

Núria Codina Solà and Jack McMartin

# The European Union Prize for Literature: Disseminating European Values through Translation and Supranational Consecration

What is European literature? For the longest of times, the label was reserved for canonical works belonging to the literatures of the major Western European powers. In more recent decades, however, in step with the gradual process of European integration initiated after the Second World War and solidified through the enlargement of the European Union, the linguistic and geographic borders of European literature have expanded to accommodate Europe's less dominant literary traditions, including those of nations situated at the periphery of the EU and in the broader "European neighbourhood". The more or less free movement of people and cultural goods within the European single market has contributed to the opening up and professionalisation of book markets and the facilitation of intercultural and interlingual literary exchange. The Eastern enlargements in 2004 and 2007 and the inflow of migrants from outside Europe's borders, which reached a highpoint in the 2010s during the refugee crisis, have meanwhile recast the European Union's self-image and its literary imaginaries. These constant transformations demonstrate that European literature, rather than an aesthetic and cultural given, is historically and socially instituted: "To *institute* something", Stefan Helgesson and Pieter Vermeulen write, "is to bring it into being", a performative and material form of agency that relies on "social recognition and sustenance" (2016, 2). As we will see, state actors operating at the intersection of European culture and politics are important participants in the institutionalisation of European literature, as are the writers, publishers, and translators active in Europe's translation publishing industry. These two groupings, comprising representatives of state and market, work within and across political, cultural and economic spheres and between national, transnational, and supranational levels.

This chapter focuses on two mutually imbricated consecratory techniques that facilitate the institutionalisation of European literature: *prizing*, an increasingly important vector of symbolic and economic value often used to further

---

**Acknowledgements:** The authors gratefully acknowledge Eva Janssens, who assisted in the gathering and processing of data on past EUPL winners.

broader (political) interests, and *translation*, the primary mode through which the literatures of Europe circulate across linguistic borders. Both are important techniques in translation publishing, an area of the publishing industry where economic interests have become dominant but where symbolic, cultural, and political interests remain very much in play (Sapiro 2016). We zero in on the European Union Prize for Literature (EURL) as a case in point. The EURL is an annual literary prize funded by the European Commission to support emerging writers and to promote the circulation of European literature within and beyond the European Union. In what follows, we show how the prize actively shapes the linguistic, cultural, and political boundaries of European literature and identity. We argue that the EURL (along with other EU-sponsored prizes like it) can be understood as instruments of soft power, where (foreign) policy goals are achieved through the prizing of a certain set of aesthetic, political and commercial values associated with the European integration process. In a first section, we examine the discursive contours of the European Union's cultural policy as it relates to prizing European integration. We look specifically at how "unity", "diversity", and "intercultural dialogue" figure in the values and messaging the European Union conveys through its consecratory practices and how these values are reflected in the organisational structure of the EURL. In a second section, we draw on insights from the sociology of translation to situate EURL-winning books, their authors and their translations within the global system of translated books, a highly asymmetric literary market dominated by the central languages of English, French and German (languages also claimed by traditionally dominant EU member states). We discuss to what extent the EURL's political goals are reflected in EURL-initiated translation flows. In a third section, we shift from the geopolitical context to a (para)textual analysis of how European values are creatively rendered in a single EURL-commissioned text, the *European Stories Anthology*, a collection of short stories by past EURL winners published in 2018 on the occasion of the EURL's tenth anniversary. Taken together, our contribution seeks to add to understandings of how translation and supranational literary consecration relate to processes of geopolitical (ex)change.

## 1 Prizes as Instruments of Soft Power and Carriers of Political Values

Established in 2009, the EURL is one of a number of prizes awarded by the European institutions aimed at showcasing artistic production in Europe and stimulating the distribution and promotion of European cultural goods across Europe

and beyond. Other notable prizes include the European Parliament Lux Prize (for film), the European Union's heritage initiatives, the European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture, and the European Capital of Culture contest, to name only a few. These prizing initiatives in the cultural field go hand in hand with the consolidation of the European Union as a political power and the partial transfer of cultural policy competences from the member states to the European Commission. Culture has been a key tool in the dissemination of European values and the formation of European identities, to the extent that “[a]t the end of his life Robert Schumann declared that if he had to start the process of European integration all over again, he would begin with culture rather than economics” (D’haen 2009, 5). Among the different policy actions that political institutions use as a form of soft power, prizes are “the best single instrument for negotiating transactions between cultural and economic, cultural and social, cultural and political capital” (English 2008, 10), for they mask the economic or political interests of the awarding institutions behind the rhetoric of “generosity, celebration, love, play, community” (7). James English writes that we tend to think of prizes as a sort of “gift” (5) that is removed from the economic and political spheres, although in practice prizes are deeply imbricated both in the market and in politics. It is no coincidence that the word “prize” has “its etymological roots in money and exchange” (6). In fact, “both the discourse internal to prizes – the discussions that take place among judges and administrators – and the external commentary about them are fairly dominated by rhetorics of calculation, invoking fine points of balance, fairness, obligation” (6). Prizes can of course serve as financial incentives, as we will see with the EUPL and its promotion of European literature through translation deals. But prizes are not economic instruments only. As François Foret and Oriane Calligaro point out, prizes also constitute a *technique of government* consisting in using symbolic distinctions as “a resource of political domination to mark the centrality and authority of the prize-giver, the exemplarity of the recipient and the legitimacy of the cause and values that are honoured” (2019, 1337). Apart from legitimising the different actors involved in the act of consecration, prizes can also serve to “flag an issue worthy of social attention” or to proclaim “the social significance of a problem” that is particularly relevant for the political institution involved in the consecratory act (1340).

If prizes serve as sources of soft power, what values and messages does the European Union convey through its consecratory practices? The main aim of the cultural policy of the European Union is to highlight the linguistic and cultural diversity of Europe while foregrounding the common cultural roots and history shared between Europeans. This tension between the one and the many is visible in the official EU motto, “United in diversity”, which came into use in 2000 and is defined as follows on one of the EU's official websites: “[The motto] signifies

how Europeans have come together, in the form of the EU, to work for peace and prosperity, while at the same time being enriched by the continent's many different cultures, traditions and languages" ("EU Motto"). In its process of self-making and self-narration, the EU draws a "direct correlation between European integration and peace on the European continent from the second half of the twentieth century" (Meijen 2020, 946). This narrative is part of what Meijen calls "the liberal-democratic myth," consisting in presenting the EU as "a champion of fundamental human rights and social rights" such as transparency, the rule of law, solidarity, stability and social welfare, values that are shared between all European states (945). According to this narrative, it is thanks to (and not despite) the diversity of national cultures that peace has settled over Europe in the era of European integration. Indeed, the "common sense of morality" between the member states implies respect for cultural and linguistic differences (945).

