



**BUREAU FOR INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE COORDINATION
BUREAU DE COORDINATION LINGUISTIQUE INTERNATIONALE**

**Steering Committee Minutes
Tartu, Estonia, 27-30 May 2019**

NATO COUNTRIES

Albania
Belgium
Bulgaria
Canada
Croatia
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
France
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Iceland
Italy
Latvia
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Netherlands
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Slovakia
Slovenia
Spain
Turkey
United Kingdom

United States

ATTENDANCE

Absent
Sr. Capt. K. Heylen
Ms. E. Nesheva
Ms. J. Dubeau
Ms. I. Prpic-Djuric
Mgr. J. Křivka
Dr. A. Juhl Kristensen
Ms. M. Boltovsky
Ms. E. Cleret
Ms. Gesche S. Sutter
Maj. M. Papathanasiou
LTC. F. Banki
Absent
Brg.Gen. G. F. Adamo
Ms. G. Lauda-Treide
Ms. I. Katauskiene
Absent
Dr. G. Seinhorst
Ms. B. Grande
Dr. S. Wrzesniewska
Lt.Cdr. M. Gabriel
LTC. C. Ispas
LTC. Š. Blahušiak
Ms. B. Petek
Col. R. V. Feijóo
Col. C. Kılıç
Maj. D. Gibb
LTC. M. Sharp
LTC. D. Beloved

PARTNERS/OBSERVERS IN ATTENDANCE

Austria
Azerbaijan
BIH

Col. W. Zecha
Col. R. Karimov
Maj. D. Malesevic



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Finland	Ms. A. Reims
North Macedonia	Ms. S. Stojanovska
Georgia	Ms. Nato Jiadze
Serbia	LTC. Z. Milenkovic
Sweden	Ms. M. Martin
Ukraine	Col. M. Hrebenuk

NATO BODIES:

NATO HQ (IMS)	Mr. Philip Turner
SHAPE	Mr. M. Adubato
NATO SACT	Col. V. Churkin

BILC SECRETARIAT

Chair	Ms. E. Nesheva
Secretary	Col. P. Petkov
Associate Secretary	Ms. P. Garza
Associate Secretary	Mr. K. Wert
Associate Secretary	Ms. J. Dubeau
Associate Secretary	Ms. J. Vasilj-Begovic

Monday, May 27, 2019

Item 1: Opening Remarks

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

Chair welcomed delegates and opened the proceedings. After thanking the host nation for organizing the conference, she asked the Associate Secretary Mr. K. Wert to explain the role of the Steering Committee (SC). He stated that the SC was the governing body of BILC, comprised of the heads of delegations from NATO members. He added that Partner nations were welcome to attend the meetings, but took no part in the voting process. In addition, the SC approves the work plan generated by its members, or by NATO.

Chair informed the SC that the previous Chair, Col. T. Stoykov had retired, and that she had the honour of replacing him. After introducing herself, she asked the Secretariat members, and the other delegates to do the same.

- ii.** Approval of Agenda

Chair invited delegates to vote on the approval of the agenda. Approval was unanimous.

Item 2: Information & Acknowledgements

- i.** Report by BILC Secretariat on the BILC visits in the period May 2018 – May 2019:



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Chair stated that one of BILC's duties was to visit nations that had requested assistance. She asked the Secretariat members to report on the visits that took place in the aforementioned period.

- Mauritania, September 2018 – Col. P. Petkov briefed the SC on the visit to Mauritania conducted by him and Ms. Dubeau, and supported by the Defense Educational Enhancement Program (DEEP). He mentioned that this nation took part in the peacekeeping missions in Africa, and wanted to enhance its English training system at the tactical level. One of their long-term needs is to develop understanding of the STANAG 6001 scale, and its application to training and testing. Bulgaria has offered access to some of its courses, as well as attendance to BILC events; however, Mauritania has not sent representatives.

- Ukraine, November 2018 – Ms. E. Nesheva reported that she and the incoming BILC Chair, Ms. B. Petek had visited the educational institutions in Kyiv, and received information on this nation's training and testing programs. Because there are numerous training and testing centres in Ukraine, this country needs assistance with the centralizing process and policy documents. A policy document has been developed, and further collaboration between BILC and Ukraine will be discussed during a meeting with the Ukrainian representative, Col. M. Hrebenuk.

- Jordan, March 2019 – Ms. J. Dubeau stated that this was a return visit to Jordan with the goal of giving a familiarization workshop on testing to a group of English teachers, out of whom a team of testers might be selected. During the initial visit in 2017, BILC team had informed the Jordanian officials of the complexities of establishing a STANAG testing team. One of the outcomes of the follow-up visit was for Jordan to decide if this course of action would be pursued.

