

**THE LANGUAGE PROFESSIONAL’S CODE OF ETHICS**

**Purpose**

The Language Professional’s Code of Ethics **(‘the Code’**), which is based on moral and ethical values and professional standards, defines the norms and rules of conduct for professionals in the interpreting and translation community (and, generally speaking, for all participants in the translation market) in Russia, when pursuing their professional objectives. Failure to observe the principles herein outlined may result in an individual incurring moral censure.

The Code covers issues that are outside of the law, and in this regard it complements the provisions of contracts made between parties in the translation market.

**Scope**

The provisions of the Code apply to all interpretation and translation practitioners who choose to subscribe to it, including language service providers, their management and staff, freelance and staff translators and interpreters (including interpreters, translators, tour guides, sign language interpreters, audio-visual translators, social interpreters, etc.), and editors and proofreaders of translated texts. Hereinafter, those professionally involved in interpreting/translation activities will be referred to individually as **‘Language professional’** or **‘Language service provider’** and collectively as **‘Language professionals & service providers’**. From time to time, freelance language professionals and language service providers alike act as clients, ordering interpreting/translation jobs.

Language professionals & service providers who subscribe to the Code are expected to communicate this fact to their partners and clients, using available means (including websites, professional rйsumйs, advertisements, etc.).

Language professionals & service providers encourage their clients and other individuals participating in the interpreting/translation process to adhere to the provisions of the Code.

**1. Professional Conduct**

**1.1. Competence**

Language professionals & service providers only undertake work they are competent to perform in terms of the language, subject matter, culture, and technology.

**1.2. Conditions Preventing Proper Performance**

If the competence, facilities, or terms of an assignment (e.g., deadlines) make it impossible for language professionals & service providers to perform the translation/interpreting job according to the client’s expectations and specifications (including situations when such complications arise in the course of the execution of an assignment), then the language professionals & service providers are obliged to inform the client accordingly, without delay, and to assist in finding a suitable solution to the situation.

**1.3. Impartiality and Independence**

Translators and, in particular interpreters, abstain from adding to the translated/interpreted text their personal judgments and attitudes relating to the subject matter. The language professional remains at all times unbiased and strives to translate the statements of the parties in the most impartial and accurate way possible.

**1.4. Good Faith**

Language professionals & service providers do their utmost to perform their work in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract made prior to the commencement of work.

**1.5. Copyright**

Language professionals & service providers respect the rights of the authors of original texts. When a translation job is ordered, it is assumed by default that issues relating to copyright in the source text have been addressed and duly resolved by the client of the translation job. The copyright that translators/interpreters own in the translation/interpreting product which they create is regulated and protected by the applicable legislation.

**1.6. Avoidance of Conflicts of Interest**

If it becomes apparent in the course of the initial discussion of the contract that the personal interests of the language professionals & service providers may affect their impartiality in executing their professional duties, or that as a result, the interests of the client may be infringed upon, then the language professionals & service providers inform the client accordingly, and the parties together work out an appropriate solution.

Language professionals & service providers may not use any information received in the course of the initial discussion or during execution of the contract for their personal commercial benefit.

**1.7. Industry Best Practices and Russian Legislation**

In their work, language professionals & service providers strive to apply the principles of industry best practices, the provisions of international industry standards, and the generally accepted usages and customs of trade to the extent to which they do not conflict with the applicable laws of the Russian Federation.

**1.8. Declining a Job/Withdrawing from a Job**

Language professionals & service providers have the right not to accept a translation/interpreting job for personal ideological or ethical reasons prior to the commencement of work.

If such reasons arise in the course of the execution of a contract, then the language professionals & service providers may withdraw from the job only if the continued execution of the translation/interpreting job is in conflict with the law or public order.

**1.9. Professional Development**

Language professionals strive to continuously enhance their professional knowledge in their subject fields and to develop their professional skills. Language service providers strive to apply state-of-the-art technologies pertinent to the translation industry in their operations.

