

A Critical Overview of Translation and its Policies in Arts Management in Türkiye

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Abstract

This study explains building a translation policy for the successful operation of the translation process in arts management and the positive impact this policy can have on institutions' recognition and prestige. It argues that establishing order in the translation process will strengthen communication, enabling a wider audience to be reached. While there are not many academic studies on the role of translation in arts management, existing studies have focused on specific cases. This study aims to provide a comprehensive perspective. The materials undergoing the translation process in arts management are described. It is emphasized that the translation process itself changes depending on the characteristics of these materials. The status of the translator as an artist in literary translation is discussed. The positive impact of incorporating translation theories into translation policies is argued via case studies. It is outlined how Türkiye's multilingual and multicultural structure should be addressed in translation policy. The concepts of accessibility, customization, and diversity are correlated to the translation process, and potential improvements within these frameworks are discussed. The importance of institutions' presence in online media for international recognition is emphasized while underlining the importance of implementing the translation policy in online media as well. The websites of various world-renowned museums were examined in terms of language access, and the services they offer in terms of translation were discussed. The language services offered on the websites of some renowned museums in Türkiye were also comparatively criticized. The steps to be taken when building a written translation policy, the concepts to be considered, and the current situation are brought together to discuss the place of translation in arts management from a broad perspective and to reveal the positive impact of this policy on international recognition.

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1. Introduction

Arts management is a valuable discipline for establishing the best possible connection between art and people. Even the smallest project involves a wide range of steps, and each step must be meticulously planned to ensure high-quality communication, interaction, and promotion. Indeed, there are a variety of discussion topics in this discipline. Ensuring accurate and high-quality communication between the parties is crucial for the smooth operation of arts management. Global communication is a key concept in this field, particularly in the context of international public image and interaction. It is crucial for art institutions and artists to present art to a broad audience to build a strong public image. When speaking of a broad audience, it is inevitable to come across audiences from diverse cultures. In this case, the importance of translation becomes evident due to the fact that different languages are spoken in different countries, and some countries are even multilingual (various nations coexist with their own cultures, countries with more than one official language, etc.).

To present art to a broad audience, both translation and its appropriate and systematic implementation are crucial points. One of the first things that can be said about translation is that it is a key factor in ensuring fluent and accurate communication. Many people report that communicating in their native language is easier, it allows them to express themselves better, to understand others more clearly, and allows them to connect more easily with other people emotionally (CSA Research, 2020; LangWit, 2018; Vacalares, 2023; RWS, 2023). Specifically, considering art, as it appeals to the emotions (Nummenmaa & Hari, 2023), it is understandable for people to approach art in their native language, connect with it, and internalize it. There is a wide range of research and studies on the role of translation in the field of arts management. Globally, studies combining arts management and translation studies have generally been published by journals specializing in translation studies, philology, literature, and so on. There is also research published in journals focused on museum studies, museum education, and curation though not common. While most research focuses on “museums,” there are studies under other subheadings. Studies that offer a perspective on arts management from the field of translation studies explore a wide range of topics, addressing issues such as appropriate translation theories, compliance with quality standards, the form of translated material, strategy changes based on translated materials, and the use of different theories based on culture or user needs (Manfredi & Bartolini, 2023). Studies examining translation from an arts management perspective, however, explore a different spectrum, addressing issues such as the translator’s working conditions as a

third party, the budget allocated for translation within institutions, and the placement of translated texts in institutions like museums (Ghazi, 2022; Kim, 2020).

While academic research in Türkiye that addresses the fields of arts management and translation together is relatively scarce, it contributes significantly to the field in terms of the topics it addresses. However, there is no resource specifically for Türkiye that approaches these two fields holistically and comprehensively explains the role of translation within the field. This study aims to explore both perspectives, creating a comprehensive midpoint and examining the role of translation in arts management in Türkiye from various perspectives. A general framework is to be established by addressing the places, situations, and materials where translation is made, the type of translation, the discussion topics related to translation, translation theories and their applicability in arts management, the importance of Türkiye's multicultural and multilingual nature in this context, its role as a tourism country, and building a systematic translation policy in arts management within the framework of international public image and accessibility. One of the primary objectives of this study is to create a holistic reference source for future research.

