



FIT EUROPE

REGIONAL CENTRE EUROPE OF THE
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF TRANSLATORS

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Minutes of the 2009 Annual Meeting of the FIT Regional Centre for Europe (FIT Europe)

held in Berlin
on Friday 11 September 2009

FIT Europe thanked the BDÜ for their support in providing the venue and hospitality, the BDÜ Conference organisers for providing the interpreting facilities, and the interpreters for making their expertise available to their FIT colleagues.

Present: 22 associations and 2 proxies (see attached list A)

Observers: Marion Boers, FIT President

The number of votes present, including proxies, was counted as a maximum of 24. Some voting members were not able to attend some of the meeting, in particular item 4.

The meeting opened at 09.00.

Marion Boers, as President of FIT, was invited to give the opening remarks. She thanked FIT Europe for the opportunity to speak and looked forward to continuing good relations and cooperation between FIT and FIT Europe.

The following items were raised for AOB:

EULITA, FIT Committees, ISO on Translation Assessment.

The agenda was approved.

1. Steering Committee Report

Reiner Heard (RH) introduced the Report, which had been circulated with the Agenda. He said that after initial difficulties (an almost totally new committee and administrative changes to be sorted) progress was now being made.

2. Results of Rates Survey

The Rates Survey was formally introduced by Sabine Colombe (SC), who presented a detailed overview of the results. She mentioned that, with 2300 respondents from almost all European countries, the value of the survey data was quite considerable and should not be neglected. She was happy to make the Excel database (a huge file) available to FIT Europe, and added that it was now time for further work on the database to be given to an

expert. She stressed that the proper focus should be given to the questions the translation community wanted to ask, before employing an expert.

It was felt that a working group with a strategic remit (rather than people with technical skills) should be set up to progress this. Javier Sancho Durán (JS) volunteered to assist SC and Liisa Laasko-Tammisto (LL) also volunteered. It was hoped that more people would volunteer to help.

ACTION: All + SC, JS, LL

RH asked for a report for the FIT Europe website.

ACTION: SC

In view of possible expenditure implications, LL reported here that FIT Europe funds had been successfully transferred to Finland. FIT Europe was €3436 (three thousand four hundred and thirty-six EUR) in credit, including a voluntary contribution from the VÜD.

3. Amended Articles of Association

Eyvor Fogarty (EF) presented the amendments to the Articles of Association, which had been distributed for input in advance. Amendments were suggested from the floor and by the proxy-holders, and the amendments were incorporated where approved. The final text was voted on, and approved by the meeting. (For: 23; Abstentions: 1) The text is attached to these minutes (Attachment C). The text can now appear on the website. It will be submitted to the FIT Council for ratification.

ACTION: EF, CC

4. Amended European Code of Professional Practice

Reiner Heard (RH) presented the amendments to the Code, which had been distributed in advance. Amendments were put forward and incorporated where approved. The final text was voted on, and approved by the meeting. (For: 21; Against: 0; Abstentions: 1.) The text is attached to these minutes (Attachment B). The text can now appear on the website.

ACTION: RH, CC

5. Discussion on future activities of FIT Europe

Due to pressures of time, it was agreed that the Steering Committee would progress and report.

ACTION: Steering Committee

6. AOB

6.1 EULITA

A document on EULITA was distributed (Attachment D). The background to the inception of EULITA was explained by the TEPIS representative. There will be a conference on 26-28 November 2009, at which EULITA will be officially launched (on 26 November 2009). It was stressed that EULITA is a forum for associations, that all associations are invited to join and that FIT as a whole has had input to its formation. There was much debate and comment about this new platform. Particular mention was made of the way 'legal' could be translated into other languages, and the opportunities for confusion that this would lead to (the main issues here being 'sworn', 'public service' and 'legal specialisation'). It was also hoped that EULITA would join FIT.

RH asked for summaries of views to be sent to him for onward distribution.

ACTION: ALL

Due to the imminent start of the BDÜ Conference opening ceremony, there was no time left for further discussion of all the AOB points. The Steering Committee undertook to look at future FIT Europe activities on relevant standards, and the FIT President would be able to inform FIT Council that FIT Europe was anxious and keen to have active links with FIT Committees.

