

## A SYNTHESIZED INVENTORY OF INTER-INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCE-SHARING AND COOPERATION

The inventory below provides a global and summarized overview of the existing inter-institutional resource-sharing and cooperation activities in the field of translation. In spite of the fact that each language service has to comply with the specific mission of its institution within the inter-institutional legislative sequence in the decision-making process as determined in the Treaties and each service therefore has its own role to play and tasks to fulfil, it must be said that considerable synergies are being achieved thanks to these activities.

### **AREA: TRANSLATION PROCESS**

- **Staff exchanges:** the current system comprises reciprocal exchanges of translators, organised twice a year on the basis of calls for expression of interest, for a period of four months between the European Parliament and the European Commission in Luxembourg and between the Council, the European Commission and the Committees in Brussels. A programme for exchange of staff is currently applied for lawyer linguists from the Court of Justice and the European Central Bank. Sharing of best practices, an insight into the working methods of other services for exchanged staff and increased mutual trust and understanding are the most important benefits from this scheme, which presents very limited administrative costs and allows to accelerate work and to further improve consistency and quality.
- **Sharing know-how and documentation:** Institutions financially contribute, based on a pre-agreed distribution key, to the costs of operating and developing large common databases used in the translation process, thus contributing to greater consistency and improved quality.

**IATE terminology database:** IATE is an inter-institutional tool designed for the collection, dissemination and shared management of EU-specific terminology. With a view to avoiding duplication of efforts and enhancing harmonisation, all of the previously existing and individually managed terminology databases of the EU's translation services (Euterpe, Eurodicautom, TIS, ...) were merged into this single new, highly interactive and accessible inter-institutional database in which terminology in all languages created by individual Institutions is made available to the other Institutions and to the general public, thus avoiding duplication of both the creation of terminology and terminology research.

In 2009, there were **6'2 million consultations by officials** of the EU Institutions. More than **77.000 terms were added**, leading to a total of more than 9 million terms at the end of the year. IATE was consulted 72'3 million times by the public in general (up from 45'7 million in 2007).

**EURAMIS translation memories:** EURAMIS is a common translation memory database which is constantly fed with segments of translation memories from the various Institutions.

It allows for the best possible re-use of the existing translations across the Institutions, thus avoiding duplication of translation effort, and ensures text concordance.

This means today that **2.301 retrievals** from the translation memories are taking place **every day**. 362'5 million segments are currently stocked in the database. 181.000 documents were added in 2009.

ELISE knowledge-sharing database: developed and fully financed by the European Commission with a view to sharing information linked to specific dossiers with other institutions<sup>1</sup>, while ensuring text consistency between participants in the co-decision procedure. It prevents unnecessary and time-consuming research, as well as verification efforts by translators working on the same dossier, be it each in a different stage of the decision-making process. The statistics show an average of **3.000 term entries per year**, with an average of **25 entries per co-decision procedure**. With the increasing number of co-decision procedures resulting from the Lisbon Treaty, efforts will be deployed to ensure more intensive use of ELISE.

QUEST metasearch tool: this tool allows translators to save a substantial amount of time by making the most of their terminology and documentary searches in one go, thus increasing availability for production.

Sharing results of internal IT development plus reference material and pre-processing documents: Institutions exchange **daily a large amount of reference documents**, including pre-processed files, alignments, and actual documents among translators to avoid duplicating efforts in other Institutions. The translation services share the results of internal technological innovations such as for instance the EESC-CoR Web extractors, which reduce the time spent for research.

Cooperation linked to outsourcing: An inter-institutional evaluation committee (SEQ) has been jointly created to provide the Institutions' translation services with a second, independent evaluation before taking action if contractors do not comply with the necessary level of quality for translations.

## **AREA: ICT TOOLS**

- Computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools: the Translator's Workbench (TWB), also known as Trados (from the name of the external developer and provider, chosen through a joint call for tenders), is the main IT translation tool currently used by all the translation services, drawing from the translation memories stocked in Euramis. The contract with Trados approaching expiry, a new joint call for tenders has been launched. Introduced in 1999-2000, its utilization rate has been constantly growing (to reach soon 100%), thus further rationalizing and modernizing translation proper. Thanks to TWB the consistency of translations has considerably improved.

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<sup>1</sup> Terminological choices, consultations of experts, reference documents, etc.

- **Other cooperation in the field of Technology:**

- Machine translation (ECMT): developed and financed by the European Commission, this tool is accessible to all the EU Institutions. The Commission and the European Parliament are currently testing more modern machine translation systems that would allow to cover all language combinations.
- Language Technology Watch network: created by ICTT's Translation Executive Committee at the end of 2009 to further increase cooperation in the field of language technology and share knowledge about new tools, thus allowing economies of scale in the development and procurement of new IT technologies. All translation services participate in the network.

***AREA: HUMAN RESOURCES***

- **Cooperation in the framework of recruitment (capacity building):**

1) Cooperation with EPSO: It covers the participation of most translation services in:

- The development of EPSO pre-selection tests and design of new competitions for translators.
- The Assessment Centre working group preparing the testing in the Assessment Centre.
- The 23 language committees on the creation of a database with translation tests.
- The 23 language committees on evaluation of reading comprehension tests for translators.
- The working group on marking.

While no quantified statistics exist on the number of working days contributed by the Institutions to the abovementioned activities, EPSO has been able to provide data on:

- Participation of officials of the translation services in the EPSO selection panels (juries) as jury members and assessors → In the period 2003-2009, the translators provided by the Institutions for juries in EPSO competitions amounted to a total of **250**, who invested in this a total of **3 250** working days.
- Participation of officials of translation services in the marking/correction of linguistic tests carried out in the framework of linguistic and other competitions. → In the period 2003-2009, the number of written tests corrected amounted to a total of **5 791**, which represented a total of **489** working days.

