

# Institute of Translation and Interpreting (IUED)

## JOINT TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING DEVELOPMENT EFFORT IN THAILAND AND THE ASEAN REGION (TIDE)

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# ASEAN MTI: Dealing with multilingualism

## INITIATIVE FOR MULTILINGUALISM, TRANSLATION, INTERPRETING



### 10 countries, 12 languages:

- Brunei Darussalam: *Malay, E*
- Cambodia: *Khmer*
- Indonesia: *Indonesian*
- Lao PDR: *Lao*
- Malaysia: *Malay, E, Chinese, Tamil*
- Myanmar: *Myanmar*
- Philippines: *Filipino, E, Spanish*
- Singapore: *E, Malay, Mandarin, Tamil*
- Thailand: *Thai*
- Viet Nam: *Vietnamese*

# ASEAN MTI: Looking at EU statistics

## MULTILINGUALISM VS. ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA

- **Fairer:** English only would advantage a minority of countries (e.g. England and Ireland in the EU; Singapore and the Philippines in ASEAN)
- **More efficient:** all members/citizens have equal access to documentation etc.
- **Less costly:** non-English member states would need to spend money on English language learning & teaching (industry)
- The EU is the largest employer of translators and interpreters worldwide and yet its language services cost only **2 Euro** per citizen per year
- Grin, F. and Gazzola, M. 2013. Assessing efficiency and fairness in multilingual communication: theory and application through indicators. In: Berthoud, A-C., Grin, F. and Lüdi, G. eds. *Exploring the dynamics of multilingualism*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 365–386.

# ASEAN MTI: Managing half the EU languages

## EU PROBLEM, WHICH ASEAN DOES NOT HAVE

28 member states and 24 official languages -> total of 552 translation combinations (only half the languages for ASEAN)

### Chronology

- EU policy of *full multilingualism* and French as a lingua franca in the institutions until 1995
- Joining of Finland and Sweden brings in more English and a need for pragmatism
- 2004 enlargement leads to *controlled full multilingualism* (*multilingualisme maîtrisé*)
- Further enlargements combined with economic crises -> *cost-efficient multilingualism*, giving English a predominant role in the institutions



# ASEAN MTI: Sharing the EU experience

## AIMS OF EU POLICY OF MULTILINGUALISM AND DGT/I

- Promote economic growth, social progress and cultural development
- Improve mobility, job opportunities and active citizenship (through language competences)
- Give access to the public to all official documents (published in official languages of all Member States)
- Give access to EU institutions to general public, government departments and interest groups
- Enable everyone in EU to contribute to discussions in the language of their choice (as a matter of transparency and democracy)
- Cultivate multilingualism as a (multi-)national heritage and a key to successful communication
- Improve quality of T&I training to get highly skilled translators and interpreters
- Have multilingualism as an asset: practically in doing business as well as mentally in terms of cognitive development

# ASEAN MTI: Managing multilingualism

## ASEAN AND AFTA

First principle of [ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia \(TAC\)](#):

*1) Mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, and national identity of all nations.*

[ASEAN Free Trade Area \(AFTA\)](#), a multilingual single market

### Goals:

- Economic development
- Socio-cultural development
- Political stability
- Connect people, engage with citizens

### Requirements:

- Overcome communication barriers
- Establish standards, quality assurance, collaboration, sustainable development

# ASEAN MTI: Meeting needs

## CONTEXT AND AGENDA

### Situation in ASEAN countries

- Bilinguals are the norm in Asia
- Great number of language institutions (British Council, Institut Francais, etc.)
- But language proficiency levels vary greatly
- Lack of skilled translators and interpreters
- Lack of guidelines, professional associations, accreditation and certification

### Agenda for ASEAN MTI

- Promote education for higher-level proficiency in languages as a solid base
- Help ASEAN countries develop curricula for and assessment of translator/interpreter training
- Set (adapted, targeted) ASEAN Best Practices guidelines
- Raise status and visibility of the T&I profession
- Cater to minority and regional languages

# ASEAN MTI: Highlighting the necessity

## BANGKOK SUMMIT MEETING 26 – 28 OCTOBER 2016

### Statement:

There is a critical and immediate need for cooperation and organization in MTI (Multilingualism, Translation and Interpreting). ASEAN MTI can provide the assurance and Best Practices Guidelines to ensure the quality and provide the framework for the translation services that government ordinances are already requiring (e.g., the Thai government insisting that all documents must be in Thai and English). This assurance and organization forms part of the professional advisory service that the MTI committee can provide. It will aim to raise awareness for the critical nature of this service.



