



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

**Minutes of the Steering Committee Meetings,
Prague, Czech Republic, 14-17 May 2012**

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
Drs. Jean-Paul van Den Heede
Ms. Emilija Nesheva
Mr. Yves Lafond
Mr. Djemal Kadric
Col. Ladislav Chaloupsky
LtCol. Steen Bornholdt Andersen
Ms. Epp Leete
Maj. Bertrand Ramon
Dr. Christopher Hüllen
Absent
Dr. Gabriella Kiss
Absent
Bgen Gianfranco Di Luzio
Absent
Ms. Ausra Narbutiene
Absent
Dr. Karijn Helsloot
Ms. Birgitte Grande
Mr. Aleksandar Skrzypek
Lt(N) Estella Magalhaes
Absent
LtCol Patrick Adamec
Ms. Dubravka Zupanec
LtCol. José M. Lamela Herrera
LtCol. Resul Baltaci
Mr Jeremy Nowers
Dr. Faith Cartwright /Dr. Betty Lou Leaver

PARTNERS/OBSERVERS IN ATTENDANCE

Australia
Austria
Azerbaijan
Finland
Georgia
Sweden
NATO HQ (IMS)

LtCol Giles Gorman
Bgen. Horst Walther
LtCol Azad Alekperov
Ms. Satu Petronen
Ms. Nato Jiadze
LtCol Peter Tagesson
Mr. Philip Turner



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BILC SECRETARIAT

Chair
Secretary
Deputy Secretary

Dr. Richard Monaghan
Ms. Julie J. Dubeau
Ms. Jana Vasilj-Begovic

Associate Secretary
Associate Secretary

Ms. Peggy Garza
Mr. Keith Wert

Monday, May 14, 2012

1 Opening Remarks

1. **Introductions and Recognition of New Heads.** Chairman welcomed delegates to the 46th annual BILC conference, introduced himself and the BILC secretaries, and invited delegates to introduce themselves.
2. **Approval of Final Minutes from the Vilnius Conference (approved by silent procedures 15 Sep 11).** Chairman stated that the Minutes were approved and asked whether there were any comments.
3. **Approval of Agenda.** Chairman asked if there were any suggested additions to or deletions from the agenda. As no changes were indicated, Chairman proceeded to Item 2.

2 Information and Acknowledgments.

1. MoC between SACT & BILC. Chairman referred to the document that had been formalized last year and that redefined the relationship between NATO and BILC. He provided delegates with the history of this relationship emphasizing BILC's move from the tactical level within the hierarchy to a more direct, strategic level and liaison with the Joint Force Trainer (JFT) of the Supreme Allied Command Transformation (SACT) in Norfolk, Virginia. Within this new arrangement, BILC offers its expertise to NATO, and NATO uses BILC services to advance interoperability causes. As a result of more direct contact with SACT, BILC is expected to respond more quickly when asked to provide advice. Chairman also indicated that the different relationship established with NATO would necessitate a closer look at BILC's internal structure, and specifically at BILC's Terms of Reference (ToR), in order to establish if they reflect BILC's concept of operations. Chairman continued by suggesting that a short-term (one year) Working Group (WG) be established to make recommendations on modifications to TORs, and asked if there were any volunteers to lead this group.

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Denmark accepted the task and Germany volunteered to join the WG. Germany moved and the Czech Republic seconded the proposal to form a WG. Chairman invited delegates to vote on the proposal. Seventeen nations voted in favour, one against, and two nations abstained. Chairman suggested that during the conference week, delegates interested in joining this WG approach the Danish rep.