2. Translations in the Art World

There is a widely-used fundamental distinction in translation studies. Kade distinguishes between “translation” for written source materials and “interpreting (interpretation)” for oral materials (1968). This distinction is fundamental to the translation process. In the context of arts management, after a review of art institutions' websites, their virtual media channels, printed biennial catalogs, museums, festivals, and literary works, it is possible to summarize the translation materials produced in this field as follows.

Written Translations: The titles, posters, descriptions, brochures, instructions such as “entrance and exit” for works in museums and galleries, posters, banners and booklets promoting events and works, other writings on walls, websites and social media posts of institutions, organizations, departments and biennials in charge of publishing and distributing art and presenting it to the public in all forms, artists' biographical websites, (c) catalogues of artists and biennials, and all written documents written for art events, and all other texts legally considered as literary works such as poems, novels, song lyrics, TV series and film subtitles are subject to written translation (DEM, 2025; İKSV, 2022; Polka Galerie, 2025; Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2025; Tuna, 2016).

Grouping translation materials and processes using this binary system will help determine the methods, people, and needs required for these tasks. There are many elements that require planning within the context of arts management during the translation process. These elements can range from determining the location of the translated material on the wall to creating a complete website. In interpreting, due to the nature of interpreting, the identity of the translator, the moment of translation, and the mode of translation (consecutive, simultaneous, etc.) are key elements to consider.

3. A Discussion on Literary Translation in Arts Management

A general analysis of translated materials reveals that most materials are used within the framework of institutions that present art to the public in various artistic fields. However, literary translations are actually outside this framework. According to Article 6 of the *Law on Intellectual and Artistic Works* (Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 1951) the translation of literary works is considered an adaptation. In this case, the author, namely the translator, can be considered an artist and expected to be treated as an author. For example, J.K. Rowling, author of the Harry Potter series, which is widely known internationally, is a well acknowledged author worldwide, while its translators, Ülkü Tamer, Sevin Okyay, and Kutlukhan Kutlu, are primarily known by those involved in the field of translation. Furthermore, the most significant step taken for translators of literary works to gain recognition is the inclusion of a biographical paragraph within the book. Ece, in her work discussing the translator's identity as an author, explains that the translator creates an independent work with multiple identities, including authorship (2016). It is a matter that needs to be discussed whether literary translators, who are considered artists within the framework of the law in Türkiye should be referred to as writers and should be promoted like other writers.

4. Applying Translation Theories in Arts Management

Because translation is a tool that enables communication between people, it is impossible to consider it as a single concept independent from context. To connect with the audience, understanding how they perceive artwork, and then tailoring a translation strategy accordingly will ensure successful communication. Various examples will help clarify this. Many artists tend to reflect some kind of pain they experienced in their art in various ways (Gerevich, 2017). For example, in a promotion event of an artist who somehow reflects a trauma from their past in their colors and lines, the words used to describe that experience vary depending on the language being translated. Instead of saying “painful” in that language, it

is important to consider “How would someone in that culture who felt similar immense pain describe it?” Because without this critique, the artist may fail in their aim to truly reach the masses with their art. The institution presenting the artwork to the public should take this into consideration as it is a crucial factor in the delivery of information. Additionally, various cultures may refrain from using certain words due to some events they faced before as a nation. For example, while some words in German have simple and casual meanings, they are out of use in daily language because they refer to things that reminds the tragic and traumatic events that occurred in Nazi rule in Germany. The word “selektion” in German means selection, but in Nazi rule, it referred to being chosen for execution from among those sent to concentration camps (Smith, 2008). Being considerate of ensuring that such words and expressions do not overwhelm audiences and negatively impact their experience falls upon people working in arts management.