RH thanked the FIT Europe association delegates for their contribution to a very productive meeting.

The meeting closed at 12.20.

Annexes:

- A. List of Member Associations represented at the meeting
- B. European Code of Professional Practice
- C. FIT Europe Regulations
- D. EULITA information sheet

Annex A

List of Member Associations represented at the meeting

	Name of representative(s)	Association		Country
1	Eva Holzmaier-Ronge	UNIVERSITAS	UNIVERSITAS	Austria
2	Elisabeth Holub	UNIVERSITAS	UNIVERSITAS	Austria
3	Doris GROLLMANN	CBTIP	Chambre belge des traducteurs, interprètes et philologues	Belgium
4	Birgitte Jensen	KS	The Union of Communication and Language Professionals	Denmark
5	Jørgen Chr. Nielsen	KS	The Union of Communication and Language Professionals	Denmark
6	Mette Aarslew	DTFB	Danish Association of State-Authorized Translators and Interpreters	Denmark
7	Birgit Offersen	DTFB	Danish Association of State-Authorized Translators and Interpreters	Denmark
8	Liisa Laakso-Tammisto	SKTL	Finnish Association of Translators and Interpreters	Finland
9	Sabine Colombe	SFT	Société française des traducteurs	France
10	Reiner Heard	ATICOM	ATICOM e.V.	Germany
11	Natascha Dalügge-Momme	ADÜ Nord	Assoziierte Dolmetscher und Übersetzer in Norddeutschland e.V.	Germany
12	Natália Rózsa	VÜD	Verband der Übersetzer und Dolmetscher Berlin e.V.	Germany
13	Johann J. Amkreutz	BDÜ	Bundesverband der Dolmetscher und Übersetzer e. V.	Germany
14	Norma Keßler	BDÜ	Bundesverband der Dolmetscher und Übersetzer e. V.	Germany
15	Miriam Watchorn	ITIA	Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association	Ireland
16	Catia Lattanzi	AITI	Associazione Italiana Traduttori e Interpreti	Italy
17	Kees van der Zwart	NGTV	Netherlands Society of Interpreters and Translators	Netherlands

18	Kevin Quirk	NFF, STF	Norwegian Non-Fiction Writers and Translators Association, The Association of Government Authorized Translators in Norway	Norway
19	Zofia Rybińska	TEPIS	TEPIS - Polish Society of Sworn and Specialized Translators	Poland
20	Zofia Rybińska	ÖVGD (proxy)	Austrian Association of Certified Court Interpreters	Poland
21	Zofia Rybińska	UNETICA (proxy)	Union Nationale des Experts Traducteurs-Interprètes près les Cours d'Appel	France
22	Cristiana Coblis	ATR	Asociația Traducătorilor din România	Romania
23	Javier Sancho Durán	ASETRAD	Asociación Española de Traductores, Correctores e Intérpretes	Spain
24	Per N. Döhler	SFÖ	Swedish Association of Professional Translators	Sweden
25	Silvia Cerrella Bauer	ASTTI	Association suisse des traducteurs, terminologues et interprètes	Switzerland
26	Eyvor Fogarty	ITI	Institute of Translation and Interpreting	UK

Annex B

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Considering the important role played by translators and interpreters in facilitating and promoting international communication and understanding,

Seeking to ensure that a high level of professionalism is achieved and maintained in translating and interpreting,

The FIT Regional Centre Europe (FIT Europe) has therefore issued this Code of Professional Practice laying down the basic rights and obligations of translators and interpreters as a non-exhaustive guide for its member associations.

1. GENERAL CONDUCT

1.1 Basic principles

Translators and interpreters shall observe the respective laws and regulations. They shall always seek to maintain the highest standards in their work and serve their clients in the best possible way. In their relations with clients, with each other and with the public at large, they shall at all times act in a manner that does not bring the profession into disrepute.

1.2 Responsibility

Translators and interpreters have sole responsibility and liability for their work; any exclusion of liability has to be expressly agreed in writing. Translators should consider taking out professional indemnity insurance.

Translators and interpreters shall not knowingly mistranslate or misinterpret. Instructions received from the client cannot justify deviation from this Code.

1.3 Impartiality

Translators and interpreters shall carry out their work with complete impartiality and not express any personal opinions in the course of the work.