- North Macedonia, March 2019 – Mr. K. Wert stated that a three-member BILC team visited this country at the request of the NATO Defence Education Enhancement Programme (DEEP). During the meetings, personnel policies and language training were discussed. BILC team was informed that its recommendations would be implemented, and the team was impressed with the willingness and enthusiasm of North Macedonian officials to effect necessary changes.

- Bosnia and Herzegovina, April 2019 – Ms. P. Garza informed the SC that she, Col. P. Petkov and Ms. B. Petek were invited by DEEP to visit the foreign language division. DEEP teams had conducted scoping visits of the officer and NCO PME systems the week earlier. The BILC team observed that the language training programme was well established; however, it would benefit from updated materials and IT equipment, as well as more teacher training. The MoD accepted the BILC teams' recommendations.

- Iraq, April 2019 – Col. P. Petkov informed SC that he and Ms. B. Petek participated in DEEP scoping visit to Iraq. During their visit they reviewed the Defence Language Institute in Baghdad and identified possibilities for future help to Iraq to develop their teaching and testing system.

Chair adjourned the meeting.

Tuesday, May 28, 2019



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ii. Update by nations on their BILC-related projects and international cooperation;

BILC Chair began proceedings by thanking the host nation for day one of the conference. She then invited nations to report on their bi-and-multi-national cooperation arrangements.

- **Austria: Aviation English conference** – Col. W. Zecha informed the SC that Italy had initiated this conference two years ago, and that Austria was this year’s organizer. He mentioned that ICAO and STANAG requirements were different, and these differences, linked to training and testing, would be some of the topics discussed at the conference. To date, 11 countries had registered and approximately 30 participants were expected. Registration was still open.

- **Lithuania: DEEP-sponsored cooperation with AZE on STANAG 6001 testing** – Ms. I. Katauskiene informed the SC of a DEEP-sponsored, bi-lateral cooperation on item moderation and piloting between her nation and Azerbaijan. Meetings will continue this November.

- **Romania: On-line Advanced English Course, multinational project** – Ms. C. Bordianu informed the SC of the launch of an international WG on the development of an advanced English course. Bulgaria joined the WG as its first partner. The two nations met to discuss the ToR, the Concept Paper, and the annual working plan. The next meeting will be held in August this year.

- **Central European Defence Cooperation Language Platform Initial Conference** – Ms. B. Petek briefed the SC on the initiative to establish a language platform for cooperation. Six nations have signed up. The first meeting took place in Vienna, in March 2019, and future meetings of heads of the training centres will take place once a year. A part of the cooperation will focus on testing, as well as military terminology. Austria has offered to host a website where contributions can be made.

- BILC Chair introduced the topic of Tunisia, and asked Mr. K. Wert to brief the SC. He stated that together with NATO staff, a proposal on the subject of assisting Tunisia with the building of its testing capacity was developed. The proposal, already accepted by Tunisia, includes a visit of a small BILC team, and a funding budget of Euro 200K. The assistance to Tunisia should cover a period of 18-24 months.

- Ms. J. Dubeau informed the SC of the bi-lateral cooperation between Canada and Colombia. A part of the cooperation was a return visit to this nation in order to assist them with access to Canadian and NATO offered resources. Colombian delegates planned to attend the Conference; however, communications through the national representative did not happen in a timely manner. This nation, with the help of Canada, has made a significant progress by developing its listening and reading tests, and formulating a national policy. Regular access to the LTS and ALTS is the desired next step.

- The Danish delegate Mr. A. Kristensen informed the SC of the Nordic defence cooperation, and mentioned the exchange of examiners between the nations, and joint work on test development projects. Meetings will resume in September.

- Col. P. Petkov stated that Bulgaria exchanged visits with Georgia four times, observed the STANAG testing, and computerized testing, as well as the Georgian students in training.



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- The Romanian delegate LTC. C. Ispas expressed her gratitude to SHAPE and Portugal for offering testing services to the Romanian personnel posted to their countries. Romania offers to test those in the proximity to its country.

iii. Other

- **BILC website** – Col. P. Petkov informed the SC that information on the website updates was provided in his Monday’s presentation in plenary.

- **BILC POC list** – Chair mentioned that for the past three years she had been responsible for this list. She asked everyone to verify the accuracy of information in the circulated document.

