

STRIDON

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CALL FOR PAPERS

Responding to the 21st-century Migration Challenge: Community Interpreting in the European Periphery

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Presentation of the topic

In the 2010s and 2020s, Europe has witnessed a marked increase in the number of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants trying to enter or cross the continent. The first phase of what has come to be termed the “European migrant crisis” or “European refugee crisis” (Schuster & Baixauli-Olmos 2018, 734; cf., Filmer & Federici 2018) involved people from the Middle East (especially Syria), countries further East (e.g., Afghanistan) and from North and Equatorial Africa attempting to enter Europe from its southern and south-eastern sea and land borders. They were escaping from outbreaks of wars and internal conflicts, ongoing political instability, economic uncertainties, and the impacts of global warming (Šveda & Tužinská 2021). Sizeable movements along the so-called “Eastern Mediterranean” or “Western Balkan” routes coincided with an increase in northward and westward migration from Albania and Kosovo. While some sources date the beginning of this wave to 2015, a year in which around 4.7 million migrants entered European Union countries (Schuster & Baixauli-Olmos 2018), it should be remembered that Turkey, at Europe’s south-eastern corner, had been dealing with a mass influx of people fleeing the Syrian Civil War ever since the summer of 2011. The second major migration phase came from Eastern Europe itself. This was sparked by the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, which pushed significant numbers to seek refuge in Europe and elsewhere. As of November 2024, more than six million displaced Ukrainians were scattered across Europe (UNRIC 2024).

As the size and diversity of the refugee and migrant communities increased, so too did the need for linguistic and cultural mediation in receiving and transit countries. Interpreters were vital at all stages of the migration process and in multiple settings. At the very beginning, this meant in rescue ships, reception centres, reception camps, official ports of entry and local government institutions; later on, migrants would find themselves needing the services of interpreters in classic “community interpreting” settings like hospitals, clinics, schools, police stations and courts.

The special issue will focus on how the challenge of providing urgently needed community interpreting in response to these two migration phases was met in South-Eastern and East Central European countries. The geographical area covered ranges from the countries that were the first landing-points for the migrants that arrived in or before 2015, primarily Greece and Turkey, through the countries which saw a sharp increase in asylum applications in 2015, like Hungary, to countries where a relatively small number of migrants settled but which a much large number passed through on their way to seemingly more hospitable destinations in Western and Northern Europe (above all, Germany); these include Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia. We understand “East Central

Europe” to denote the countries that border on Ukraine and that were thus the first to experience the mass exodus in the aftermath of the Russian invasion; this means above all Czechia, Hungary, Moldova, Poland and Slovakia, but also North-East European countries, such as Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia. What makes our geographical focus particularly interesting is that the societies and polities in question were mostly not used to large-scale immigration, especially from outside Europe. On the contrary, countries as different as Turkey and Poland had traditionally been countries of emigration but were now also experiencing considerable immigration (Kirişçi 2010; Komornicki, Szejgiec-Kolenda & Czapiewski 2024). What is more, because of local traditions of ardent monolingualism and the prevalence of ethnically-rooted populist nationalism, the region witnessed considerable resistance to immigration (Šveda & Tužinská 2021) and to measures, including community interpreting, designed to facilitate migrants’ access to public services.

At the outset of the migration crises, few countries in the impacted area possessed a suitable infrastructure for training, accrediting, recruiting, assigning and regulating community interpreters. Thus, a conspicuous feature of South-Eastern/East Central European responses was widespread recourse to *ad hoc* solutions, such as the deployment of non-professional interpreters and mediators (Čemerin & Črnko 2019; Schuster & Baixauli-Olmos 2018), the use of pivot languages and *linguae francae*, and the deployment of machine translation. Another reason why untrained, volunteer interpreters were relied upon so much was that, in many places, few professional interpreters possessed the language combinations and cultural competence that matched the needs of the migrant communities. One thinks, for instance, of the lack of interpreters in the area capable of providing interpretation between the vernacular and Arabic, Farsi or Pashto.