For the recruitment of lawyer linguists, the translation service of the Court of justice cooperates with the Parliament and the Council for the organization of the next EPSO competitions. An EPSO assessment centre will be organized in Luxemburg on the premises of the Court of justice and three lawyer linguists have been put to the disposal of EPSO for inter-institutional lawyer linguist competitions.

The cooperation with EPSO is essential to ensure that the selection procedures correspond to the needs of the services and that all official languages can be covered without requiring that EPSO is heavily staffed with experienced linguists.

2) Awareness-raising among potential candidates to become translators: The translation services of the different Institutions actively participate in a series of programmes and schemes intended to disseminate information in the academic world and national Institutions on the translator career opportunities in the EU Institutions and to draw the best potential candidates:

- Visiting Translators Scheme (VTS): organized since 2004 by the European Commission.
- The European Master's in Translation (EMT) Network launched in 2009 by the DGT (European Commission) aiming at ensuring high quality university education corresponding to the needs of the institutions, the Member States and their organisations and industry.
- Coordinated participation in language fairs organised in Member States (a working group was set up by ICTI at the end of 2009).
- Visits to Member States or to applicant countries where delegations of the translation services representing all Institutions participate.
- Joint inter-institutional participation in the European Day of Languages.

- **Training and lifelong learning (capacity building)**:

- Several Institutions have signed an inter-institutional Memorandum of Understanding governing language learning and participation in the European Commission's language courses. The Parliament and the Council also organise language courses, open to staff of the other Institutions when there are available places. The Court of Justice, the Court of Auditors and the Translation Centre participate in the linguistic programme for the institutions based in Luxembourg and regularly organize courses open to all staff.
- Institutions systematically invite translators from other institutions to their training seminars, thus capitalising on the organisational and financial effort involved.

## **AREA: PROCUREMENT**

- **Outsourcing:** Cooperation in this field is carried out mostly through joint inter-institutional calls for tenders, such as those organised by the European Parliament together with the CoR-EESC and the Court of Auditors, or by the Commission together with the Translation Centre. They enable important economies of scale from which small Institutions do benefit most. Besides this, work has been done by the Institutions to align the tender specifications as well as the contracts to the extent possible.
- **Joint calls for tenders for computer-aided translation tools (CAT):** the Institutions publish joint calls for tenders for CAT tools. The most important one (currently ongoing) seeks to replace SDL Trados/TWB. A joint call for tenders reduces administrative costs and allows for technical compatibility and alignment of IT skills, and facilitates exchange of documents, translators and technical knowledge.

## **OTHER ACTIVITIES**

- **Inter-institutional language networks:** all translation services take part actively in such networks. They ensure consistency of terminology, exchange of best practices and sharing of knowledge.
- **Cooperation in the framework of IAMLADP,** an international forum grouping international public translation services: all the linguistic services of the EU Institutions are members of IAMLADP and its sub-bodies, task-forces (TF) and working groups (University contact group, TF on quality management, TF on the status of the Language Professions, TF on performance indicators, working group on terminology and CAT tools - JIAMCATT, etc.). Joint training ventures with the member international organisations are also organised.

It should also be noted that the European Economic and Social Committee and Committee of the Regions have a joint translation service, which is an effective method of workload balancing for two Assemblies that have a similar size and function, and which are able to balance their translation demand through the joint setting of their calendars of meetings. Also, the Council Translation Department is in a similar situation, since it serves both the Council of the EU and the European Council.

## **INVENTORY OF FUTURE COOPERATION ARRANGEMENTS**

- **Improved inter-institutional document workflow in legislative procedures:** an inter-institutional working group has examined the inter-institutional document workflow in the legislative procedures resulting from the Lisbon Treaty and made recommendations aiming to ensure the high quality of the translations, the avoidance of work duplication in the Institutions and the best use of the IT tools available. These recommendations will in the coming months be implemented by the institutions concerned.

- Improved arrangements for staff exchanges: more flexible arrangements for exchanges of translators, in order to encourage greater participation, are foreseen in a pilot project to be implemented in 2010. Exchanges of non-translating staff (assistants and staff in horizontal services) with a view to exchanging best practices are also foreseen, as well as a programme of seminars/short-term study visits for managers. Sharing best practices can result in efficiency gains.
- Inter-institutional training programme for translators: It will be set up in 2010 at the initiative of the training units of the European Council and the DG Translation (European Commission), comprising all possible cooperation areas on language training and translation training.<sup>2</sup>
- Enhanced cooperation linked to outsourcing: ways for an increased cooperation between language services in the area of external translation are being explored, with a view to increasing translation quality and cost-efficiency of outsourcing. Possible joint calls for tenders in relation to the coming enlargements, a common approach for non-EU languages, facilitating full use of the early warning system in case of problems encountered with contractors or tenders, are, i.a., measures under discussion.
- Development of common performance indicators: A working group set up by ICTI's Executive Committee on Translation is currently examining the establishment of key performance indicators, common to all the translation services of the Institutions, in the areas of human and financial resources and the translation process and workflow.
- Development of a common approach to human resources needs: a reflection exercise by the translation and interpretation services of the EU Institutions is currently ongoing to address the existing difficulties for the recruitment of linguists and the needs for competence development of staff.

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<sup>2</sup> First concrete steps will be to compare mutual needs and possibilities in the language training area (special language training for translators, lists of good language schools in all Member States, conversation courses, etc). The second step will concentrate on gathering needs and possibilities in the translation training area: joint workshops on revision, editing or terminology, refresher courses in translation theory and joint presentations by thematic experts.