La relève : The next generation

Les organisations internationales connaissent un vieillissement de leurs effectifs permanents.

Claude DURAND.
Published: September 6, 2005 Last updated: December 28, 2015

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**Foreword**

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who assisted with this ambitious AIIC project. Over two years of painstaking work were required in order to collect concrete, accurate data on which to base the findings of the study. My thanks go to:

- the members of the Staff Interpreters' Committee, who worked unstintingly to collect information on their respective organisations: M. BoBramsen (OECD), J. Dykstra (Canadian Government), L. Fitchett (European Parliament), P. Fournier (FAO), A. Gauthier (UN - New York), S. Marrone (Italian Chamber of Deputies), M. Marton (IMF), E. Moggio-Ortiz (UN-Geneva), A. Scialom (NATO Defense College), and E. Setton (NATO - Brussels);
- the members of the Training Committee, especially G. Francia and B. Strolz, who sent the questionnaire to the universities and monitored the project from start to finish;
- the members of the PriMS Standing Committee, particularly Vincent Buck, for their superb teamwork;
- the heads of the 11 interpreting services of the organisations taking part in the study who provided candid, detailed answers to our questions, particularly O. Abou Zahr (UN- Geneva), M. Benedetti (European Commission), O. Cosmidou (European Parliament) and A. Wood (Canadian Government);
- the 19 universities that responded to the questionnaire on their relations with the principal employers of interpreters.

I hope that the findings of this study will provide more accurate guidance not only to employers and training institutions but also to young students who are attracted to the profession of conference interpreter, so that future generations of interpreters may continue to set an example in their daily work of the rigorous standards of professional ethics handed down to us by the pioneers of modern interpreting.
I. Inception of the Project

This project originated in June 2002, when the IAMLADP[1] working group published a report on the training of language staff (translators, interpreters, minute writers, editors and proofreaders). The working group was chaired by Noel Muylle, then Director of DG SCIC (EC). The report was based on a previous survey conducted by the working sub-group on conference interpretation into the training and recruitment needs of international organisations. 11 institutions answered the questionnaire sent to them, and 37 universities training interpreters also participated in the survey. The main finding was that the widening gap between employer demand (staff and freelance numbers) and the supply of interpreters graduating from training programmes was cause for very serious concern.

Claude Durand was notified of the results of the survey at an early stage through his contacts with Penny Pouliou and Helen Campbell, the SCIC staff members in charge of coordinating the sub-group. He forwarded the IAMLADP report to Jean-Pierre Allain, AIIC president, who drafted a report for the AIIC Council analysing the implications of the report for the future strategy of the Association. The salient points, listed below, are followed by recommendations of interest mainly to the AIIC CdP (Staff Interpreters Committee) and the Training Committee (TC).

1. Universities seem unaware that the languages they offer must be tailored to the requirements of international organisations (IOs). There is a glaring lack of training in languages which are in demand and which IOs need urgently now and will need even more in the future. EU applicant countries’ languages are an obvious example.

Suggested action: In all written and verbal communications with universities and other training institutions, the Training Committee (TC) should stress the most needed languages.

2. Language services in all IOs are relatively small and are seen as support services rather than policy-making bodies, but at the same time are recognised as essential to the smooth functioning of the organisation and indeed to maintaining its democratic credentials.

Suggested action: The Bureau, CdP (Staff Interpreters Committee) and individual members should bring this matter to the attention of top level officials (in departments other than language services) in IOs and national governments. Communicate! should publicize the AIIC Declaration on Multilingualism at regular intervals.

3. germane to the need for lifelong learning and training is the need to expose staff to other environments, other cultures, and different ways of thinking and doing things.

Suggested action: The TC should encourage universities and schools to institute exchange programmes for students of interpretation with institutions in other countries.

4. Shortages appear to exist in virtually all the languages used in the UN, including English, French, Russian, Arabic, Chinese, Portuguese and Spanish, to name some of the languages that are of universal professional importance. Specific mention was repeatedly made of shortages in the English booth, in particular as regards interpreters with passive Russian.

