



# FIT EUROPE

REGIONAL CENTRE EUROPE OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF TRANSLATORS  
[info@fit-europe.org](mailto:info@fit-europe.org)

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## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

Lisbon, Portugal  
30 September 2010

**Present:** 15 + 3 observers (list attached)

**Apologies:** -

Reiner Heard (RH) welcomed all present, and mentioned the occasion: International Translation Day.

RH welcomed as observers Frans de Laet (FIT Secretary General), Geoffrey Buckingham and Alan Thomson (Chairman and Secretary, APCI, UK)

RH read out a message of greetings from Marion Boers, president of FIT.

General Introductions

Delegates to the Meeting introduced themselves briefly.

With 15 authorised delegates, the Meeting was declared quorate.

Additions to the Agenda were requested. Four items under AOB were put forward (venue for next meeting; report on situation regarding interpreting in England, Wales and NI; procurement of translation, especially in the EU; FIT matters).

### 1. Steering Committee Report

Delegates had read the Report issued in advance. There were no general comments.

#### 1/1 Survey

RH mentioned that the electronic Survey on rates and working conditions of translators in Europe is available now on the newly created Members section of the FIT Europe website. (All associations have a password.) There have been conflicting opinions about the availability of this document. RH asked the Meeting for its opinion.

Sabine Colombe (SC), as the organiser and author, said that she would like the Survey to be available on the open pages of the website. The problem lies in the 'naming' of prices and fees. Because of the range of respondents, some of the figures quoted may skew the general range. Different countries have different fee structures, and there was some feeling in that local conditions should not be adversely

affected by pressure to use skewed figures. Some delegates felt that Intranet distribution could maintain the principle of confidentiality and business secret. Others were concerned about the need to avoid any infringement of anti-cartel principles.

**Proposal:** that the results of the Survey be put in the public domain.

**For:** 13 **Against:** 2

**Motion carried.**

## **1/2 FIT Europe website**

Cristiana Coblis (CC) presented the basic structure of the new FIT Europe website. She emphasised that the aim had been a) to use a good content management system, b) to make the site user-friendly (for compilers and users) and c) to have everything suitable for integration into the FIT website.

It was noted that FIT itself has just commissioned a new design and structure for the FIT website.

CC and all delegates at the Meeting look forward to progress and eventual integration into the FIT website. CC was formally thanked for all the effort she has put in to this successful project.

## **1/3 Other associations in Europe**

Several associations or associations in the formation stage had been in contact with FIT Europe (Hungary, Macedonia (FYROM), Ukraine and Cataluña).

RH indicated that it would be helpful to be able to offer such associations a brief overview of the benefits of belonging to FIT Europe and FIT. He aims to have FIT Europe's publicity incorporated with FIT publicity.

## **1/4 Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

CC reported on an e-meeting, on a video conference link, with ADÜ Nord, Romania, ITI and SFT attending. With only four associations present, there had been ample opportunity to explore all points in depth, and the meeting was very useful. This group still needs a chairperson.

Types of CPD had been discussed: conferences, webinars etc; assessment criteria; validation of CPD; cooperation with universities; recognition by other associations; credit points; and whether CPD should be mandatory. Each association had recommended a point of action. The minutes have been distributed internally. The date of the next virtual exchange on CPD will be agreed by the group members.

CC reminded the Meeting that there is a Googlegroup for this CPD working group. The first meeting had been recorded and the members of the group could listen to the recording at any time. All a new

member needs to do to join is to let CC know their name and which association they represent. There are ten members in the group at present.

RH added that the Steering Committee hope to continue this project and publish the information on the website, once a useful document can be put together.

### **1/5 Working Group on LTI**

The new FIT Europe Working Group on legal translation and interpreting was discussed at length and ways were sought to achieve good contact amongst the relevant representative associations and groups and to avoid any duplication of work and conflict of interests. One of the roles of the WG chairperson, Doris Grollmann, and liaison representative, Natascha Dalügge-Momme, is to find complementary rather than overlapping interests, oversee the exchange of information, try to minimise repetition, and help bring effort to a fruitful conclusion.

