defence counsel’s perspective”.

For the purpose of contributing to best practices and to a more effective communication through legal interpreters and translators, **EULITA and ECBA have jointly developed a few guidelines which have been set out on a [Vademecum](#).**

This Vademecum – which is built upon practical experience and is a mere first attempt to contribute to smooth cooperation between interpreters, translators, judges, prosecutors and lawyers – was presented and the Madrid TRAFUT workshop by Vânia Costa Ramos.

The presentation gave some examples from the practice of legal interpretation and translation in the Portuguese courts which demonstrate the need to establish best practices in the field.

Essentially, Vânia underlined that from a defence counsel’s perspective, it is indispensable to guarantee one fundamental principle: that the courts must be able **to**

*understand and be understood* by the people who come before them, in order to ensure effective access to justice.

In this sense, the word “court” must be interpreted extensively, including not only judges, but prosecuting authorities and defence counsels, as well as all of the procedural acts (the file itself, production of evidence, oral pleadings, etc.).

It was therefore underlined that best practices have to be developed in order to allow the courts to assess evidence in a foreign language in an accurate and effective manner – i.e. *to understand the persons and the evidence that comes before them*.

But best practices also need to be developed in order to ensure that any person, and in particular a defendant in a criminal case, is put into an equal position to the persons who speak the court’s language. The effective use of interpreters and translators will balance the vulnerable position of a person who does not understand the court’s language, allowing an effective criminal defence and therefore ensuring that this person has access to *a fair trial* under the same conditions as any other citizen, i.e. allowing *them to be understood in a meaningful way*.

The next Workshops will be held in Helsinki, Finland (13-15 June 2012) and in Antwerp, Belgium (18-20 October 2012). If you are interested in participating, you will find more information available [here](#).

**Vânia Costa Ramos** ([vcr@advogados.in](mailto:vcr@advogados.in))

**European Criminal Bar Association** ([www.ecba.org](http://www.ecba.org))