Suggested action: This information should be published on our website and through VEGA, to attract potential students of interpretation.
5. Employers (IOs) say that there is a need for training in new technologies: computer skills, IT for meeting preparation, video-conferencing, and remote interpreting.

Suggested action: The PriMS, the CdP and regions should institute (or pursue, in the case of PriMS) training sessions for interpreters in computer skills and IT for meeting preparation. The CdP and the Technical Committee (through its NIT Project) should keep abreast of IO plans in the area of videoconferencing and remote interpreting and should establish diplomatic contacts with the appropriate IO agencies (not only the Interpretation Services) to explain what interpreters using new technologies need to provide quality interpretation and protect their health.

6. Universities examine future needs under the same main headings, i.e.:

New language requirements:
- more working languages for interpreters wishing to work with EU Institutions;
- Eastern European languages, Chinese, Portuguese, Ukrainian;
- Working into a B language for the private market.

New technologies for interpreters:
- acquiring and maintaining computer literacy;
- Internet tools for interpreters, information and knowledge management, meeting preparation;
- ability to search, manage, evaluate and structure knowledge/information electronically;
- new technologies in interpreting: video-conferencing, remote interpreting;

Intercultural communication; professional ethics and social skills.

7. Both the EP and SCIC provide training for their staff in basic IT skills in the form of general or specialised courses. The SCIC offers a meeting preparation course and training in the production, use and management of glossaries. Other interpreter-specific training courses include voice coaching, relay coaching, training for trainer seminars, specific interpreting techniques such as interpreting for the media and on the Internet, and training in pedagogical assistance. Other courses on offer include thematic training, e.g. “law for non-lawyers”, introduction to micro/macroeconomics, management skills and administrative writing, to name but a few of the most popular courses. The EP and the SCIC allow freelance interpreters, on certain conditions, to take part in some of the training they provide for staff members.

Suggested action: The AIIC should ask the SCIC and the EP to allow AIIC trainers (volunteers from the TC, PriMS, CdP, NIT, etc.) to participate in some of their training sessions, so that they can learn about content and methods of teaching that can be used in AIIC training activities.

On the basis of these ideas, the CdP agreed during its annual meeting on 7 and 8 September 2002 in New York to propose a project entitled The Next Generation (“La Relève”) to the Council and the Assembly. A brief description of the project appeared in the Bulletin published before the Assembly in Porto. In January 2003 the Assembly approved the proposal, which was ratified on 6 July 2003 at the Council meeting in Paris on the recommendation of Claude Durand, project coordinator. As decided during preliminary contacts in Porto, it was confirmed that the project would be directed by the CdP in liaison with the TC and the PriMS.

II. Project Goal

The first goal of the project was to define what contribution AIIC could make, based on the IAMLADP study (UN, European Institutions, ITU, WTO, ILO, ICAO, IMF, Eurocontrol) to reduce the looming gap between:
international organisations’ recruitment needs for conference interpreters and quantitative and qualitative output from interpreter training programmes.

The study could not have come at a better time, as this gap will widen in the years to come as a result of the combined effect of two main factors:

- large-scale retirement of staff members from the baby boom generation;
- the arrival of new languages in the international arena, in particular in European institutions, following EU enlargement.

It was logical for AIIC’s contribution to begin with a snapshot of the current situation:

- in international organisations: by examining the correlation between volume of work and interpreter numbers in order to corroborate and, by involving IOs not covered by the employer survey, amplify the results of the IAMLADP study;
- in training programmes: by conducting a survey of their problems in adapting to changing demands.

The purpose of this snapshot was to enable AIIC to formulate constructive recommendations to IOs and interpreter training programmes, as well as to AIIC members working for IOs or involved in conference interpreter training.

III. Methodology of the Project

1. Organisations

In the spring of 2003, the Chairman of the CdP sent an official letter to the chief interpreters of 24 national and international organisations using conference interpreters in North America, Europe, Africa and the Middle East to request their cooperation in gathering the data for the IO chapter of the project. Most of the recipients were represented on the CdP (Camera dei Deputati Italiana, Government of Canada, EC, ECJ, FAO, IMF, NAMSA, ICAO, OECD, NATO Brussels, NATO Defense College, EP, WEU Assembly, UNHQ, UNOG, UNOV), plus organisations that were not in regular contact with the CdP (IADB, ICTY, IDB, IRDB, OAS, WTO, OAU and UNESCO).