- **Transfer of the BILC Secretariat from Bulgaria to Slovenia at the end of the 2019 BILC Conference.** Chair informed the SC of the Secretariat transfer, and invited Ms. B. Petek to say a few words about it. Ms. B. Petek stated that the Bulgarian Chair and Secretary had done everything they could to ensure a smooth transition. The contact email address would remain unchanged, and around mid-June, she would begin to respond from it. Two Slovenian members, heads of training and testing, would join the Secretariat. The head of translation will be the national representative. Ms. B. Petek thanked Bulgaria for all the support she received during the transition period and for the excellent work they have done presiding BILC in the past three years.

Item 3: Action Items from Last Conference

i. Report by BILC Secretariat on WG final products, Overview of STANAG 6001 Language Proficiency Levels, and Study of Joint Fires Observer (JFO) language requirements. On 24 April 2019, the North Atlantic Council approved the inclusion of the simplified STANAG 6001 SLP descriptors into NATO’s Manpower Policy bible (MC 0216/4(AAP-16(D)) - Ms. P. Garza stated that last year the SG she led was planning to create a resource for those using STANAG 6001, such as Manpower, HR and other non-specialists. The plan was to create a platform with samples of proficiency at different levels; however, Mr. P. Turner from NATO IMS advised there was little interest in the platform, but that a document, simple enough to be understood by everyone would be beneficial. Consequently, the one-page document written by the WG was sufficient to meet this need. It was included in the Allied Publication 16 as Annex, and has become a formal reference in the Manpower policy. Ms. P. Garza thanked Mr. G. Seinhorst for having spearheaded work on that document. The final version can be found on the BILC website. Ms. P. Garza continued by mentioning the Language Needs Analysis (LNA) for Joint Fire Observers, who are typically NCOs on the ground making radio calls and describing parameters. Their SLPs were set very high, namely as 3 3 2+ 2. Along with Ms. P. Garza, representatives from Latvia and Slovenia conducted the LNA via interviews with Latvian and Slovenian SMEs and questionnaires completed by JFOs from the Czech Republic, Latvia, Poland, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The results showed that their SLPs were set too high, and should be 2 2 2 2. In addition, the LNA team recommended a JFO related language course for these personnel, as the posts require using specific phraseology during radio communications. Chair adjourned the meeting.

Wednesday, May 29, 2019

BILC Chair began the proceedings by thanking the host nation for the tour of the military academy.



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ii. Report by BILC Secretariat on BAT2 - Ms. P. Garza provided the background of the BAT testing and thanked the participating nations. She stated that the purpose of the second BAT project was to evaluate how far the BILC community has come in standardizing its language testing. She mentioned the norming sessions that took place in the summer of 2018, the development, moderating and trialing of the writing prompts. All nations that applied for the BAT have completed the process of testing and received reports on the results, that is, the alignment between the scores on their national tests and those their test-takers obtained on the BAT. In June, the qualitative and quantitative results will be analyzed, and released in the fall, in Tours, at the BILC Testing Workshop. Because the testing sample was small (only 10 candidates per nation), it is not recommended that nations make significant changes. The initial feedback showed the benefits of having had norming sessions for the speaking and writing skills, as periodic norming is critical. The samples obtained will be used to update the LTS and ALTS, and lessons learned from the computer-delivered/ adaptive testing would be made available to everyone.

Item 4: New Business

i. Proposal to create a one-page BILC leaflet for distribution in NATO HQ, NATO ACT and NATO ACO. BILC Chair informed the SC of DEEP's suggestion that BILC produce a one-page leaflet describing its activities and the documents it has produced. This leaflet would be distributed throughout NATO HQs with the goal of making BILC more visible, especially to the nations that might need its assistance. Chair added that if a nation wished to volunteer to design this leaflet, to let the incoming Chair, Ms. B. Petek know. A decision on this will be taken at the next conference.

ii. Proposal to award certificates of attendance to the participants in the BILC STANAG 6001 Testing Workshops – Ms. B. Petek stated that testers found it important to receive certificates of attendance as part of their professional development. Such certificates were awarded to the participants of the 2018 STANAG Testing Workshop, and the template could be provided to the future organizers.

iii. Proposal to nations to provide BILC Chair with information on the availability of English language training resources offered to foreign students, or nations. - Ms. J. Dubeau stated that through DEEP, BILC visits nations that requested assistance. During such visits, nations frequently ask for concrete help in terms of courses, and other resources, and the visiting teams often do not have such information at their disposal. For example, Mauritania asked for tactical English courses, and the BILC team did not have information about availability of such courses. Ms. Garza said that the SHARP platform provided such a list; however not every nation has access to it. Mr. Leischman from DLIELC added that many materials, no longer for sale, would be uploaded on the new DLIELC website. Ms. J. Dubeau ended her discussion by asking the SC delegates to email to the BILC Secretariat a list of the resources their nations offered to foreign students. The list should include the items below.

