



# ReSPA

Regional School  
of Public Administration

## WORKING GROUP MEETING ON *MANAGEMENT OF THE TRANSLATION PROCESS*

Draft Discussion Paper

23 - 24 July 2015  
Danilovgrad, Montenegro



## Background

In order to support institutional capacities for translation activities related to the European integration process, the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) is organising a meeting of the Working group on translation. The meeting will be dedicated to the theme of *Management of the Translation Process* and will take place at ReSPA Seat in Danilovgrad, Montenegro, on 23 and 24 July 2015.

## Objectives

The purpose of this paper is to provide background for discussion among the participants of the Working Group Meeting.

The main objectives of the event are:

- To exchange experience on different national practices related to the management of the translation process, specifically:
  - organisational structures, co-ordination and co-operation with the national administration and other stakeholders, staffing issues, resource management,
  - quality assurance, both in the process of translating the *acquis* and translating in membership negotiations;
- To become familiar with the good practices of the most recent EU Member State with regard to management of the translation process;
- To review and discuss challenges in terminology management and the ways the various Translation Co-ordination Units (TCU) are dealing with these challenges;
- To support networking among responsible institutions of ReSPA Members in order to ensure future cooperation and exchange of experience.

## Content

Each country aspiring to become a member of the EU must complete 3 crucial tasks: it must transpose the *acquis communautaire* into its national legislation; it must translate the *acquis* into its national language for publication in the Official Journal whereby the *acquis* becomes the law in the country in question and it must prove to the EU that it satisfies the membership criteria and can indeed become a functioning member of the EU.

A vital component in all these tasks is translation work - and it is translation work unlike any other undertaken in these countries prior to setting off on the road to membership. The most recent EU member state, Croatia, has translated more than 200 000 pages of the *acquis* into Croatian and almost as many pages of various documents into English to serve the work of the national administration in the negotiation process.

The sheer volume of this task is daunting in itself but becomes even more so in light of the fact that the translations have to be of the highest quality. Upon publication translations of the

*acquis* will become the law in the country in question and negotiation documents are important elements in often quite exacting and sensitive talks influencing a country's future. In order to be able to rise up to the challenge of this task, candidate and potential candidate countries must set up and maintain effective structures that can perform the task at hand and do so as part of the larger structure of the national administration as a whole.

The Working group meeting will be dedicated to three main aspects of this process: managing and organisation of the translation process, quality assurance and terminology issues.

### I – Managing the translation process

Translating in the integration process is a highly collaborative task. The Translation Co-ordination Unit (TCU) is one element in the complex structure of the integration/negotiation process and its efficient functioning relies a great deal on effective co-operation and co-ordination with the other stakeholders. Each translation requires smooth co-operation between numerous participants of the process: civil servants in line ministries, members of the negotiating team, translators, editors, revisers, IT experts, TCU co-ordinators and management staff. The numerous participants and stages of the process of translation make efficient horizontal and vertical co-ordination imperative and require careful and efficient management. Clear and efficient operational rules and procedures need to be in place for the process as a whole as well as for the particular stages of the process (pre-translation and post-translation). On the other hand, there is a need to strike a balance between adherence to these procedures and flexibility in decision-making regarding work allocation, planning, communication and co-operation with the other participants in the process. One of the main challenges TCUs are faced with is creating a structure and workflow that best serves this balance.

The TCUs are unique in that they are set up for a specific, hitherto non-existent task and are often temporary in character. This in itself presents organisational and staffing challenges. In addition to this, decision makers are mostly quite unfamiliar with the complexities and intricacies of the tasks performed by the TCU. All this creates difficulties in setting up efficient structures, attracting, recruiting and keeping qualified staff and securing and maintaining adequate budgetary funds. The countries that opt for outsourcing face additional challenges presented by public procurement regulations, but also additional quality control issues in their reliance on external collaborators/agencies.

### II – Quality assurance

In terms of quality, translating in the negotiation process includes both texts that have to be of the highest quality (the *acquis* and other texts intended for publication) and those that serve information purposes (e.g. supporting materials for meetings). In both cases, quality assurance must be a carefully considered, planned and controlled process. It has to be clear which stages the translation must go through, which procedures and mechanisms are to be employed.

Human resource management is an essential element of quality management. This applies to in-house staff, free-lance translators and agencies and other external collaborators and TCUs are often faced with the challenge of trying to ensure highest quality staff in conditions of budgetary restrictions and public procurement limitations.

What are the specific problems in quality assurance in translating the *acquis* and in translating for the negotiations? When considering the best way to implement quality assurance, several key issues need to be addressed: are the usual translation quality control mechanisms adequate in the specific and in many ways unique circumstances of translating in the EU integration process? How is feedback collected and managed? What is the best approach in organising and scheduling revision work?

An important element in assuring the quality of translations of the *acquis* are expert revisions. The range of subject matter covered makes expert consultations unavoidable. Establishing and maintaining a network of experts to act as expert revisers is one of the most important factors in assuring high-quality translations. What are the best approaches to successful co-operation with expert revisers? How can the pitfalls of legal revision, experienced by previous candidate countries, be avoided in the future?