- .2. Defence Planning Targets. Chairman introduced the item and asked the Secretary to report on it. The Secretary reminded the delegates of the fact that some targets were lowered from level 3 to level 2+ for officers, and some were raised for NCOs from level 2 to level 2+. The Secretariat had proposed that targets be reported as minimal and optimum goals; however, even though that proposal was not accepted, and the goals remained unchanged, the wording in the document reflected a positive change. The document mentioned that those in charge of the SLP setting should base SLPs on careful study and data, and should consult BILC. The Secretary also mentioned that during a meeting she and the Associate BILC Secretary Mr. Wert attended in Brussels in January 2012, it became evident that SLPs were not based on any firm evidence to support relevant decisions. Nevertheless, the importance of officers having solid level 3 proficiency was also stressed as their workload has increased and the number of personnel has decreased.
- .3. Partner Funding and Participation. Chairman introduced the item and the Secretary informed the SC that much confusion occurred with regard to partner funding, and that the issue has still not been resolved. Because of the unanticipated unavailability of funding, a dozen delegates could not attend the conference. The Secretary stated that once more information is received from the Military Cooperation Division (MCD), delegates would be advised. Chairman added that the JFT staff is aware of the problem and is trying to resolve it as soon as possible.
- .4. BILC Website – Follow up. Chairman explained the legal challenges to which the Government of Canada had been subjected in conjunction to its online services, which resulted in the temporary shut-down of the BILC website. The simple solution was for the BILC website to migrate to a NATO server and negotiations are underway; however, in the meanwhile, the problem was resolved by assigning a login and password for the BILC website. Chairman informed the plenary of the login and password and asked them to disseminate that information internally (login: bilc6001, password: 123). He also mentioned that part of the BILC mandate has been to maintain a community of learners, and to

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do that more successfully, detailed notes or a more formal exposition should accompany presentation slides. He also asked the delegates to consider the possibility of founding an online military linguistics journal through which more formalized information on research projects and lessons learned in applied linguistics could be disseminated throughout and beyond the BILC community.

- .5. **Russia/BILC Collaboration.** Chairman asked the Secretary to report on this item. The Secretary reported that last summer BILC had been approached by the IS and ACT to explore collaboration possibilities with Russia. BILC was invited to attend meetings of the newly formed Linguistic Centre at the Military University in Moscow under the auspices of NATO Russia Council, and under the umbrella of the NATO Expert Group on Terminology. As a follow-up to those meetings, during a meeting held in Brussels in January 2012, a roadmap was drafted outlining the stages of future collaboration to be approved by NATO Russia Council (3 yr roadmap). Russian delegates were invited to the BILC conference and seminar, and a visit by BILC has been scheduled for the fall 2012 under Mr. Wert's cooperative assessment programme. During this visit, BILC representatives will have the opportunity to familiarize themselves in a greater detail with the Russian training system. The Secretary asked the delegates to engage in discussions with the Russian representatives and added that the Secretariat would keep them apprised of new developments. Chairman adjourned the meeting.

Tuesday, May 15, 2012

3 Action Items from Last Conference

- i. **National Reports-Follow up.** Chairman greeted delegates and resumed the meeting. The Secretary reported that last year a Danish delegate had offered to assist in reviewing the template for national reports. About a dozen or so national reports have been submitted and were posted on the BILC website. Chairman reminded the plenary of the importance of these documents as sources of information for ACT and as a means of marketing services.
- ii. **SG1: Guidelines for Native English Speakers.** The Secretary reminded the SC that a study group had convened in Vilnius with the purpose of producing a report on the topic. She reported that the Secretariat has not received a copy of the report and would appreciate receiving it from anyone who had been a member of that study group. Chairman reminded the SC that the JALLC report on interoperability shortfalls indicated the importance of having guidelines that would help native English speakers adapt their language in international settings.

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- iii. **SG3: Military Terminology and Translation** – The Secretary reported that as a result of the SG in Vilnius, a WG was formed and each member has been working on a chapter from APP3. The WG will be reporting on their progress at the end of the week.
- iv. **SG5: STANAG for Non Specialists:** The Secretary reported that, based on the report of this SG, the Secretariat produced a draft document intended for HR personnel and other non-specialists. The paper copy of this document would be distributed with a request for feedback by July 1, 2012. [Copies provided at meeting. Extra copies available from the Secretariat via e-mail.]
- v. **Language Needs Analysis (LNA).** Although BILC was tasked in 2010 by ACT (through JSSG) to conduct an LNA of SLP levels in NATO job descriptions, in the end, ACT requested a scoping report outlining the way ahead, which was sent to ACT in June 2011. The Scoping Report outlines arguments for the need of data collection before assigning SLPs. Chairman referred to an earlier exploratory study of CE posts which established that only 58% of the sample of job descriptions reviewed seemed to have an accurate SLP attached to them. All reports or research produced by the Secretariat are available upon request.