1.4 Confidentiality

Translators and interpreters shall maintain complete confidentiality at all times and treat any information received in the course of work as privileged, except when the law requires disclosure. They shall ensure that any person assisting them in their work is similarly bound. This confidentiality requirement continues beyond the respective assignment and also applies vis-à-vis persons who have acquired knowledge of the relevant information from another source.

1.5 Exploitation of knowledge acquired

Translators and interpreters shall not derive any gain from privileged information acquired in the course of work undertaken. In particular, they shall not interfere in a client's business relations with his/her customers.

2. QUALIFICATIONS

2.1 Competence

Translators and interpreters shall only work in languages and subject areas for which they are qualified and have the requisite skills. Translators should translate only into their mother tongue, their language of habitual use or a language in which they have proven equivalent competence.

2.2 Self-development

Translators and interpreters shall keep up to date with developments in the profession and the relevant tools by means of continuing professional development.

2.3 Titles

Translators and interpreters shall only use academic or other titles which they are permitted to use by law.

3. RELATIONS WITH FELLOW TRANSLATORS/INTERPRETERS

3.1 Competition

Translators and interpreters shall refrain from unfair competition (e.g. predatory pricing) and from public attacks on the reputation and competence of other translators and interpreters. Any criticism of another translator's or interpreter's work must first be expressed directly to the person concerned as objectively as possible.

3.2 Advertising

Translators and interpreters shall not infringe accepted advertising standards, nor make claims which cannot be substantiated. They may mention a client as a reference only with his/her prior consent.

3.3 Collegiality

Translators and interpreters, especially those belonging to professional associations, should assist each other where practicable. If offered work they are unable to accept, they should seek to recommend to the client another translator or interpreter who has the necessary skills.

3.4 Partners and employees

Relations with partners or employees are also governed by this Code where applicable. Inter alia, these persons must be granted reasonable remuneration for the services rendered.

4. PERFORMANCE OF WORK

4.1 Acceptance

Translators and interpreters are free to accept or turn down work, subject to any legal constraints. They shall decline work if it results in a clash of interests, if they believe it is intended for illegal or dishonest purposes or if they know that their own capacity, working conditions or time will prevent its proper completion. When declining work, they shall do so without unnecessary delay.

4.2 Contracts

Translators and interpreters should always seek to sign a written contract in advance of an assignment. The contract should, inter alia, specify the deliverables, deadlines, quality assurance methods, copyright, confidentiality, ownership of any translation memories used, terms of payment and access to background information.

The client must be informed as early as possible if it becomes evident that an agreed deadline cannot be met. If facing insoluble difficulties, the translator shall advise the client promptly so that they can jointly decide on how to proceed.

A fixed quotation in writing shall only be made if the full scope of the work to be performed is known. It shall explicitly state that services not specified in it will be charged at current rates.

4.3 Methods and Procedures

4.3.1 Translating

Translators shall at all times maintain the highest level of work, ensuring fidelity of meaning and register, unless demanded otherwise by the client. They should seek to apply the relevant European standards.

They shall draw the client's attention to any significant errors or ambiguities in the source text. If the client is acting as an intermediary, they shall not directly contact the client's own customer without the client's prior consent.

Translators shall refrain from plagiarism; use of another's translation must be duly accredited.

4.3.2 Interpreting

Interpreters shall take all reasonable steps to ensure complete and effective communication between the parties, including intervention to prevent misunderstanding and incorrect cultural inference. They should seek to apply the relevant European or national standards.

Court interpreters shall always be mindful of the overriding interest of justice.

4.4 Distribution of work

Translators and interpreters shall not distribute work to colleagues or partners without first obtaining the client's consent. When distributing work, they shall not withhold an unreasonable portion of the fee. They shall ensure that colleagues, partners or employees performing such distributed work observe all the relevant clauses of this Code.

Where subcontracting is permitted, this Code shall apply accordingly.

5. DISPUTES

In the event of any disputes between a translator or interpreter and his/her colleagues or clients or in the event of any infringement of this Code, the matter should preferably be settled by arbitration, for which appropriate rules of procedure must be put in place.

