

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(80) 348 final

Brussels, 17th June 1980

DRAFT DECISION
CONCERNING A JOINT INTERPRETING SERVICE

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JOINT INTERPRETING SERVICE

The Commission's Interpreters and Conference Services Directorate provides interpreters for all meetings held by the institutions in Brussels - the Commission, the Council and the Economic and Social Committee. With 384 LA interpreter posts (and 58 support posts) it is by far the world's largest interpreting service.

The number of meetings with interpreters has constantly been increasing, from 2,801 in 1959 to 8,376 in 1978. The trend in the number of interpreter-days is even more impressive, with an increase from 4,438 in 1959 to 78,949 in 1978, 20% being provided by freelance interpreters. The full six-language interpreting system is requested with growing frequency, especially in Council working parties.

The new round of enlargement, bringing in first Greece and then Spain and Portugal, will have the effect of greatly expanding the need for interpreters and the assignment of interpreters to meetings in the various institutions will become all the more complex; a new computer application (SAFIR) has had to be developed for the purpose.

In view of the shortage of qualified conference interpreters it has been found necessary to work closely with university interpreting and translating schools and to design and operate a programme consisting of, among other things, intensive training courses for interpreters who have graduated in other disciplines (35 % of the Directorate's current personnel were trained in the Directorate).

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On the basis of purely practical arrangements the Interpreters and Conference Services Directorate has thus in actual fact become a joint service; it works for the Commission as to 51% and for the Council as to more than 40%. This fact, combined with the volume of its staff, the daily use of a large number of freelance interpreters and specific obligations regarding selection and training mean that the activities of this service go way beyond the four corners of a single institution and have no logical place in a Commission Directorate-General.

So that these activities can develop as flexibly as possible in the interest of all the institutions, without any ruinous competition between the institutions regarding the recruitment of staff and freelance interpreters, it is proposed that an interinstitutional Joint Interpreting Service be set up at the Albert Borschette Conference Centre (Place Jourdan).

STATISTICAL PAPER

1. Posts authorized : 384 LA posts (20 of them temporary)

2. Current manpower : 308 officials and temporaries

	<u>Officials</u>	<u>Temporaries</u>	<u>Total</u>
Women	113 (57%)	65 (60%)	178 (58%)
Men	86 (43%)	44 (40%)	130 (42%)
<u>Total</u>	<u>199</u>	<u>109</u>	<u>308</u>
of which former trainees	51 (26%)	55 (50%)	106 (35%)

3. Trend of activities

	<u>No of meetings</u>	<u>No of interpreter-days</u>	<u>Proportion accounted for by freelance</u>
1959	2,801	4,438	Not available
1960	2,182	6,860	Not available
1965	3,620	17,786	29.30 %
1970	5,516	29,551	28.01 %
1975	7,254	64,115	28.00 %
1978	8,376	78,949	20.25 %

4. Breakdown by institution in 1978 (interpreter-days)

Commission	51.28%
Council	40.86%
Economic and Social Committee	5.36%
European Investment Bank	0.12%
Other (Research budget, Berlin Centre, Dublin Foundation, etc.)	2.38%

5. Freelance interpreters on the computer index (SAFIR)

French	301
German	246
English	227
Italian	117
Dutch	45
Danish	19
Greek	8
Other languages	75
Total	1,038

6. Selection procedures in 1978

Tests	82
Candidates	326
Successes (contracts, training periods, renewals, entry on the freelance register)	190 (58%)
Failures	136 (42%)

7. Budgetary and financial aspects

BFR

<u>1978</u>	Total cost of Interpreters and Conference Services	Directorate	645,216,182
	<u>Average cost of interpreter-day</u>		
	- all in		8,172
	- freelance		8,485
	- officials or temporary or auxiliary servants		8,094
	CIUTI Subsidy		7,600,000
<u>1979</u>	Estimated average cost of interpreter day		8,000
	Cost of a freelance per day (Category I, 1 January 1979)		6,972
	of which fees		6,113
	CIUTI Subsidy		8,500,000

8. Remuneration

Allowance paid to trainees : Bfrs 16,500 monthly

	Without expatriation allowance		With expatriation allowance	
	Single without dependents	Married with 2 dependent children	Single without dependents	Married with 2 dependent children
LA8 - Step 1	53,493	69,293	64,605	82,169
LA7 - Step 1	59,885	77,633	72,831	92,435

9. Career structure

LA8	Assistant interpreter
LA7/6	Interpreter
LA5/4	Principal interpreter
	Principal interpreter (managerial)
	Head of Interpretation Group
LA3	Head of Division

10. Administrative infrastructure

A officials	1
B officials	16
C officials	43 (including 21 conference technicians)
	60

11. Meeting rooms equipped for interpreters

Managed by the Directorate :	Commission	: 18 *
	Others	: 13
	Economic and Social Committee:	6
	Total	37

* Plus 20 rooms under construction at the Albert Borschette Conference Centre

12. Some figures for other international organizations

UN - New York	104 staff interpreters - 1,543 meetings (1978) *
UN - Geneva	86 staff interpreters - 2,590 meetings (1978) *
NATO	44 staff interpreters
OECD	20 staff interpreters - 2,500 meetings (1978) *
UNESCO	10 staff interpreters
IMF	6 staff interpreters
GATT	5 staff interpreters
WHO	4 staff interpreters

* These figures have been converted to facilitate comparison with figures for the Communities.

