**Translating for a Multilingual Legal System: Ambiguity, hybridity and the impact of translation on European Union law.**

Karen McAuliffe, University of Birmingham

People approach the field of legal translation from many diverse viewpoints, whether they be lawyers, translators, linguists or one of the myriad of other professionals with interests in the subject. A question common to all, however, is how to best understand and engage with multilingual law? While the sheer complexity of the topic requires focus on details of terminology, translation techniques, comparative legal analysis and resources specific to the field, it is also important to take a step back at times and consider the impact of translation on a body of (multilingual) law as a whole.

Using the Court of Justice of the European Union (ECJ) as a case study, this presentation aims to investigate the impact that translation can have on the development of European Union law. The methods of translation, both overt and implicit, employed within the ECJ have led to the creation of a unique and hybrid language - a ‘Court French’ - which is used to produce the case law of that court. That language is then replicated, in translation, in a further 23 linguistic forms and the case law is applied and interpreted in (currently) 28 member state legal systems. The role of translation in the process of producing the ECJ’s case law is important not only in delivering that court’s message to interested parties across EU member states, but also insofar as it has an impact on the development of that case law, and thereby on EU law more generally.

Understanding the impact that translation can have on the development, interpretation and application of multilingual law is important for those creating that law and for those involved in engaging with it at any level.