# ASEAN MTI – Setting up a taskforce

## NETWORK PARTNERS IN AND OUTSIDE ASEAN

### AATI (Asian Association of Translation Industry) & associates

1. Prof. Dr. Maneeratana Sawasdiwat Na Ayutthaya, Rajamangala University of Technology ([Thailand](#))
2. Saeang Sopagna, CEO, Bridge International Translation ([Cambodia](#))
3. Daisy Subakti, Indonesian Translators Association ([Indonesia](#))
4. Prof. Dr. Anchalee Meemuk Khonevixam, Advisor, Laos Suksawad College Board ([Laos](#))
5. Loh Wai Wah, Lingua Technologies International ([Malaysia](#))
6. Kyaw Swa Win, Executive Vice President of Myanmar-Thailand Technology Commission
7. Jefferson Corral Lingua Technologies International ([Philippines](#))
8. Nickson Cheng, CEO, Lingua Technologies ([Singapore](#), [Brunei](#))
9. Tuan Dinh Khac, CEO, Global Language Solutions ([Vietnam](#))
10. Dr. David Chin, Chairman of New Century International College ([China](#), [Taiwan](#))
11. Prof. Dr. Leo Tak-hung CHAN, former Professor of Translation Lingnan University ([Hongkong](#))
12. Ravi Kumar, President Indian Translators Association, CEO Modlingua Group ([India](#))
13. Yoshiki Matsuoka, CEO G-Com ([Japan](#))
14. Tamil Selvan, Coordinator Translation and Interpretation ([Nepal](#))
15. Dr. Kara Warburton, Chair of ISO TC37 ([Canada](#))
16. Dr. William P. Rivers, Executive Director, Joint National Committee for Languages and National Council for Languages and International Studies ([USA](#))
17. Prof. Dr. Michaela Albl-Mikasa, Professor of Interpreting Studies at ZHAW ([Switzerland](#))

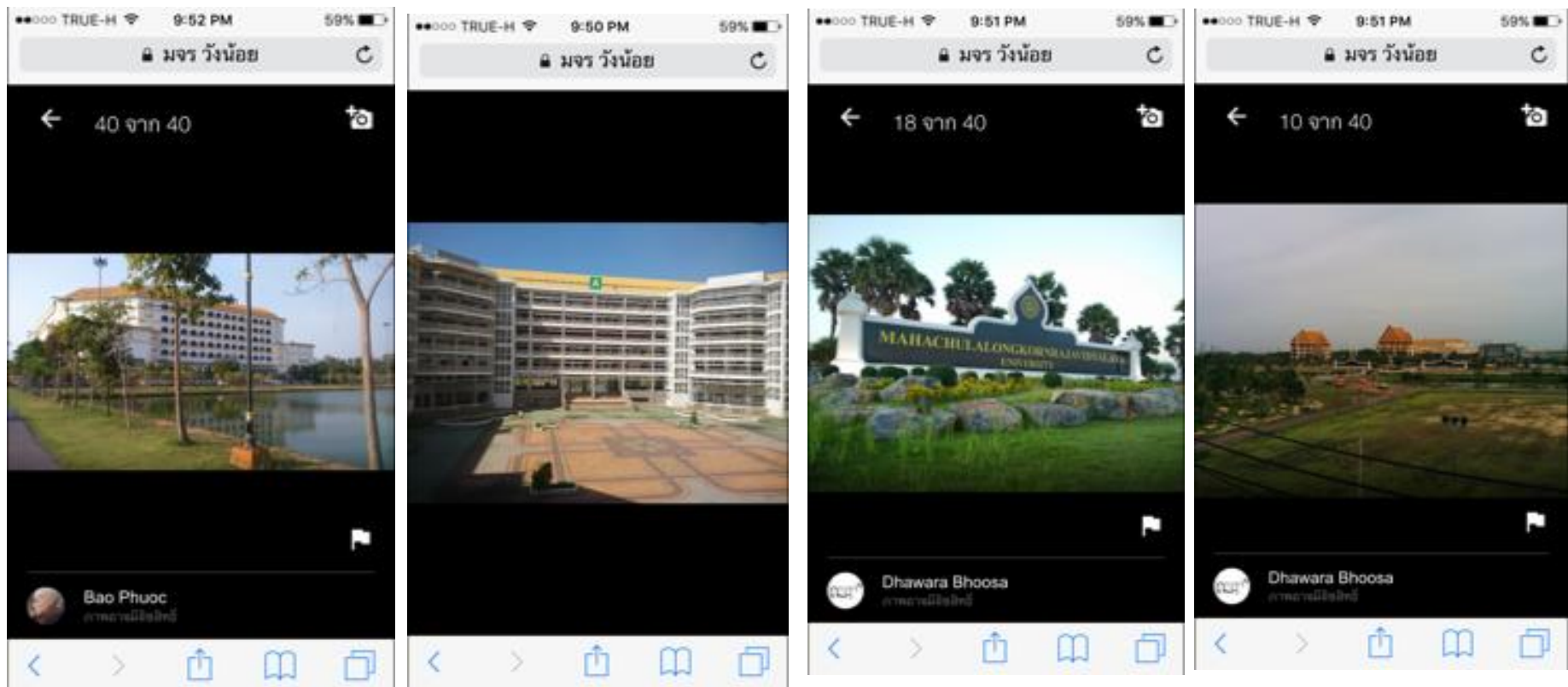
# ASEAN-MTI: Gaining official recognition