Disputes with clients can be avoided by the translator or interpreter responding appropriately to a client's criticism which is legitimate and expressed directly to the translator or interpreter. If time permits and if given a fair opportunity, the translator should correct any proven fault in the work submitted, thus avoiding a cause for the withholding of payment or even cancellation of the contract by the client.

6. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this Code must be approved by the General or Annual Meeting of FIT Europe.

Relevant documents (optional part of the Code):

- Nairobi recommendation
- EN 15038: Translation services – Service requirements

Annex C

Regulations of the FIT Regional Centre for Europe (FIT Europe)

Adopted at the General Meeting in Strasbourg on 24 June 1995.
Last amended at the Annual Meeting in Berlin on 11 September 2009

This version supersedes all previous versions.

1. Organisational

- 1.1 FIT's Regional Centre for Europe (FIT Europe) is an integral part of FIT.
- 1.2 The Regional Centre for Europe was established by FIT Council decision in Vienna in April 1994 and is known as FIT Europe.
- 1.3 The Regional Centre for Europe (FIT Europe), hereinafter FIT Europe, shall operate within the framework provided by FIT's Bylaws and the *Guiding principles for the establishment and work of regional centres within FIT*.

2. Membership

- 2.1 The geographical coverage of FIT Europe is Europe. Any FIT Regular Member based in Europe and in good standing with FIT is entitled to be a member of FIT Europe. Other relevant associations or organisations in Europe may attend meetings as observers, with the approval of the Steering Committee, but only until the next FIT Statutory Congress.
- 2.2 Each FIT Europe member is entitled to representation at the General Meeting.

3. Governing Body

- 3.1 The General Meeting shall be the governing body of FIT Europe.
- 3.2 The General Meeting shall elect a Steering Committee to be the governing body of FIT Europe in the interval between General Meetings.
- 3.3 A minimum of one General Meeting shall be held in Europe in the three-year interval between two FIT Statutory Congresses. If the interval between Statutory Congresses is longer than three years and six months, a General Meeting must be convened in due fashion as soon as any delay in the timing of the Statutory Congress is known.

3.4 The General Meeting shall be convened by the Steering Committee and must be held in an easily accessible location. Notice of a General Meeting must be sent to the members a minimum of three months in advance by letter (or email or fax if so requested by a member) and must be accompanied by an agenda.

3.5 The Agenda for the General Meeting must contain, as a minimum:

- Membership status and nurturing of the translation community within Europe
- Steering Committee's report on the period under review
- Finances and funding
- Approval of the accounts
- Discussion of proposals received
- Decision on future activities (action plan)
- Discussion of FIT Council report
- Promotion of FIT activities
- Election of the Steering Committee
- Election of the auditor and alternate auditor.

Any proposals for discussion must be submitted to the Steering Committee no later than two months before the General Meeting and, if appropriate, submitted by the Steering Committee to the members no later than one month before the General Meeting.

3.6 An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) may be convened by the Steering Committee but must be convened when so demanded by at least one-third of the membership of FIT Europe (which must be in good standing with FIT). The convening notice shall specify the items which members demanding the EGM wish to be placed on the agenda. These shall be the only items on the agenda. An EGM shall be convened and run in accordance the same rules and procedures as ordinary general meetings.

3.7 In addition to the General Meeting, an Annual Meeting shall be held each year in which no General Meeting is held. In the year of the FIT Statutory Congress, it shall be held at the Statutory Congress if the latter takes place in Europe.

3.8 An Annual Meeting shall be convened by the Steering Committee and must be held in an easily accessible location. Notice of an Annual Meeting must be sent to the members a minimum of three months in advance by letter, email or fax, and must be accompanied by an agenda.

3.9 The Agenda for an Annual Meeting must contain, as a minimum:

- The Steering Committee's report on the period under review
- Discussion and decisions on future activities (action plan).

Any proposals for discussion must be submitted to the Steering Committee no later than two months before the Annual Meeting and, if appropriate, submitted by the Steering Committee to the members no later than one month before the Annual Meeting.

4. Voting

- 4.1 Attendance by, or representation by proxy of, at least one-third of regular members in good standing with FIT shall constitute a quorum.
- 4.2 Each member association shall have one vote. Resolutions shall be adopted by a simple majority. Proxies are permitted to a maximum of two per representative with voting rights and proxy holders must have written confirmation from their associations of their authority to vote. Observers and FIT candidate members are not entitled to vote.

