

# FIT – EUROPE

## Minutes of the Working Meeting held in Berlin on 4 and 5 October 2008

The following associations member of FIT Europe are present:

ADÜ-Nord, AITI, ASETRAD, ASTTI, ATICOM, ATR,  
BDÜ,  
CBTIP,  
DTFB,  
ITI, ITIA,  
NGTV,  
NFF,  
SFT, SFÖ, SKTL,  
UTR,  
VÜD  
and FIT Europe

### **Saturday, 4-10-2008 – 2 p.m.**

Johann J. Amkreutz (JA), President of BDÜ, welcomed the participants, and João Esteves-Ferreira (JEF), President of FIT Europe, pointed out that representatives from Norway (NO) and Russia (UTR) participated in a European meeting for the first time.

Antje Kopp (BDÜ) read out a letter received from the President of FIT. The message was appreciated and considered an indication of improving relations between FIT World and FIT Europe.

JA then presented a short history of BDÜ and its relationship with FIT.

### **(1) Reports Steering Committee, FIT Europe**

The Steering Committee of FIT Europe gave a run-down of its activities:

It was pointed out that the website [www.fit-europe.org](http://www.fit-europe.org) met its purpose as a forum for the exchange of information between the European associations and on FIT activities. The number of visits was continuously increasing and the different sections were regularly being updated.

The Code of Ethics was sent to all European associations. The suggestions received had been incorporated and a final version had been circulated which was expected to be adopted during the General Meeting in Paris (in December). A number of associations had not provided any comments and would submit amendments instead. JEF suggested the code should be adopted as it stands and be reviewed one year later.

Contact with EU institutions and other European organizations such as EUATC had been made and was considered promising.

The Admission Criteria Project had been taken a step further by sending a questionnaire to the different European associations. The results would be published on the website in tabular format.

The results of the Bad Payers Project were considered very useful, although information from various countries regarded as major continental players was still missing.

JEF told the meeting that the project with a view to defining the “Profile of a European Professional Translator”, which had been approved in Bologna, should be launched after the Berlin meeting.

The participants were pleased about FIT Europe’s efficiency and its effective way of dealing with European questions.

The discussion of questions concerning continuous professional development was postponed until the arrival Sandro Corradini (SC).

JA and JEF concluded their remarks by stating that the meeting was convinced that basic training was not a matter for the associations of translators (or FIT Europe) and that these organizations should instead devote their efforts to continued professional development.

## **2) XVIII FIT World Congress in Shanghai**

Course of events – Discussions and votes – Results

The participants were of the opinion that both the Statutory Congress and the World Congress had been perfectly organized. They appreciated the opportunity to gain first-hand insights into translation in China, to establish useful contacts and to exchange views with colleagues from around the world.

Nearly all the European candidates for the FIT Council and those supported by the European associations attending the Shanghai congress were elected. It was felt that a new spirit pervaded the newly elected Executive Committee and hope was expressed that the new team would enable FIT to make a fresh start. Members of the former Council present at the meeting stated that past relations between FIT World and FIT Europe had been deficient and complained about FIT Europe’s attitude in this respect. Other participants in the meeting complained about FIT World’s attitude deficiencies in the past. This exchange of views was followed by heated discussions interrupted by JEF who stated that probably both parties were to be blamed equally and that a fresh start should be made with a positive approach. He expressed confidence in the new FIT World leadership and assured the meeting that the FIT Europe Steering Committee was totally in favour of close cooperation without any ulterior motives. The meeting appeared to support this stance.

With regard to the World Congress, the meeting was pleased about the excellent organization but generally disappointed at the rather “academic” level of presentations. It was suggested that this aspect be brought to the attention of the organizers of the next congress (ATA) so that this would not happen again.

JA drew attention to the specific character of Europe compared with other continents (small size, large number of languages, an integrating institution – the EU, etc.). He stated that BDÜ was in favour of a strong representation of FIT Europe at the level of EU institutions and that such representation in Brussels (perhaps in the form of a liaison office) would be desirable.