### III – Terminology issues

Systematic and meticulous terminology work provides the best foundation for an efficient and cost-effective translation process. The experience of previous candidates has shown that it is optimal to engage in systematic terminology work as early on as possible in the translation process. Putting in place mechanisms to enable such systematic (rather than random and intermittent) terminology work in conditions of understaffing and budgetary restrictions is a challenge faced by most TCUs in the integration process. What are the challenges and best practices in using existing terminological resources (databases, glossaries, knowledge of translators in the national administration) and tying them in with the work of experts and the ongoing translation work performed by the TCU? Is it cost-effective to employ in-house terminologists rather than assign terminology management as an additional task to in-house translators/co-ordinators? How are the current models of terminology verification functioning and what can be done to improve upon existing models? Finally, terminology management is an area where IT tools can be valuable and identifying and ensuring the use of the right tools becomes an important task of the TCU management.

## **Methodology and conduct of meeting**

The first block would focus on the best practices with regard to the organisation and management of the translation process, specifically addressing issues such as staffing (numbers, recruitment, profile, motivation and retention issues), co-operation structures and models, setting up and managing the workflow and document management. The participants will also be invited to share their experience and present the challenges that have arisen in their countries, as well as to identify the obstacles, if any, to successfully addressing those challenges. The second block would address several aspects of quality management, including human resources, linguistic resources and quality control mechanisms with an emphasis on setting up and adhering to clear procedures. The objective of the third block is

to address the specific problem of a translation endeavour where the range of subject matter is so vast that effective terminology management becomes imperative. Participants will be invited to present their experience, challenges and possible solutions in dealing with terminological issues, such as organising terminology verification, managing horizontal corrections, co-operation with expert revisers and the IT tools used in this process.

The presentation and discussion should cover both translation of the *acquis* and translation for membership negotiations, addressing both the common traits and the differences between these translating projects.

The fact that the ReSPA Members are at different stages of the integration (and translation) process provides a valuable foundation for exchange of experience. Thus participants can make use of the experience not only of the country that has completed the process, but also those countries that are in more advanced stages of the process and have already overcome some of the inevitable obstacles along the way.

The Working group meeting format will rely on active involvement of participants in discussion and their contribution would be valuable to reach concrete conclusions. In order to demonstrate the experience of their public administrations in the translation process under relevant agenda topics, the participants may make structured presentations using power point.

## Target Group

Target audience for the Working group meeting are senior and mid level management civil servants working for TCUs of ReSPA Members (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia) and Kosovo<sup>\*</sup>. The working group meeting can be attended by civil servants in charge of coordination of the translation process working in other institutions.

## Moderator

Ms. Višnja Barbir received her degrees from the English Department of the University of Zagreb and the University of Edinburgh. She has worked at the Croatian Translation Co-ordination Unit since 2003. She was part of the team that set up the Croatian TCU and devised its organisational structure and operational procedures. As Head of the Department for translation of Croatian legislation and for the needs of the Ministry of European Integration, she managed the project of translating the replies to the EC Questionnaire and later the translation process during membership negotiations. Having worked as both a freelance translator earlier in her career and in translation management positions at the TCU she has extensive insight into the translation process. In recent years she has been increasingly engaged in transferring Croatian know-how and experience to candidate and potential candidate countries.

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<sup>\*</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and ICJ Advisory opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of independence

# DRAFT AGENDA

## Day 1- Thursday, 23 July 2015

9.15 -9.30	Registrations
9.30-9.45	Introduction and Welcome address Introductory presentation on the event's Program
9.45-11.00	<b>Session I Organisation and management of the translation process</b> 1) Croatian experience and lessons learned (presentation by Višnja Barbir), Discussion, questions and answers 2) Discussion and presentations by participants sharing experience in relation to organising and managing the translation process (app. 5 minutes per ReSPA Member)
11.00-11.15	Coffee break
11.15-12.45	Continuation of Session I Discussion and presentation by participants sharing experience in relation to organising and managing the translation process in their countries (app. 5 minutes per ReSPA Member)
12.45-14.15	Lunch break
14.15-15.45	<b>Session II – Quality assurance</b> 1) Croatian experience and lessons learned (presentation by Višnja Barbir), Discussion, questions and answers 2) Presentations and discussion by participants sharing experience from their countries in relation to quality assurance in the translation process (app. 5 minutes per ReSPA Member)
15.45-16.00	Coffee break
16.00-16.30	Wrap up session and conclusions of the first day Discussion by participants (moderated by Višnja Barbir)
16.30	End of Day 1

## Day 2- Friday, 24 July 2015

09.15-09.30	Introduction to Day 2
09.30-11.00	<b>Session III – Terminology Issues</b> 1) Croatian experience and lessons learned (presentation by Višnja Barbir), Discussion, questions and answers 2) Presentations and discussion by participants, moderated by Višnja Barbir (app. 5 minutes per ReSPA Member)
11.15 - 11.30	Coffee break
11.30.- 12.30	Continuation of Session III 1) Presentations and discussion continued (app. 5 minutes per ReSPA Member)
12.30 -13.00	Summary of conclusions and recommendations for the future Moderated by Višnja Barbir End of the event
13.00-14.00	Lunch