Dear colleagues and friends!

On behalf of all the faculty of the School of Foreign Languages at Karazin National University in Kharkiv, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to Professor Defrancq, Professor Russo and all the CIUTI’s board members for inviting me and the esteemed vice-rector of Taras Shevchenko National University to participate in the work of the General Assembly as the representatives of Ukraine and to present albeit briefly our T&I programs.

For most of you, what’s been happening in Ukraine for the last 200 days is beyond comprehension and beyond imagination. Since the very first hours of the aggression and until this very moment, my native city Kharkiv has been in the epicenter of the most cruel aviation raids, missile attacks, artillery and mortar shellings. Thousands and thousands of civilians of all ages including children have been killed and wounded, among them both students and teachers from my University. Thousands of houses, apartment buildings, schools, hospitals, trade centers, shops, enterprises have been demolished and flattened with the ground. Every night when we go to bed we don’t know where the next rocket launched from the neighboring Russian city of Belgorod will land.

A few words about the University, which is the oldest continuously functioning university in Ukraine and the second largest after Taras Shevchenko National University in Kyiv. It was founded in 1802, and for more than 30 years remained the only classical University on the territory of modern Ukraine. Today it bears the name of its founder, local philanthropist Vasyl Karazin. Despite all the terrible circumstances, the University keeps on working. As a token of trust in our future, this academic year hundreds of brilliant young men and women applied, were admitted and are going to begin their study as freshmen on the 1st of October. Obviously, so far we can only provide online distant training and even this became a real challenge after the University’s main building was hit by the explosion wave from the missile that destroyed the neighboring building of Kharkiv Regional Government located in the same central square of the city.

Let me say a few words about the School of Foreign Languages, my Department in particular, and our T&I programs. Today, the School of Foreign Languages teaches English, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Chinese and Arabic. All our students learn two foreign languages. Currently, we have Programs for Bachelors and Masters that prepare both teachers of foreign languages and translators/interpreters. We fully realize that such an approach may sound too strenuous, but in fact it reflects a pretty competitive and rather unfavorable situation for philology-related professions on the Ukrainian labor market.

I am the head of Mykola Lukash Translation Studies Department that provides training in the fields of translation and interpreting from English into Ukrainian, but methodology-wise our main task is to develop the concept of training future translators and interpreters and monitor the fulfillment of the proposed curriculum by all the colleagues from other Departments of the School as well.

We have been implementing a rather ambitious curriculum that includes courses in both written and oral translation. Typically, each course is taught during one semester. We begin with the theoretical course called Introduction into Translation Studies, and then proceed to practical courses. For future translators, we begin with the Foundations of Written Translation and for future interpreters we have Interpreters’ Shorthand Writing course for consecutive interpreting. After that, we propose a number of what we call mixed courses aimed at further elaborating both translation and interpretation skills in such thematic areas as International Organizations, Government Functioning, Economy, Jurisprudence, Natural Sciences and Medicine etc.

In the framework of our Master’s program we concentrate on simultaneous interpreting, computer-assisted translation skills, translation digital tools, conference interpreting, etc. For those students who want to enhance their theoretical and practical background even more we propose a number of selective courses in history of translation, intercultural communication, editing, methods of teaching translation and interpreting, etc.

And of course, the students graduating from our Master’s program write their theses in the field of Translation Studies. Every year, we hold a competition for the best students’ research and its winner then participates (and often wins!) in the similar national contest. We also publish annual collections of articles written by our students in collaboration with their faculty supervisors.

It should be noted that all the textbooks that we use for our practical courses are written by our faculty and published by one of the leading Ukrainian publishing houses “Nova Knyga”. Thus, they can be used in other Universities that have similar programs. In fact, I know that our colleagues at Taras Shevchenko national University also use our textbooks. Moreover, we hold seminars and lectures for teachers from all over Ukraine where we explain our concept and demonstrate its benefits and its sustainability.

Finally, I can’t miss such an important aspect of our work as research. We do have excellent scholars who specialize in such research areas as history of Ukrainian translation, methods of teaching translation, cognitive foundations of translation, experimental methods in translation studies and so on and so forth. It would take me a lot of time to elaborate on this issue, but I sincerely hope that in the course of our future collaboration you’ll have more than a good chance to see it all with your own eyes.

I would like to emphasize that most of all we appreciate your moral support. The prospect of joining the network of like-minded colleagues engaged in the same kind of professional and social activities is of great importance and value for us. I hope this meeting and your subsequent decisions will open for us the door to new scientific and methodological achievements. We still have a lot to learn, but we as the Department with a 50-year old experience of teaching and training translators and interpreters also have a lot to share. Without any doubt, this cooperation will be mutually beneficial.

Unfortunately, the war is still far from being over and we can hardly estimate and comprehend the losses we’ve already suffered and are likely to suffer more in the near future. All I know for sure is that we will need your aid as soon as the peace returns to our land and we return to our classrooms. It will take a lot of time, effort and money to regain and move forwardб but we all hope that for doing this we can always count on your friendly helping hand.

Thank you for your kind attention!