In conclusion, the associations represented at the meeting declared that they were prepared to cooperate on concrete projects: “Let’s work together, find solutions to our problems and see if this more pragmatic approach is more efficient.”

## **3) FIT Europe**

General Meeting in Paris in December of 2008 – Draft by-laws

Terence Oliver (TO), Secretary of FIT Europe, told the meeting that the convening instructions, the agenda and the documents for the General Meeting had been sent on time as required by the Statutes and that the details about the venue and accommodation would soon follow.

JEF reported that the Working Group on Structures and Means of FIT Europe had been unable to reach a consensus and would therefore not present a proposal for amendment of the by-laws in Paris. He then summarized the reasons for this decision.

TO gave a summary of the statutory amendments proposed by VÜD and announced that the Steering Committee would support them and recommend their adoption to the General Meeting. The main point concerned the frequency of General Meetings which should be changed from a triennial to an annual pattern. The text of the amendment existed only in English and German, but Natalia Rosza, President of VÜD, announced that a French translation would be prepared for the General Meeting.

JEF informed the meeting that from 2005 to 2008 FIT Europe only lived on donations. This situation would no longer be acceptable and membership dues would have to be introduced for the next term of office in order to ensure the continuity of activities in progress. He proposed dues ranging from 100 to 300 euros per association. A short discussion of the subject followed but ended without a clear decision.

#### **4) European Codes of Ethics**

Reiner Heard (RH) gave a status report, thanked the associations which had provided comments and expressed his hope that the code would be adopted in December. He told the meeting that the code was only a recommendation and not a binding document and that it was not exhaustive since it represented the lowest common denominator of the codes existing in the different European associations. He voiced his hope that the work carried out at the European level could serve as a basis for a more comprehensive code prepared and promoted by FIT World.

Several associations announced that they were either in the process of updating their codes (SKTL – Finland, SFT – France) or that they had suspended their activities on the subject and were waiting for the European code to be adopted (ASTTI – Switzerland).

#### **5) "Services" Regulation**

SFT reminded the meeting of the impact that the European "Services" Regulation would have on the translation services sector. Several associations expressed their concern and wished that FIT Europe would prepare a study on this issue. BDÜ announced that Dörte Stielow was working on such an analysis together with a lawyer and that the results would be made available to FIT Europe for circulation: The proposal was gratefully accepted.

**End of the 1<sup>st</sup> day: 6.30 p.m.**

**Sunday 5-10-2008 - 9 a.m.**

#### **6) Fees and Working Conditions (Survey)**

Several associations represented at the meeting (BDÜ – Germany, SFT – France, SFÖ – Sweden, SKTL – Finland, ADÜ-Nord – Germany, ITIA – Ireland) presented the results of surveys conducted in recent years and stated that these results would be sent to TO for distribution to the executive bodies of the European associations.

The blueprint for the next pan-European survey supported by FIT Europe was distributed to the participants in the meeting with comments from Sabine Colombe (SFT) and Javier Sancho, survey coordinator on the FIT Europe Steering Committee. A final document would be available by December taking account of the criteria adopted in Bologna with

regard to circulation, accessibility and data protection, as well as the legal implications. The survey should be sent to the member associations early in 2009 for circulation among their members.

The following remarks were made by those present:

- Participation in the survey should be restricted to members of FIT Europe member associations.
- The results must be published on the FIT Europe website.
- Special attention must be given to the interpretation of raw data in order to obtain a tool suitable for promotion of the profession.

The meeting wholeheartedly welcomed the work performed by the working group (Sabine Colombe – SFT, Antje Kopp – BDÜ, Perpetua Uitterwal – NGTV; Javier Sancho – FIT Europe coordinator).

## **7) International Conference in Berlin from 11 to 13 September 2009**

General Information – Questions and Answers

Wolf Baur (WB – BDÜ) gave a presentation on the event entitled “Interpreting the Future” and explained its aims and objectives: make translators aware of the new challenges; focus on the practical issues of the profession and understand the new requirements of the industry and other potential clients. As for the number of participants, he added that BDÜ expected an audience of about 1,000 people. WB also briefed the meeting on the conference website, distributed the call for papers and asked the sister associations to promote the event among their members. The meeting was impressed with the work already carried out and had no doubt that the conference would be a success.

