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Annex I to the WGT Report (with its six annexes hereto)

REPORT TO IAMLADP 2007
UNIVERSITIES' CONTACT GROUP
OF THE WORKING GROUP ON TRAINING

Under the auspices of The Working Group on Training, established by IAMLADP in 2001, a Universities' Contact Group was set up, to report to IAMLADP in 2007.

MANDATE

- **To act as liaison point for the further development of relations and co-operation between International Organizations and training providers.**

From 2006-2007:

- **To establish the true position on reported shortages of languages and language combinations in IOs and universities and**
- **To compile a compendium of past and present courses for professional development run by universities for language professionals plus a list of IOs' wishes for CPD courses**

Chair: Helen Campbell European Commission, DG Interpretation

with co chair Steve Slade, University of Bath and subsequently Svetlana Carsten University of Leeds, co-chair UCG

Members of the Universities' Contact Group

16 Members from 15 IOs

Tania Chauvet UN Geneva

Alison Graves European Parliament

Ruth Griffiths ICRC

Robin Halle WTO

Ann Hendrickson EPO

Laura Lopez ECLAC

Anthony Pitt ITU

Patricia Benoit-Guyot ITU

Steve Odera UN Nairobi

Angeliki Petrits DG Translation, European Commission

René Prioux OECD

Sally Reading UN Vienna

Steve Sekel UNHQ

Guanrong Shen UN Nairobi

Anne van Wylick IMF

15 members from 13 universities

Jesus Baigorri, Salamanca

Chuanyan Bao Monterey

Jacolyn Harmer Monterey

Clare Donovan ESIT Paris

Galina Elizarova, Herzen St Petersburg

Claudia General, Zurich

Anca Greere Babes-Bolyai Cluj

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Tanya Kostadinova, Sofia

Elzbieta Tabakowska Krakow

Daniel Toudic, Rennes

Hildegard Vermeiren Ghent

Lidi Wang Beijing

METHODOLOGY

Members of the UCG are volunteers from IAMLADP IOs and universities. A call for volunteers was sent out on 12 September 2006. DG Interpretation provided the extensive university mailing list (including many non European HEIs). The final list was compiled in November 2006. Co chairs Steve Slade and Helen

Campbell agreed that the numbers and geographical spread among respondents constituted a representative sample of both constituencies so all volunteers were accepted.

Four questionnaires were drafted by the co-chairs on the above two mandate items, one each for universities and IOs respectively, and sent to members, encouraging them to obtain as wide a coverage as possible from respondents (e.g. each member should elicit feedback from colleagues in other universities in his/her region or network) in January 2007, with a February deadline, chosen as the quietest time in most academic centres and IOs. Response was unexpectedly good (see "Findings" below).

Four tables summarizing results were drafted and are attached.

The university co-chair was taken over in January by Svetlana Carsten of Leeds when Dr Slade left Bath.

Members communicated by e-mail and were invited to attend a one day meeting on 10 May held back to back with the DG Interpretation "SCIC Universities Conference" for financial and practical reasons. Eighteen members attended.

Throughout the year, the UCG reported to and sought the guidance of the WGT. In WGT meetings its activities and progress were discussed.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

1. At its last meeting in March 2006, the former Standing Committee discussed its previous work programme, to collect and post on the website information on job and skills profiles. This was duly done, though no feedback was received. Next, it asked university members to provide data on courses they offered, also to help guide in-house training programmes for staff.
2. Little if any input on SC activities was forthcoming, though four non-European universities joined. A short reflection paper circulated in February 2006 to members showed that the majority felt that a forum to bring IOs and training providers together was needed, but clearly in another form, with a practical mandate and with committed members. As a result, the project leader, DG Interpretation, together with the co-chair from the university of Bath, agreed to present to IAMLADP 2006 a new plan. The project leader proposed to IAMLADP in Vienna in 2006:
 - that the SC be disbanded and a new body be set up, the UCG, which would enlist interested, active volunteers from both constituencies and subsequently formulate a two-pronged mandate on subjects known to be of real concern to all stakeholders, language shortages and university courses for professional linguists. IAMLADP approved this proposal.
3. The co-chairs decided on a realistic approach to the mandate, i.e. to confine the scope of questionnaires to a stock-taking exercise in the first year. The call for volunteers to join the UCG was sent out in September 2006, resulting in **34** positive responses, divided equally between IOs and representative universities "with proven track records", covering a wide range of organizations and HEIs in all corners of the globe, and constituting a representative sample.
4. The membership list was finalized in October. Two simple questionnaires were produced and circulated to members (the formats adapted to each constituency). They were deliberately sent out in January, a relatively quiet period for universities. The unexpectedly high feedback proved the point.