One of the fundamental theories in translation studies is the “localization/foreignization” binary concept. Localization involves translating by replacing the cultural elements of a source text with the most closely corresponding elements of the target, while foreignization involves preserving words representing the source culture in the source text in a way that makes them easier to read in the target culture (Venuti, 1995). For example, Korean, like Turkish, contains honorific indicating kinship, closeness, eldership, and youth (e.g., “ağabey (elder brother),” “abla (elder sister)” “oppa,” and “noona²”). When localization is adopted in a translation from Korean to Turkish, contexts where the word “oppa” is used can be translated as “ağabey.” However, it is important to consider the context in which the word “oppa” is used in one’s own culture. This word can be used between a romantically involved woman and a (relatively older) man when addressing each other and is simply a sign of respect. However, in Turkish, as well as in English neither “ağabey” nor elder brother has such a cultural use. The example here is that the cultural meaning of some words cannot be conveyed through localization. Global communication has increased for many reasons today, and people want to interact with the other party’s cultural elements in communication. There is significant research on interaction with foreign cultures. For example, according to a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center, 50% of participants say they feel very or somewhat close to people from around the world (Wike, Fetterolf, Fagan, & Gubbala, 2023). Another study examined international interaction of posts shared in platform X, specifically in Europe. The results show that monolingual users with

2 These two words are romanized. Their original versions are as followed:

multilingual neighbors are 16 times more likely to share foreign domain names and 4 times more likely to share foreign-language hashtags (#) (Mendelsohn, Ghosh, Jurgens, & Budak, 2023). Because the blending of foreign cultures is getting more accepted, foreignization is also a frequently used approach.

A case study was conducted using materials presented at the War and Women's Human Rights Museum in Seoul to demonstrate the effectiveness of the foreignization strategy in terms of arts management (Kim, 2020). This memory museum conveys the trauma and sexual slavery endured by Korean women at the hands of the Japanese army during wartime. The study explains, through examples, how translation can be done depending on the diverse user base. It is noted that the term "comfort women" was used in English translations to describe women subjected to sexual slavery. This term was considered derogatory in Korea. It was decided that the Korean word "halmoni"³ would be used verbatim in English to convey the trauma experienced by the women in the most comprehensible and culture-specific way. The study states that such translation adjustments will both increase international awareness of the issue presented in accordance with the museum's mission and enable museum visitors to engage more deeply with the subject presented (Kim, 2020). This research actually shows how effective the method used within the translation policy of various art institutions, including museums, in conveying their vision and mission to an international audience is in terms of the public image they will create in the eyes of the audience.

In the field of translation studies, there are many approaches based on ensuring that the target audience of the translation process comprehends the given material as clearly as possible. Choosing the most appropriate approach for each situation is crucial for reaching a broad audience. The strategy for a descriptive text for a modern art museum exhibition differs from the translation service provided to a foreign artist attending a cultural festival for several reasons. Because translation is an iterative service, systematic progress prevents inaccurate and problematic communication. A translation policy that provides standards primarily ensures linguistic uniformity across translation and interpreting services for the same institution or organization, reducing the difficulty of repeating the same extensive process from beginning to end in subsequent translations, and preventing the emergence of different terminology on the same topic, object, phenomenon, etc. Reaching as many

3 The word *halmoni* corresponds to *mother*, *grandmother*, and is also used as an honorific for an older lady.

audiences as possible in their native language contributes to their desire to revisit the same experiences. Addressing the audience in their native language provides a customized experience, increasing their motivation to return.

5. The Importance Translation Regarding Türkiye's Multilingual Structure and Tourism in Arts Management

The Anatolian peninsula where Türkiye is located has hosted numerous civilizations over the course of history and today Türkiye has a multicultural and multilingual structure. Türkiye has approximately 35 different languages actively spoken, including minority and foreign languages. Due to its multinational structure, many languages such as Kurdish, Zazaki, Circassian, Laz, and Gagauz are spoken in Türkiye (Ghuaze, 2025; Haznedar, 2018; Rudaw, 2025). Due to shared history, migrations, and neighborly relations, many other languages such as Arabic, Russian, Greek, German, and French are also actively used in communication (Estukyan, 2024; T.C. Aile ve Sosyal Hizmetler Bakanlığı, 2025; TRT, 2025). Because Anatolia has long been accepted as a place of divine and historic significance by Abrahamic religions, languages such as Italian and Hebrew, in which religious sources are written, are also widely used (Komisyon, 2025; Şalom, 2025). Due to globalization, the use of European languages such as English and Spanish is quite widespread. In such a diverse country, the visitor profiles of the institutions must be equally diverse. Furthermore, Türkiye, a popular destination for tourists due to its location, history, and climate, creates a multilingual communication environment through the convergence of tourist activities and art.

