



BUREAU FOR INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE COORDINATION
BUREAU DE COORDINATION LINGUISTIQUE INTERNATIONALE

**Minutes of the Steering Committee Meeting
25 May 2022**

NATO COUNTRIES

Albania
Belgium
Bulgaria
Canada
Croatia
Czechia
Denmark
Estonia
France
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Iceland
Italy
Latvia
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Netherlands
Montenegro
North Macedonia
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Slovakia
Slovenia
Spain
Turkey
United Kingdom
United States

ATTENDANCE

Absent
Sr. Capt. K. Heylen
Col. P. Petkov
Ms. J. Dubeau
Ms. I. Prpic-Djuric
Ms. Ž. Nikam
Mr. K. Kildevang
Ms. M. Kompus
Ms. E. Cleret
Dr. C. Loreck
Absent
LTC. F. Banki
Absent
Capt. (N) M. Ghiacino
Ms. G. Lauda-Treide
Ms. J. Kuzaitė
Absent
Dr. G. Seinhorst
Ms. M. Mašković
Absent
Ms. B. Grande
LTC. J. Dudek
Cdr. C. Rolo
Ms. C. Bordianu
LTC. L. Murček
Ms. T. Derman Zadravec
Col. F. Valencia Feijoo
LTC. Ó. Bostanci
LTC. M. Sharp
Dr. J. Rattler



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PARTNERS/OBSERVERS IN ATTENDANCE

Austria	Col. W. Zecha
Armenia	Ms. E. Galstyan
Australia	WGCDR. P. Reddacliff
Azerbaijan	LtCol. H. Khalilov
BIH	Maj. D. Bozic
Georgia	Ms. T. Shavlakadze
Iraq	SMaj. Gen. M. Z. Al-Hamami
Ireland	Mr. E. Carroll
Serbia	Mr. G. Milićević
Sweden	Ms. M. Martin

NATO BODIES

NMI	Mr. J. Nowers
ACO/SHAPE	Mr. M. Adubato

BILC SECRETARIAT

Chair	Ms. B. Petek
Associate Secretary	Ms. P. Garza
Associate Secretary	Ms. J. Dubeau
Associate Secretary	Ms. J. Vasilj-Begovic
Senior Advisor	Dr. Ray Clifford

Item 1: Opening remarks

- i. Introductions and recognition of the heads of delegations and observers

Chair opened the proceedings and welcomed delegates. She expressed satisfaction over high attendance and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

- ii. Approval of agenda

After the introductions, Chair asked for the approval of agenda, and the agenda was unanimously approved. Chair asked Ms. Garza to provide an update on BILC courses.



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Item 2: Information & Acknowledgements

i. Update on BILC courses – Ms. Peggy Garza

Ms. Garza stated that the 2022 calendar was available on the BILC website, and that already about half of the planned courses had been delivered. This year, participation has been excellent. The calendar, however does not mention the Writing Strategies course, which had been delivered to eight staff officers from SHAPE. The Writing Strategies course will be offered again at SHAPE in the fall of 2022. For all the other BILC courses, invitations are sent to the BILC PoCs, and they can also be found in e Prime for partner nations. Ms Garza then requested the nations' assistance with one very important activity that occurs in both the Language Testing Seminar (LTS) and the Advanced Language Testing Seminar (ALTS): the practice speaking tests, which are now conducted online. She asked the nations to look for volunteers who would be willing to participate in the mock speaking tests. This activity offers an opportunity for the candidates to receive feedback on their speaking proficiency, as well as to practice speaking. She is interested in candidates with a speaking proficiency level 1+ to 2+ for the LTS (in February, June and August), and candidates with a 2+/3 proficiency level for the ALTS in March. Ms. Garza asked SC representatives to contact her regarding potential volunteers.

ii. Report on cooperation with DEEP

- Ukraine, BiH, Kazakhstan, – Ms. Peggy Garza

Ms. Garza continued by reporting on the Defence Education Enhancement Programme (DEEP)-sponsored cooperation with Ukraine, BiH, and Kazakhstan. DEEP is involved with about seventeen Partner nations, out of which, approximately half have language as part of their programmes. Each nation may have different needs for BILC support. .