- English language courses (including information on the application process and prerequisites);

- On-line English courses/resources (including the links, and information on application process and prerequisites);



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- English curricula/textbooks.

iv. Discussion on the CIOR requests for STANAG 6001 tests in English and French for the participants of the two-week Summer Language Academy. – Ms. J. Dubeau and the BILC Chair informed the SC that the Inter-allied Confederation of Reserve Officers (CIOR) has approached NATO and several nations requesting that the participants of their annual 2-week long course be tested on STANAG-based French and English. The organization offered to pay travel expenses for the testers. Canada received such a request, but could not offer the service. In many cases, nations who host this course feel obliged to offer these services. The Estonian delegate said that her nation offered testing services in 2016, and will do the same this summer. Romania and France had also been asked, but refused. Bulgaria tested the CIOR Summer Language Academy participants twice in 2014 and 2015. The organization was looking to find a permanent testing body, and Ms. Dubeau thought that SHAPE might consider accepting this task. No nation volunteered to accept undertaking this additional task.

v. Discussion on the requests made by several individuals asking that their presentations be removed from the BILC website – Col. P. Petkov informed the SC of this request, and stressed that even though presentations may be removed, once they have been published, they could still be found. He also suggested that presentations be marked clearly as NATO releasable to the Internet or unclassified.

Thursday, May 30, 2019

- vi.** Approval of Study Group recommendations.

SG1: Assessing the need for the development of French STANAG-based tests: Ms. Dubeau informed the SC that the SG made four recommendations. The first recommendation is to translate the one-page NATO STANAG document into French. Mr. P. Turner stated that it would be translated automatically, and Ms. J. Dubeau asked if it could be reviewed by BILC before it is finalized, in order to ensure the specialized terms are correctly translated. Mr. P. Turner said he would do his best to ensure a review. The second recommendation was to norm trainers during the Testing Workshop in Tours, if leading members are able to attend. This session would be a ‘train the trainer’ effort, and participation would be by invitation only. The third recommendation was to organize a small workshop at the BILC Professional Seminar in Copenhagen by inviting those interested to a norming session on test items. The fourth recommendation was to compile a list of testing centres that test in French. The SC agreed to all four recommendations.

SG2: Evaluating foreign language capability: Maj. D. Gibb suggested that, if BILC wishes to take forward work on evaluating foreign language capability, a WG might be formed to do this. The aim, to be agreed, would potentially be the same as the aim of SG2: to agree an approach to higher-level evaluation (Kirkpatrick Level 4), including metrics which allow quantitative (as well as qualitative) evaluation to be conducted, in order to measure the value added to the organisation (or the nation) through having a foreign language capability. The evaluation tool devised would be piloted across the nations, and the evidence gathered used for a comparative study. If the methodology were to be accepted, it could be used more widely. Some of the comments, made during the discussion that followed, included the following statements: the WG goals were not clear enough; the right people may not be present to set up the work correctly; English was the language of primary concern, and higher military authorities set the requirements, and anything produced by



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BILC would have little or no impact. The Chair proposed that the SC vote on whether a WG should be established, and there were no votes in favour. Another SG of the same kind might be held at the next conference and discussion continued.

SG 3: Implementing an in-house professional development program for teachers: no recommendations

SG4: What do leaders of language schools have to know at a minimum? Recommendation: to continue to develop a short course for leaders, managers, and directors. The SC members supported this recommendation.

SG 5: Communicating with stakeholders: no recommendation to form a WG.

SG6: Advanced English course for testers: no recommendations.

Item 5: Future Events

Conferences

2020 Conference: Norway (confirmed by a formal letter)
2021 Conference: Azerbaijan (will confirm with an official letter asap)
2022 Conference: Italy (TBC)
2023: Turkey (TBC)
2024: N/A

Seminars

2019 Seminar: Denmark (confirmed by a formal letter)
2020 Seminar: Portugal (confirmed)
2021 Seminar: Lithuania (TBC)
2022: N/A

STANAG 6001 Testing Workshops

2019 STANAG 6001 Workshop: France (confirmed by a formal letter)
2020 STANAG 6001 Workshop: Romania (TBC)
2021 STANAG 6001 Workshop: Germany (TBC)
2022 STANAG 6001 Workshop: N/A



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Item 6: Acknowledgments

- Contributions
- Secretariat

The outgoing BILC Chair thanked the host nation for the impeccable organization of the event, and warm hospitality; she also thanked the Secretariat members for their continuous contributions.

Prepared by: Jana Vasilj-Begovic, Associate Secretary, June 2019

Reviewed by: Julie Dubeau, Associate Secretary, June 2019