Referring to the American context, Joyce M. Bell and Douglas Hartmann note that "[f]ew words in the current American lexicon are as ubiquitous and ostensibly uplifting as diversity" (2007, 895), an ambivalence that also applies to the European situation. The varied meanings of 'diversity' have evolved in relation to the political changes faced by the EU. In the 1970s, diversity was mainly associated with the protection of cultural heritage, understood both as "tangible material artefacts" such as monuments or historical sites as well as "intangible forms of cultural expressions," including history, language, and folklore (Calligaro 2014, 62). Cultural heritage enabled the EU to negotiate the fine line between unity and diversity and to fill universal principles such as democracy and human rights with local content. As Calligaro observes, "[t]he introduction of the concept of European cultural heritage on the Community's agenda in 1974 is an attempt to incarnate European identity, beyond abstract political principles" (62). If the cultural initiatives promoted under the label of European heritage tended to highlight "the diversity of national cultures within a European cultural unity" based on Greek, Roman and Judeo-Christian cultures (64), in the 1980s "[t]he rhetoric of 'unity in diversity' [. . .] was mobilised to promote a larger diversity that encompassed the subnational level" and valorised minority languages (69). This regional diversity has a direct expression in the language politics of the EUPL, which make room for minority languages as long as they are officially recognised "by the Constitution or relevant national law" of the participating countries ("Selection Rules"). Another extension of the notion of heritage that took place in the 1990s was "the recognition that negative dimensions of European history are an integral part of European heritage" (Calligaro 2014, 70), a new meaning that led to increasing investment in projects related to the recovery of the collective memory of fascist dictatorships in Europe and Europe's colonial past. With the 2004 enlargement of the European Union, "European diversity

was further transformed, and a new concept is the revealing sign and instrument of this transformation: *intercultural dialogue*” (71, our emphasis). The notion of intercultural dialogue moves away from “specific cultural contents” and towards “shared values” such as the ones laid out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union of 2000 (78). This discursive strategy can be seen alongside growing disparities and national(ist) factions within the Union and increasing migration flows into it. Shared values, which include human dignity, the right to life, the right to the integrity of a person and the right to liberty and security, among many others, make European culture “less and less substantiated” (78) and turn hospitality and multiculturalism into intrinsic European values, thereby reinforcing the “the liberal-democratic myth” that sustains European identity (Meijen 2020, 945).

By capturing the distinctiveness of the EUPL among other transnational European prizes and its connections with the official narrative of the European Union, we contribute to emerging research on critical cultural policy studies and offer a first extensive case study of the EUPL. In the next section, we look at the ways in which European notions of diversity, equality and intercultural dialogue impact on the very conception and organisational structure of the EUPL – and how these values distinguish the prize from other comparable supranational consecratory institutions.

## 2 Situating the EUPL in the Transnational Literary Field and its Prize Economy

The stated goals of the EUPL are three: “to put the spotlight on the creativity and diverse wealth of Europe’s contemporary literature in the field of fiction, to promote the circulation of literature within Europe and to encourage greater interest in non-national literary works” (EUPL). This description epitomises the tension between unity and diversity encapsulated in the motto of the EU. While reflecting the varied linguistic and literary traditions of the participating countries, the prize aims to strengthen unity through literary circulation and through the promotion of works that transcend the nation-state. The prize is funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Commission, which similarly seeks to “promote European cultural and linguistic diversity” (“Culture and Creativity”) and has a specific ‘culture strand’ focusing on transnational exchanges among artists and cultural organisations in the literary and publishing fields. This reflects a double dynamic that, like the EUPL, puts national diversity in the service of supranational unity. The EUPL is run on behalf of the European Commission

by three trade organisations intimately involved in the business of translation publishing in Europe: The European Writers Council (EWC), the Federation of European Publishers (FEP) and the European and International Booksellers Federation (EIBF). Together, they form the EUPL Consortium, an intersectoral entity that represents the variety of market actors involved in the circulation of literary texts in Europe. Such a public-private partnership embeds both the political and cultural interests of the European Commission and the commercial interests of the Consortium into the EUPL's organisational structure. The Consortium runs the award ceremony and additional promotional activities and administers the coordinating body that selects the national juries. The national juries are typically composed of three or four eminent individuals from each participating country's national literary scene in addition to a member appointed by the Consortium.<sup>1</sup>

Interestingly, despite being a supranational institution, the EUPL is organised around nation-state-specific juries, each of which selects one winner among the nominated works from that country, a structure that mirrors the multi-level governance of the EU. Each year, the EUPL is awarded to between 11 and 14 writers from different countries within and outside the European Union (see Tab. 1). In the period 2009–2021, 148 authors from 42 countries representing 40 languages received the award.<sup>2</sup> Participation is limited to those countries involved in the European Commission's Creative Europe programme: the twenty-seven member states of the EU, the three countries that are part of the European Economic Area (Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein), the seven acceding countries, candidate countries and potential candidates (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Turkey) and five European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) countries (Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Tunisia, and Ukraine). Additional ENP countries (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Palestine) have expressed interest in joining the Creative Europe programme and may be included in coming years.

The geographical scope of the EUPL has political implications. The prize itself serves as a platform for promoting intercultural dialogue both within the EU – between Northern and Southern Europe and between Eastern and Western Europe – as well as between the EU and neighbouring states. In this sense, EU-internal cultural policy and outward-facing EU cultural diplomacy both fall within

---

<sup>1</sup> Although analysing the membership and evaluative practices of the respective EUPL national juries is beyond the scope of this study, such an investigation would doubtless generate important insights into the national signatures of a supranational prize promoting 'non-national' works.

<sup>2</sup> No prizes were given in 2018. Organisers opted instead for a short story contest to celebrate the ten-year anniversary of the prize (see coda below).

**Tab. 1:** Awarding countries and awarded source languages by year.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Austria (German)	Belgium (Dutch)	Bulgaria (Bulgarian)	Austria (German)	Austria (German)	Belgium (French)	Albania (Albanian)	Austria (German)	Belgium (Dutch)	Albania (Albanian)	European Stories contest	Austria (German)	Belgium (French)	Albania (Albanian)
Croatia (Croatian)	Cyprus (Greek)	Czech Republic (Czech)	Croatia (Croatian)	Croatia (Croatian)	Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosnian)	Bulgaria (Bulgarian)	Croatia (Croatian)	Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosnian)	Bulgaria (Bulgarian)		Finland (Finnish)	Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosnian)	Armenia (Armenian)
France (French)	Denmark (Danish)	Greece (Greek)	France (French)	France (French)	Cyprus (Greek)	Czech Republic (Czech)	France (French)	Cyprus (Greek)	Czech Republic (Czech)		France (French)	Croatia (Croatian)	Bulgaria (Bulgarian)
Hungary (Hungarian)	Estonia (Estonian)	Iceland (Icelandic)	Hungary (Hungarian)	Hungary (Hungarian)	Denmark (Danish)	Greece (Greek)	Hungary (Hungarian)	Denmark (Danish)	Greece (Greek)		Georgia (Georgian)	Cyprus (Greek)	Czech Republic (Czech)
Ireland (English)	Finland (Finnish)	Latvia (Latvian)	Ireland (English)	Ireland (English)	Estonia (Estonian)	Iceland (Icelandic)	Ireland (English)	Estonia (Estonian)	Iceland (Icelandic)		Greece (Greek)	Denmark (Danish)	Iceland (Icelandic)
Italy (Italian)	Germany (German)	Liechtenstein (German)	Italy (Italian)	Italy (Italian)	Finland (Finnish)	Latvia (Latvian)	Italy (Italian)	Finland (Finnish)	Latvia (Latvian)		Hungary (Hungarian)	Estonia (Estonian)	Latvia (Latvian)
Lithuania (Lithuanian)	Luxembourg (German)	Malta (Maltese)	Lithuania (Lithuanian)	Lithuania (Lithuanian)	Germany (German)	Liechtenstein (German)	Lithuania (Lithuanian)	Germany (German)	Malta (Maltese)		Ireland (English)	Germany (German)	Malta (Maltese)
Norway (New Norwegian)	North Macedonia (Macedonian)	Montenegro (Montenegrin)	Norway (Norwegian)	Norway (Norwegian)	Luxembourg (Luxembourgish)	Malta (Maltese)	Norway (Norwegian)	Luxembourg (Luxembourgish)	Montenegro (Montenegrin)		Italy (Italian)	Kosovo (Albanian)	Portugal (Portuguese)
Poland (Polish)	Romania (Romanian)	Serbia (Serbian)	Poland (Polish)	Poland (Polish)	North Macedonia (Macedonian)	Montenegro (Montenegrin)	Poland (Polish)	North Macedonia (Macedonian)	Serbia (Serbian)		Lithuania (Lithuanian)	Luxembourg (German/Luxembourgish)	Serbia (Serbian)