In a country where multiple languages are actively used, translations will open doors to many opportunities. First, reaching audiences in their native language can be incorporated into institutions and organizations' services of accessibility. Accessibility refers to the ability to use all types of spaces, products, information, and so on, by everyone, without any segregation (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Aile ve Sosyal Hizmetler Bakanlığı, 2025). While organizations such as WHO and UN use the phrase "for individuals with disabilities" (Birleşmiş Milletler Ekonomi ve Sosyal Konseyi, 2013) when defining accessibility, it is important to consider that language barrier might create an accessibility issue. For example, a Russian tourist who speaks neither Turkish nor English and wants to visit an exhibition at an institution that uses Turkish and English as its languages of communication and won't experience the same level of interaction as a Turkish or English-speaking individual. They may even experience difficulties such as not being aware of what to look for or finding their way around the institution. This results in

such an experience that contradicts the principle of accessibility. Providing visitors with services that don't create language barriers, but instead are linguistically accessible, is crucial for the recognition of individuals, institutions, and organizations that present art and for their reach to a wider audience. Making every institution and organization linguistically accessible requires different steps, because the needs of each institution's visitors vary in terms of language, and many factors, such as the institution's physical location, the type of art it presents to its audience and for what purpose, the tourist profile of the location, its history, etc., influence the languages that visitors need for communication and the extent and location of translation. Most institutions carry out their activities on accessibility by targeting access for individuals with physical or mental disabilities. A potential malfunction in multilingual communication is not considered an accessibility issue. Recognizing the language barrier as an accessibility issue and implementing translation policies accordingly will increase the potential of arts institutions to reach their target audiences.

Today, many interactions are designed with the goal of providing a "customized" experience. According to a global survey conducted in 2025, 64% of consumers prefer to shop from companies that tailor their experiences to their wishes and needs (Green, Scutt, & Quaadgras, 2025). Customization is rapidly trending in numerous sectors and its integration into the arts management will strengthen the relationship between institutions and their visitors. Addressing visitors in their native language, rather than a global language, is an opportunity that institutions should consider as a customization method.

Diversity is also a concept that deserves significant attention in this context. Within the context of arts management, diversity is addressed in various perspectives. When discussing the steps institutions take for providing diversity, it is generally observed that diversity in hiring is focused on factors such as race, gender, sexual orientation, and religion for employees and artists (Creativity and Free Expression, 2021; The Alice Walton Team, 2023; The Clay Studio, 2021). Considering foreign languages and visitors, it would be beneficial for institutions to try to connect with visitors in their native languages in order to demonstrate that they are institutions that can provide visitor diversity and that diversity is pursued as a policy.

6. Examples of Translation in the Virtual World related to the Field of Arts Management and Discussions

The virtual world is undeniably a part of everyday life, and today, many art management activities take place in the virtual world. Just as many commercial brands use virtual media for advertising, promotion, and other activities to reach a broad audience, arts institutions and organizations largely conduct their projects of public relations through virtual media. The important point in carrying out these projects in virtual media is not only to reach a wide audience but also to be able to connect with the audience reached. Nowadays, most people get their first impression on general topics through virtual media. Weinschenk states that most decisions are made instantly and unconsciously, driven by intuitive and emotional processing, and therefore, people decide to interact with what is most familiar to them first. Based on this, it can be inferred that an individual is less likely to browse a post or website in a language they don't understand (2015). Taking steps towards accessibility, customization, and diversity through work presented in virtual media will benefit art institutions in terms of branding and recognition. The policies adopted by art institutions in terms of international communication in the virtual world are abundant.

