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ANNUAL REPORT

2019



Baltic Centre for Writers and Translators (BCWT) / Östersjöns författar- och översättacentrum (ÖFÖC)

Introduction

In 2019 the Baltic Centre for Writers and Translators devotedly promoted international writers and translators' residency and continued facilitate the literary and cultural exchange between the countries around the Baltic Sea and beyond. BCWT, pursuing its aim to provide authors and translators an opportunity for intercultural encounters, time and space to write, read, translate, study, conduct research, give readings and become part of the vibrant, contemporary and diverse literary context, served as a work and meeting place for a broad international community of 179 writers and translators from 28 countries.

Summarizing with the long-term perspective, since 1993 when the BCWT was founded on the initiative of authors and translators in the Baltic and the Nordic region, 5400 literary professionals from all over the world have stayed and worked side by side at BCWT 78 000 days and nights during these years. Estimated in books, at least 4000 titles have been worked with within the centre's walls.

BCWT was further developing its international, national and local collaborations and networks and actively sought new forms of cooperation and partners. Highlights of the year were in this regard the cooperation with:

- Language and literary scientists at Uppsala, Helsinki and Stockholm university to prepare and carry out a symposium on multilingualism in literature.
- Baltic Writers' Council to put together a seminar on translation and General assembly.
- A group of Polish Translators who chose the centre as a location for a Polish-Swedish translators seminar.

The quest to convey the centre's narrative out to the world and intensive work to maintain the centre as an active international cultural actor continued.

BCWT continued working on making its operations more visible.

Many groups and individuals visited the Centre to get closer acquainted with its activity and work conditions.

Through the year a number of Open Houses, literary programs, talks with authors, translators, scientists, politicians and school visits were arranged. Film screenings and concerts, receptions, study visits, mingles and excursions around Gotland were recurrent events.

BCWT continued its initiatives for children and young people. Secondary school pupils were visiting the centre to meet authors and translators, to listen to how they started writing, how they work and what they write about, and “breath in” the “bookish” ambience of BCWT.

The Centre’s programs often become the first introduction of an authorship to the Swedish audience. It was particularly exciting to arrange talks about ongoing writing and translating project, or a recently published book which to some extent had come to life during a residency at the Centre.

BCWT continued to act as a hub of languages and literatures, and a vibrant think tank, catching up on suggestions and ideas and assisting with their implementation.

Last but not least BCWT’s landlord – Region Gotland – renovated the dwelling house!, which has been devotedly serving as a home for literary creation, authors’ and translators’ ongoing workshop, an inspiring international environment and a place for significant meetings and learning.

Background

Baltic Centre for Writers and Translators was established on the initiative of writers and translators in the Baltic region and Scandinavia. Centre's core activity is to offer writers and translators a workplace and stimulating environment. With residences as a starting point the centre creates links and networks across national borders and helping to strengthen freedom of expression, dissemination of knowledge and building of bridges between different nationalities and cultures. In the same direction, such as seminars, conferences and literary events the centre organizes, both on its own and in collaboration with national and international organizations. Writers and translators have a majority in the centre's board, which has representatives from both Sweden and other countries. Baltic Centre for Writers and Translators is a forum for international cultural exchange and cooperation.

Statistics

Writers and translators in residence 2019

| | Days | | Guests | | | | | |
|----------------|------------|--------|--------|--------|--|-----|-------------|---------------|
| Sweden | 525 | 19,55% | 52 | 29,05% | | | | |
| Finland | 390 | 14,52% | 30 | 16,76% | | | | |
| Belarus | 168 | 6,25% | 6 | 3,35% | | | | |
| Lithuania | 164 | 6,11% | 8 | 4,47% | | | | |
| Russia | 162 | 6,03% | 7 | 3,91% | | | | |
| Germany | 151 | 5,62% | 8 | 4,47% | | | | |
| Poland | 148 | 5,51% | 11 | 6,15% | | | | |
| Norway | 131 | 4,88% | 9 | 5,03% | | | | |
| Iceland | 115 | 4,28% | 7 | 3,91% | | | | |
| Estonia | 114 | 4,24% | 8 | 4,47% | | | | |
| Denmark | 85 | 3,16% | 5 | 2,79% | | | | |
| Ukraine | 65 | 2,42% | 3 | 1,68% | Days | | 2686 | |
| Italy | 56 | 2,08% | 3 | 1,68% | Unique guests | | 179 | |
| Latvia | 52 | 1,94% | 3 | 1,68% | Countries | | 28 | |
| France | 41 | 1,53% | 2 | 1,12% | | | | |
| Bulgaria | 38 | 1,41% | 1 | 0,56% | | | | |
| Netherlands | 30 | 1,12% | 2 | 1,12% | Profession | | Days | |
| Syria/Poland | 30 | 1,12% | 1 | 0,56% | Writers | 90 | 1550 | 57,71% |
| UK | 29 | 1,08% | 2 | 1,12% | Translators | 64 | 959 | 35,70% |
| Switzerland | 27 | 1,01% | 1 | 0,56% | Other * | 25 | 177 | 6,59% |
| Turkey | 27 | 1,01% | 1 | 0,56% | | | | |
| Greece | 26 | 0,97% | 2 | 1,12% | *playwrights, publishers, cultural administrators, etc. | | | |
| Spain | 26 | 0,97% | 1 | 0,56% | | | | |
| Czech republic | 21 | 0,78% | 2 | 1,12% | | | | |
| Georgia | 20 | 0,74% | 1 | 0,56% | Gender | | | |
| Canada | 18 | 0,67% | 1 | 0,56% | Female | 118 | 65,92% | |
| Hungary | 14 | 0,52% | 1 | 0,56% | Male | 61 | 34,08% | |
| Slovenia | 13 | 0,48% | 1 | 0,56% | | | | |