Part of the discussion centred on inviting EULITA to FIT Europe meetings as an observer. While this might be a desideratum, there was some anxiety about what kind of a precedent this would set and similarly, if FIT Europe wished to invite other pan-European associations as observers, whether this would be on some sort of reciprocal basis. It was generally felt that a more established form of cooperation and coordination between FIT Europe and EULITA is being encouraged, though it was recognised that it might take some time to develop appropriate approaches and test their workability.

It became obvious during this discussion that the term ‘observer’ had two categories (one of relevant or candidate association, and one at the more federal level of ‘mutual stakeholder’ in translation/interpreting issues). In order to formalise these categories, RH suggested that the Steering Committee consider the matter of observer status, look for a way forward within the Regulations and report back to the membership with an amendment to incorporate both types of Observer, for adoption at the General meeting.

### **1/6 Survey on Interpreting**

RH asked the meeting to consider its approach to the Interpreter Survey, a lengthy survey that had been prepared and sent out, and express its views. CC explained there was in 2007 a Working Group (WG) with the objective of proposing action plans and recommendations. The WG drew up a very detailed survey. The Interpreting Committee tested it, and found that since not all the questions could be answered by each individual respondent and that the questionnaire took about an hour to complete, the survey had not proved very satisfactory to run. However, a lot of work has been done, and could be continued by energetic and enthusiastic people.

Sandro Corradini suggested two solutions: 1) that each association answers the questionnaire on behalf of its members and 2) simplifying the questionnaire for individuals to answer. The number of respondents could not be guessed. It was generally agreed that while FIT represents many interpreters, it did not have an overview of the type of interpreter and the distribution of types of interpreters.

Another suggestion was that FIT Europe could analyse the results of the German survey, to find the answers it gives, and progress from there.

RH pointed out the urgent need for FIT to have more information about the interpreters it represents, as it had found that, in many quarters, it was thought that FIT only represented translators. FIT Council wishes to change this, and is grateful that FIT Europe is addressing the issue. RH would like a Working Group set up to deal with this. Various projects for the WG would be: drawing conclusions from the BDÜ survey, description of rates and working conditions, the interpreter's role in society, interpreting in small communities (coordinating with FIT's committee on community-based interpreting, and with FIT's special interest group, where EU based Jorgen Nielsen is FIT representative). The meeting was reminded that community interpreting is being given legislative foundation in Italy and that associations could report back on similar approaches in other countries.

RH summed up the discussion and suggested that the Steering Committee look at the great variety of views expressed and, if appropriate, would set up a working group, with membership drawn from the associations. Further discussion could be continued on the FIT Europe e-group.

## **2. Amended Regulations**

RH explained that the version of the FIT Regulations adopted in Berlin was sent up to FIT Council for ratification. There were however some objections, mainly in relation to the distinction between regular and associate members. In addition, when the Regulations were translated into French, some inconsistencies emerged. As a result of the FIT Council meeting in Moscow, a clause was added on entitlement for FIT Europe to have working groups. FIT Council had resolved in Moscow to have all comments from its members in to the Steering Committee by 31 July 2010. These had been incorporated where appropriate.

The Meeting discussed the wording of the Regulations on observers. It was noted that the current wording mainly concerns associations/organisations that are candidate members of FIT. In the interests of having working Regulations, it was confirmed, as discussed earlier, that the Steering Committee would draft a clause (taking suggestions from the floor into account) to cover observer status for other types of organisations and to incorporate this new wording once it had been seen by the FIT Europe member associations and FIT Council.

A proposal was then put forward by RH and Liese Katschinka: that the Meeting adopts the FIT Europe Regulations presented to the Meeting.

A vote was taken. Result:

For: 15

Against: 0

The Regulations were therefore adopted unanimously.

