



FIT EUROPE

REGIONAL CENTRE EUROPE OF THE
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF TRANSLATORS
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Minutes of RCE General Meeting 2008

held at Certex, 22 rue de la Pépinière, 75008 Paris,
on Saturday 6 December 2008

The meeting began at approximately 10.10. a.m.

The entire Steering Committee was present:

João Esteves-Ferreira, Chair
Birgitte Jensen, Co-Chair
Terence Oliver, Secretary
Sandro Corradini
Andrew Evans
Reiner Heard
Javier Sancho

The following 25 associations entitled to vote were represented:

Assoziierte Dolmetscher und Übersetzer e.V. (ADÜ Nord)
Associazione Italiana Traduttori ed Interpreti (AITI)
Asociación Española de Traductores, Correctores e Intérpretes (ASETRAD)
Swiss Association of Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters (ASTTI)
ATICOM Fachverband der Berufsübersetzer und Berufsdolmetscher e.V. (ATICOM)
Asociata Traducatorilor din Romania (ATR)
Bundesverband der Dolmetscher und Übersetzer e. V. (BDÜ)
Chambre belge des traducteurs, interprètes et philologues (CBTIP)
Translatørforeningen (The Association of Danish Authorized Translators) (DTF)
Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI)
Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association (ITIA)
*Jednota tlumocniku a prekladatelů (JTP)
Forbundet Kommunikation og Sprog (Denmark)
Nederlands Genootschap van Tolken en Vertalers (NGTV)
Norsk Faglitterær Forfatter- og Oversetterforening (NFF)
Norsk Oversetterforening (NO)
*Österreichischer Verband der Gerichtsdolmetscher (Austria)
Sveriges Facköversättarförening (SFÖ)
Société française des traducteurs (SFT)
Finnish Association of Translators and Interpreters (SKTL)
Statsautoriserte Translatørers Forening (STF)
Polskiego Towarzystwa Tłumaczy Przysięgłych i Specjalistycznych (TEPIS)
Union Nationale des Experts Traducteurs-Interprètes près les Cours d'Appel (UNETICA)
Österreichischer Übersetzer- und Dolmetscherverband (Universitas)
Verband der Übersetzer und Dolmetscher Berlin e.V. (VÜD)

João Esteves-Ferreira opened the meeting and declared that it had been convened in due time and was quorate.

Terence Oliver announced that 23 associations were directly represented and that there were 2 requests for representation by proxy (the two associations indicated by * in the above list). The 23 associations voted unanimously to accept these proxies, on the principle that where no provision exists in the Bylaws of FIT Europe the relevant provisions of the worldwide FIT Bylaws are to be applied. This meant that 25 associations were represented, i.e. 13 were necessary for a simple majority.

The Steering Committee requested and received unanimous approval from the members for its action in inviting the members of FIT Council to attend as observers.

At this point the President of FIT, Marion Boers, thanked the Steering Committee for its invitation to attend the General Meeting of FIT Europe and said a few words of welcome. She expressed the hope that the emerging spirit of cooperation would be maintained and indicated the interest of both Council and Executive Committee in an intensive ongoing dialogue.

In a brief reply, João Esteves-Ferreira thanked the President and assured the meeting that FIT Europe for its part was keen to cultivate good and fruitful relations with all other bodies within FIT.

The agenda was approved without any changes.

1. Report

The Steering Committee's report had been sent out as part of the meeting document package. A question was asked about the problems with the interpreter project. João Esteves-Ferreira explained the situation, pointing out that there were two main problems: the complexity of the survey and the difficulty of finding volunteers to handle the project. Several members drew attention to the software "Survey Monkey", which they said could be used to implement surveys without incurring heavy external costs.

2. Accounts

João Esteves-Ferreira pointed out that the accounts presented covered the period 1 September 2005 to 31 July 2008, i.e. from the beginning of the month after the Steering Committee took office to the end of the month before the accounts had to be distributed as part of the meeting document package.