Assistance to Ukraine was an ambitious program, composed of three main projects, unfortunately all discontinued after the Russian invasion: (1) one-week tailored methodology workshops at 10 military institutes throughout Ukraine. Different teams of BILC experts were scheduled to deliver the methodology workshops in 2021. However, only two were conducted in Odesa before the project was put on hold due to COVID-19; the workshops were planned to begin again in March 2022; (2) an expert review of the Ukrainian-developed STANAG 6001 familiarization course for language teachers and MoD personnel; and (3) an expert review of the Ukrainian-developed professional development course for English teachers.

The expert reviews described in (2) and (3) above were started with virtual meetings and in-country assessment visits were planned for later in 2022. The BILC member nations taking the lead on these projects were Bulgaria, Estonia, Romania and



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Slovenia. Other nations also offered their assistance. Ukraine had been making great progress toward improving their STANAG 6001 testing system, as well as providing more professional development for teachers and testers. In addition, the Ukrainians were very eager about participating in the BILC projects, and cooperating on NATO issues.

With regard to BiH, the first event in 2022 was a visit by an Austrian SME team on military terminology. The second event was a three-week blended programme offered by PLTCE to the BiH instructors of advanced English. The third event, which will begin in late June, is a tailored course in Bulgaria, also for instructors of advanced English.

BILC was contacted by Kazakhstan late last year for assistance with rebuilding their STANAG 6001-based testing capacity. Members of the BILC Secretariat, along with the head of the UK delegation participated in a couple of virtual meetings to discuss the thorough needs analysis conducted by the Kazakh representative and to consider a plan for the way forward. Although communication was at a standstill for a few months, BILC just received an email expressing this nation's desire to resume this project

- Colombia, Iraq, Armenia – Ms. Branka Petek

Chair informed the delegates that Colombia was new to DEEP, and had just begun to cooperate with BILC in the teaching and training systems development. BILC participated in the scoping visit conducted by DEEP in May 2022 to the army academy in Bogota, the air force academy in Cali and navy academy in Cartagena; the BILC representative met with military education specialists, who in the past had experienced many challenges linked to the difficulty of exerting control over their territory. The police of Colombia are also part of the Ministry of Defence. This nation wants a STANAG 6001- based testing system and the capacity to test cadets. They also need help with the faculty development.

Iraq also has had an ambitious language training programme and has benefited from having a BILC representative on the ground. Quite a few activities have taken place since 2019. A number of workshops took place online and in person, and in 2022 four DLI instructors participated in an instructor exchange in Slovenia. A faculty development workshop was planned for June 2022 for 15 DLI instructors, but was postponed. There are a number of activities planned for 2022 and 2023.

Productive online meetings have taken place with Armenia on the topic of establishing a STANAG 6001-based testing system. An in-person visit has been planned for the fall of 2022.



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iii. Other

- BILC website – Ms. Branka Petek

Chair stated that Slovenia would upload the presentations of the May 2022 conference after it ends. After that, Croatia would be in charge of updating the website.

- BILC POC list – Ms. Branka Petek

Chair emphasized the importance of an updated BILC PoC list of the national testing centres, as well as of the main BILC PoCs. She added that she would pass around both lists so that the delegates could update them or confirm the accuracy of information. She asked everyone to notify the incoming BILC Chair of any changes that take place in the course of the year.

Item 3: BILC Projects

i. JTAC working group – Ms. Peggy Garza, Mr. Kåre Kildevang

Before beginning her update on the JTAC Working Group (WG), Ms. Garza thanked the nations for providing facilitators for the BILC courses and DEEP engagements. She continued by showing the JTAC-related survey results. Twenty five respondents completed the survey by answering questions whether their nations tested or trained JTAC personnel. Quite a few nations responded that they tested JTACs, but only a few stated they trained them. With this data in mind, BILC may recommend the formation of a special WG that would design JTAC-specific language courses. . This endeavour dovetails with the proposal for nations to collaborate on the development of an aviation English course. A virtual meeting with 75 JTAC programme managers was planned for the afternoon with the goal of informing them on the status of the WG efforts.

ii. Shared Item Bank Project – Ms. Merit Kompus

Ms. Kompus stated that this project was launched in 2020, and that several countries have been involved working on the creation of an item bank for the listening and reading test items. All the participating nations have been normed on the interpretation and application of STANAG 6001. To assist nations in establishing their test development, norming and item moderation, as well as to foster their standardization practices, the WG will allow them to use items from these banks, as anchor items in their national tests. In 2020, reading items for all three levels were submitted by the WG member



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nations, and the items were moderated from 2021 to May 2022 with all seven nations present. Items are ready for large scale pretesting and the WG will ask for assistance.