Questionnaires are known to be unpopular, so the questions were kept short and respondents could be as brief or full as they wished or had time for.

5. Mandate item 1 on CPD courses elicited **19 responses from 24 universities**, **18** in Europe, **1** in the USA, **1** in China and **4** in Latin America. **11** indicated courses already offered or run specifically for professionals, with more willing to tailor-make courses according to particular needs. **12 IOs** replied, several outlining their wish-lists. Mandate Item 2 on language shortages produced **12 IO** and **12 university replies** which clearly identified lack of English mother tongue as the major problem, as well as English with Arabic, Chinese and Russian, Arabic in general, German and passive Russian. Others in short supply included those of the latest members of the EU. It was striking to see that **nine (9) out of 14** IO respondents gave unequivocally **"English mother tongue"** as their main concern, with **Arabic** coming a close second.

6. An additional contribution to the results was provided by the ECLAC representative in the UCG who compiled a (first) list of establishments training translators and interpreters in Latin America, four of whom completed the questionnaire. This compendium is a unique reference list and the UCG extended gratitude and appreciation to Ms Lopez for her productive efforts in the common interest.

7. Results from the questionnaires can be seen in the annexed tables. They were discussed in detail during the one day annual meeting of the UCG on 10 May in Brussels at DG Interpretation. As can be seen from the tables and the meeting report, universities offer a wide range of CPD courses. Many run short courses, summer schools and the like, suitable for language staff. Examples include training for trainer seminars for interpreters, CAT tools, terminology and data base management, glossaries and précis-writing for translators. Tailor-made courses for professionals such as simultaneous training for interpreters with experience of consecutive only, or interpreter training for translators wishing to change are also offered, as are courses on how to set up and run a business (for freelance translators), which, with increased outsourcing in all IOs' translation departments, can only be of benefit to all. Other subjects offered include voice coaching, refresher courses for translators and interpreters (e.g. to brush up a language infrequently used) and language enhancement for interpreters working into a B language, to quote one example, a course was run in Leeds recently for Chinese UN interpreters, with a 'retour' into English.

8. Two items arose of particular interest from the IAMLADP perspective. Salamanca university has for years been running courses on special subjects for UN translators, such as legal translation. Any university environment could offer professional linguists a variety of knowledge and expertise and translation and interpreting departments should be co-operating with other faculties with this in mind. In future, courses on legal translation could be organized for several IO staff, making it possible to achieve a critical mass to enable the university to take on such a task. This would merge naturally with the WGT's Task Force on JTV, being a perfect example of joint training at low cost, for maximum benefit.

9. Another practical option discussed during the meeting was exchanging competences. EU and UN staff recently attended Herzen University St Petersburg to enhance their Russian, where they were also able to give courses to translation and interpreting students during their stays. The concept could be repeated easily at minimal cost. Since the point was also made by several IO members that new recruits are often ill prepared for life in the "real world" this would be a further asset for students, giving them practical advice and guidance on the skills they are studying but also on the "culture" of IOs, which they usually have little knowledge of, another shortcoming often bemoaned by experienced language staff and one which can adversely affect quality.

10. A proposal was made by a university representative in the general interest. Most translation and

interpreting courses require research projects, often carried out by students seeking suitable subjects. Employers could suggest topics of interest which students could research, such as 'the cognitive processes in interpreting' which could be done in collaboration with the Psychology Department.

11. On the IO side, one request was for specialization seminars in criminal law systems and international co-operation in this area, while others were keen on enhancement courses. Revision was mentioned as a need and editing, the latter repeated by several translation Department Heads, since editing was now accounting for more and more of the translator's time. The supply and the demand are there, as can be seen clearly, it is now a question of matching them.

12. As for languages and combinations allegedly in short supply, evidence to support this claim has now been produced. Quick fix solutions will not be found since the issue has for too long been neglected by national education authorities. However, together, measures could be taken to alleviate the problem, for example, by supporting initiatives like the UK's "Routes into Languages" project, the European Commission's Action Plan on languages and the EU-US bid to set up a consortium of one American and two European universities (the minimum requirement) to co-operate in interpreter training and in future, translation. If the bid is successful, the consortium would benefit from EU and US funding. In this context it should be noted that the dearth of translator/interpreter training in the USA has further exacerbated the shortage of English mother tongue linguists. With this in mind, a high level UN/EU mission to Georgetown university Washington DC (once home to a prestigious translation and interpreting course) was undertaken in November 2006, with the aim of discussing with university authorities the possibility of reviving the former course. If this plan succeeds, it will also help offset the shortage. Currently only Monterey MIIS is training future language staff in the US.