The list contained questions on:

- current numbers of staff interpreters and their age range, in order to determine whether or not there would be any need for renewal;
- retirement age for staff interpreters and whether or not they can be rehired as freelances for their IO after retirement;
- language combinations currently understaffed and the forecast in five years;
- success and failure rates in selection procedures for staff interpreters and freelances;
- whether or not there is a specific recruitment policy to facilitate the integration of newcomers to the profession;
- contacts with universities and interpreting schools and IO policy with regard to providing information on the professional opportunities they offer.

Within the IOs represented on the CdP, the CdP representative was the interface who dealt with the administration in order to collect the necessary – and sometimes sensitive – data. Direct contact was more productive than sending an anonymous questionnaire, a procedure initially considered but subsequently discarded by the CdP.

At the time of drafting this report, the CdP had received specific information from only 11 of these IOs, all represented on the CdP. This, incidentally, shows how important it is for AIIC to be
represented in as many IOs as possible, in order to keep abreast of developments and bring its influence to bear. However, as the reader will note, the data provided varies in depth and accuracy depending on the type of management tools used in the IOs. The most comprehensive data was provided by the EC, the EP and the Government of Canada.

It is significant that not a single organisation located in Africa or the Middle East answered the requests for information. It might be inferred from this that the problem of new blood does not arise with the same urgency as in Europe and North America, where most IOs are located, especially those providing the largest volume of work for conference interpreters. Others state that at present the terms of staff employment and freelance contracts in Africa and the Middle East do not enable the interpreters in those regions to make a living, and therefore the problem of new blood is not particularly relevant in this case.

Chapter IV covers the answers provided by the IOs participating in the study to the above-mentioned questions.

2. Interpreter Training Courses

In cooperation with the Training Committee (TC), the CdP prepared a questionnaire to round off the one the TC sent out in early 2004 to higher education institutions and universities offering postgraduate programmes in interpreting. A final version of the text (Chapter V) was agreed upon by both committees during the annual meeting of the CdP in Geneva on 25 and 26 October 2003, at which Birgit Strolz represented the TC and Vincent Buck the PriMS.

It was decided to limit the text to five main areas (each one containing two to four questions), in order to ensure that the main questionnaire was not too long, which might have discouraged training institutes from answering the part on “The Next Generation”.

The questionnaire was published on line in March 2004 with the assistance of Omar Ebullio and Vincent Buck. However, a special procedure was implemented so that the answers to the questions on “The Next Generation” could be reviewed by the CdP. Reviewing began in April 2004.

A summary of the answers to the additional questionnaires is provided in Chapter V of the report.

IV. International organisations: results of the survey

Camera dei Deputati Italiana (Rome)

The Lower House of the Italian Parliament is one of the smallest organisations represented on the CdP. However, Stefano Marrone, Head Interpreter and a member of the CdP, expressed concern about recruitment in forthcoming years.

In peak years the Camera dei Deputati organises 1000 interpreter days annually, 2/3 of which are covered by freelance interpreters.

a) Staff interpreters: numbers and age pyramid

Number of interpreters: 6 permanent staff:

- 2 interpreters aged 35-40;
- 4 interpreters aged 47 and above.

b) Retirement age of staff interpreters

57 to 60 (depending on age on recruitment).
c) **Rehire of retired staff interpreters as freelances**

Yes, but as an exception to the rule and only for language combinations that would otherwise not be available.

d) **Shortages**

- bilinguals EN – I, D – I, ES – I (+ 1 C language requested for the competitive examination);
- short term recruitment plans: the competitive examination envisaged for 2004 has been postponed indefinitely.

e) **Success rate**

Below 3% of the applications submitted (3 successful candidates out of 104 applicants at the last competitive examination).

f) **Contacts with training institutions**

Stefano Marrone is a teacher at San Pio V University in Rome, which features a Master’s degree in Conference Interpreting as of academic year 2003-2004.