The Italian delegate inquired about the security of the items and Ms Kompus replied that security procedures would be implemented. The British delegate offered to help with the pretesting.

The French delegate asked if the WG on JTAC could include new members, as France has the highest number of JTACS to train. Ms. Garza replied that eventually the WG would ask other nations to join, but not at the moment. The WG will first distribute questionnaires and analyse the collected information, brief the JTACs, and only then consider adding new members.

iii. Level 4 test – Ms. Jana Vasilj-Begovic

Ms. Vasilj-Begovic mentioned that the WG on level 4 proficiency was set up in 2010 to study level 4 and assist nations in eventual test development. The products the WG developed, such as a tutorial and a paper on level four proficiency, had the goal of helping test developers understand the difference between level 3 and 4 IAW STANAG 6001 descriptors. The WG produced two prototype tests (reading and writing) and published two articles, among other products.

The work on level 4 proficiency coincided with the Language Needs Analysis (LNA) that was conducted at ACT in 2015, and which showed that level 4 proficiency was not required for the jobs, but a solid level 3. This LNA also revealed that the writing skill was the most challenging one.

Currently, the WG is piloting the prototype writing test, which contains four items from which the candidates may select one on which to write a 750-word essay. The use of Internet is allowed, and the test is administered online. Seven trial tests were administered in Phase I; Phase II consists of rating several tests taken by Spanish candidates and possibly a few samples produced by native writers from a US military college. Some of the challenges the WG has faced include norming raters on the STANAG 6001 interpretation of level 4 writing proficiency, and defining what it means to produce a first draft.

Ms Vasilj-Begovic mentioned further that the newly revised ILR scale (level 4 writing descriptor) was also used for the purpose of rating the tests, and its equivalency to STANAG 6001 was observed. In addition, she mentioned that the WG planned to give a workshop on level 4 at the upcoming STANAG 6001 Workshop that would take place in Bonn in September 2022.



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iv. Faculty Development Workshop Lite – Ms. Branka Petek

Chair informed delegates that a new project involving three nations, Bulgaria, Czechia, and Portugal was initiated in order to offer a faculty development workshop to new teachers, or military instructors with little experience in language teaching. This workshop is a four-day event aimed at developing speaking and writing skills using the communicative approach, as well as the interpretation of STANAG 6001. The materials have been finalized, and are ready for piloting. Nations interested in participating or receiving additional information should contact BILC Chair.

Item 4: New Business

i. Changes to BILC events – Ms. Branka Petek

Chair stated that nations had expressed a need for some changes in BILC events with the goal of improving content. At the 2021 Professional Development Seminar in Vilnius, four WGs discussed the topic and produced lists of suggestions, which the Secretariat discussed during an online meeting. After studying the suggestions, the Secretariat found a lot of them were feasible and represented improvement. Some changes have already been implemented, such as the use of NATO BILC instead of only BILC on invitations, as there were no legal obstacles to this change. More targeted topics for the Seminar were introduced, as that event intends to attract a different audience from the one that attends the Conference. In the future, topics for the Conference will be tailored to decision makers' interests, while those at the Seminar, for the practitioners.

Another change is linked to the name of the professional seminar, which is now called Professional Development Seminar to signal that the event is intended for practitioners and not managers. Certificates of attendance will be issued at this event. Workshops were added to the Seminars and panels to the Conferences.

Chair also invited participants to think about the content of the next events. Some nations had already suggested to the Chair that a Study Group on the development of training strategy be part of the next conference. Chair added that IMS would be contacted and asked to share their strategy development documents

Another change that has been implemented was to ask presenters for summaries of their presentations that would be uploaded on the BILC website. In addition, inviting military guest speakers to the BILC events has proved to be beneficial, and that practice should be continued, as their perspective on language use is always informative and insightful.