In spring 2006 the Steering Committee had decided that it could not ask for financial contributions from members until it had produced evidence of meaningful activities that were worth financing. Assistance from FIT for a specific project (TM Conference in Barcelona, October 2007) had been applied for and received in the form of seed money. The question of regular finance for both day-to-day activities and specific projects of FIT Europe needed examination and the possibilities should be clarified in consultation with FIT Council/EC. This should be done in the context of the general re-examination of membership dues being conducted at world level. One possibility might be a small regular allocation from the world budget, plus project-based funding on application for specific projects. (See also Item 9.)

3. Vote on report and accounts

Again on the principle that the general Bylaws of FIT apply where no rules exist in the Bylaws of FIT Europe, a vote was taken and the report and accounts were approved.

4. Ratification of change of name from Regional Centre Europe to FIT Europe

The change of name had been approved by the Executive Committee and Council, and in August 2008 by the Congress in Shanghai. FIT President Marion Boers pointed out that the Steering Committee, in its statement justifying the change of name, had give an assurance that the title "Regional Centre Europe of FIT" would continue to be used as a subtitle in all official contexts, e.g. letterheads. She urged that this should continue to be the case, and that the SC should sift its documents and publications, especially those on the website, and make the necessary editorial changes. Another point made from the floor was the need for consistency in the use of either "FIT Europe" (without hyphen) or "FIT-Europe" (with hyphen).

The vote went clearly in favour of the change of name (24 for, 1 against, no abstentions) combined with the editorial changes mentioned above and consistent use of the form of the name without the hyphen.

5. Approval of mission statement

The Mission Statement was approved subject to the necessary editorial changes (see Item 4). A large majority of those present agreed that this document in particular should make it clear that the term “translator” as used by FIT covered “translators, interpreters, terminologists and other language professionals”, as many readers might not be aware of this internal convention. The meeting asked the next Steering Committee to include this point in its revision.

6. Discussion on future activities of FIT Europe

a) Website

Several members suggested the creation of a password-protected Members Section and/or a Steering Committee Section. It was agreed that the new webmaster would look into this as a matter of urgency.

b) EU Services Directive

Concern was expressed about the impact this might have on the translating profession. Many delegates saw lack of information as a problem and felt there was a need for associations to inform their members. FIT Europe could play a useful role by disseminating relevant information at the supra-national level, and also by contacting European organisations and institutions, e.g. the Council, representatives of EU translators and those organising the European Master in Translation.

It was noted that the BDÜ in Germany was working on the problem with other liberal professions.

c) Continuous Professional Development

This project was to get under way properly in 2009. Numerous delegates advocated progress on this front. It was felt that in the interests of continuity, inter-association contacts should be at institutional rather than individual level. It was decided that meetings would be held online and organised by Ben Phister of SFT.

In view of the differences in CPD requirements in the individual countries, it was decided that the CPD working group should reach internal agreement on the scope of its remit and should keep the members informed about progress.

d) Database of admission criteria

The meeting thanked Natascha Dalügge-Momme (ADÜ Nord) for her considerable work on this project. It was suggested that the accumulated information be re-examined with a view to simplifying/harmonising requirements, e.g. for interpreter membership.

e) Other projects

The floor approved the other projects mentioned in the report and suggested possible improvements. Additional projects suggested at the meeting which met with general approval and were envisaged for the near future were:

- i) Translator profile: What is a translator in Europe?
- ii) Practical guidance for freelancers on preparing their business for certification under EN 15038

7. Amendments to Bylaws (proposal submitted by VÜD, Germany)

The proposal on the agenda was primarily intended to institutionalise an annual meeting of FIT Europe in the years between its General Meetings, and to shorten the prescribed periods of notice to take account of modern communications facilities. The Secretary pointed out that under the existing Bylaws, six months notice had to be given even for an extraordinary general meeting, which was a ridiculous situation in the present day and age.