**Government of Canada – Translation Bureau _ Interpretation and Parliamentary Translation Directorate**

Detailed information was provided in 2003 by Mr Gilles Martel, Director of the Interpretation and Parliamentary Translation Directorate, and by Mr Michel Parent, in charge of tracking “Interpretation Needs and Development”. Both of them have transferred to other positions within the Translation Bureau, and Mr Alain Wood, the new Director of IPTD, is responsible for determining future needs and trends in his Directorate, since Mr Parent’s position has been eliminated. However, at the time of initial contact, the Canadian Government’s Translation Bureau representatives were very interested in the AIIC project. Concerned by the age profile of its own interpretation resources, the Translation Bureau undertook a project in 2002 entitled “Le deuxième souffle” (Second Wind) to provide new stimulus to the profession of conference interpreter in Canada and the Americas by ensuring the preparation of a new wave of interpreters.

a) **Staff interpreters: numbers and age pyramid**

Unlike other international organisations, the Translation Bureau included its staff and accredited freelance interpreters in its calculations:

- total resources available for official languages (EN + F): 203;
- average age of official language interpreters: 51.35 years;
- interpreters in official languages, 50 years and older: 121 (59%);
- total resources of foreign language interpreters (other than EN or F) i.e. mainly in Spanish, Portuguese and Chinese: 122;
- average age of foreign language interpreters: 51.63 years;
- interpreters in foreign languages, 50 years and older: 77 (64%).

These figures, amongst the highest of those in the organisations surveyed, indicate the need for renewal within the Translation Bureau.

b) **Retirement age of staff interpreters**

As of 55 years of age with no upper age limit. Most staff interpreters leave between 55 and 60 years of age.

c) **Rehire of retired staff interpreters as freelances**
Yes. A common occurrence, which alleviates recruitment difficulties for the Canadian Government. However, freelance interpreters tend to withdraw progressively from the market from about 65 to 70 years of age.

d) **Current shortages and recruitment needs over the next 5-10 years**

- ES into EN and P into EN;
- ES into F and P into F.

The demand for these combinations will increase considerably when the FTAA (Free Trade Area of the Americas) is signed and comes into force.

e) **Success rates**

**Freelance interpreters**

Approximately 30% of candidates pass accreditation tests.

The main reasons for failure are: unsatisfactory linguistic skills; poor general knowledge; inadequate training; lack of sound professional qualifications.

**Staff**

Success rates are much higher for official language services, thanks mainly to the 2-year Trainee Programme (details below). Those who failed the first year (2 out of 4 in 1999, 4 out of 5 in 2000, 2 out of 5 in 2001, and no failures out of 6 in 2002) passed later after gaining experience, with the result that the success rate after 2 years in the programme is 100%. Similar success rates were obtained in 2003 and 2004.

f) **Contacts with universities**

The Translation Bureau is always represented during interpretation exams at the University of Ottawa and forms part of the jury. A representative is also often invited to observe the examinations held at the Monterey Institute of International Studies in California.

Contacts have also been established with other institutional employers of interpreters, translation schools in Canada and interpretation schools in South America, as well as with Canadian career guidance counsellors for young people, and with AIIC Canada and other professional associations in Canada.

g) **Trainee Programme**

The Translation Bureau provides a two-year training programme with salary to graduates of the Master’s in Interpretation programme at the University of Ottawa. In the first four months the trainees (with TR1 pay) are assigned as extra members of a team under the guidance of staff interpreters four days a week, and on the fifth day each week receive additional training provided by senior interpreters in the training facility with booths owned by the IPTD. In December of the first year the trainees undergo an exam and, depending on results, are promoted to level TR2 or TR3, with corresponding pay levels. As of this promotion they are considered fully-fledged members of any team of interpreters but their assignments are carefully chosen to enhance their skills. On completion of the second year they will be hired as full time staff interpreters if vacancies have been published (as a result of retirements or resignations by staff interpreters); otherwise they become accredited freelance interpreters.