**1.10. Confidentiality**

Language professionals & service providers at all times hold in confidence any confidential information which becomes known to them in the course of discussion or execution of the contract, and which is recognized as such by law or in the contract between the parties concerned.

**2. Remuneration and Liability**

**2.1. Pricing**

Language professionals & service providers quote such rates which are conducive to the continuous provision of quality services to clients, and which ensure the fair remuneration of language professionals.

The practice of excessive undercharging exercised with the aim of undercutting the competition is deemed unethical and unacceptable. When submitting their bids in tenders for the provision of translation/interpreting services, language service providers do not quote prices which would not ensure the fair remuneration of language professionals and the delivery of quality translation/interpreting services to the client.

The quote made by language professionals & service providers must be clear, precise and complete, and must exclude any unexpected mark-ups on the price at the time of settlement.

**2.2. Penalties and Sanctions for Defaulting on Contractual Terms**

When negotiating a translation/interpreting contract, the parties agree on the grounds for the potential application of penalties and sanctions to language professionals & service providers for non-compliance with contractual terms, and on the extent of such measures; any penalties and sanctions may not exceed the fee payable for the job ordered to which such complaints relate.

Likewise, when negotiating a translation/interpreting contract, the parties agree on the grounds for the potential application of penalties and sanctions to the client for non-compliance with the terms of the contract.

In both cases, the parties rely on the provisions of the applicable laws.

**3. Competition**

**3.1. Fair Competition**

Methods of competition which are in conflict with the generally accepted industry best practices and business ethics, even though they may not be forbidden by law, are deemed unacceptable for language professionals & service providers. These include, inter alia: cyber-attacks; defamation and trolling on social networks; any and all means of explicit labour pirating, including by contracting head-hunting agencies for the purpose, or by making knowingly misleading statements about a potential employer or their terms of employment; inducing staff members of competitor companies to disclose the commercial secrets in the course of negotiations; inducing staff members of the current employer to disclose commercial secrets of their previous employer; negative references to the competition in the course of meetings and discussions with clients; use of confidential information obtained by chance; deliberate price dumping; etc.

When developing industry standards, inviting bids in an open bidding procedure, holding conferences or any other industry-specific events, language professionals & service providers that participate in and exert substantial influence over such events must not violate the principle of equal opportunity for all to participate, and most specifically in respect to their direct competition.

While preparing tender submissions, language professionals & service providers do not include in their bids the names and professional profiles of highly qualified language professionals if it is known beforehand that in fact language professionals possessing lesser skills will be engaged to do the work.

**3.2. Relations with End Clients**

Language professionals & service providers do not solicit orders from any clients with whom they work through an intermediary (be it a fellow translator/interpreter or a language services provider).

**3.3. Anti-corruption**

Indifference and/or acquiescence to the following corrupt practices are deemed unethical: extortion practised by public and municipal officials or clients’ employees; bribing clients’ employees (including through gifts and other non-cash items); collusion with public and/or municipal officials or clients’ employees to the detriment of the public interest or clients’ interest; collusion with competitors while participating in bids, auctions, and tenders for translation/interpretation and associated services, or the participation of several affiliated companies in the same bidding process, auction, or tender, etc.

**4. Relations with Clients**

**4.1. Agreement between Parties**

The usual business practice prevailing in the translation/interpretation market in the Russian Federation is to make a written contract; however, language professionals & service providers also honour oral agreements reached before the commencement of work. No party may unilaterally change the terms and conditions of, or include any additional provisions into, the contract to the disadvantage of the other party, either in the course of or following the completion of any translation or interpreting assignment.

**4.2. Client Awareness**

Language professionals & service providers inform their clients of the basic principles and rules of rendering translation/interpreting services, and ensure the maximum transparency of their work.

**4.3. Offering the Best Solutions**

If clients appear to rely on ineffective means for addressing their translation/interpreting requirements, language professionals & service providers voluntarily offer their clients the best available solutions and describe their advantages.

**4.4. Pointing out Mistakes in a Source Text**

If apparent errors are identified in a source text received from a client, language professionals & service providers voluntarily notify their client accordingly.