MAIN ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERPRETERS AND CONFERENCE SERVICES DIRECTORATE

GENERAL MATTERS

1. Activities relating to staff interpreters

- a) Selection
- b) Tests
- c) Preparation of competitions
- d) Promotion and careers

2. Activities relating to freelance interpreters

- a) Negotiations and relations with the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) - five-year agreements regarding working conditions for freelance interpreters at all institutions (including Parliament).
- b) Life assurance and endowment policies for freelance interpreters.
- c) Sickness and accident insurance for freelance interpreters.
- d) Grading of freelance interpreters (Categories I and II).

3. Relations with other Community institutions and bodies

- a) Invoicing interpreter-days served for other institutions.
- b) calculating the average cost of an interpreter-day.

4. Relations with other international organizations

- a) Appropriate departments in other organizations.
- b) Advisory Committee on Administrative Questions (UN).

5. Relations with university interpreting schools

- a) Direct contacts - help with teaching, membership of examining boards.
- b) Relations with the Standing International Conference of Directors of University Institutes for the Training of Translators and Interpreters (CIUTI), and particularly subsidies for particularly scarce language combinations.

6. Other activities

- a) Matters of principle regarding the Community language rules, particularly with an eye to enlargement.
- b) Budget and financial matters, and particularly re-use of funds.
- c) Statistical work.

CONFERENCES

- 1. Management of all Commission conference rooms.
- 2. Programme for assigning interpreters to all meetings held by institutions in Brussels, at headquarters and elsewhere, currently being put on to computer (SAFIR).
- 3. Engagement and remuneration of freelance interpreters.
- 4. Technical services :
 - a) Design and maintenance of simultaneous interpreting facilities, and research into new techniques.
 - b) Assignment of conference technicians and operators.
- 5. Albert Borschette Conference Centre, place Jourdan.

TRAINING

- 1. Intensive training for student interpreters who have graduated in other disciplines. *
- 2. Study grants to help interpreters learn new languages.
- 3. Vocational training and specialization (steel, coal, nuclear energy, data-processing, ...).
- 4. Training in preparation for accession (Greece, Spain).
- 5. Assistance to non-member countries for the training of conference interpreters (teacher training in China, Tunisia, India and Turkey).

* Particularly Oxford and Cambridge - 61% of English-language interpreters are former trainees.

JOINT INTERPRETING SERVICE

The Council,
The Commission and
The Economic and Social Committee,
Whereas the provision of interpreters for meetings held within
the institutions should be organized in such a way as to meet the
institutions' needs as rationally as possible;
Whereas the Commission's interpreting service serves several
institutions, and those institutions should be more closely
associated in the management of the service,

Have decided as follows :

Article 1

A Joint Interpreting Service shall be formed to provide
the institutions with the interpreters they need for meetings
they hold.

Article 2

The Service shall be responsible for selecting and training
interpreters and shall regularly determine their work schedules. The
services of freelance interpreters shall be used where necessary.

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Article 3

1. A Managing Board shall be set up. Each institution shall have one vote.
2. The Chairman of the Managing Board shall be provided by the Commission.
3. Unless otherwise agreed the Managing Board shall take decisions by a majority vote.
4. The Managing Board shall unanimously adopt its rules of procedure.

Article 4

Acting in the common interest of all the institutions the Managing Board shall exercise the following functions :

- it shall unanimously determine the Service's operational procedures;
- it shall put to the institutions suggestions for improvements in the operation of the Service;
- it shall adopt the Service's programme of work;
- it shall determine the Service's requirements as to appropriations and staff.

Article 5

1. The Commission shall assign to the Service officials and other staff to manage it and perform its duties. Commission posts assigned to the Service shall be included as a specific item in the Commission's list of posts.
2. The powers conferred by the Staff Regulations of Officials and Conditions of Employment of Other Servants upon an institution, the appointing authority and the authority empowered to conclude contracts of employment shall be exercised by the Commission.

The Commission shall appoint officials in Grades A1 to A3 and LA3 after seeking the Opinion of the Managing Board.

Article 6

The Director of the Service shall be responsible for the smooth operation of the Service. He shall act as Secretary to the Managing Board, report to the Board on the effect given to its instructions and put suggestions to the Board regarding the operation of the Service. He shall be the hierarchical superior of the staff of the Service.

Article 7

Appropriations relating to the personnel and operation of the Service shall be entered in the section of the General Budget of the Communities relating to the Commission.

Article 8

The Economic and Social Committee shall be treated as an institution for the purposes of this Decision.

Article 9

The Managing Board may, in accordance with rules to be determined, place its interpreters at the disposal of other European institutions and bodies.

Article 10

This Decision shall be reviewed by the institutions adopting it, on the basis of a report from the Managing Board, with a view to determining, in the light of experience, ways in which other institutions who so request might become involved in the Joint Service, or in certain of its activities.

Article 11

This Decision shall enter into force on