Examining the language policies of some established, globally recognized institutions will reveal the extent of this abundance. When visiting the website of the Louvre Museum in Paris, France, the site is initially opened in English because it originates from a different country. In the upper left corner, language options are available. These include English, French, Spanish, and Chinese. Considering this site layout and language selection, it appears that the primary audience is considered likely to come from largely populated, geographically close areas and that the focus is on universal language communication. Placing language options at the top of the page provides accessibility without creating confusion or delays in the experience (Louvre, 2025). MoMA, one of the world's most renowned modern art museums, has no language options on its website (MoMA, 2025). The Chicago Museum of Modern Art, on the other hand, only offers Spanish, with the language options listed at the bottom of the page (MCA, 2025). Like the Louvre, the Seoul National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art's website prioritizes user language options by placing language options menu over other menus. By putting English, Chinese, and Japanese for language options, the museum, like the Louvre, appears to prioritize globalization and geographical proximity (MMCA, 2025). The Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam offers its users language options both on the main menu and with a "plan your visit" menu in eight languages: German, Italian,

Spanish, French, Portuguese, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean (Van Gogh Museum, 2025). Via both a wide range of languages and a visitor invitation, the Van Gogh Museum demonstrates a more welcoming approach to its visitors. The website of the Queen Sofia National Museum of Art in Madrid, Spain, differs slightly from previous examples in terms of language policy. The language selection menu is again located at the top, offering Spanish, English, Catalan, Basque, and Galician as options. The Queen Sofia Museum has taken steps to increase accessibility and diversity by reaching out to the Catalan, Basque, and Galician communities living in Spain and considered minorities (Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, 2025). All of the museums mentioned offer services such as headset translation in various languages and private tour guides during visits.

However, when deciding to visit these museums, an online search can only be done using the search engines' own translation service to understand the exhibition content of the institutions. While the translation services provided by search engines are improving, there is no way to immediately prevent misunderstandings because the final output is not human-reviewed, and translations are done without prioritizing specific terminology. In sum, it's clear that there is more to be done to improve interlingual communication beyond current translation practices. Most museums prioritize population density, global reach, geographical proximity, and touristic objectives when choosing their language options.

In Türkiye, institutions exhibit varying approaches with varying motivations. Some of Türkiye's most renowned museums, the Istanbul Museum of Modern Art, Arter, and Pera Museum, offer only English language option on their websites (Arter, 2025; İstanbul Modern, 2025; Pera Müzesi, 2025). These museums, located in places with high tourism density, would benefit from a language other than English and use it on their websites, analyzing the majority of tourists visiting their locations. Numerous museums in Türkiye are affiliated with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. While these museums don't exclusively represent their own websites, they are also featured on the website "müze.gov" (T.C Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2025). "Müze.gov", however, only offers an English language option. The website "Müze İstanbul" (İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2025), which promotes museums affiliated with the Istanbul provincial administration, primarily operates in English. Examples from around the world demonstrate that institutions choose languages based on multiple criteria, while in Türkiye, English, the global language, is used solely to reach a wider audience. From this perspective, in a multinational country that receives many visitors in terms of tourism, there are many steps

that institutions can take to reach large audiences in the context of language and translation.

7. Towards Building an Institutional Translation Policy

A systematic translation process is essential for healthy interlingual communication and interaction. The first step in implementing a translation policy within the arts management process is to identify the visitor. Institutions responsible for arts and cultural management can conduct field research on language and translation to better understand visitor profiles, present art more effectively, and expand the visitor profile and increase the number of visitors. In this research, after a target audience is created by gathering the general ethnographic profile of the population living in the location where the institutions are located, a profile considering the history of the location, the profile of the visitors, and the profile of the tourists who visit the location, it can be discussed how many more people can be reached and in what way. The results of this research will determine which language options will be provided. The next step is to determine a translation method within the framework of the institution's vision and mission. As mentioned in previous sections, using a translation method will ensure the accurate conveying of the art. There is no single translation method; in fact, multiple methods can and must be used for multiple situations. The important thing is that the translations follow a well-established and consistent system. The next step is to develop terminology within the framework of the art the institutions' presenting. Creating a terminology not only provides everyone with the same information but also allows individuals and institutions the freedom to reflect their vision, social, and political approaches in other languages. Because translation services, whether written or spoken, are often provided by third-party companies, institutions should share their written translation policies with their translators and request that they arrange their translations, accordingly, resulting in uniformity in the tone of voice of the translation.

8. Conclusion

Translation, as a process within communication, requires solid planning. There are several points to consider regarding translation in the field of arts management. The role of translation in the process of communicating and presenting all forms of art to an audience is undeniable. A well-planned translation policy will ensure greater reach. Furthermore, a translation that ensures accurate communication positively impacts the international

recognition and prestige of institutions and organizations working in arts management.