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ii. Proposal for future work in the field of Military Terminology – Ms. Branka Petek

Chair introduced the topic by mentioning the Military Conference that took place in Slovenia in 2022, the objectives of which were to create opportunities for nations to collaborate in this field, to raise the awareness of the importance of terminology, as well as to propose the adding of a new BILC event. This event would be a bi-annual military terminology conference. It would be intended for terminologists, translators, proofreaders, interpreters, military SMEs-terminology developers, managers, ESP programme and materials developers. The first BILC event of this kind would be held in March or April 2024. Chair emphasized that the BILC Secretariat would help coordinate this event, but the responsibility for organisation would fall on the nations. Chair also offered the help of the team of Slovenian terminologists, who had organised the terminology conference in April 2022. BILC PoCs are expected to forward this information to the relevant people. In addition, a separate PoC list would be gradually created for this purpose.

The Bulgarian delegate asked who would be responsible for ensuring that the new BILC event is officially recognized and given the proper ACT reference number in e Prime. Chair replied that Slovenia would work on that with the help of PLTCE, and that this was exactly the reason behind the need to formally create this event. The Australian delegate stated that his nation would like to be involved in this. The future Chair and representative from Croatia stated that she supported this proposal. The Italian delegate asked how this was related to the NATO Standardization Group, and if there was any coordination with this group. The Slovenian delegate, who had been one of the organizers of the military terminology conference, replied that this group had been contacted and that they were represented at the terminology conference in Slovenia. Cooperation with this group would continue. The Austrian representative stated that Austria had glossaries and booklets produced and strongly supported this idea. He suggested that a WG be formed in advance to decide which field of terminology would be the focus. Chair agreed that different WGs should be established to work on different fields of terminology. Priorities should be set, such as JTAC training. Experts would decide on the areas of priorities. The Portuguese delegate asked about the level of commitment expected from nations, as content specialists were needed. Chair replied that the process would be gradual and that the Secretariat would discuss the best way to approach this endeavour. The Spanish representative stated that he had worked in many countries, such as Afghanistan, and that military terminology posed a huge challenge because NATO has introduced big terms that should be simplified for tactical and operational situations, if terminology were to be usable. The Iraqi delegate stated that he found the proposal perfect, and mentioned that a cooperation with JFTC might be of benefit, as they were familiar with capabilities in NATO countries. Chair



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acknowledged that the suggestion was excellent and proceeded by asking nations to vote on the proposal to create a bi-annual BILC event on military terminology. The vote result was unanimous support.

Item 5: Future Events

Chair went over the list of hosts for future events.

Conferences

2023 conference: Istanbul, Turkey - confirmed

2024 conference: Vienna, Austria

Seminars

2022 seminar: Provo, USA - confirmed

2023 seminar: Baku, Azerbaijan - confirmed

2024 or 2025 seminar: Croatia

STANAG 6001 Testing Workshops

2022 workshop: Bonn, Germany – confirmed

2023 – Latvia

2024 – Norway

Chair asked nations to discuss with their authorities the possibility of hosting a future event.

Item 6: BILC Chair

- i. Information about the handover of the BILC Chair to Croatia – Ms. Branka Petek

Chair explained that the three-year BILC presidency term has ended, and that Croatia had submitted its candidacy. The task to find replacement had been challenging and Chair thanked Croatia for volunteering. Chair said that she would continue to extend her future support. She added that voting had been done via silent procedures, and that there were no objections to this change.

The incoming Chair thanked everyone for entrusting her with this important role and thanked the Secretariat in advance for their expected support to the Croatian Chair for the duration of the mandate.



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Item 7: Acknowledgments

- Contributions

Chair adjourned the meeting and thanked delegates for their contributions. She extended her deepest gratitude to the host nation for an impeccable organization of the Conference and a most generous hospitality.

- Secretariat

Finally, Chair thanked the Secretariat members for providing her with invaluable and unwavering support over the past three years.

Prepared by: J. Vasilj-Begovic, Associate Secretary

Reviewed by: P. Garza, Associate Secretary and B. Petek, former BILC Chair

Approved by: I. Prpic Djuric, BILC Chair

June 2022