

BUREAU FOR INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE CO-ORDINATION
HÜRTH, GERMANY
MINUTES OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS
6-9 JUNE 2005

IN ATTENDANCE

Bulgaria	Ms. Greta Keremidchieva
Canada	Dr. Richard Monaghan
Czech Republic	Col. Ladislav Chaloupsky
Denmark	Mr. Erik Gram
Estonia	Lt. Meelis Vilippus
France	Lt. Col. Didier Guinard
Germany	Mr. Herbert Walinsky
Greece	Mr. Elias Papadopoulous
Hungary	Ms. Gyulane Mag
Italy	Brig. Gen. Augusto Staccioli
Latvia	Ms. Inese Preisberga
Lithuania	Lt. Andrius Kiesas
Netherlands	drs Gerard Seinhorst
Norway	Maj. Bente Sandkleven
Poland	Maj. Tomasz Cymek
Romania	Maj. Sorin Hazu
Slovakia	Col. (Ret.) Milan Jakubec
Slovenia	Ms. Melita Djuric
Spain	Col. Carlos Rey
Turkey	Cdr. Rasim Secer
United Kingdom	Lt. Col. Anthony Rabbitt
United States	Col. Michael "Boots" Miller

OBSERVERS

Austria	Brig. Gen. Horst Walther
Finland	Mr. Risto Kuokkanen
Sweden	Ms. Monica Larsson
NATO SHAPE Language Testing Centre	Mr. Michael Adubato
NATO E3A Component Language Testing Centre	Ms. Laura DeOdorico

SECRETARIAT

Chair	Dr. Ray Clifford
Secretary	Ms. Peggy Garza
Secretary for PfP	Mr. Keith Wert

Item 1. Introductions and Recognition of the New Heads of Delegations

Introductions were made and the Chair welcomed the new Heads of Delegations.

Item 2. Completed Action Items from the Last BILC Conference

a. BILC Secretary will update the BILC Constitution and Rules of Procedure to reflect the addition of the new NATO nations and the changes due to NATO transformation. France will translate these changes.

- This has been accomplished.

b. The Chair tasked the Working Panel on Test Administration to come up with some guidelines on the longevity of test scores and the legitimacy of commercial STANAG 6001 certificates.

- This has been accomplished. The guidelines are posted on the BILC website.

c. The Chair tasked the BILC Secretary to solicit the nations for voluntary national contributions to the pilot benchmark test.

- Eleven nations have submitted items; however, the test specifications were insufficiently articulated and require additional input. The BILC Secretary handed out a survey regarding the benchmark test project. The nations were asked to return the completed survey by 6 July. (See action item 8a below.)

d. The BILC Steering Committee requests that the NTG Section accept the action to inquire of the appropriate NATO office to initiate a review of language proficiency requirements for NATO positions. This review would include a language needs analysis performed by BILC representatives.

- The NTG Section did not follow through.

Item 3. JSSG Meetings

a. Fall: Dr. Richard Monaghan reported that he had attended the meeting in Ottawa, Canada where he had presented a BILC update including the BILC proposal on language needs analysis of NATO position descriptions. He indicated that no interest in analyzing NATO position descriptions was generated. On the proposal the BILC website be hosted by SACT, Dr. Monaghan was told that a solution was forthcoming.

b. Spring: drs. Gerard Seinhorst reported that he attended the meeting in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. He also briefed on BILC activities, including the BILC proposal on language needs analysis of NATO position descriptions. HQ SACT/NTG Section representative, while not evincing a level of concern over the topic, responded that a clearly articulated proposal should be submitted to the JSSG. Concerning the hosting of the BILC website by SACT, it was learned that the NTG and its sub elements will be given pages. BILC will need to coordinate with the JSSG for final details. In addition, drs. Seinhorst related that the UN works closely with JSSG Working Group (WG) on Training and Education for Peace Support Operations (TEPSO). TEPSO is preparing a document on language requirements for UN police and military. The UN is considering adopting the STANAG 6001 in absence of their own language level descriptors. CM TEPSO WG asked if BILC would review the draft document.