(continued)

Tab. 1 (continued)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Portugal (Portugese)	Slovenia (Slovenian)	The Netherlands (Dutch)	Portugal (Portugese)	Romania (Romanian)	Serbia (Serbian)	Portugal (Portugese)	Romania (Romanian)	The Netherlands (Dutch)	Slovenia (Slovenian)	Poland (Polish)	Montenegro (Montenegrin)	Slovenia (Slovenian)	
Slovakia (Slovak)	Spain (Spanish)	Turkey (Turkish)	Slovakia (Slovak)	Slovenia (Slovenian)	The Netherlands (Dutch)	Slovakia (Slovak)	Slovenia (Slovenian)	Turkey (Turkish)	Romania (Romanian)	Romania (Romanian)	North Macedonia (Macedonian)	Sweden (Swedish)	
Sweden (Swedish)	United Kingdom (English)	Sweden (Swedish)	Sweden (Swedish)	Spain (Spanish)	Turkey (Turkish)	Sweden (Swedish)	Spain (Spanish)	United Kingdom (English)	Slovakia (Slovak)	Norway (Norwegian)	The Netherlands (Dutch)	Tunisia (Arabic)	
					United Kingdom (English)				Ukraine (Ukrainian)	Spain (Catalan)	United Kingdom (English)		



the prize's remit. By opening the label of "European" and "European Union" to countries experiencing ongoing geopolitical disputes, such as Cyprus or Ukraine, the EUPL reinforces the view of Europe as a peacemaker, using literature as a diplomatic tool to promote respect for linguistic diversity in conflict zones. At the same time, it highlights the symbolic and cultural proximity between the EU and candidate countries such as Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey, while also easing the accession path for potential candidates such as Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo.<sup>3</sup> This intercultural dialogue takes place mostly through translation – both in the more metaphorical sense of 'carrying across' and 'bridging differences', which has been central to the European project,<sup>4</sup> and in the material sense, in the form of EUPL-initiated translation flows.

The fact that only a third of the participating countries are awarded the prize each year does not mean that all 42 countries compete against each other. In order to ensure that there is a balanced turnout and that all countries and linguistic areas are equally represented, the prize's selection mechanisms stipulate a three-year regime (2009–2011, 2012–2014, 2015–2017, 2019–2022) in which the participating countries are organised into relatively stable groups that are routinely represented in each cycle.<sup>5</sup> Because all countries taking part in their allocated edition are awarded the prize, the nominees only compete against other nominated writers from the same country of origin. Thus, rather than referring to the prize in the singular we could just as well speak of the European Union Prizes for Literature, since the participating countries not only have equal conditions

---

<sup>3</sup> For more information on candidate countries and potential candidates, see <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/enlarg/candidates.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> On European-language metaphors of translation, see St. André (2007).

<sup>5</sup> The EUPL organisers recently announced a new format for the 2022–2024 cycle in a press release issued on 3 February 2022: "Initial book selection for each participating country will be conducted by national organisations, each entitled to submit one book that is of high literary quality with potential for translatability. A second round of selection will be conducted by a seven-member European jury, who will thus select an overall Prize winner and five special mention awards. The authors whose works win these new categories will be awarded a financial prize, half of which will include a grant to support translations of their winning books. [. . .] The three-year cycle will be maintained, with approximately one third of all countries participating in the EU's Creative Europe programme represented each year" ("Press release"). While keeping the nation-specific selection processes and a rotating award cycle, the new EUPL cycle introduces (a measure of) competition and a hierarchy of distinction (1 winner, 5 special mention awards, approximately 14 nominees). By awarding a financial prize that includes a grant to support translation, the new format of the EUPL continues to promote the dissemination of European values through the dual mechanisms of consecration and translation support discussed in this article.

and are subject to the same selection rules but also enjoy equal benefits; every country wins eventually and at predictable intervals.

This model of prizes within the prize sets the EUPL apart from other Europe-based, supranational literary consecration institutions such as the Nobel Prize in Literature, the International Booker Prize, and the European Book Prize, each of which ultimately rely on a single panel of judges who generally confer a single, yearly award on one book and author. Of the three prizes we will discuss, the European Book Prize can be seen as most analogous to the EUPL. First awarded in 2007, it arrived on the European literary scene more or less contemporaneously with the EUPL. Like the EUPL, it shares a formal and ideological affiliation with the European Union and has similar aims “to promote European values and contribute to a better understanding of the European Union by its citizens” (Barnes 2011). It is run by *Esprit d’Europe*, an organisation whose ethos is captured well by a now-famous remark made by its inaugural chairman and the initiator of the prize, Jacques Delors: “We have made Europe, now we must make Europeans.” The scope of the prize is similar to the EUPL, with the important distinction that only books from the 27 EU member states are considered, thus excluding candidate countries and countries in the European Neighbourhood (precisely the countries privileged by the EUPL). Books may be submitted in their original language or in translation, and in one of two categories: the quintessentially French *essai* and *romans et récits* (novels and narratives). From the body of submitted works, a longlist is distilled (approximately 50 *essais* and 50 novels) by the Paris-based organisers, which is subsequently submitted to a ‘sponsorship committee’ populated with eminent European writers and politicians. Their shortlists (usually seven works for each of the two categories) are then handed over to a jury consisting of 10–12 European journalists and writers, who choose a winner for each category. The prize’s proximity to the cultural centre of Paris (and, via its sponsorship committee, the political centre of Brussels) and its organisational structure dominated by the *Esprit d’Europe* make the European Book Prize much more francocentric than the EUPL: Francophone writers are overrepresented in the longlists for the prize, juries tend to be predominantly francophone, and deliberations are carried out in French. More laureates wrote in French than in any other language (6 out of 26) and the diversity of languages represented is much more limited in comparison to the EUPL (11 as compared to 40). Furthermore, unlike the EUPL, the European Book Prize does not actively support the dissemination of winning books in other European languages through translation and international promotion.

The EUPL is also distinct from the two most prestigious Europe-based supranational literary prizes: the Nobel Prize in Literature, which places the emphasis on the whole oeuvre or trajectory of well-known authors, and the International

Booker Prize, which prizes a specific work. Although prizes “cannot be understood strictly in terms of calculation and dealmaking” (English 2008, 7), since they cannot be purchased, it is undeniable that the monetary incentives offered both by the Nobel and the Booker contribute to their prestige, making the price the prize (126). Interestingly, the official website of the EUPL does not include any reference to prize money, although the laureates each receive a 5,000-euro cash prize (totalling 55,000–70,000 euros in prize money per year, counting all laureates) alongside institutional support for the translation and promotion of their work. For its part, the European Book Prize carries a 10,000-euro cash prize.

