



By email
etremblay@acep-cape.ca

June 10th, 2015

Ms. Emmanuelle Tremblay
President
Canadian Association of Professional Employees

Dear Ms. Tremblay,

Thank you for advising me of the concerns of the Canadian Association of Professional Employees and its TR members about the Translation Bureau's language technology projects.

As Chief Executive Officer of the Translation Bureau and Chair of the Council of the Network of Official Languages Champions, I take your comments very seriously.

Indeed, the Bureau has committed to deploying a machine translation tool on all government employees' workstations by 2016. This tool that has been developed in Canada, by the National Research Council and demonstrates that the public service is capable of innovation and is keeping up with technology. The pilot is being launched this week and the tool will be tested with over 200 employees in various federal departments and agencies. The purpose of the pilot will be to assess the tool's effectiveness. We hope to gain valuable insight and refine the tool before launching it on all desktops.

We all know that language technologies like machine translation are being increasingly used. Government employees are already using machine translation tools that are available online. Some departments have even purchased their own translation tools. As the federal government's centre of excellence in translation and linguistic services, the Bureau must oversee access to language technologies in the public service.

The profession is changing, and this change is being led by technological advances. Therefore, the Bureau is spearheading a number of initiatives, including the machine translation project, in order to better support the public service, encourage use of the two official languages in the workplace and ensure optimal effectiveness in the use of language technologies as they develop.

The quality of machine translation is improving dramatically and quickly, but the oversight of professionals is still necessary. Under this pilot project, the Translation Bureau needs to strike the right balance between its desire to offer a useful tool and the current state of technology. Based on an assessment of the existing technology, the Bureau believes that it is preferable to use this tool to improve the understanding and translation of short, unofficial internal communications.

I am looking forward to having further discussions with you about the Translation Bureau's projects and the issues that are of concern to your members.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Donna Achimov', with a large, stylized initial 'D'.

Donna Achimov
Chief Executive Officer
Translation Bureau

c.c: Graham Fraser