# Building Bridges Across Languages: Human-Centered AI for the Euro-Med International Conference

**Dates:** June 6-7, 2024

**Location:** Ljubljana, Slovenia

**Venue:** Center of Excellence in Finance, Cankarjeva cesta 18, Ljubljana

In June 2016, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia and the Anna Lindh Foundation organised the "Translation for Dialogue" conference, the first of its kind in the Euro-Med region. The conference brought together experts and cultural actors involved in translation to showcase, debate, and advocate for translation as a central tool for intercultural dialogue. The participants pledged an ambitious Euro-Med translation policy to foster cultural diversity and promote shared values.

Since then, translation has been relevant in promoting intercultural dialogue and strengthening a shared identity based on cultural diversity between Euro-Med societies. However, a new player has entered the scene that has the potential to disrupt, for the good or the bad, this pattern. Nowadays, AI can accurately understand and generate human language, leading to impressive translation quality that is expected to improve in the near future. This change has been facilitated by the convergence of AI's computational capabilities, the availability of more data of better quality, and increasingly sophisticated software.

The evolution of AI-powered translation tools holds the potential to create a more connected and inclusive regional community where language is no longer a barrier to information, services, and cultural exchange. Advances in AI technology can enable translation tools to capture and interpret cultural nuances and idiomatic expressions more effectively, thereby improving the quality of translations or allowing for the automated translation of less-spoken languages and dialects. This can foster deeper intercultural understanding and trust. This unparalleled technological progress comes with risks for practice and policy. While AI can generate societal benefits, its integration into our daily lives requires a cautious approach, as numerous technical, social, ethical, and political challenges must be addressed to ensure their development and implementation. For example, AI translation systems are susceptible to design, deployment and operation biases. They are at risk of reflecting, perpetuating or amplifying existing inequalities, discriminatory patterns, and stereotypes or even creating new ones, raising ethical concerns. Also, the increasing performance of AI translation raises concerns about the potential displacement of human translators and how to make sure that, as AI continues to advance, the role of humans is not diminishing but instead evolving, enabling them to remain relevant and competitive in the job market.

In this spirit, the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia intend to promote a human-centered approach to the role of AI in translation in the Euro-Med region. This is based on a commitment to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in AI access and usage by engaging in Euro-Med multi-stakeholder collaboration. The objective is to contribute to translation policy and practice by creating and sharing knowledge and developing actionable strategies to bring humans and AI together to benefit intercultural dialogue.

**DRAFT AGENDA**

**Day 1, June 6, 2024**

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| *13:00- 14:00* | ***Registration and welcome coffee*** |
| *14:00-14:45* | ***High-level opening remarks*** |
|  | * Her Royal Highness, Rym Ali, President, ALF * Tanja Fajon, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs * Valter Mavrič, Director-General for Translation, European Parliament * Rado Bohinc, President, EMUNI * Moderator: Boštjan Zupančič, Head of Unit, Translation Department, MFEA |
| *14:45-15:15* | ***Keynote address*** |
|  | * Ildikó Horváth, Director, Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union |
| *15:15-16:30* | ***AI translation in action: Case studies from the Euro-Mediterranean region***  This panel will feature a series of case presentations by front-runners in AI translation, offering insights into tangible projects that exemplify the integration of AI in language services. The presentations will pave the way for an interactive Q&A, inviting active participation from the audience.  Speakers: |
|  | * Gavin Brown, Digital Transformation Lead, Tarjama * Imane Khaoujia, MoroccoAI co-founder and Professor in NLP & AI Ethics at University of Kent, UK * Mihajela Črnko, D4D Expert (AI), Digital for Development (D4D) Hub Secretariat * Alenka Unk, Translator/Language Technology Coordinator, Directorate-General for Translation, European Commission   Moderator:   * Josep Ferré, Executive Director, ALF |
| *16:30-16:45* | ***Networking break*** |
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| *16:45-18:15* | ***Ethics and AI: Navigating bias and fairness in multilingual contexts***  An expert panel will delve into the ethical considerations inherent in the design and development of AI translation, discussing bias, fairness, and the ethical implications of AI in multilingual scenarios. The session will culminate in a Q&A, providing a platform for engaging dialogue on maintaining integrity in AI practices.  Speakers: |
|  | * Gemma Galdon Clavell, CEO and Founder, Eticas AI * Imane Momayiz, Co-founder, AtlasIA * Joao Pita Costa, Researcher, International Research centre on AI under the auspices of UNESCO - IRCAI   Moderator:   * Mihalis Kritikos, Policy Officer, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, European Commission |
| *20:00* | ***Networking reception*** (City Museum of Ljubljana)  **Day 2, June 7, 2024** |
| *8:30 – 9:00* | *Registration and welcome coffee* |
| *9:00– 10:30* | ***Human+AI collaboration: Reskilling and upskilling for the future***  This panel will discuss the symbiotic relationship between human translators and AI, addressing how professionals can adapt and enhance their skills in anticipation of future developments in AI translation. The session will encourage discourse on education and skill development, followed by an audience Q&A.  Speakers: |
|  | * Nicolas Naully, Vice-Chairman, Scientific Committee, Agence Francophone Intelligence Artificielle * Manal Amin, Founder & CEO, Arabize * Wayne Holmes, Associate Professor, University College London, UCL, IRCAI, University of Nova Gorica * Jana Zidar Forte, MFEA, Translation Department * Marjana Rupnik, Head of Language Department - Head of Interpretation Department II, Directorate-General for Interpretation and Conference Organisation, European Commission   Moderator:   * Mitja Jermol, UNESCO Chair in OER, International research centre on AI under the auspices of UNESCO - IRCAI |
| *10:30- 10:45* | ***Networking break*** |
| *10:45 -12:15* | ***Championing diversity and inclusion in AI translation***  A panel of activists, scholars, and decision-makers will discuss innovative policy strategies and practices to promote diversity and inclusion in the implementation and use of AI translation technology. The session will end with a Q&A segment and offer solutions to ensure that AI translation tools are accessible and equitable.  Speakers: |
|  | * Laila Shereen Sakr, Professor, USC Santa Barbara * Maha Jouini, Founder, African Center for Artificial Intelligence and Digital Technology   Moderator:   * Yamina El Kirat, President, Moroccan Institute for advanced studies - IMEA |
| *12:15 -13:15* | ***Networking lunch*** |

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| *13:15-14:45* | ***Overcoming data deficits: A focus on low-resource languages***  This panel will address the challenges of compiling robust datasets for underrepresented languages within AI systems, emphasizing the Euro-Med context. The discussion will engage with the consequences for diversity and access to AI, followed by a Q&A session.  Speakers: |
|  | * Asmelash Teka Hadgu, CTO, Lesan * Karim Bouzoubaa, Full Professor, Mohammed V University - Rabat * Simon Krek, Head, Centre for language resources and technologies, University of Ljubljana * Alenka Guček, Researcher, Jožef Stefan Institute   Moderator:   * Davor Orlič, COO, International Research centre on AI under the auspices of UNESCO - IRCAI |
| *14:45-15:00* | ***Closing remarks*** |