**4.5. Unpredictable Events**

When language professionals & service providers undertake to execute a contract, they take full responsibility for their part of the work. Therefore, if any unforeseen events occur hindering the performance of their professional duties, the language professionals & service providers do their best to notify their respective clients promptly of any such events, and to assist in seeking an appropriate solution.

**4.6. Dispute Settlement**

Disputes relating to translations/interpreting are settled through negotiations. Some complicated cases may call for the involvement of a panel of independent experts nominated by the parties, or for a court settlement. The law also provides for arbitration. It is deemed unethical to make any such disputes public (e.g. to discuss them in social networks, at professional forums, etc.) because such situations do not leave room for unbiased opinions; moreover, there is no competent body whose decisions are considered binding on both parties.

**4.7. Positive Communication at all Levels**

The culture of communications has a direct impact on the accurate expression of thoughts and the quality of interaction between the parties. Language professionals & service providers adopt a neutral communication style, avoid getting personal, respect the rights and responsibilities of the parties concerned, stick to the rules of decorum, and adhere to professional ethics and netiquette.

**5. Relations within the Professional Community**

**5.1. Language Service Providers and their Employees**

When a language service provider subscribes to the Code, its staff members are deemed obligated to comply with the Code’s provisions. When selecting vendors among freelance translators/interpreters, the language service provider is expected to prefer, other things being equal, those contractors who have publicly subscribed to the Code.

**5.2. No Unsubstantiated Criticism of Colleagues**

Language professionals avoid making harsh comments regarding their colleagues, especially in front of clients, as it degrades the translation industry as a whole and creates a negative image of the language professionals & service providers in question.

**5.3. Mutual Assistance, Cooperation, Sharing Experience, Friendly Relations**

Language professionals & service providers demonstrate a friendly attitude towards their colleagues, refraining from viewing them merely as competitors, even when they have to compete by virtue of circumstance. Language professionals & service providers acknowledge that mutual assistance, sharing of experience, tutorship, and training colleagues are useful for the development of the professional community and for boosting the prestige of the profession.

**5.4. No Discrimination by Age, Sex, Appearance, etc.**

When selecting a translator/interpreter for an assignment, it is not recommended to specify such parameters as age, sex, appearance, etc., unless they are pertinent to the work requirements.

**5.5. Netiquette**

When communicating via digital media, language professionals & service providers follow the rules of netiquette, i.e. the etiquette of communications via the Internet.

**6. Public Relations**

**6.1. Boosting the Prestige of the Profession**

The work of language professionals is usually not visible to the public, and its importance is often underestimated. Language professionals & service providers strive to demonstrate to the general public the significance of their profession by highlighting specific examples, while maintaining, at the same time, the appropriate degree of confidentiality.

**6.2. Promotion and Support of Legislative Initiatives**

Language professionals & service providers promote and support legislative initiatives intended to develop the translation industry, enhance the prestige of the profession, develop industrial standards and regulations, and specifically those initiatives which draw the attention of federal and municipal authorities, the business community, and the general public to the various issues of the translation industry.

**6.3. Volunteering and Charity**

Volunteering (translating or interpreting for free) and other charitable activities are subject to personal choice. Compelling language professionals to work for free, and any use of the product of free services for commercial purposes, are unethical.

When translating/interpreting for free, language professionals & service providers follow the same professional standards of responsibility, quality, and confidentiality as when they perform under fully paid contracts.

**6.4. Preventing Cross-cultural Conflicts**

The inherent intent of the profession of a language professional is to unite people. Any statements leading to ethnic and religious discord, use of offensive and/or insulting language in relation to other nations (except where such language is found in source texts to be translated), participation in Internet discussions aimed at or resulting in the instigation of hatred and/or ethnic (religious) conflicts are deemed unethical, even when such actions may not formally contradict the law.

Developed by the Expert Council of the translation industry (<http://translation-ethics.ru/experts/>) after public discussions within the translation community, approved by the major translation conference Translation Forum Russia.