Like all literary prizes, the EUPL also participates in what English has famously called “the economy of prestige,” but the logics of this “symbolic transaction” (4) are not based on unique winners with large stores of symbolic capital, as is often the case for other prizes. Instead, the EUPL-winning writers tend to be young, promising figures, attributes that give an edge of dynamism and innovation to the prize – and to the old continent at the same time. The laureates in turn benefit from the symbolic prestige of the European Union, an entity associated with values such as transparency, peace and democracy, which is reinforced by other consecration institutions beyond the cultural domain.<sup>6</sup> As François Foret and Oriane Calligaro note, the acceptance of a prize “means that the recipient acknowledges the values associated to it”, so that “the prize creates a symbolic association between the two parts” (2017, 1336). By offering opportunities to lesser-known authors and replicating itself according to the number of participating countries, the EUPL disguises the transactional, evaluative nature of prizes behind its inclusionary mechanisms. Whereas the exclusive nature of the Nobel and the Booker International reflects the corporate origins of both prizes by reinforcing the principle of competition and scarcity that characterises the capitalist market, such a display of rivalry would be problematic for a prize representing a public institution such as the European Union, whose main goal is to “enhance economic, social and territorial cohesion and solidarity among EU countries” and to provide equal opportunities and rights to all citizens (“Aims and Values”). As mentioned before, despite being a supranational prize, the EUPL does not really stimulate international competition, i.e., competition between nations. It limits participation to 42 countries in and around Europe and prizes each of these countries’ singularity equally. The EUPL furthermore uses translation, international circulation, and the promise of long-term (international) success as markers to distinguish itself from the traditionally more canonical prizes awarded by participating member states on a national level, such as

---

<sup>6</sup> The European Union was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012. More recently, in 2017, it received the Princess of Asturias Award for Concord.

the Prix Goncourt, the Premio Miguel de Cervantes, the Libris Literatuurprijs or the Deutscher Buchpreis (to name just a few), which are typically oriented towards their respective language-specific markets.<sup>7</sup> The reasons for favouring budding writers over established ones are thus not just symbolic, but also material.

In addition to plotting the EUPL alongside other European prizing institutions, we must also situate the prize in the global translation system. Translation, like prizing, is a vector of symbolic and economic capital; it is both a technique of generating prestige and a prerequisite for economically exploiting a book in new language markets. In her seminal study *The World Republic of Letters* (2004), Pascale Casanova analyses the formation of a world literary space from the sixteenth century onwards in which national literatures compete against each other for international recognition. The geography of the world republic of letters is based on the opposition between the centres of consecration, Paris, and the periphery; the further away the dominated spaces find themselves from the centre and its aesthetic values – a benchmark that Casanova calls “the Greenwich meridian of literature” (88) – the more unlikely it is for them to gain international prestige. Although Casanova’s account has been criticised for being too francocentric and depriving the periphery of aesthetic innovation and sovereignty, her perspective has been crucial in shaping a vision of literature and culture as politically charged and as sources of soft power. Whereas Casanova makes very clear that “[t]he world republic of letters is in fact something quite different from the received view of literature as a peaceful domain” (12), the EUPL ostensibly presents the literary contest between the participating countries as an exchange between equals, almost removed from the asymmetric power relations that characterise the global (and European) arena. One of the explicit goals of the EUPL, as mentioned, is the promotion of “non-national” works, a rather ambiguous term that is not specifically defined but which seems to imply that literary texts are produced beyond the strictures of the nation-state, in a common European space free of borders and geopolitical hierarchies. This stands in contradiction with the organisation of the prize around national countries. It also obscures the selection criteria for the nominated writers, which stipulate that “the author must have the nationality or be a permanent resident of the country participating in the year edition” (EUPL). Belonging to the nation-state, moreover, requires the use of the national language(s), a linguistic affiliation that excludes multilingual writers or (migrant) writers belonging to cultural and social minorities that are not officially recognised by the nation-state:

---

<sup>7</sup> However, winning a national prize certainly improves a book’s chances of being selected for translation, as Gisèle Sapiro (2015) has shown in her study of Goncourt winners in English translation.

“The book eligible for the EUPL jury deliberations must be written in a language/s officially recognised by that country (officially recognised languages are those defined by the Constitution or the relevant national law of the respective country)” (EUPL). A first step for juries in officially multilingual countries is then to decide which of the country’s official languages will be prized over others. The Belgian solution has been to alternate between Dutch and French, leaving the country’s third official language, German, out of the mix. Spain, which recognises Catalan, Galician, and Basque as co-official languages in the autonomous regions in which they are spoken alongside Spanish, has only recently elevated a winner writing in a language other than Spanish: Irene Solà’s *Canto jo i la muntanya balla*, written in Catalan, won Spain’s EUPL in 2020. Other officially multilingual countries like Cyprus, Ireland, and Montenegro have consistently opted to award only one of its various official languages (Greek, English and Montenegrin, respectively). How to square these national language policies with the EUPL’s emphasis on the “non-national”? Such questions are not just rhetorical: in a Europe characterised by open borders and intercultural exchange, virtually all EUPL winners had developed professional or personal ties outside their home country by the time they received the award, and many (no less than 54, or 36 percent of the winners’ pool, according to our count) either currently live in a country that is not their country of birth or have lived substantial parts of their lives abroad. Despite the multicultural profile of the winners, which helps reinforce the linkages between the European Union and the value of cultural diversity, the scope of such intercultural exchange is limited. How much room does a “non-national” focus really offer for, say, a German-Turkish author writing in Turkish who was born in Berlin and does not have the Turkish nationality, or a writer such as Sulaiman Addonia, who was born in Eritrea, lives in Brussels and writes mainly in English?

The equality presumed between the participating countries is also at odds with the language hierarchies that shape the circulation of literary texts and the balance of power between the languages and countries that form the global translation system. As sociologists of translation have demonstrated, literary texts travel mainly in translation, and the world translation system displays a clear centre-periphery structure in terms of translation flows: a small number of languages supply the vast majority of source texts for translation. No less than three out of every five books translated worldwide in recent decades were from English, while German and French each contributed about ten percent of the world’s source texts for translated literary works (Brisset 2017, 267). These ‘central’ languages are followed by several ‘semi-central’ languages (Russian, Spanish, Italian and Swedish), each of which supply one to three percent of source texts. With a share of one percent or less, all other languages can be said to occupy a peripheral position (Heilbron 1999). Another characteristic of

this centre-periphery structure has to do with the relative proportion of incoming and outgoing translations in a language or country: centrality implies that many translations are made out of that language, while relatively few translations are made into it. In the US and UK, only three percent of all published books are translations. In France and Germany, that number is somewhat higher, between twelve and eighteen percent of national book production (van Es and Heilbron 2015, 295). In peripheral languages, the share of translations in national book production is much higher; in the Dutch-language market, for instance, a language that supplies just under one percent of the world's source texts for book translations, about one in three books are translations from other languages (McMartin 2020). Interestingly, the Creative Europe translation policy explicitly prioritises translation into the central and semi-central languages of English, German, French and Spanish, "as these contribute to a wider circulation of the works", particularly between "less-used" languages ("Support to Literary Translation Projects").<sup>8</sup>

These systemic asymmetries are so pronounced that success for the emerging writer, especially writers working from peripheral languages (which is the case for 111 of the 148 EUPL laureates), is synonymous with having one's work translated. Translation is, of course, a crucial vector of transnational symbolic value for any author. It is also a form of literary consecration in its own right because when a book is selected for translation, the symbolic capital of its target publisher(s) and language(s) is added to that of the original work and its makers (Casanova 2010). The more central a language, the more endowed it is with a power of consecration in the transnational literary field, with translation into English (and to a lesser extent French and German) representing a major step in an emerging author's consecration on the international scene (Sapiro 2014, 8). As for target publishers evaluating whether to acquire and translate a book from another language, the centrality of the source language is an important selection criterion alongside others, including the symbolic capital of the source publisher, sales in the home market, prizes won at the national level, and whether other works by the same author have also been translated. The EUPL has internalised many of these criteria in its own selection mechanisms: before a writer is considered for the prize, they must "have published between

---

<sup>8</sup> Our analysis of the translation deals reported on the EUPL website shows that 85 of the 148 winning books (57 percent) found a publisher in at least one of these four priority languages, 46 found an English publisher (31 percent), 33 found a German publisher (22 percent), 39 found a French publisher (26 percent), and 43 found a Spanish publisher (29 percent). Eight found a publisher in all four priority languages (5 percent). Without meticulous qualitative research into each book's international career, it is impossible to comment on the indirect effects these translations may have had on stimulating translations in other (peripheral) languages.

