

**Research-based
analysis of European
youth programmes**

RESEARCH PROJECTS ON THE RESEARCH-BASED ANALYSIS AND MONITORING OF THE EUROPEAN YOUTH PROGRAMMES

(RAY-MON & RAY-SOC)

SURVEY TRANSLATION GUIDELINES

VERSION 20230320

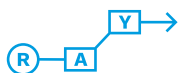


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1. INTRODUCTION

For the first time since its foundation in 2008, the RAY Network is revamping the main surveys for the monitoring of the European youth programmes. In a concerted effort, new surveys have been developed, discussed and refined. In the weeks to come, the new surveys will now be translated into the ~30 languages of the network.

This is the first time we are running such a large-scale, parallel translation exercise. Please be patient with yourself, your translation agency, and us – we’ll all get there and get it all done!

For any questions the translation agency or you might have, reach out to us at

translations@researchyouth.net

and we will respond as quickly and thoroughly as we can.

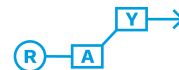
2. SURVEYS TO BE TRANSLATED

There are three surveys to be translated for the Erasmus+ Youth Programme:

- A survey for project participants in youth mobility and youth participation projects
- A survey for project participants in youth worker mobility and TCA activities
- A survey for project teams

There are also three surveys to be translated for the European Solidarity Corps:

- A survey for project participants in volunteering and solidarity projects
- A survey for project participants in NET activities
- A survey for project teams of volunteering projects



The surveys share many questions, but we provide all of them in full, so the translators can see the full context and logic of each survey and don't have to guess. All closing modules are fully identical, for example, so they will only need to be translated once.

The yellow, blue and grey boxes do not need to be translated, they provide contextual information for the translators and reviewers.

3. DECIDING ON TONALITY

Before briefing your translation team, you should decide on the tonality of the survey translations. If the languages you cover have different levels of formalities (tu/vous; du/sie), you may want to pick a different tonality for project participants and project teams. If the languages you cover have different pronouns and/or masculine and feminine word forms, you may want to decide how to handle the translation, so the translators can apply your choice consistently.

4. COLLECTING TRANSLATION EXAMPLES

If you are working with a new or different translation agency, they might lack experience with translations in the youth field. In that case, do provide them with a couple of key translations pro-actively. Many languages have specific words for youth work, youth worker, youth participation, and so on. You can also provide them with previous translation your NA has done.

5. BUILDING A REVIEW TEAM

We recommend building a small team to review the translations as they are ongoing, and to respond to questions of the translators. In most countries, such a review team could consist of the NA colleague(s) working with RAY and colleague(s) from the national research partner.

6. BRIEFING YOUR TRANSLATION TEAM

It is expected and strongly recommended to use professional translators for the survey translations. The translators should be skilled practitioners, ideally with a degree in Translation Studies or Linguistics and/or having worked as professional translators for many years. In addition, they should receive a briefing on the RAY Network and on the questionnaires to be translated. We recommend using two translators who can work as a small team. Translators are to translate out of English *into* their mother tongue. Ideally, they are living in your country at the time of translating the RAY questionnaires.

7. SPLITTING TRANSLATIONS

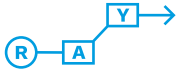
If you can work with a team of translators and decide to split translations, please do not split the surveys up between translators, or split the surveys into a first half and a second half. The translation should be divided between translators in the form of alternating pages or modules.

8. SHARED LANGUAGES

A number of RAY countries produce questionnaire in the same language. We strongly recommend to reconcile your translation processes and harmonise your translations as much as possible. Try and follow the 'as close as possible to each other, but as different as necessary' principle – do not force a common version, but aim for one.

9. DRAWING ON OTHER SURVEY TRANSLATIONS

Our new surveys use a couple of questions from the European Social Survey (ESS) and the World Values Survey (WVS). If a translated version of such a question exists, you should use the translated ESS/WVS version. Deviations should only be made with a clear rationale and should be documented in the translation documentation.



We have collected all available translations of the ESS and WVS surveys. You can find them on the RAY data server here:

<https://data.researchyouth.net/s/5notrty8wSjo88R>

Even if your country did not participate in the last round of the ESS or WVS, you might still be able to use a translation (Russian translations exist through Estonia and Lithuania even though Russia did not participate in the last round of the ESS; Dutch translations exist through the Netherlands and can be adapted to Flemish even though Belgium did not participate in the last round of the ESS).

10. NEW RESPONSE SCALE

Our new surveys use several new response scales, including a five-point likert scale:

{Agree strongly} {Agree} {Neither agree nor disagree} {Disagree} {Disagree strongly}

This scale is also used in the European Social Survey (ESS), and the available translations of the ESS should be used for our survey translation.

11. ISCED LEVELS FOR EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

We have used and keep using the ISCED levels to measure educational attainment. The ESS survey translations have adapted the ISCED levels to each country's context and will be used for our survey translations. You do not need to translate them again.

12. DRAWING ON OLDER RAY TRANSLATIONS

Our new surveys keep using many of the questions we have previously asked, but oftentimes with slight changes to the language and/or the scale. Feel free to provide your translators with the latest translated survey from 2019/2020, if the copyright of your previously used translation agency allows you to do so. Please be clear with the translators that they cannot just copy and paste these old translations, but need to pay attention to every word and every punctuation mark – and should also pay attention to time-related changes of meanings of words. Some of the words and phrases we have used in older translations should not be used any longer, because the meaning of them has changed over time, in particular for young people.

13. ADAPTING CONTENT

We follow the Ask-The-Same-Question model with our translations (and always have), which means that we strive to ask the same question in every language. Translators are therefore not expected to adapt content. It is, of course, fine to adapt the questions linguistically – some questions will require you to change a verbal construction to a noun construction, for example; or you may have to ask “How many times” instead of “How often” for a question to make sense in your language.

In other words, we are not looking for a ‘close translation’, but an adequate one. To give you an example from the ESS translation manual:

“How often do you meet socially with friends, relatives or work colleagues?” was translated into “How often do you meet friends, relatives or colleagues outside of your work time?” or as “How often do you meet friends, relatives or colleagues on a private basis?” because “meeting socially” could not be rendered in some languages.

Content adaptations should only occur to ensure functional equivalence of a question. One example might be questions around discrimination, with some languages having and using an equivalent for the word ‘race’ and others not having and/or not using that equivalent for very good reasons. Another example might be the meanings of the words ‘tolerance’ and ‘acceptance’, which have a clear meaning and hierarchy in English, but may not have the same meaning in your language. In these cases, adaptations should strive for equivalence in meaning.

Content adaptations should always be discussed with the transnational research team.



14. DOCUMENTATION OF THE TRANSLATION

The translation process needs to be documented (see Annex 1). Our surveys are ongoing biennial surveys (pandemic interruptions notwithstanding). Documentation of translation processes help inform later versions of our surveys. In addition, if changes are made over time, records need to be available of the chain of changes (or their absence) across translations.

We recommend that translators note down – while doing the translation – problems, alternatives, uncertainties or any other thoughts they wish to keep track of and later discuss with you when reviewing the translation. In our experience, this is best done in a separate Excel document (rather than using ongoing commentary in the Word documents).

Any content adaptations and deviations from the English source questionnaires should be documented in that Excel file not just with a short explanation, but with a literal back translation into English as well.

Once the translation process is complete, kindly provide us with the Excel file used for documentation (or another file format, if Excel was not used).