BCWT is a haven for work and a forum for exchange

“Building bridges and breaking barriers”

Highlights of the year

BCWT is a workplace and meeting point for writers and translators, open for applicants from all over the world, though residency priority is given to literary professionals from the countries in the Baltic Sea region and Scandinavia. The main criteria for being granted a residency at BCWT is the professional character of literary work, t. i. a writer/translator’s works have been published through established publishing, either in paper or digital form. An applicant is asked to send a CV, list of publications, description of the project to be worked on.

During 2019 the BCWT hosted 179 residing guests from 28 countries. They could devote themselves to a literary project of their own, staying in average 2-5 weeks on a residency bursary, t. i. free of charge, with 24-hours full access to all BCWT’s facilities. Furthermore, German Translation Fund, Swedish Writers’ Fund, Swedish institute, Estonian Writers’ Union, Finland Swedish Writers’ Association and others granted a number of individual allocated bursaries, meant for a work term at the BCWT. Most of the residing guests were authors and translators of poetry, prose, plays, screenplays, film scripts, libretto, essays, children books, non-fiction within humanities, though occasionally cultural administrators, publishers and other guests working in the literary field stayed in connection to a shorter project or meetings. BCWT actively facilitated dialogue between residents, as well as visibility of Centre’s international activity. The Centre extensively served as a place for readings, Open Houses, film-screenings, meetings, talks, receptions, mingles, dinners and study visits.

Serving and promoting the BCWT as an international meeting place the organization has been investing significant efforts into creating good working environment and welcoming conditions to develop professional and personal contacts and networking. Dinners, tea-hours, combined with talks and presentations of work-in-progress contribute to deeper acquaintance with each other’s writing, culture, backgrounds, experiences. To inspire the guests by extraordinary historical and natural richness of the island, to create more opportunities for international dialogue-on-road many excursions in Visby and around Gotland were arranged for residing guests and participants of the projects. A great number of presentations of the BCWT’s activity were done for booked and drop-in study visits to BCWT’s premises.

How BCWT is being governed and managed

Members and founders

of the non-profit organization BCWT (Östersjöns författar- och översättarcentrum) are Swedish Writers' Union, Gotland County Administration and Region Gotland. The members appoint three representatives each to the Board of Representatives and nominate Swedish members to the Board of the BCWT.

Representatives

Gotland County: Britt Silfvergren, Hanna Johansson;
Region Gotland: Inger Harlevi, Carin Rosell / Deputies: Bo Björkman, Eva Gahnström
Swedish Writers' Union: Lena Karlin, Kristina Sjögren, Ing-Britt Björklund

Annual Meeting of the Representatives was held on **3 May**.

Board of the BCWT

is composed of a Chairman and six members and six deputies who are appointed by the Representatives on the annual meeting and the Board internally appoints its Deputy Chairman. Of the Board's six members, two are nominated by the Swedish Writers' Union, two - by the County Administration of Gotland, of whom one represents Uppsala University Campus Gotland, one member is to be nominated by Region Gotland. The Baltic Writers' Council nominate two members representing the foreign Writers' and Translators Unions for a two-year period.

Members of the Board

Olle Jansson, chairman, Campus Gotland Uppsala university
Katarina Krusell/ Fredrik Gradelius; Region Gotland
Thomas N. Persson, Gotland County Administration
Janina Orlov / Stefan Ingvarsson, Swedish Writers' Union.
Baltic Writers' Council:
Yuliya Tsimafeyeva / Dmity Plax, Belarus Writers' Union
Mudite Treimane, Latvian Writers Union / Marius Burokas, Lithuanian Writers' Union

Deputies:

Anna Hrdlicka / Oscar Lindster, Region Gotland
Cecilia Hansson, Viveka Sjögren, Swedish Writers' Union

Baltic Writers' Council:
Malin Kivelä, Finland's Swedish Writers Association
Mudite Treimane, Latvian Writers' Union

Meetings of the Board

During the year 2019 the Board held meetings on 1st March of March, 3rd of May, 25th of June and 6th December – all in Visby.

