



PEN International promotes literature and freedom of expression and is governed by the PEN Charter and the principles it embodies: unhampered transmission of thought within each nation and between all nations. Founded in 1921, PEN International connects an international community of writers from its Secretariat in London. It is a forum where writers meet freely to discuss their work; it is also a voice speaking out for writers silenced in their own countries. Through Centres in over 100 countries, PEN operates on five continents. PEN International is a non-political organisation which holds Special Consultative Status at the UN and Associate Status at UNESCO.

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The Quebec Declaration on Literary Translation and Translators

Promoting Literature,
Defending Freedom of Expression

PEN International brings together the writers of the world. Developed in Barcelona (April 2015) by the PEN International Translation and Linguistic Rights Committee, ratified by the PEN International Assembly of Delegates at the 81st Congress in Quebec (October 2015), this Declaration contains a six-point summary of the principles and objectives that PEN International intends to promote in the area of literary translation.

- 1. Literary translation is an art of passion. Promoting values of openness, acting for peace and freedom and against injustice, intolerance and censorship, translation invites a dialogue with the world.**
- 2. All cultures are not equal when it comes to translation. Some cultures translate by choice, others by obligation. Translation is a key to the protection of languages and cultures.**
- 3. Respectful of authors and original texts, translators are nevertheless creators in their own right. They seek not only to reproduce a literary work but to move the work forward, to expand its presence in the world. Translators are not simply messengers: though they speak for others, their voices are also their own. In particular, they act in favour of cultural diversity by remaining loyal to marginalized authors, literary styles and social groups.**
- 4. The rights of translators must be protected. Governments, publishers, the media, employers – all must respect the status and needs of translators, give prominence to their names, and ensure equitable remuneration and respectful working conditions – in all forms of print and digital media.**
- 5. The physical safety and freedom of expression of translators must be guaranteed at all times.**
- 6. As creative writers with specific skills and knowledge, translators must be shown respect and consulted for all questions related to their work. Translations belong to those who create them.**

Translated by Sherry Simon, PEN Québec