## PROF. MANEERAT MEETING THAI MINISTER OF EDUCATION



# ASEAN MTI: Forming an institution

## INFRASTRUCTURE PROVIDED BY MAHACHULA UNIVERSITY



# ASEAN MTI: Building a larger-scale network

## LETTERS OF INTENT AND DECLARATIONS OF SUPPORT

- Dr. Henry Liu, President of FIT ([International Federation for Translators](#))
- Dr. Jim Hlavac, [Monash University](#), Australia
- Dr. Mridula Nath Chakraborty, Annual [Asian Traditions Translation Conference](#)
  
- [SERI Switzerland](#) -> allocation of seed money

# ASEAN MTI: Forging links

## ASEAN **MTI** AND **ZHAW** SWITZERLAND

- Share experience and expertise
- Build a larger Asian-European T&I network
- Embark on joint research projects



# FIT IN ASEAN

## Promoting multilingualism in ASEAN



**FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE DES TRADUCTEURS**  
La voix des associations de traducteurs, d'interprètes et de terminologues à travers le monde

**INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF TRANSLATORS**  
The voice of associations of translators, interpreters and terminologists around the world

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Photo of some of  
ASEAN industry  
leaders; logo of  
ASEAN; with Vice  
President of MCU

As specially invited guest of Prof. Dr. Maneerat Sawasdiwat Na Ayutthaya, Chair and convenor of the steering committee of the ASEAN Center for Multilingualism, Translation and Interpretation (MTI) and President of Association of ASEAN Translation Industry (AATI), Dr. Liu participated in the joint annual summit of professional and industry leaders in the ASEAN region and beyond.



Photo from ASEAN MTI summit

In 2015, the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) resolved to adopt English as the official language of the entire ASEAN Community against a background of 11 national official languages and average English competency of around 40%. Prof. Maneerat Sawasdiwat and her steering committee are committed to ensuring wider community engagement, increased regional collaboration and better informed decision-making across all levels of government through multilingualism with highly trained professional translators, interpreters and terminologists.

MTI approached FIT at the APTIF8 conference in Xi'an in June this year. At the same time, FIT Associate member ZHAW, which has been part of this committee, also saw the importance of collaboration with FIT, as FIT can share its expertise, resources and experience in professional issues pertinent to multilingualism.

President Dr Henry Liu shared the stage with other stakeholders and experts in the wider Asia Pacific Region, including China, Korea and the USA.

In his address at the live streamed summit, President Liu highlighted the benefits of multilingualism for the people, culture, business and the government and therefore the urgent need for a local, regional, national and ASEAN-wide commitment to the multilingual principles and values. He also gave a comprehensive overview of its importance and possible pathways, based on international best practice in professional training for translators, interpreters and terminologists across different contexts, ranging from drafting

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multilateral agreements, to implementing directives and standards, to community interpreting and refugee determination and resettlement. He concluded by emphasising the need for establishment of strong, independent, accountable national professional associations of translators, interpreters and terminologists.

During the three-day summit, there were detailed planning sessions as well as passionate discussions on the future direction and strategy of both MTI and AATI. The delegates agreed to lobby their national governments on the need for multilingual policy and its associated infrastructure. They also resolved to hold the next regional summit with the 3rd professional conference for ASEAN practitioners, industry, users and policy makers in Hanoi next November.

After the summit concluded, President Liu met with the Associate Vice President of the Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (MCU), a University founded by Buddhist Order with religious and liberal arts programmes. MCU has been active in religious translation research and training and is also the host of the ASEAN Studies Center and would like to be considered to host an eventual ASEAN Center for MTI.

ASEAN is one of the most dynamic regions of the world and is inherently multilingual and proud of its diversity. FIT is committed to fulfilling its mission to promote best practice in T&I and to support establishment of professional associations where there is a need (Articles 4e and 4g of the By-laws). We look forward to welcoming new members from this region to complement our members in Indonesia and Malaysia and we hope to see ASEAN becoming a Centre of excellence in multilingualism, translation, interpreting and terminology.

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