The meeting expressed its thanks to Jean Buyse (NGTV) for the translation into French.

### **3. Discussion of future activities of FIT Europe**

Much had been covered in agenda item 1 and RH looked for suggestions from the meeting, reminding the meeting that there is indeed a lot to do, for example the new website, ensuring better exchange of information with FIT committees and standardisation in that respect, and a working format to enable information to be cascaded to the European associations. An upcoming topic is input to standards on interpreting and translation quality at ISO/CEN level. Associations are encouraged to share information. EN15038 is up for revision next year. FIT Europe should be involved, as it was in the original drafting on the standard.

### **4. AOB**

#### **4/1 Venue of next meeting**

The Steering Committee is looking for suggestions for a venue and date from the associations. The meeting has to be in autumn 2011 (Oct – early December), ideally on the eve of a workshop / conference / seminar, on subjects such as translation quality. One option available so far is the use of a conference room made available by the Belgian association. Delegates were asked to report this need to their associations and to contact the Steering Committee

#### **4/2 Situation in Britain regarding interpreting, presented by Geoffrey Buckingham, APCI**

The Association of Police and Court Interpreters (APCI) is a candidate member, having applied to join FIT 18 months ago. It wished to report on Justice Sector interpreting in the UK, and quoted in its report to FIT Europe from a letter from the Better Trials Unit, Ministry of Justice, announcing its intention to outsource interpreting services. It was of interest to the meeting that in Northern Ireland and Scotland the outsourcing process had led to catastrophic slashing in fees, with there being no payment of travel expenses or for travel time. The minimum payment had therefore reached a low of GBP18 (no travel expenses etc).

APCI is engaged in the fight to maintain and improve interpreting conditions, and views this prospective deterioration as being contrary to the interests of justice. It has countered with robust and powerful arguments and some serious positive proposals. One of APCI's lead policies is to lay the foundations for statutory protection of title.

In the Q&A session, it emerged that similar outsourcing policies had had huge negative impact in Sweden. Finland had also experienced difficulties when competitive bidding was introduced: there, the counter-policy was to have a stake right at the start of the process (when five commercial operators were submitting bids and required actual names in their bids). In Ireland, where tendering had taken place, the texts for the documentation used for the tendering process had been taken from other service sectors. (This had been ascertained from certain oversights in the texts.)

There was general discussion of the way in which interpreters are selected for court work, and the impact of interpreter supply agencies on working conditions. It was recalled that the Grotius project had issued a booklet based on the British model, and the Green Book of the European Commission was based on this.

The need to share information was re-affirmed, and it was agreed that this is the kind of information that could be usefully shared in an e-discussion group.

### **4/3 Procurement of translation, especially in EU**

The representatives of the Swedish association FAT described the recent central procurement exercise for the whole state sector. There had been some successful efforts to counter less advantageous aspects of the procurement requirements, but nowadays there was always the constant issue of outsourcing. The counter-campaign had met with certain problems, one being that Sweden does not have a 'poverty level'. Discussion ended on the high note that while we as workers may not be able to influence the market, we could try to influence the end user through consumer rights (the end user being entitled to ask for the origin of goods).

### **4/4 FIT matters**

FIT Secretary General Frans de Laet reported to the meeting that:

- i) Jiri Stejskal (ATA) as chairman of the organising committee for the XIX FIT Congress Organiser *Bridging Cultures* had asked Frans to convey his best wishes from ATA for the FIT Europe Annual Meeting.
- ii) FIT President and Council wished to congratulate the OVG D (Austria) on their 90th anniversary. (General applause)
- iii) René Haeseryn is to become an honorary member of Chambre Belge (CBTIP-BKVTF) after 50 years of honourable and hard-working service. (General applause)

RH closed the meeting, thanked delegates for their attendance and participation, and expressed his hope to see all (and more) at the General Meeting next year.

*List of delegates attached*



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