2–4 fiction books” and have been translated in no more than four languages (“Selection Rules”). Virtually all EUPL laureates received one or more national awards before winning the EUPL. In other words, EUPL hopefuls must have already achieved a measure of national and transnational consecration.

### **3 Diversity in Practice: Winners’ Profiles, Promotional Activities and Translation Flows**

So far, we have situated the EUPL in the transnational literary field and discussed how European notions of diversity, equality and intercultural dialogue find expression in the organisational structure of the prize. We turn now to (1) how these values are embodied in the social makeup of the group of 148 EUPL laureates and inscribed their literary works, and (2) how the EUPL goes about its mission “to promote the circulation of literature within Europe” in practice (EUPL).

While an exhaustive sociological analysis is beyond the scope of this chapter, we can glean an impression of the social makeup of the pool of EUPL winners from information published on the EUPL website. We looked especially at four parameters that have a bearing on diversity broadly defined: the author’s country of origin, the source language of the winning book, the author’s gender, and the author’s professional background. The diversity of countries and languages represented in the winners’ pool is a direct result of the EUPL’s policy of prizing the singularity of each participating country equally and on a rotating basis: overall, 42 countries and 40 languages are represented, and no single country has seen more than four winners. The slight language asymmetries apparent in the overall list, with German (12 winners), English (8), Greek (8), French (6) and Dutch (6) relatively more represented than other languages, are nowhere near as pronounced as they are in the world translation system at large. This, too, is a function of the EUPL’s prizing model: only those languages that are officially recognised in more than one participating country stand to accumulate more prizes than other languages (Germany, Luxembourg, and Austria for the awarded German-language books; the UK and Ireland for the English-language books; Greece and Cyprus for the Greek-language books; France and French-speaking Belgium for the French-language books; and the Netherlands and Dutch-speaking Belgium for the Dutch-language books.) Those languages with fewer than four winners are lower on the list because the countries that claim them joined the Creative Europe programme later than the others. In terms of gender diversity, the winners’ pool is more or less in parity, with 77 male winners (52 percent) and 71 female winners (48 percent). Although the



EUPL does not explicitly enforce a gender quota, gender equality is an important political priority for the EU, and this is clearly reflected in the winners' pool. In terms of professional background, winners' self-descriptions showed much variation. Our analysis of the biographical sketches published on the EUPL website revealed that only 11 percent of winners identified themselves as writers only. Most combined writing with other professional roles, the most common additional occupations being teacher/academic (26 percent), journalist/media professional (24 percent), performing/audiovisual artist (24 percent), and translator (19 percent).<sup>9</sup> This reflects the economic reality that making a living with one's writing alone, particularly for emerging writers, is rather the exception than the rule. It also indicates the extent to which the literary, academic, media, and creative fields are interconnected through the multiple roles taken up by Europe's culture workers.

Turning from the writers to their literary works, we observe that, although the winning books cover a wide range of themes, there is little generic diversity in the list overall. The EUPL mostly prizes novels (121, of which 22 were historical novels), followed at a distance by short stories (23) and crime fiction (5). This can be related back to the EUPL's exclusive focus on fiction (and the enduring dominance of the novel within that category), as specified in its mission statement. However, a closer analysis of the winning books' *thematic* diversity reveals the political work performed by the EUPL through prizings: although – or precisely because – the selection rules for eligible books do not establish any thematic criteria beyond 'fiction', the repeated emphasis on topics such as European history, migration or social conflicts points towards an implicit bias for stories that reflect the political agenda of the institution giving the prize. Awarded works such as Maxim Grigoriev's *Europa* (EUPL Sweden 2021), a novel about emigration and exile set between Russia and Paris; Matthias Nawrat's *Der traurige Gast* (EUPL Germany 2020), based on the 2016 terrorist attack in Berlin; Giovanni Dozzini's *E Baboucar guidava la fila* (EUPL Italy 2019), describing the situation of four asylum seekers in Italy after crossing half of Africa and the Mediterranean; Kallia Papadaki's *Δενδρίτες* (EUPL Greece 2017), a story about Greek and Puerto Rican immigration in New York; or Antonis Georgiou's *Ένα άλπουμ ιστορίες* (EUPL Cyprus 2016), a short story collection about refugees and emigration, to just name a few, highlight the importance of intercultural dialogue, solidarity and tolerance to overcome social injustice, conflict and discrimination. Other works underwrite the importance of cultural heritage

---

<sup>9</sup> Many winners self-reported multiple roles. The roles presented here are not mutually exclusive of each other.



by showcasing the diverse historical, linguistic, and cultural specificities in varied European contexts. Examples include Sigrún Pálsdóttir's *Delluferðin* (EUPL Iceland 2021), a novel about the preservation of a cultural treasure in nineteenth-century Iceland and New York; Anja Mugerli's *Čebelja družina* (EUPL Slovenia 2021), a collection of short stories centred around rituals, ancient customs and traditions of Slovenian culture; Irene Solà's previously mentioned *Canto jo i la muntanya balla* (EUPL Spain 2020), a novel written in Catalan inspired by the traditional legends and history of the Pyrenees; Made Luiga's *Poola Poisid* (EUPL Estonia 2020), a bildungsroman set in socialist Poland and inspired by the cultural group ZA/UM in Estonia, and Jan Carson's *The Fire Starters* (EUPL Ireland 2019), a novel about two fathers living in Belfast during a summer of deep discontent and social unrest.

Each of these books are material carriers of EU-endorsed European values in narrative form, and this awareness adds a political valency to the EUPL's stated aim "to promote the circulation of literature within Europe". In practice, the EUPL carries this out by adopting commercial techniques commonly used by publishing professionals: a highly polished website with promotional texts about each winning author and book, contact information for the source publisher and rights controller, a list of past translation deals, excerpts from the book, and a sleekly edited video biography of the author. The excerpts are provided both in the source language and in English or, less commonly, French translation. These are essentially sample translations, an indirect translation aid commonly used in translation publishing to overcome the language barrier separating a rights holder and a perspective publisher who does not read the source language. All this information is also made available in print form in attractively designed yearly "European Stories" anthologies. Taken together, the website and anthologies amount to catalogues similar to the websites and booklets produced by publishers to showcase their lists. By tailoring its messaging to prospective publishers in this way, and by doing so in a highly professionalised manner, the EUPL participates in a larger trend in translation publishing whereby state actors assume a 'double agent' mediating role that deploys cultural diplomacy in market-savvy forms (cf. Heilbron and Sapiro 2018; McMartin 2019). These promotional activities are augmented with translation subsidies: "[e]ncouraging the translation and promotion of books which have won the EU Prize for Literature" is a stated policy priority of the Creative Europe programme (Creative Europe), and translation grant applications for EUPL-winning books are automatically allotted more points in the allocation mechanism than non-winners (Meijen 2020, 951).

Clearly, EUPL consecration and promotion practices have a real impact on translation flows: after benefiting from prizing and promotion by the EUPL,

winning books found their way to nine target languages on average. The most widely translated source languages (in terms of number of target languages reached) were German (121, 10 percent of all translation deals), English (84, 7 percent), Finnish (59, 5 percent), Dutch (58, 5 percent), French (53, 4 percent), and Greek (52, 4 percent).<sup>10</sup> These figures illustrate once again that the EUPL's prizing model effectively mutes systemic dynamics that would otherwise privilege central and semi-central source languages over others. In fact, the most widely translated EUPL-winning book belongs to one of Europe's most peripheral languages: Goce Smilevski's *Сестрата на Зигмунд Фројд* (EUPL Macedonia 2010), written in Macedonian, has been translated into 28 languages. Shares of outgoing translations are widely distributed across source languages, with most languages accounting for between 2–4 percent of the overall total.