5. Steering Committee

- 5.1. The Steering Committee shall consist of a minimum of three and a maximum of seven elected members. Members of the Steering Committee are elected for a term of three years and may serve a maximum of three terms. The appointment of the Steering Committee shall be subject to the approval of the FIT Executive Committee.
- 5.2 The Steering Committee shall meet at least once a year. The Steering Committee shall elect its own Chairman and Treasurer and shall lay down its own procedures. It may, in the interests of expediting projects or ensuring adequate numbers on the Steering Committee, co-opt a maximum of two members until the next election. No member association may have more than one member on the Steering Committee.
- 5.3 The Chairman of the Steering Committee shall act as the spokesperson for FIT Europe and shall also be responsible, inter alia, for submitting FIT Europe election results and regulation amendments to FIT Council for ratification.
- 5.4 The Steering Committee shall prepare an annual report for FIT Council.

6. FIT Committees

- 6.1. To help achieve its objectives and the aims expressed in the mission statement, FIT Europe may ask FIT Council to coopt a FIT Europe representative chosen at its general meeting onto any FIT Committee (except the Executive Committee).

7. Financial

7. The financial year shall be the calendar year.
- 7.1 Administrative expenses shall be covered by the member and observer associations. FIT Europe may also seek external funding.
- 7.2 Accounts must be presented at the General Meeting for the period since the previous general meeting.
- 7.3 A copy of the approved financial statement must be sent to the FIT Treasurer.

8. Other provisions

8.1 Disputes

Should FIT Europe become involved in a dispute which it cannot resolve by itself, it shall request the FIT Executive Committee to resolve the dispute, or failing that, to authorise a third party, who must have a precise mandate and be fully briefed, to attempt resolution of the dispute.

9. Amendments

9.1 A resolution to amend the FIT Europe Regulations can only be adopted at a quorate General Meeting or Annual Meeting at which this subject is itemised in the agenda accompanying the three-month convening letter.

Any amendment to these Regulations must be submitted within two months to FIT Council for ratification.

10. Dissolution

10.1. FIT Europe can only be dissolved if a) its General meeting so decides or b) FIT Council so decides or c) it has not been active for three years or for the period between two FIT Statutory Congresses.

10.1.1 A resolution for FIT Europe to dissolve itself can only be adopted at a quorate General Meeting at which this subject is itemised in the agenda accompanying the three-month convening letter.

10.1.2 In the event that FIT Council votes in favour of dissolving FIT Europe, FIT Council shall not be responsible for any debts or obligations incurred by FIT Europe and any assets remaining to FIT Europe shall revert to central FIT funds for future support for FIT activities in Europe.

10.1.3 If FIT Europe has not been active for three years or for the period between two FIT Statutory Congresses, it shall automatically be deemed to be dissolved.

Annex D

EULITA information sheet

ABOUT EULITA

EULITA is committed to promoting the quality of justice, ensuring access to justice across languages and cultures and thus, ultimately, guaranteeing the fundamental principles of human rights as enshrined in the European Convention of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

EULITA aims to bring together in its membership as full members the professional associations of legal interpreters and translators in the EU member states as well as the general associations that include legal interpreters and translators among their membership. As associate members EULITA welcomes all interested organisations, institutions and individuals that are committed to the improvement of quality in legal interpreting and translation.

EULITA aims to strengthen and to represent the interests and concerns of the associations and their members vis-à-vis national, European and international organisations and institutions, to promote the establishment of associations of legal interpreters and translators in member states where as yet they do not exist, to promote close cooperation with academic institutions in the field of training and research and to encourage the establishment of national and EU-wide registers of qualified legal interpreters and translators, while at all times respecting the diversity of judicial systems and cultures.

EULITA is further committed to promoting quality in legal interpreting and translation through the recognition of the professional status of legal interpreters and translators, the exchange of information and best practices in training and continuous professional development and the organisation of events on issues such as training, research, professionalism, etc. thus promoting judicial cooperation and mutual trust by the member states in each other's systems of legal interpreting and translation.

EULITA, finally, aims to promote cooperation and best practices in working arrangements with the legal services and legal professionals.