Baltic Writers' Council - BWC

The Baltic Writers' and Translators' Council (BWC) represents 21 literary organizations, 12 countries and approximately 17.000 members around the Baltic region and beyond.

The Council was founded during the legendary authors and translators' Baltic Sea voyage in 1992. The BWC is a multinational, non-profit, non-governmental organization which promotes the freedom of expression, democracy and the free flow of ideas and information between the writers' and translators' organizations. It also aims to support and inspire BCWT activities. The BCWT is the headquarters for BWC, which nominates two members and two deputies to BCWT's Board. The chairperson of Baltic Writers' Council is **Kazimiera Astratoviene** (chair of Lithuanian Translators Organisation)

BWC had its annual General Assembly on 27-28 of April in Visby at BCWT.

The Office

has been open every week-day 8.30 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.

Employees:

Lena Pasternak – director
Patrik Muskos – managing assistant
Lina Larsson – household, cleaning, administration

Service: Accountant Gustav Söderdahl

From BCWT's "Logbook":

Symposium

"Multilingual Literature and the Reader"

7 - 9 March

The symposium was arranged by a group of literary researchers at Stockholm, Uppsala, Helsinki universities and Baltic Centre for Writers and Translators

The symposium "Multilingual Literature and the Reader" focused on multilingualism in contemporary literature from the Nordic countries. Multilingualism is a phenomenon as old as the literature itself and the Nordic region has always been characterized by linguistic diversity. Multilingual literature has become increasingly prominent in recent decades, partly as a result of globalization and migration. A large number of contemporary authors have either changed language and started writing in a language other than their mother tongue, or started using several languages in their literary works. The prose and poetry created by writers like Ralf Andtbacka, Marjaneh Bakhtiari, Kristian Guttesen, Zinaida Lindén, Eija Hetekivi Olsson, Øyvind Rimbereid (and many more) challenge readers by questioning the view of language, nation and identity that has been prevalent since nationalism emerged in the early 1800s. The research interest in literary multilingualism has grown rapidly since the early 2000s, which is reflected in several monographs and anthologies on the subject. Despite this, there is a lack of theoretical framework which in a convincing and multifaceted manner can account for the influence that multilingualism has on both writing and reading literature. The symposium contributed to clarify this through its focus on the reading process in connection with multilingual literature. The symposium took place 7-9 March at the Baltic Centre for Writers and Translators in Visby. It was organized by a number of literary studies researchers from Uppsala, Stockholm and Helsinki universities and by the Baltic Centre for Writers and Translators. The symposium is financed by the Riksbankens Jubileumsfond.

Public reading at Almedal library

7 March

In connection to the symposium a literary public programme takes place at Almedal Library

Participated; **Ralf Andtbacka**, Finland, **Marjaneh Bakhtiari**, Sweden, **Kristian Guttesen**, Iceland, **Zinaida Lindén**, Finland, **Øyvind Rimbereid**, Norge

26 April.

Round table discussion dedicated to the work of literary translators, 26 April.



Photos © Lena Pasternak

27-28 April.

Baltic Writers' Council had its annual General Assembly in cooperation with and at the Baltic Centre for Writers and Translators in Visby.



The following representatives of the 12 member organisations were present: Swedish Writers' Union (Anna-Säflund Orstadius), The Union of Finnish Writers (Hannu Niklander), Society of Swedish

Authors in Finland (Malin Kivelä), The Finnish Association of Finnish Non-Fiction Writers (Anna Rutanen, Satu Lundelin), The Finnish Association of Translators and Interpreters (Taina Helkamo), Lithuanian Association of Literary Translators (Kazimiera Astratoviene), Lithuanian Writers' Union (Marius Burokas), Estonian Writers' Union (Tiit Aleksejev, Piret Viires, Ingrid Velbaum-Staub), Latvian Writers' Union (Mudite Treimane), Polish Association of Literary Translators (Justyna Czechowska), The Union of Belarusian Writers (Dmitri Plax, Barys Piatrovich), The Norwegian Association of Literary Translators (Hilde Lyng). Lena Pasternak was representing the Baltic Centre for Writers and Translators.

The common matters of interest were discussed, such as freedom of speech, publishing, copyright, status of literature nationally, conditions of literary professionals, cultural political issues.