Literature on the topic has been emerging in the last few years (e.g., Čemerin & Črnko 2019; Federici & Declercq 2020; Pokorn & Mikolič Južnič 2020; Polat Ulaş 2021; Skourmalla & Sounoglou 2021; Šveda 2021; Nuč Blažič, Iacono & Orthaber 2023; Šveda & Štefková 2023; Eser & Lai 2024; Iacono, Heinisch & Pöllabauer 2024). However, so far no publication has been devoted to scrutinising and comparing how the countries of South-East and East Central Europe faced up to the new and urgent communicative challenge. The aim of the special issue is to bring together original papers that describe, explain and discuss how community interpreting was deployed (or even initiated) in this relatively peripheral area of Europe in response to the two abovementioned post-2015 migration crises. Contributions may choose to take a macro-approach and survey developments, infrastructure, and initiatives within a single country. Alternatively, they may focus on individual cases, such as the work of a particular NGO involved in coordinating interpreting provision or an interpreter training program introduced by an institution of higher or further education. Other contributors might prefer to compare developments or cases in multiple countries in the area or take a diachronic approach, tracing a subject within one territory across one of the migration phases or even drawing a comparison between the two phases.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to, the following:

- New community interpreting needs and practices as a challenge for local traditions of translation and interpreting.
- Community interpreting policies in one or more of the countries in the area.
- Community interpreting and legislation, both on the EU level and within individual countries.
- Community interpreting provision and practices across different sectors and institutions.
- Interpreters’ associations’ responses to the migration challenge.
- Training initiatives in higher or further education.
- Non-professionals and volunteer networks (including online networks) in the provision of community interpreting.

- *Ad hoc* forms of community interpreting (e.g., use of pivot languages or *linguae francae*, “crowd-sourcing” (Filmer & Federici 2018), machine translation/interpreting).
- Remote interpreting in the migrant crisis.
- Ethical challenges of community interpreting.
- Psychological impact of interpreting for asylum-seekers and other migrants.
- Working conditions of community interpreters.

Production schedule

Publication of call for abstracts:	January 2025
Deadline for abstract submission:	March 2025
Confirmation of acceptance:	March 2025
First version from authors:	August 2025
Peer-review:	August 2025-September 2025
First version returned to authors:	September 2025
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Final editing by guest-editors	October-November 2025
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Submission of abstracts/manuscripts:

Abstracts should be submitted to the guest editors’ email addresses.

Manuscripts should be submitted through the STRIDON homepage and should follow the author guidelines available here: <https://journals.uni-lj.si/stridon/about/submissions>

Guest editors

Jonathan Maurice Ross

London-born Jonathan Ross studied German and Politics at Edinburgh University and completed his doctorate in German Literature at King’s College London. He is now an associate professor in the Department of Translation and Interpreting Studies at Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, where he teaches both applied and research-oriented courses. He has also contributed to in-service training for community interpreters in Turkey, especially for interpreters working largely with asylum-seekers and irregular migrants. His research interests include telephone interpreting, community and non-professional interpreting in Turkey, and audio-visual translation. Articles by him have appeared in *The Translator*, *Target*, *Across Languages and Cultures*, *Parallèles* and other international and Turkish journals and anthologies. He has also translated, or edited translations of, 13 books in Turkish, as well as numerous Turkish films, plays, short stories, articles and folk songs.

Tamara Mikolič Južnič

Dr Tamara Mikolič Južnič is Associate Professor at the Department of Translation of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana (Slovenia). She was the lead researcher in two EP projects on the dissemination of best practices in conference interpreter training between EU and non-EU languages. She is permanent co-editor of *STRIDON. Journal of Studies in Translation and Interpreting*. An experienced editor, she has authored two volumes, co-edited a number of publications in Slovenia and internationally, as well as published articles in renowned journals (*Translation and Interpreting Studies, Perspectives, Across Languages and Cultures, The Interpreter and Translator Trainer*, etc.). Her research interests include community interpreting, translation history, translator and interpreter training and corpus-based contrastive linguistics. Currently, she teaches courses in undergraduate, post-graduate and doctoral programmes and heads the chair in Translation Studies within the Department of Translation at the University of Ljubljana.

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