4 New Business

- i. **English Language Strategic Training and Education Plan (EL STEP).** Chairman informed the SC of ACT's intention to institute a NATO English Test (NET) to verify that nationally assigned profiles accurately reflect proficiency. This test is part of a larger strategy involving the development of an English Language Strategic Education and Training Plan (EL STEP) for NATO, to be implemented by December 2012. Another element of the draft plan involves NATO's intention to certify and accredit courses, as well as to support individuals from other nations to attend a course that has a proven success track record (this parallels overall JFT intent for implementing Smart Defence). Chairman also mentioned that one of the goals of the outlined strategy was to prevent duplication of efforts by nations. BILC Secretariat showed reluctance to having courses certified, and indicated that courses should only be recognized. In the ensuing discussion of the topic, some delegates expressed their concern and raised a question over when training and testing were national versus NATO responsibility, and that the NET would represent an interference with the national testing responsibility. Chairman pointed out that as an employer, NATO had a responsibility to potential employees were properly qualified, and that nations would still have a final say in this matter. The Secretary added that the Secretariat has been in



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continual consultations with NATO in order to ensure that the NET is delivered in a manner consistent with language training and education standards. The Danish delegate stressed the importance of nations being informed in a timely manner of these developments. The Czech delegate expressed his satisfaction with the NET becoming a screening tool as he had the opportunity to work with officers who had level 3 certificates, and whose real proficiency was at 0+. The IMS representative commented that the plan to validate national test results was not new; however in the past, such plans had always been blocked by nations, once the proposal was tabled in Brussels. The Slovenian delegate added that, in her opinion, instead of investing funds into the NET, money should be invested into further standardization processes. Chairman concluded the discussion by informing the plenary of his intention to convey the SC concerns to ACT.

- ii. **Update on L4 WG.** Chairman mentioned that the Deputy Secretary would be giving a presentation on the progress of this WG to the plenary session.
- iii. **Sample LNA NATO HQ-SACT.** The Chairman stated that another element in the EL STEP initiate would be for a BILC group to conduct an LNA of all NATO HQ posts, because most descriptions were predicated on the old version of STANAG 6001 or on “best-guess.” This LNA would involve training of the HR staff in NATO on application of STANAG 6001. He asked that someone move for the adjournment of the meeting until Thursday. Denmark moved, and the UK seconded.

Thursday, May 18, 2012

- iv. **BILC-ToR.** The meeting resumed by Denmark’s announcement of the composition of the WG on BILC ToR. The members are from Germany, from Turkey, from the UK, from NDL, from the IMS, and the BILC Associate Secretary, USA. The preliminary work would be presented at the BILC Seminar in Slovenia (fall 2012). Four months before the next conference, delegates would have a chance to study the proposed draft and respond via silent procedure by 1 April. In May 2013, the final version will be presented at the BILC Conference in Georgia. Chairman thanked the WG members.
- v. **Approval of SG Recommendations.**
- i) **SG1- Effective Integration of Language Learning and Maintenance into Career Development** Co-leader of the SG, LtCol Andersen reported that so many gaps were identified that he felt a need to contemplate this topic seriously in order to produce a matrix that nations could fill out online. Chairman stated that voting was not required.

