

FIT matters

PEM's manifesto for FIT Europe 2017-2020

To us, Europe is a unified cradle of ideas, cultures and languages that cannot be divided by the internal borders of the European Union. It is a space of coexistence, diversity and variety, where notions of division have been left behind. This is the Europe that FIT Europe's vision, strategy and actions should reflect.

By selecting John O'Shea for FIT Europe's Board 2017-2020, the professional associations will be voting for a truly European colleague, who, both on a professional and personal level, can effectively address issues concerning all European translators and interpreters, such as building stronger communication channels between the European North and South, promoting less dominant languages, promoting the interests of translators within and outside our continent, establishing ongoing education opportunities and defending translators' rights.

For us at PEM, synergies are the only option. Our actions on a national level have proven to be effective only through collaborations characterised by integral visions. In particular, we believe that the best –and typically the only viable– solutions come forth through smart, well prepared and, above all, achievable collaborations, and not through individual players or unilateral decisions.

Our Association wishes to see the European linguistic "South" expand beyond national borders and strengthen its international collaboration, reaping long-term benefits for all of our colleagues. In particular, with John on FIT Europe's board we will raise issues concerning the languages of the Balkans and the South before EU institutions, thus making significant steps toward protecting and promoting them. PEM is committed to supporting John O'Shea in relation to any initiative by us or our colleagues.

Our intention to form outgoing and multifaceted collaborations is not limited to removing artificial barriers that divide our profession. Our course, things so far have taught us that a self-referential approach in the field of translation leads nowhere. As our profession builds communication bridges between languages and cultures, our Associations and Federations must operate as communication channels with other professional fields. John O'Shea will use his knowledge and network in the academic, legal, business and art world, to work towards establishing institutions and actions for FIT Europe at a European and international level.

Our Southern European and Balkan identities help us understand and experience the importance of establishing communication with the peripheral regions of the Middle East, Africa, Caucasus and the Black Sea. Initiating synergies with associations in those regions will enrich FIT's activities and lead the way to accessing new markets, where translation from and into European languages is much needed. Additionally, such collaborations will help us better understand and eventually form a common field of action to address urgent translation issues brought about by the flow of immigration, a cause for concern throughout Europe. PEM, armed with a strong vision, maturity and an established set of tools, can forge stronger collaborations with our colleagues working in Asian and African languages.

A main pillar of John O'Shea's action plan is education. At present translators are not merely required to have deep knowledge of their working languages and fields of specialisation; they are also obliged to constantly inform themselves about translation technology and seek costly training in translation tools. Ongoing training and professionalisation in the international field can be done

effectively only through collaboration between European associations. United, we can make education a source of funding for FIT Europe itself, achieve access to better-quality, ongoing education for our regional members and find more effective sources of outside funding to expand and improve training programmes.

John O'Shea will work to update the strategic position of our professions.

Among others, this may be achieved through:

- a. better and more regular funding by FIT Mundus and the EU
- b. regular collaboration with FIT Mundus and other regional associations
- c. initiatives for new and stable self-funding sources for FIT Europe
- d. increasing regular FIT membership within Europe and neighbouring countries
- e. creating stable, visible and transparent relationships with the EU, as it is both the most important client of translation services in our neighbourhood and the best means of defending our sector's rights.

Concluding, we wish to note that the idea of a continuously-shrinking FIT Europe locked in tight linguistic, cultural and symbolic borders is inconceivable. FIT Europe's course underscores the need for greater visibility and highlights the areas needing improvement. John O'Shea will work to make FIT Europe a constant, lively forum providing both for its regular members within the EU as well as other associations that can potentially become members within and outside Europe, creating an open, flexible, and united linguistic continent.