13. As far as Arabic is concerned, it was regretted by members that no university in the Arabic-speaking world was represented in the UCG. A UN/ESCWA initiative to establish in Beirut a centre for the Arabic Language is of general interest in the light of the dwindling numbers of language professionals; it would appear that one of its objectives is to set up a data base of translators and interpreters plus contacts in universities offering training with Arabic. The UCG will follow closely developments in this field.

14. One practical way to increase awareness among young people of careers with languages would be for IOs to undertake a proper campaign. This would mean going to universities and schools to talk to students, teachers and school leavers about career openings, and attending careers events (which are particularly efficiently run in the UK) to which speakers from IOs are always welcome. IOs can and should open their doors to students, offering internships or receiving students for short study visits to give them a feel for professional life. Feedback from teachers and students from short study visits to the EU institutions is resoundingly positive. Furthermore, trainers from professional life should be teaching or lecturing on translation and interpreting courses in universities and indeed many are, though not enough. Co-operation in this area should be stepped up.

15. In addition to the questionnaire results on the two mandate items, two other points arose, directly linked to the above paragraph. Professionals are concerned about shortages and staff training, but also, and ever more acutely, by the lack of professional awareness of new recruits. It appears that there is a widening quality gap between the knowledge a student acquires during training and what a professional translator or interpreter is required to do on the job. Criticisms include an unwillingness to accept poorly drafted texts (becoming the rule rather than the exception in most IOs), ignorance of the importance of basic accuracy in facts and figures or the need to put in a minimum number of hours or pages, often on more mundane subject matter than the high flowing literary works students have been used to. A better preparation for real life is called for but can be best achieved by closer synergy between IOs and

universities.

16. Outsourcing is giving cause of concern, since freelancers often have little understanding of the role and culture of the IO they work for. Again, more exchange, briefings for external translators on the ins and out of the organization may be a solution to the problem. One proposal made in another forum was to set up a university course in UN translation, but this was universally considered too narrow and against the interests of the profession as a whole. A module on translation or interpreting as part of a training course could, however, be a useful component.

Results of the questionnaires are attached in four tables as is the list of Latin American training establishments and the Annual Meeting Report.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO IAMLADP 2007

- **That IAMLADP take note of the success of the UCG and its improved output in terms of quality and quantity;**
- that it encourage IAMLADP members to collaborate actively with the UCG, by following and putting into practice the UCG's recommendations;
- that it interact with universities running training programmes to narrow the gap between graduates' knowledge and skills after leaving university courses and the practical needs of the workplace, for instance by sending staff to training courses and allowing students to visit IOs or by offering internships.

PROPOSED FOLLOW UP FOR 2007-2008

First: That IAMLADP agree that the Universities' Contact Group, under the guidance of its parent body the WGT, and in the light of its findings of the last reporting period, be mandated:

1. To organize training on a joint basis to address common needs with shared costs, e.g. short courses in universities for several IOs (so as to achieve a 'critical mass' making it feasible for a university to run such courses), allowing IOs to share their different experiences with the university, and to try to match supply and demand. Two examples are:-

- *Legal translation (possibly at Salamanca);*
- *Editing, for which a need has been expressed.*

2. *To exchange services between language staff needing to add or enhance a working language and university students to whom professional training can be offered. EU and UN staff improving their Russian and offering courses to students at Herzen University St Petersburg is a model which could be replicated. Such an exchange would provide maximum benefit to both sides at low cost.*
3. *To identify research projects in universities on subjects of interest to IOs. (An example could be co-operation with a Psychology Department researching the "cognitive processes in interpreting")*
4. *To undertake an awareness campaign on careers with languages, targeting careers fairs, schools, teachers and students, to address the problem of language shortages and lack of interest in language careers.*
5. *To follow closely, support and provide input where possible to projects designed to overcome the shortage of English. (e.g. the UK initiative to increase participation in language study in higher education and the EU/US/UN initiatives to promote translation and interpreting courses in USA and cooperation programmes between US and European universities).*
6. *To monitor developments in the UN/ESCWA project for a Centre for the Arabic Language (and encourage membership of the UCG by a university in an Arabic-speaking country to address the problem of shortage of the language).*

Second: That the Universities' Contact Group report regularly to the WG Training and through the WGT to IAMLADP in 2008 on the results of its work.

Annexes:

1. **Table of questionnaire results on Mandate item 1 – CPD courses – universities**
2. **Table of questionnaire results on Mandate item 1 – CPD courses - International Organizations**
3. **Table of questionnaire results on Mandate item 2 – language shortages – universities**
4. **Table of questionnaire results on Mandate item 2 – language shortages – IOs**
5. **List of Latin American training establishments**
6. **Report of meeting of UCG May 10 2007**

Helen Campbell