
Language Practitioner / Taalpraktisyn

Heléne van der Westhuizen

PO Box 27071

Gezina

0031 Pretoria

Phone +2712 3300101

Mobile +2779 130 9660

helenevdwesthuizen@telkomsa.net

Zinnia Mews 4

619 Twenty First Avenue

Rietfontein

0084 Pretoria



12 August 2013

The Chairperson
Portfolio Committee on Arts and Culture (PCAC)

Dear Sir/Madam,

SA Language Practitioners' Council Bill

I've been working as a language practitioner for six years, and have been an accredited member of the South African Translators' Institute (SATI) for two years since I moved back from Poland in 2011. I've also been an associate member of the Professional Editors' Group (PEG) for the same period, and member of the PEG Gauteng Branch committee since June 2013.

I have received information about the proposed Language Practitioners' Council Bill via these two professional bodies, and while I welcome the regulation of our profession in principle, I would like to raise the following concerns:

Although there are established professional organisations like SATI and PEG that have represented language practitioners for a long time, they seem to have been overlooked in the process of drafting this bill.

The language practice field is complex and diverse in the sense that language practitioners work in different and diverse sectors of society, amongst others, the all-important field of education. Tertiary degrees and diplomas for translation and editing are fairly recent developments. Many editors and translators were qualified in other fields, but that does not mean they are not good translators and editors. In addition, the professional bodies are aware that a degree in editing or translation does not necessarily produce a good translator or editor. Therefore, SATI has had an accreditation system for translators and editors in place for many years.

I feel that because of the work they do and the practitioners they represent, it is crucial that SATI and PEG have permanent representation on the Board of the Council. Currently, the Board seems heavily weighted towards government employees. If the professional bodies are not properly represented, and have no say regarding the accreditation, training and continuing professional development (CPD) of practitioners, these crucial processes could fall by the way, which could have serious consequences for these professions.

The only consultation with SATI, which is listed as a body that was consulted about the Bill, was some six years ago. To my mind it is vital that Government should consult professionals in the field more widely. It should be their priority to tap into this vast source of knowledge and experience so as to successfully establish and maintain a council that would regulate the profession to the advantage of all stakeholders involved.

Yours faithfully,



Heténe vd Westhuizen

APTrans (SATI) / APVert (SAVI)

Language Practitioner / Taalpraktisyn