



Preparing for New Languages in the European Union

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Disclaimer

What follows is probable scenarios based on experience from previous accession exercises and the latest thinking. No official decisions have yet been taken.

Scope (I)

- 11 official languages
 - 110 language combinations
- In future: 22 languages
 - 462 language combinations
- 9 European Institutions
- 10 European Agencies - Other Bodies
 - Each one with different requirements and rules of procedure

Scope (II)

- Most European Institutions have their own translation service
 - Total of 2 500 translators
- More than 3 000 000 pages translated every year
- Interpreting !

Background

- Regulation 1/1958, Article 1:
 - Official languages are also working languages of the European Community
- At each enlargement: automatic adaptation of Article 1
- Article 6:
 - Every Institution decides the practical application of the linguistic regime

In Practice (I)

- All official national languages remain official Union languages
 - No matter how many
- European legislation is directly applicable
- Working language regime will probably be modified
 - With deeper Institutional reform ?

In Practice (II)

- At the Commission:
 - 3 working languages for the Commissioners
- English and French most important source languages
 - 1992: 44% FR - 41% EN
 - 1999: 48% EN - 37% FR
- Other Institutions: much the same
 - Except European Parliament

The Issues

- Personnel
 - Numbers (!), recruitment, training
- Infrastructure
- Workflow
 - Workload, working methods
- Outsourcing
- Translation Tools
 - Terminology, memories, machine translation

Pre-enlargement (I)

- Field offices in future Member States
 - For revision of legislative translations
- External translation
 - Market (!)
 - Quality control
 - Qualifications
 - Harmonised internal procedures

(II) Training

- In-house translators in new languages
 - Staff of the EN, FR
 - And possibly DE and ES units
- University training in CEEC
 - Course curricula
 - Requirements of the Institutions
 - List of recognised diplomas

(III) Recruitment

- Typical success rate in translator competitions < 5%
 - Local offer ? Qualifications ?
- Scenarios
 - Accession -3: Heads of services
 - Accession -2: Competitions
 - Accession -1: Recruitment
- Translation assistants

(III) Translation Technology

- Terminology tools
 - Local and central
 - Batch lookup and concordancing tools
- Translation memories
 - Local front-ends
 - Central storage of translation memories
- Machine translation
 - From and into new languages

Post-enlargement (I)

- Translation demand
 - Reduce number of translation requests - procedures (!)
 - Limit length of documents
- Number of translators
 - E.g. Commission:
 - 10% new posts (135 on 1350)
 - Liberate 165 existing posts

Post-enlargement (II)

- Translation via relay languages
- Translation via pivot languages
- Two-way (“aller et retour”) translation
 - With thorough revision
- Even more external translation
 - E.g. Commission: from 16% to 25%

Translation of the “Acquis”

- TAIEX
 - Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Office
- 80 000 pages of existing legislation to be translated in 11 languages
- Translation Coordination Units in candidate countries

Langtech for the “Acquis”

- Document server with full text search capabilities for storing translations
 - “Pre-Celex”
- Organised terminological circuit
 - “Pre-Eurodicautom”
- Translation memories
 - “Pre-Euramis”
- Machine translation

Conclusions

- Full multilingualism guaranteed
 - At least externally
- Stimulation of translation market
 - For freelance and officials
- Novel working methods
- Translation technology
- First task: translation of the “Acquis”