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- ii) **SG2-Applying STANAG 6001.4 to Foreign Languages.** It is recommended that at the next BILC conference, a SG consisting of experts in different FLs be formed and that these experts discuss how STANAG is to be applied to different languages based on the characteristics of these languages. Leaders of this SG should communicate with the Secretariat and Mr. Nowers agreed to formulate precise recommendations.
- iii) **SG3- Level 3 Curriculum Template.** The SG members produced a skeletal framework for L3 curriculum development. The report of this SG was accepted by the SC and will be published on the BILC website. [Posted as SG3 Report.]
- iv) **SG4- NATO Recognized Courses.** Mr. Wert stated that NATO accrediting procedures did not readily apply to language courses and asked the SC to decide on how to proceed. Chairman mentioned that some nations had approached NATO with requests for certification of their courses, and that the EL STEP contained that element. He added that a list of accredited courses would enable ACT to send individuals to training assured that these individuals would be provided with appropriate training. Associate Secretary for Testing Programmes added that ACT funded partners to attend accredited courses, such as the LTS. She added that nations have approached ACT with requests for accreditation and that BILC should be involved in this. The Danish delegate added that he agreed with the LTS being accredited but not whole language programmes. The Secretary replied that only short courses would be accredited and not the training systems. The German delegate stated that BILC should define which courses could be accredited. Chairman asked SC members if they wanted BILC to get involved in defining what constituted certifiable courses. The UK moved and the Czech Republic seconded the motion. Chairman invited delegates to vote. Eleven nations voted in favour, one nation voted against and eight nations abstained. The vote was passed. Chairman asked whether the SC members wanted to set up a WG to address the gaps in the definitions provided by NATO. The Danish delegate stated that language should support a proper purpose, such as arms control verification, and not be an end to itself. Chairman stated that the Secretariat has responded to ACT's initial plans for accreditation by saying that a proper infrastructure needed to be put in place. Chairman asked for motion on how the SC members would like the Secretariat to proceed and asks whether the delegates would like the Secretariat to continue discussing with ACT the parameters for course recognition. Denmark moved and was seconded by the UK. Chairman called for a vote on the motion, which resulted in 11 nations in favour, one against and 8 abstaining. The Secretariat will therefore continue working with ACT on establishing recognized courses.

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- v) **SG5-Interoperability Shortfalls.** The SG recommended that a post-deployment questionnaire be developed in order to collect feedback on the use of English language. The German delegate volunteered to devise this questionnaire that could later be translated into different languages. He also invited other nations to send him questions. The questionnaire would contain up to 6 questions. Chairman stressed that English language ranked high on the interoperability shortfall list.
- vi) **WG on Military Terminology and Translation.** Chairman thanked the leader and members of the WG and the SC accepted the report based on which all chapters have been assigned.
- vi **Review of Action Items.** Deputy Secretary provided the following summary:
- a. Establish a WG to analyze BILC ToR and make recommendations on modifications (DEN POC LtCol Andersen to action)
 - b. Send to BILC Secretariat, if available, the outstanding report from the Vilnius SG on Guidelines for Native Speakers (any delegate who has the report to action)
 - c. Convey to ACT national concerns over EL STEP, especially the NET (BILC Secretariat to action)
 - d. Produce a matrix for nations to fill out in conjunction with SG1 (DEN POC LtCol Andersen to action)
 - e. Formulate recommendations for the work of a new FL STANAG SG that would meet at the next conference (UK Mr. Nowers to action)
 - f. Publish SG3 product on BILC website (BILC Secretariat to action)
 - g. Get involved and continue discussions with NATO and ACT in defining parameters for certifiable courses (BILC Secretariat to action on behalf of SC)
 - h. Develop a post-deployment questionnaire (GER Dr. Huellen to action)

5 Confirmed Future Conferences and Seminars

- 2013 conference: Georgia 5-10 May in Tbilisi **confirmed**
- 2014 conference: Belgium **confirmed**
- 2015 conference: Poland *to be confirmed*

- 2012 seminar: Slovenia 21-26 October in Bled **confirmed**
- 2013 seminar: Sweden **confirmed**
- 2014 seminar: Germany *to be confirmed*



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- 6 **Acknowledgments.** Chairman expressed his deepest gratitude to the hosts for their outstanding organization of the conference and their inspiring generosity, and his sincere thanks to the members of the Steering Committee, and to the leaders of the Study and Working Groups. He concluded by expressing his heartfelt thanks to the four secretaries for their continued support and guidance over a challenging but rewarding year.

Minutes prepared and reviewed by Secretariat, 31 May 2012, Gatineau, Quebec,
CANADA

Corrections made by Secretariat 30 July, 2012.

Julie J. Dubeau, Secretary

Jana Vasilj-Begovic, Deputy Secretary