Turning to the receiving side of the translation rights transaction, an interesting constellation of target languages emerges that reveal just how much the political contours of European integration are reflected in EUPL-initiated translation flows (See Tab. 2 and Tab. 3.). No less than 71 percent – nearly three out of four – of all translations of EUPL-winning books were published in languages claimed by countries that are either new EU member states (since 2004), candidate countries, or ENP countries. 81 percent (!) of the list of EUPL-winning books has been translated into Bulgarian, the official language of new EU member state Bulgaria (since 2007). We found similarly high figures for Serbian (76 percent), the official language of Serbia, a candidate country and a language widely spoken in Montenegro, another candidate country; Macedonian (76 percent), the official language of candidate country Northern Macedonia; Croatian (64 percent), the official language of new EU member state Croatia (since 2013) and a language widely spoken in candidate country Montenegro; and Albanian (61 percent), the official language of candidate country Albania. By comparison, the languages claimed by the founder countries plus the UK, which include English, French, German, Italian and Dutch, accounted for just 19 percent of all translations.

In sum, linking source and target, we found that EUPL-initiated translation flows originated in more or less equal proportion in the 40 languages of the participating countries and overwhelmingly tended to accumulate in target

---

**10** The data analysed in this section was scraped from the EUPL website, which contains information about the translation deals secured for each winning book as well as details about source language, name and national grouping of target publishers, and biographical information about winning authors. This information was manually parsed into metadata categories (*inter alia*: source country, source language, target country, target language) to enable analysis of translation flows.

**Tab. 2:** Target languages for translated EUPL-winning books and EU membership status of target publishers' country of origin.

Target language	translation deals #	EUPL-winning titles translated %	Membership status (Country)
Bulgarian	110	81%	member since 2007 (Bulgaria)
Serbian	103	76%	candidate country, applied in 2009, entry possible by 2025 (Serbia), candidate country (Montenegro)
Macedonian	102	76%	candidate country beginning in 2005, approved 2020, accession pending (Northern Macedonia)
Croatian	86	64%	member since 2013 (Croatia); candidate country (Montenegro)
Albanian	83	61%	candidate country since 2014 (Albania)
Hungarian	76	56%	member since 2004 (Hungary)
Italian	75	56%	founder (Italy)
Polish	55	41%	member since 2004 (Poland)
English	51	38%	member since 1973, ceased to be a member in 2020 (United Kingdom)
Slovenian	47	35%	member since 2004 (Slovenia)
Spanish	45	33%	member since 1986 (Spain)
Czech	42	31%	member since 2004 (Czech Republic)
French	39	29%	founder (France)
German	33	24%	founder (Germany); founder (Luxembourg); founder (Belgium); member since 1995 (Austria)
Dutch	31	23%	founder (Netherlands); founder (Belgium)
Greek	30	22%	member since 1981 (Greece)
Latvian	25	19%	member since 2004 (Latvia)
Georgian	19	14%	European Neighbourhood Policy country (Georgia)
Romanian	19	14%	member since 2007 (Romania)
Turkish	19	14%	candidate country since in 2005 (Turkey)

Tab. 2 (continued)

Target language	translation deals #	EUPL-winning titles translated %	Membership status (Country)
Lithuanian	14	10%	member since 2004 (Lithuania)
Arabic	12	9%	European Neighbourhood Policy country (Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia)
Norwegian	10	7%	member of the European Economic Area
Swedish	10	7%	member since 1995 (Sweden)
Ukrainian	10	7%	European Neighbourhood Policy country, planning to apply in 2024, entry possible in the 2030s (Ukraine)
Portuguese	8	6%	member since 1986 (Portugal)
Finnish	7	5%	member since 1995 (Finland)
Bosnian	6	4%	potential candidate, applied in 2016 (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
Estonian	6	4%	member since 2004 (Estonia)
Russian	6	4%	party to EU-Russia Common Spaces (Russia)
Hebrew	5	4%	European Neighbourhood Policy country (Israel)
Slovak	5	4%	member since 2004 (Slovakia)
Icelandic	4	3%	member of the European Economic Area (Iceland)
Korean	4	3%	no official status (South Korea)
Danish	3	2%	member since 1973 (Denmark)
Faroese	3	2%	no official status
Chinese	3	2%	no official status
Catalan	2	1%	member since 1986 (Spain)
Hindi	2	1%	no official status
Japanese	2	1%	no official status
Malayalam	2	1%	no official status

Tab. 2 (continued)

Target language	translation deals #	EUPL-winning titles translated %	Membership status (Country)
Moldovan	2	1%	European Neighbourhood Policy country, treated relations with EU since 2014 (Moldova)
Amharic	1	1%	no official status
Azerbaijani	1	1%	European Neighbourhood Policy country (Azerbaijan)
Basque	1	1%	member since 1986 (Spain)
Persian	1	1%	no official status
Galician	1	1%	member since 1986 (Spain)
Armenian	1	1%	European Neighbourhood Policy country (Armenia)
Maltese	1	1%	member since 2004
Mongolian	1	1%	no official status
Urdu	1	1%	no official status
<b>Total translation deals</b>	1225		
<b>Total winning books (2009–2021)</b>	135		
<b>Aver. # translation deals per winning book</b>	9		

**Tab. 3:** Translation deals sorted by EU membership status of target publishers' country of origin.

Membership status	translation deals #	translation deals %
Candidate countries	313	26%
ENP countries	56	5%
2013 accession	86	7%
2007 accession	129	11%
2004 accession	271	22%
1995 accession	17	1%
1986 accession	57	5%
1981 accession	30	2%
1973 accession	3	0%
Founder countries	178	15%
No official status	20	2%
Former member states (UK)	51	4%
EEA member states (Iceland and Norway)	14	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	1225	100%

languages belonging to those countries most directly implicated in EU's enlargement policy. This finding is not random; rather, it shows that the relationship between the EU's enlargement policy, the EUPL's prizing and translation promotion practices, and the contemporary circulation of European literature are intimately imbricated.

#### **4 Coda: Celebrating European Values at the 10th Anniversary of the EUPL – The *European Stories* Anthology from 2018**

The varied meanings of diversity also materialise in the *European Stories: Winners Write Europe* anthology from 2018. This is a special anthology featuring 36 stories from former EUPL winners who participated in the contest “A European

Story: European Union Prize for Literature Winners Write Europe”. This event was organised for the tenth anniversary of the EUPL in 2018, which coincides with the European Year of Cultural Heritage, as Tibor Navracsics, former European Commissioner for Education, Youth and Sport, explains in the foreword. In his statement, European diversity is understood as the sum of national differences. Indeed, Navracsics mentions the “108 talented authors from 37 different countries” that have received the EUPL up to 2018, all of them “writing in their national languages” and representing “Europe’s linguistic and cultural diversity” (Navracsics 2018, 4). This diversity, however, “makes it difficult for cultural works to circulate across borders”, which is why the EUPL relies both on the power of literature to “build communities” and the practice of translation to overcome linguistic differences to emphasise unity and a shared European identity (4). At the end of the foreword, Navracsics also introduces another meaning of diversity, related to minority languages and cultures, by pointing to the importance of promoting literature “written in less-used languages” (4).