Item 4. Language Training Assessments

BILC Secretary for PfP reported on the continuing assessments, pointing out the national contribution of the UK, Slovenia and Sweden in supplying experts to comprise the team. Since the 2004 BILC Conference, BILC assessments have been conducted in the Czech Republic, Georgia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* at the invitations of their defence authorities. While each host had unique issues, there are common themes that were mentioned as challenges to language training programs in general:

- The downsizing and fundamental transformation of force structures is taking a toll on orderly language training planning and execution.
- There is a frequent disconnect between defence authorities who develop personnel and language training policies and the actual schoolhouses. This results in the promulgation of language policies that cannot be fulfilled.
- Small decentralized language programs under the control of local unit commanders are generally ineffective, producing too few language capable students for the investment.
- Bilateral assistance for language training is generally not effectively integrated into host countries' language training objectives and organizations.

Item 5. BILC Secretariat Issues

a. The Chair brought up the concept of a succession plan for the BILC Secretariat and that the US would agree to serve for another two years, until summer 2007. He asked for discussion. Germany moved that the US continue for another two years, Canada seconded the motion. It was passed unanimously.

b. The Chair asked the Netherlands representative to discuss his proposal to pursue a permanent staff element. A concept was elaborated for a permanent staff element with a rotating chairmanship based on the hosting of the annual conference. The Steering Committee engaged in discussion of pros and cons of such an approach. The Chair proposed that a working group be formed to thrash out the details. The Netherlands, Canada, Germany and the UK agreed to serve on the WG. (See action item 8c below) The Chair also charged the members of the Steering Committee to consult back home with a view to see if any country could assume the BILC Chair and Secretariat under the current BILC Constitution and Rules of Procedure. (See action item 8d below.)

Item 6. Future BILC Meetings

a. BILC Conferences. Future BILC Conferences were agreed to: 2006 Hungary, 2007 United States, 2008 Greece, 2009 Italy, and 2010 Turkey.

- Hungary proposed a theme for the 29 May-1 June 2006 Conference: "Aligning program goals, instructional practices, and outcomes assessments."

b. BILC Professional Seminars: 2005 Bulgaria, 2006 Estonia and 2007 Austria. Additional hosts are kindly solicited.

- The theme for the 10-13 October 2005 Professional Seminar in Bulgaria will be: "Improving language programmes: in the classroom, in testing and in syllabus design."

* Turkey and the United States recognize the Republic of Macedonia by its constitutional name.

Item 7. Other Business

a. Bulgaria asked for input concerning attending countries' practices concerning the administrative arrangements for STANAG 6001 testing teams. Several countries responded with descriptions of their arrangements. Common practices can be summarized as follows:

- Test construction and delivery is conducted separately from instruction. Testing teams enjoy independence from influences that might compromise the integrity of their tests. However the testing teams are not isolated from academic environments, frequently sharing higher level leadership, such as being an office in a Defence University or some similar institution. Members of the testing teams are usually former language teachers re-educated into a language-testing specialty. Many of these teachers expect to return to teaching in the future.

b. The Czech Republic raised concerns with the title "Minimum Professional" for Level 3. Romania and Bulgaria agreed that this was a concern to their countries as well. The ensuing discussion led to action item 8b below.

Item 8. Action Items

a. The Heads of Delegation are asked to return the survey concerning the benchmark test to the BILC Secretary by 6 July.

b. A WG will convene at the next conference to develop explanations of the STANAG 6001 language level descriptor titles with examples of military occupations at those levels.

c. The Netherlands, Canada, Germany and the UK will comprise a WG to make recommendations to the Steering Committee on the future organization of the BILC Secretariat.

d. Each Head of Delegation was asked consult back home with a view to see if his country could assume the BILC Chair and Secretariat under the current BILC Constitution and Rules of Procedure.

e. The members of the Subgroup on Plus Levels will introduce the plus descriptors at the BILC professional seminar in Bulgaria. Afterwards the plus levels will be officially presented to the Steering Committee at the BILC Conference in Hungary.

Item 9. Vote of Thanks to the Host Nation

The Chair expressed the Steering Committee's appreciation to Germany for hosting an excellent Conference.

PEGGY GARZA
BILC Secretary