The new Steering Committee was given a mandate to review the Bylaws. This was to be done in close consultation with FIT to ensure compatibility between the world and European levels.

After considerable discussion, the meeting voted on the VÜD proposal. It was accepted in unaltered form by a large majority (*nem. con.*), on the basis that an interim solution was needed to ensure annual meetings and shorter periods of notice while the Bylaws were being revised. For the next annual meeting (by the end of 2009) the new Steering Committee was to present, with 3 months notice, a comprehensively revised version of the Bylaws.

8. Discussion of other proposals received

The only item for discussion here was the Code of Professional Practice, a “non-exhaustive guide on for member associations”, which was introduced briefly by Reiner Heard (Aticom, Germany). The meeting thanked him for the substantial effort he had put into this project and generally expressed great approval of the resulting working document.

One suggestion from the floor was that a list of references could be provided at the end, rather than citing specific examples in the text. It was also noted that references to subcontracting might cause problems in certain national contexts.

The meeting nevertheless felt that the document (after the necessary editorial changes, see above) should be published on the website as a draft code and that European and other associations should be invited to comment. On this basis the Code was approved without any objections.

9. Finances, annual dues

There was considerable discussion about the idea of regular dues and the possible level of subscriptions. As an interim compromise it was overwhelmingly agreed that the Steering Committee would send out a request for voluntary contributions, accompanied by a list of projects in progress or due to start shortly.

Several other points discussed were noted for action by the new Treasurer who would be elected from within the new Steering Committee:

- i) the FIT Europe bank account would have to be moved from Denmark;
- ii) a policy on advertising and relevant revenue (e.g. website) was needed;
- iii) there was a need for annual reporting, for which suitable arrangements should be drafted;
- iv) there was a need for creative exploration of fund-raising opportunities.

10. Election of Steering Committee

Terence Oliver, who was not standing for re-election, took over as Chair for the duration of this item. The question arose as to whether candidates whose associations had been unable to complete all the electronic documentation should be allowed to stand from the floor. The meeting voted overwhelmingly in favour of allowing them to do so.

There were then eight candidates for seven places. 25 associations were represented and able to vote. Voting took the form that the associations were asked to write down the names of the candidates they wanted to elect. They could list up to seven candidates; voting slips with fewer names were possible, but lists with more than seven names would be invalid. The results were as follows:

Reiner Heard (24)
Kevin Quirk (23)
Eyvor Fogarty (22)
Cristiana Coblis (20)
Liisa Laakso-Tammisto (19)
Patricia Alarcon (17)
Javier Sancho (14)

João Esteves-Ferreira (13)

The first seven form the new Steering Committee. The meeting thanked João Esteves-Ferreira for his efforts and achievements during his period of office.

11. Election of auditor

João Esteves-Ferreira resumed the chair for the rest of the meeting.

The BDÜ proposed its Treasurer, Ingrid Nøkleby-Braun.

In the absence of other candidates, Terence Oliver agreed to be alternate auditor. The meeting elected both candidates *nem. con.*

12. Miscellaneous

BDÜ, Germany, suggested that the next annual meeting could conveniently be held in connection with its forthcoming major conference in Berlin on 11-13 September 2009, which it was hoped that many delegates would be attending in any case. The meeting expressed general approval, and the new Steering Committee was asked to consult with the BDÜ and confirm the date and venue in good time.

There was no other business.

The meeting closed at 1.40 p.m.

João Esteves-Ferreira
Chair

Terence Oliver
Secretary

31 January 2009

Footnote:

At a meeting held on 6 December 2008 directly after the General Meeting, the new Steering Committee elected the following officers: Reiner Heard (Aticom, Germany) as Chairman, Patricia Alarcon (CBTIP, Belgium) as Vice-Chair, Liisa Laakso-Tammisto (SKTL, Finland) as Treasurer, and Eyvor Fogarty (ITI, United Kingdom) as Secretary. (See "Steering Committee" on www.fit-europe.org)