In Türkiye, emphasizing Türkiye's multicultural and multilingual structure in the context of translation in arts management and incorporating it into translation process planning will increase the quality of translation and thus the number of visitors. Translation is also important for accessibility. Language barriers can be considered as an accessibility issue when engaging in art. Various studies have shown that individuals interact more and feel more emotionally connected with materials in their native language. From this perspective, presenting art to individuals in their native language will also have positive benefits for institutions. Furthermore, the smooth functioning of translation policies is also crucial for providing a customized experience to the visitor where art is presented. The translation process is also related to the institutions' diversity policies. Developing a translation policy to ensure the most efficient translation process and executing translations within this policy framework will significantly benefit institutions in terms of effective communication and international recognition.

In order to build a translation policy, field research should be conducted to determine the languages required for translation. Then, terminology should be developed that describes the art the institution presents. Separate terminology is then created for terms that institutions prefer (not) to use in their texts due to their social/political/ humanitarian etc. stances. Which translation theories align with the art they present should be determined and which of these will be utilized should be specified. Creating such a framework will ensure a continuous, consistent, and sustainable translation process for institutions, strengthening their communication skills.

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Extended Abstract

Global communication is a topic that deserves attention in the field of arts management, in terms of public image and interaction. It is stated that it is easier for most people to communicate in their native language, that they express themselves better, that they understand the other party more clearly, and that they can establish an emotional bond with the other party more easily (CSA Research, 2020; LangWit, 2018; Vacalares, 2023; RWS, 2023). To bring art to a wider audience, both translation and the appropriate and systematic implementation of this translation are crucial points. This study explains building a translation policy for the successful operation of the translation process in arts management and the positive impact this policy can have on institutions' recognition and prestige. It argues that establishing order in the translation process will strengthen communication, enabling a wider audience to be reached. While there are not many academic studies on the role of translation in arts management, existing studies have focused on specific cases. Research examining the field of arts management from the perspective of translation studies covers a wide range of topics, addressing issues such as appropriate translation theories, compliance with quality standards, the form of translated material, strategy changes depending on the translated material, and the use of different theories based on culture or user needs (Manfredi & Bartolini, 2023). Studies examining translation from the perspective of arts management explore a different spectrum, addressing issues such as the translator's working conditions as a third party, the budget allocated for translation in institutions, and the placement of translated texts in institutions such as museums (Ghazi, 2022; Kim, 2020). This study aims to provide a comprehensive perspective by giving a two-way perspective into the topic. The materials undergoing the translation process in arts management are categorized according to the difference between translation and interpreting. It is emphasized that the translation process itself changes depending on the characteristics of these materials. The status of the translator as an artist in literary translation is discussed. The positive impact of incorporating translation theories into translation policies is argued via case studies. It is suggested that applying certain translation strategies will hinder miscommunication, help the audience form connections with the art presented, and allow organizations to express their values regarding what is presented to an international audience. It is outlined how Turkey's multilingual and multicultural structure should be addressed in translation policy. There are nearly 35 languages that are often used in communication in Turkey and considering the variance in audience while building a policy is important to achieve a wider audience and strong communication. The

concepts of accessibility, customization, and diversity are correlated to the translation process, and potential improvements within these frameworks are discussed. The language barrier is suggested as an accessibility issue and a well-planned translation and interpretation policy is suggested as solution. Trending in customization in user experience is also correlated with translation process, and it is suggested that providing translation is included in customization. The importance of institutions' presence in online media for international recognition is emphasized while underlining the importance of implementing the translation policy in online media as well. The websites of various world-renowned museums were examined in terms of language access, and the services they offer in terms of translation were discussed. Population density, globality, geographical proximity and touristic purposes have been prioritized in the language selection of most museums. It is suggested that there are numerous other criteria that can be included in this decision. The language services offered on the websites of some renowned museums in Turkey were also comparatively criticized. The steps to be taken when building a written translation policy, the concepts to be considered, and the current situation are brought together to discuss the place of translation in arts management from a broad perspective and to reveal the positive impact of this policy on international recognition.