Workshop for translators from Polish into Swedish

1-5 maj

Workshop mentor Justyna Czechowska. The group worked with the texts by the Swedish writer Andrea Lundgren who was present through the workshop and worked with her translators. Maria Antas from Swedish Arts Council, Stefan Ingvarsson, the Swedish cultural attaché in Russia, the linguist Anders Svensson, the literary scholar and critic Annina Rabe gave talks for the workshop participants, touching such issues as conditions and support for translators, translation experience, overview of the Swedish literary scene.





Workshop photos © Justyna Czechowska

Literary evening

25 september

with

Gunilla Boëthius, Åsa Maria Kraft, Arne Hugo Stølan och **Liza Alexandrova-Zorina**, all at the time writers-in-residence at Baltic Centre for Writers and Translators

Talks on the topic of Artistic Freedom at BCWT

12 November

Baltic Centre for Writers and Translators in cooperation with BAC

Among participants:

Barys Piatrovich, Belarusian writer and chairman of Belarus Writers' Union, talked with Lena Pasternak on matters of freedom of speech, writing and language, he as well as read from his work.

Fikret Atay, the Turkish-Kurdish artist, asylum artist in Örebro Sweden until august 2019. In his short film that was screened during the programme he reflects on experience of escape and exile.

Niklas Westergren, Niklas Westergren, Social Science teacher at Wisbygymnasiet, talked about the school workshop The Excursion, which took place on November 7-12. Democracy, freedom of expression and community engagement were some of issues explored during the workshop.

Renovation

January - March the BCWT was undergone an extensive renovation and all-round fresh-up. The walls and ceiling were painted, the windows frames were restored, and new floors were installed in all rooms.



Photos © Lena Pasternak

The result: walls, ceiling, windows, floors...



... and not the least!

Utterly delighted the BCWT saluted another Nobel Literature Prize laureate who had stayed and worked at the BCWT – the Polish writer Olga Tokarczuk. While on Gotland and staying at BCWT she not only wrote a part of her book “Flights” (Bieguni) for which she was awarded the Man Booker Prize, but also read for the Gotlandic public at by BCWT arranged International Poetry Festival and – extra, set out on the audience demand! - solo reading. Her Swedish translator Jan Henrik Swahn, a renowned author himself, has also been a frequent guest at the centre. The long collaboration with him as a participant and mentor, as a festival conferencier and moderator was another reason to celebrate the award. As well the long-term cooperation with Olga Tokarczuk’s publisher Mikael Nydahl, Ariel publishing. All in all, the centre had plenty to celebrate and commemorate in connection to Olga Tokarczuk’s Nobel Prize Award – t. i. many years of serving literature and international culture and literature exchange, of being in the midpoint of the creative process.



Olga Tokarczuk Copyright/fotograf: Jacek Kolodziejski

Prize motivation: "for a narrative imagination that with encyclopedic passion represents the crossing of boundaries as a form of life."

Grants

BCWT in cooperation with Belarusian and Swedish Writers Union and with the financial support from the Swedish Institute hosted four writers from Belarus.

German Translators' Fund awarded bursaries to a number of German translators, and Estonian Writers Union to Estonian writers for a residency at BCWT.

BCWT's chairman Olle Jansson donated, as the years before, his chair remuneration of 10 000 SEK for grants conferred equally half to Greta Ambrazaite from Lithuanian and Boris Ponomarev from Kaliningrad, Russia.

BCWT's activity is financed by :

Swedish Arts Council and Region Gotland

The projects were financed by

Riksbankens jubileumsfond (through

Uppsala University)

Swedish Arts Council

In 2019 BCWT, on a daily basis and in connection to the projects, cooperated and communicated with a great number of international, national and local organizations as well as with many individuals in the domaine of literature and culture

Swedish Arts Council, Swedish Institute, County Administration on Gotland, Region Gotland, Swedish Writers' Union, Übersetzerhaus Looren in Switzerland, Ventspils International Writers and Translators House, Baltic Writers' Council, KLYS, Publishing house *Natur och Kultur*, Baltic Art Center, Visby International Composers Centre, Estonian Writers' Union, Belarus Writers' Association, Uppsala

University, Stockholm University, Helsinki University, Campus Gotland Uppsala University, Almedalen Library Visby, German Translators' Fund, network RECIT - Réseau Européen des Centres Internationaux de Traducteurs littéraires, Network *Kulturskaparna*, Swedish PEN, Film on Gotland, Julie Hansen, language and literature scientist at Uppsala University, Justyna Czechowska, Polish translators from Swedish and many others.

Thank you from BCWT's Board

To maintain and develop the activity of BCWT is only possible thanks to support and vital relations with institutions, organizations and private persons in many countries.

Thank you all!

Visby, June 2020

Olle Jansson

Janina Orlov

Fredrik Gradelius

Stefan Ingvarsson

Thomas N Persson

Marius Burokas

Malin Kivelä



Photo © Lena Pasternak

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