## **8) Continuous Professional Development**

The participants in the meeting reviewed the common practices existing in the different European countries and pointed out the need for an exchange of information on the details of the experience gained. Silvia Cerrella Bauer (ASTTI) proposed that she could organize a meeting of those in charge of professional development in the different associations. Chris Durban (SFT) suggested that his meeting be held by videoconference in order to reduce costs and announced that her colleague Ben Pfister would convene the meeting. The following associations immediately declared their interest in attending the meeting: SFT – France, NGTV – The Netherlands, ASTTI – Switzerland, SKTL – Finland, BDÜ – Germany, AITI – Italy. ITI – United Kingdom.

The follow-up to the Bologna meeting in the area of distance learning prompted a long discussion. In the end, however, it was decided that the matter should be dealt with by the specialists.

## **9) Current Situation of the Steering Committee**

JEF told the meeting that elections for the FIT Europe Steering Committee would be held at the General Meeting in Paris in December. He announced that of the seven current members of the committee, two would not stand for re-election (Andrew Evans and Terence Oliver), one was considering to stand again (Reiner Heard), while four other members (Birgitte Jensen, Sandro Corradini, Javier Sancho and JEF himself) had not yet made up their minds. He pleaded for a new geographical distribution of SC incumbents by pointing out that Central Europe was not represented on the committee at all.

He informed the meeting that the current working groups were doing a good job, that the ongoing projects were awaiting completion and that it was up to the European associations to assert themselves and to communicate their ideas and wishes to the future SC. He expressed once more his concern about the future budget, the question of membership dues, which required a decision, and also urged the meeting to continue work with a view to bringing about the desired changes to the FIT Europe Statutes. JEF concluded his remarks by saying that much work was waiting to be done and asked the member associations to support FIT Europe in the same manner as they had done in the past.

## **10) Invitation of SPR**

PowerPoint Presentation by Dr. Igor Chramow, UTR

The Russian association UTR suggested holding the next meeting of the FIT Executive Committee and the FIT Europe Steering Committee at Orenburg in Russia in April of 2009. UTR would be pleased to welcome a maximum of sister associations to this historic provincial university town located on the border between Europe and Asia.

JEF thanked the Russian association for the invitation and promised to forward it to the FIT Executive Committee. The decision on the invitation, however, could not be made until the new FIT Europe Steering Committee was in office.

## **11) Miscellaneous**

- The meeting asked JEF to reply to the new FIT President's letter on their behalf and to tell her that they appreciated the message and that they were pleased about the improved relationship between FIT Europe and FIT World.
- Chris Durban (SFT) presented the new publication "Les mots au kilo – Translation is a non-commodity" and launched an appeal for translation of this brochure into a maximum of languages. Associations wishing to sponsor the document (free of charge) should contact her directly.
- Patricia Alarcon (CBTIP) suggested that a list of items for discussion be prepared with access restricted to officials of the European associations. The meeting approved the idea and asked FIT Europe to take on the task. It was expected that the list would be compiled within a month to enable informal discussions in preparation of the General Meeting in Paris.
- BDÜ informed the meeting that it hired the services of a professional press officer and that it would be prepared to make her available to FIT Europe, if required.
- Frequency of meetings: The participants considered working meetings such as the one in Berlin, as well as the previous ones, to be very useful. They were of the opinion that the minimum of meetings per year should be one formal meeting, such as an extended General Meeting, and one other meeting. JEF pointed out that one working meeting with physical attendance per year would be indispensable, however, in order to reduce expenses for the different associations, videoconferences could perhaps be organized at shorter intervals, if required. SFT stated that it would be prepared to organize such videoconferences. The conditions would still have to be defined.
- In conclusion, JA thanked the meeting for having accepted the BDÜ invitation and JEF, speaking on behalf of the associations present, congratulated BDÜ on the excellent organization of the meeting and expressed his thanks for the initiative.

**The meeting closed at 12.15 p.m.**