Although the most recent meaning of diversity associated with intercultural dialogue and multiculturalism is not foregrounded in the paratextual material, it is very much present in the texts submitted for the contest, particularly in the four stories that won the anniversary prize. In this regard, the 2018 edition of the EUPL is quite different from other editions, since it encourages competition between writers from different nations for the first time. Another significant difference concerns the jury composition. While in previous editions the laureates were selected by the respective national juries, this time the winners were nominated by three different juries of mixed nationalities: a professional, a public and a political jury. The professional jury was “made up of distinguished experts from the field of literature, including literary critics, journalists, authors as well as booksellers” from Portugal, Germany, Spain, United Kingdom, Greece and Belgium (EUPL Winners, 84). Apart from selecting their favourite story (“A Voice”, by the Romanian author Ioana Pârvulescu), the members of the professional jury were also “invited to give a special mention to the best short story fiction in which European heritage plays a significant role” (84). This special prize went to the story “When I Left ‘Karl Liebknecht’”, by Lidija Dimkovska, an author from North Macedonia. Through the EUPL website, the public jury was also able to cast a vote for their favourite story, Jelena Lengold’s “Jasmine and Death” (Serbia). The texts of the 36 participants were made available in advance in a publication that was “accessible also to print disabled persons” and “contained both original texts and English translations” (84). By letting the public have their say and reinforcing the inclusive nature of the prize in this way, the EUPL used the nomination process to play on typically European values such as transparency and democracy. While the professional and public jury selected only one winning story (except for the professional

jury's special mention for cultural heritage), the MEP's jury, made of several members of the European Parliament, elevated two stories: "European Clouds", by Jean Back and "Current Weather Warning: Predominantly Heavy Fog", by Gast Groeber. The implication of the European Parliament in the nomination process reflects the political valences of literature and of prizes in particular. It is significant, given the EUPL's usual model, that both winners share the same nationality (Luxembourg). Although the names of the MEP's participating in the nomination are not revealed, the afterword of the winners' anthology mentions that the initiative "was spearheaded by Ms Petra Kammerevert, Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education" (84). Despite being selected from different juries with different profiles, all winning stories centre around European values of democracy and diversity and belong amongst the most politically explicit in the volume.

Ioana Pârvulescu's "A Voice" is a literary homage to the Romanian journalist Monica Lovinescu, the daughter of Eugen Lovinescu, who fled to Paris before the establishment of Ceausescu's Communist regime and became a famous broadcaster and the voice of freedom for many Romanians during the Cold War. According to the jury, the text presents "a theme with an important moral purpose about Europe before and after the Cold War" (85). While recovering the collective memory of dictatorship and hence the negative aspects of cultural heritage, the story primarily associates Europe and the EU with open borders. The text is situated between Paris and an Eastern European country, presumably Romania, and narrates the encounter between Lovinescu, who returns to her home country for the first time after many years in exile, and a young woman working as passport controller at the airport, who recognises Lovinescu's voice and bursts into tears when she realises that Romania is now a free country. This intergenerational encounter symbolises the continuity of European values such as freedom, democracy, and solidarity across temporal and geographical boundaries.

The story awarded a special mention for cultural heritage, Dimkovska's "When I Left Karl Liebkecht", similarly associates the European Union with freedom and refuge. According to the jury, it "shows how citizens of various European countries are linked by shared knowledge" (85). The text tells the stories of five migrants who used to live in different streets named after Karl Liebkecht. Escaping from political persecution or economic misery, their stories present an overall positive account of the migrant experience. While the countries outside the EU where the protagonists originally come from are associated with political unrest and instability, the EU is equated with success, peace and security, the only exception being the testimonial of a young German woman who becomes homeless but manages to start a new life in the US. Moreover, because some of the protagonists who find refuge in Europe belong to linguistic or ethnic minorities – such as the boy from Transnistria, who flees to Bucharest



after being the victim of a terrorist attack, or the couple from Crimea belonging to the ethnic minority of the Tatars –, the EU is presented as particularly welcoming towards minorities, a form of hospitality that plays on the association between cultural heritage and regional diversity. The text also evokes the notion of diversity as intercultural dialogue by including explicit references to the refugees of the Syrian civil war who now seek asylum in Europe, a situation which is compared to those of the Jews during the Holocaust (28). By recalling the negative aspects of European cultural heritage, the text calls on intercultural dialogue and solidarity to redeem the mistakes of the past.

Gast Groeber's "Current Weather Warning: Predominantly Heavy Fog" also mobilises the refugee crisis to praise intercultural dialogue. It tells the story of a truck driver from Tallinn, who helps a refugee boy hiding in his vehicle to settle in Europe. It is significant that this story of friendship and solidarity – in analogy with many of the arrival destinations in Dimkowska's "When I Left Karl Liebknecht" – is located in Eastern Europe, implicitly erasing the fault line dividing Western Europe on the one hand and the Balkan and Baltic states on the other concerning the refugee question (cf. Meijen 2020, 948). The other story awarded with the MEP's prize, Jean Back's "European Clouds", takes place against a backdrop of deepening economic crisis that increases the tensions between Europeans and provokes hostility against the less affluent European communities in Luxembourg: "The EU is going bankrupt. Should stay home. Gipsies, the lot of them" (12). Despite the rise of nationalism that jeopardises the European project, the story ends with a celebration of democracy, open borders and national diversity. These principles are embodied by tangible as well as symbolic elements belonging to the European cultural heritage, such as the upcoming local elections that stand for transparency, efficiency and the victory of democracy ("[p]ractical, square, democratic local elections", 13), as well as the varied European products that the protagonist purchases in the supermarket and which represent, rather stereotypically, the diversity of national cultures within the EU: "three bottles of Chianti, two packs of olives from Portugal, one Romanian brandy and at five o'clock there is Barça playing against Red Bull Salzburg. Olé!" (13). This commodification not only turns diversity into a rather innocuous value, but also transforms regional identity (Tuscan wine, Catalan football, a regional Austrian team) into a folkloric theme ready for Europe-wide consumption.

Jelena Lengold's "Jasmine and Death", the short story selected by the public, is perhaps the text that voices the possible pitfalls of intercultural dialogue in a most explicit way. It recounts a passionate long-distance relationship spanning European countries that risks coming to an end when the first-person narrator embarks on a plane to visit her boyfriend. Sitting next to her is Ahmed, a "dark-skinned man" whom she believes to be a terrorist (61). Her fears of dying on the

plane prove irrational, and she arrives safely to her destination, wondering “where we would go next, when we touch the earth, Ahmed and me” (65). While revealing the misunderstandings and racial prejudices that complicate intercultural dialogue, Lengold’s text celebrates multiculturalism by pointing to a possible friendship or even love affair across linguistic and cultural borders.

These vignettes demonstrate how the 2018 *European Stories* anthology legitimises European values by prizing those stories dealing with topics such as diversity, multiculturalism, democracy and freedom. While the texts hint at the negative aspects of Europe, such as the financial crisis, disagreements between the member states, the rise of nationalism, or the lack of a comprehensive EU migration and asylum policy, their main goal is to celebrate European integration and identity. Without questioning the importance of promoting tolerance and pluralism, such oversimplified, unidimensional accounts of the European experience risk turning the European project into a happy-end fairy-tale that is far removed from the daily experiences of many Europeans and – more acutely – the harsh realities faced by the many migrants to Europe who find themselves in a precarious social and legal position. That past EUPL winners were the writers solicited to build the *European Stories* narrative tapestry points once again to the EUPL’s overlapping literary and political priorities.

