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A MASTERLY TREATMENT OF EU LAW AND TRANSLATION IN A SINGLE BOOK

Review of Colin D. Robertson's *Multilingual Law.
A Framework for Analysis and Understanding.*
London and New York: Routledge. 2016. pp. 273.

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Over the past two decades, EU translation has turned into one of the most dynamically evolving fields of specialized translation in the pan-European globalized context. From a legal-linguistic angle, the EU machinery with its multilingual policy equalizes the particularities of the individual Member States' legal language, but at the same time it generates its idiosyncrasies. In this context, Colin D. Robertson comes up with his new publication on multilingual law and EU legal language, thus contributing to the topic at hand, alongside books by Emma Wagner et al (2002), Kaisa Koskinen (2008), Lucja

Biel (2014) and Klaudia Bednarova-Gibova (2016), to mention just a few.

The book under review is an outcome of long-term conceptual research whose primary function is to contribute towards a better understanding of multilingual law against the backdrop of the structure of legal systems, language policy formation, drafting and revision practice and of course, translation. This all-encompassing approach on the part of the author seems justified as the subject of multilingual law is indeed “phenomenally complex”. Robertson meets the best possible requirements for having written such an incredibly ambitious book as he draws on his experience from legal services both in the UK government and the European Commission, as well as in the Court of Justice of the European Union. Also, the author has over twenty years of experience as lawyer-linguist in the Council of the European Union. All this background information accounts for credibility and reliability behind all the individual book chapters.

As Robertson himself admits, the publication has been a long time in the making as he started in 1999. His aim was to put together a conceptual tool to analyse and understand European law and language in a multilingual supranational setting in one volume. Robertson’s book does not offer a universal panacea for EU translators and linguist-lawyers, working hard to find solutions to vexing problems of multilingual-law in drafting and translation. He does provide the reader with plenty of legal-linguistic incentives to soak up. It should be emphasised that the publication has been targeted at the general reader, academic audience specializing in legal language and translation, and experts working in areas of drafting, translating and revising legal texts.