

Report on Meetings with the Cuban Association of Translators and Interpreters

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Background, 2011:

In March of 2011, while I was on the IMIA Board, I presented for the IMIA and the National Board and served on a panel about professional associations worldwide at the Seventh Symposium on Translation, Terminology and Interpretation. This Symposium is sponsored by the Cuban Association of Translators and Interpreters (ACTI) and the Canadian Translation, Terminology and Interpretation Council (CTTIC). The then Latin American Representative of the International Federation of Translators (FIT), Silvana Marchetti, now Vice-President of FIT, was also there.

I met many interpreters and translators from Cuba and several other countries. The presentation on the IMIA that featured the National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters and our work on national medical interpreter certification was very well received.

At that time, leaders of ACTI, and especially the interpreters and translators that work at the Cuban National Center of Information for Medical Sciences, INFOMED and who are also members of Cuban Association of Translators and Interpreters expressed interest in collaborating with the International Medical Interpreters Association. INFOMED (www.sld.cu/) is a network of individuals and institutions that work and collaborate to facilitate the access of information to better the health of Cubans and all people worldwide. Their web site is a wealth of information and resources. I toured their offices in Havana the day after the conference and met other colleagues there.

Rita Weil, Secretary of the National Board, attended and presented at the Eighth Symposium on Translation, Terminology and Interpretation in December, 2012, in Havana.

Feb. 10-25 2013 Trip to Havana, Linda:

In February of this year I went to Cuba on a research trip and as part of that I renewed ties with ACTI and others in the leadership of the organization that had been forged in the earlier trip.

I met with Gretchen González Nieto of INFOMED, Secretary of ACTI, and Gisela Odio Zamora, President of ACTI (a nongovernmental organization). I also met with Grisel Ojeda Amador, Department Head, ETECSA, the telecommunications company of Cuba, author of the *History of Translation and Interpretation in Cuba*.

I attended a public presentation by Grisel on the *History of Translation and Interpretation in Cuba* given as part of the International Book Fair of Cuba, a major cultural event held every year and attended by thousands of people, with 81 exhibitors from 31 countries. At this presentation I was asked to say a few words about the IMIA and the National Board during the discussion period.

Grisel gave an overview of her “*History*” in the form of a multimedia presentation – the DVD contains articles, documents, interviews, and images - 209 photos, 68 articles, 54 videos, and 18 historical documents. Grisel gave me copies of the DVD to give to anyone who is interested and permission to make more copies. ACTI plans to have this presentation available on the Internet soon.



Photo: Left to right: Ana, Grisel, Linda and Gretchen

About medical interpreters in Cuba: Translators and Interpreters in Cuba attend the Faculty of Foreign Languages for six years and come out with degrees as a translator, interpreter and/or teacher. Besides their native Spanish, the students acquire at least two additional

languages; some up to three or four. There is a website for Cuban interpreters and translators that contains the ACTI code of ethics and other useful information at www.sld.cu/sitios/traduccion/index.php

The National Health Care system in Cuba is free for its citizens. For foreign guests visiting or working in Cuba there are clinics and hospitals specifically for them. To work in these facilities, the personnel must speak the languages that are most encountered. In addition there are translators, interpreters and professors in the medical field.

International Collaboration

ACTI would like to collaborate with the IMIA through the colleagues in their organization who work primarily as medical interpreters and translators at INFOMED. Gretchen González Nieto would be our point person.

- We could propose that Gretchen join IMIA through the free membership for international interpreters
- We could consider Gretchen as a possible country rep in the future
- Could the IMIA and ACTI trade memberships (both are members of FIT)?
- Gretchen suggested that IMIA send someone there to deliver workshops/training – one week in Havana and another week in the provinces for example
- We could invite a representative from ACTI to our next conference - enough in advance so that person can get a visa
- The Ninth Symposium will be held not this December, but in December 2014. It would be excellent if we sent another representative from the IMIA to this conference.
- Other ideas?