



To GALA Board of Directors

Open Letter

From the Union of Translators of Russia (UTR), the National League of Translators and Interpreters of Russia (NLT), Translation Forum Russia (TFR)

August 25, 2022

The Globalization and Localization Association (GALA) that connects translation industry organizations from 50 countries worldwide posted a statement ‘How the GALA Community is Showing Support for Ukraine’ on their website on August 10, 2022. Referring to the letters from 40 GALA members (names withheld) in response to an official request made by the GALA administrative team, GALA on behalf of the **entire** (*sic!*) trade association expresses solidarity with the people of Ukraine and more specifically, with Ukrainian translation professionals. GALA encourages targeted support that was or is expected to be offered by GALA members personally or through their respective organizations. The statement is addressed to GALA members urging them to take further specific steps in this context.

It is beyond argument that solidarity and support for colleagues that are struggling with difficulties in their professional activities is a matter of conscience for every decent person. Moreover, translation professionals express such solidarity with their peers indiscriminately, regardless of their country of residence, religion, color, etc.

Efforts of translation professionals have always been aimed at developing and strengthening mutual understanding between countries and peoples, especially amid growing international tensions. A translator’s overarching priority is to give parties a chance to understand each other and, if possible, reconcile and reach an agreement. It is due to this fundamental objective with both professional and moral dimensions that any politicization of the situation within our professional community and, especially, discrimination of its members is inadmissible.

It is to be noted that these principles are embedded in the GALA Bylaws and the GALA Code of Conduct. They are at the heart of the translation profession as such and are therefore found in the constitutional documents of FIT and other translation associations. Their goal is to enforce ethical and legal norms, ‘*foster exchange to promote professionalism in the language industry*’ (GALA Bylaws).

The GALA administrative team listed support measures that are currently available, adding that such support included *sanctions against Russia-based translation companies* and called on all the GALA members to honor their appeals that rest solely on the convictions of the GALA members. Some of those appeals are in violation of the above guiding principles that have shaped relations between translators across borders for decades as well as of the rules of the international law.

We believe the following appeals made by the GALA administrative team to GALA members to be unacceptable in our professional environment:

- Choose Ukrainian language companies. Shift requests for translations into Russian by assigning them to Ukrainian LSPs or translators.
- Boycott businesses paying taxes to the Russian government and shift it to other countries.

(<https://www.gala-global.org/knowledge-center/professional-development/blogs/how-gala-community-showing-support-ukraine>)

The GALA message contains other calls that are openly political in nature and are clearly outside the purview of an international translation association.

Such rhetoric on behalf of the association that claims to represent translation community interests directly violates Articles 5, 20 and 26 of the 1966 UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Articles 5 and 7 of the 1965 UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 14 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (prohibition of discrimination), Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (inadmissibility of discrimination). The GALA statement discriminates against Russians and citizens of Russia (Russia is a multinational country with more than 190 peoples) (descent-based discrimination).

In this regard, we urge the GALA management / administrative team to withdraw the above calls from their post of August 10, 2022 as being in contravention of the traditions of the translation community, violating the norms of the international law and EU legislation, and to publish this Open Letter on the GALA official website.

We draw the attention of the international translation community to the stance of Russian-based translators in respect of the post by the GALA administrative team and urge all members of our community to consistently follow the time-tested principles of professional cooperation and friendly engagement among translation professionals of all countries.