## 5 Conclusion

Through a combination of contextual, quantitative and (para)textual analysis, this chapter explored the impact of European values on the EUPL’s organisational makeup, winners’ profiles, translation flows and textual dynamics and put a finger on the double-edged ambivalences of prizing and translation as main consecratory strategies in the cultural field. Both serve to enhance a literary work’s symbolic and economic value and tend to amplify one another, a dynamic EUPL organisers are keen to exploit: having been translated into no more than four languages was a prerequisite for consideration; and once prized with the EUPL, winning books found publishers in an average of nine new languages. Each EUPL-consecrated work is also a carrier of political value(s), as demonstrated by the thematic analysis of the winning texts in the *European Stories* anthology. Although mutually imbricated in this way, prizing and translation are often at odds with each other and function as centripetal and centrifugal forces respectively when it comes to notions of linguistic and cultural diversity. In the context of the EUPL, translation creates a centrifugal movement that contributes significantly to the diversification of European literature beyond the dominance of Western European canonical works from

major cultural and political powers such as Britain, Germany, France, Spain, or Italy and the (semi-)central languages they claim. Our analysis of the EUPL-initiated translation rights sales suggests that while translation into the central languages of English, French and German is valued by the EUPL and a proportion of EUPL winners find their way into those languages, it is target publishers in the (semi-)peripheral languages and countries keen to benefit from European integration that are most inclined to translate EUPL winners. Indeed, 71 percent of all translations of EUPL-winning books were published by publishers in countries that are either new member states, candidate countries, or ENP countries.

Whereas translation was in our case a centrifugal force for dissemination and diversification, prizing strengthened the centripetal force of the nation-state and of the supranational institution that unites Europe's national states, the European Union. Despite its aim to promote "non-national" literary works, the EUPL's organisation in national juries, replication of annual awards according to the number of participating countries, exclusion of potential authors lacking the nationality of the participating countries or writing in a language that is not officially recognised, and simplification of the winners' multicultural profile to a single country of origin all end up reinforcing national categories. The strictures of the prize have clear textual implications on the rather predictable ways in which emerging European writers engage with the topic of European diversity, as shown in our analysis of the *European Stories: Winners Write Europe* anthology from 2018, in which cultural heritage, peacemaking and consumable national differences become the archetypes of the European motto of "United in diversity". Future studies on culture as a form of soft power arising from this volume's contribution should therefore not only consider the ways in which political institutions foster cultural relations and international integration, but also how literature and other media register the presence of such mechanisms and actively shape the contours of cultural policy and diplomacy.

## Reference List

- "Aims and Values." *European Union*. [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/eu-in-brief\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/eu-in-brief_en), accessed 14 Nov. 2021.
- Barnes, Julian. "Judging the European Book Prize for 2011." *The Guardian* (16 Dec. 2011). <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/dec/16/european-book-prize-julian-barnes>, accessed 14 Nov. 2021.
- Bell, Joyce M., and Douglas Hartmann. "Diversity in Everyday Discourse: The Cultural Ambiguities and Consequences of 'Happy Talk'." *American Sociological Review* 72.6 (2007): 895–914.

- Brisset, Annie. "Globalisation, Translation, and Cultural Diversity." *Translation and Interpreting Studies* 12.2 (2017): 253–277.
- Calligaro, Oriane. "From 'European Cultural Heritage' to 'Cultural Diversity'? The Changing Core Values of European Cultural Policy." *Politique européenne* 45.3 (2014): 60–85.
- Casanova, Pascale. *The World Republic of Letters*. Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Casanova, Pascale. "Consecration and Accumulation of Literary Capital: Translation as Unequal Exchange." *Critical Readings in Translation Studies*. Ed. Mona Baker. London/New York: Routledge, 2010. 285–303.
- "Culture and Creativity." *European Commission*. <https://ec.europa.eu/culture/funding-creative-europe/about-the-creative-europe-programme>, accessed 14 Nov. 2021.
- D'haen, Theo. *Literature for Europe?* Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009.
- English, James F. *The Economy of Prestige: Prizes, Awards and the Circulation of Cultural Value*. Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 2008.
- "EU Motto." *European Union*. [https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/symbols/eu-motto\\_en](https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/symbols/eu-motto_en), accessed 14 Nov. 2021.
- European Stories: EUPL Winners Write Europe* [includes texts by the 5 winners] European Union, 2018. <https://www.euprizeliterature.eu/node/21>, accessed 14 Nov. 2021.
- European Stories: EUPL Winners Write Europe* [includes texts by 36 participants]. European Union, 2018. <https://euprizeliterature.eu/node/20>, accessed 14 Nov. 2021.
- Foret, François, and Oriane Calligaro. "Governing by Prizes: How the European Union Uses Symbolic Distinctions in its Search for Legitimacy." *Journal of European Public Policy* 26.9 (2019): 1335–1353.
- Franssen, Thomas, and Giseline Kuipers. "Coping with Uncertainty, Abundance and Strife: Decision-Making Processes of Dutch Acquisition Editors in the Global Market for Translations." *Poetics* 41.1 (2013): 48–74.
- Heilbron, Johan. "Towards a Sociology of Translation: Book Translations as a Cultural World-System." *European Journal of Social Theory* 2.4 (1999): 429–444.
- Heilbron, Johan, and Gisèle Sapiro. "The Politics of Translation: How States Shape Cultural Transfers." *Literary Translation and Cultural Mediators in 'Peripheral' Cultures: Customs Officers or Smugglers?* Eds. Diana Roig-Sanz and Reine Meylaerts. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018: 183–208.
- Helgesson, Stefan, and Pieter Vermeulen, eds. *Institutions of World Literature: Writing, Translation, Markets*. New York/London: Routledge, 2016.
- McMartin, Jack. "A Small, Stateless Nation in the World Market for Book Translations: The Politics and Policies of the Flemish Literature Fund." *TTR: Traduction Terminologie Redaction* 32.1 (2019): 145–175.
- McMartin, Jack. "Dutch Literature in Translation: A Global View." *Dutch Crossing* 44.2 (2020): 145–164.
- Meijen, Jens. "Exporting European Values? Political Myths of Liberal Democracy and Cultural Diversity in Creative Europe's Literary Translation Projects." *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 26.7 (2020): 942–958.
- Navracsics, Tibor. "Foreword. How Literature Helps Us Build Communities." *European Stories: EUPL Winners Write Europe* [includes texts by 36 participants]. European Union, 2018: 4–5. <https://www.euprizeliterature.eu/node/20>, accessed 14 Nov. 2021.
- "National Juries & Selection Rules." European Union Prize for Literature. <https://www.euprize.literature.eu/national-juries-selection-rules>, accessed 14 Nov. 2021.

- “Press Release.” European Union Prize for Literature. <https://www.euprizeliterature.eu/sites/default/files/2022-02/PR-EUPL-renewed-2022-2024.pdf>, accessed 23 March 2022.
- Sapiro, Gisèle. “The Metamorphosis of Modes of Consecration in the Literary Field: Academies, Literary Prizes, Festivals.” *Poetics* 15 (2014): 5–19.
- Sapiro, Gisèle. “Translation and Symbolic Capital in the Era of Globalisation: French Literature in the United States.” *Cultural Sociology* 9.3 (2015): 320–246.
- Sapiro, Gisèle. “How Do Literary Works Cross Borders (or Not)? A Sociological Approach to World Literature.” *Journal of World Literature* 1 (2016): 81–96.
- St. André, James. “Metaphors of Translation and Representations of the Translational Act as Solitary Versus Collaborative.” *Translation Studies* 10.3 (2017): 282–295.
- “Support to Literary Translation Projects.” *European Commission*, <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/crea-cult-lit1>. Accessed 14 Nov. 2021.
- van Es, Nicky, and Johan Heilbron. “Fiction from the Periphery: How Dutch Writers Enter the Field of English-Language Literature.” *Cultural Sociology* 9.3 (2015): 296–319.