**European Commission (DG SCIC)**
Of all the IOs participating in the survey, the EC is beyond dispute the one which provided the best documented response. This will come as no surprise to those who know that DG SCIC remains the number one employer of both permanent and freelance conference interpreters worldwide. With a volume of work unrivalled in the world, DG SCIC has adopted a modern management infrastructure and efficient statistical tools, without which it would not be able to provide cover for about 11,000 meeting days a year with a wide range of regimes varying from 2 to 20 languages. Given SCIC’s considerable share in the European interpretation market, its response and strategy can have a very marked impact on developments in the profession.

a) Staff interpreters: numbers and age pyramid

**Official languages (11) of EU-15**

The following statistics reflect the situation as of 1st January 2003 and only concern staff interpreters in EU-15 languages (before the enlargement of 1st May 2004), who deliver about 50% of the interpretation provided by SCIC.

**Total number of interpreters, all languages 446**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>EN</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>ES</th>
<th>NL</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>EL</th>
<th>DA</th>
<th>FI</th>
<th>SV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average age</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCIC</td>
<td>+3%</td>
<td>+8%</td>
<td>+3%</td>
<td>+4%</td>
<td>-11%</td>
<td>+3%</td>
<td>-11%</td>
<td>-10%</td>
<td>+10%</td>
<td>-8%</td>
<td>-13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures may at first sight seem favourable, but they vary considerably from one language unit to another:

**F | D | EN | I | ES | NL | P | EL | DA | FI | SV**
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures show that aging is affecting mainly booths in existence at the start of European integration (D, F), as well as the Danish booth, which has the lowest renewal rate.

Moreover, SCIC has estimated the probable trend in numbers per booth in the event of a hiring freeze. The results are as follows:

**F | D | EN | I | ES | NL | P | EL | DA | FI | SV**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear from these estimates that, without a deliberate recruitment drive, by 2013 falling numbers will significantly affect the D, F, EN and I booths.

**Enlargement languages (EU-10, 9 new languages)**

From December 2003 onwards the first inter-institutional competitions were held (organised jointly by SCIC, EP and ECJ) for the recruitment of interpreters trained in any of the 9 new languages. Here are the results known as of 1st September 2004:
Results of inter-institutional competitions for interpreters in the new languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CS</th>
<th>ET</th>
<th>LV</th>
<th>LT</th>
<th>HU</th>
<th>MT</th>
<th>SL</th>
<th>SK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applicants</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tested</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passed</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To this must be added the competition for interpreters into Polish, which was not completed until October 2004. There were only 19 successful candidates, allocated as follows:

- 9 for SCIC;
- 7 for EP;
- 3 for ECJ.

As the number of successful candidates from the competitions (to be spread among SCIC, EP and ECJ) generally fell far short of needs, the three institutions have offered temporary contracts to already known and accredited freelance interpreters. This offer has led to the following temporary contracts:

Offers of recruitment and extension of temporary contracts for new language interpreters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>CS</th>
<th>ET</th>
<th>LV</th>
<th>LT</th>
<th>HU</th>
<th>PL</th>
<th>SK</th>
<th>SL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECJ</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EP</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCIC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract extension for SCIC temporaries recruited in country capitals</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total SCIC</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A total of 46 new staff interpreters will have been recruited from the new member states by SCIC (11 who passed the competition + 8 temporaries transferred from the capitals of the new member states to Brussels + 27 new temporaries).

Moreover, as of 1st September 2004 DG SCIC was also able to draw on a list of a total of 406 accredited freelances for the new languages: 85 Poles, 75 Hungarians, 51 Czechs, 45 Estonians, 44 Lithuanians, 40 Latvians, 36 Slovaks and 31 Slovenes, but no Maltese.

b) Retirement age of staff interpreters

For all staff members who in 2003 were aged at least 50 years or had at least 20 years of service: minimum 60 years, maximum 65 years.

From 1st May 2004, for those staff members aged below 50 years or with less than 20 years of service: minimum 62 years, maximum 67 years, under the new Staff Regulations for the European civil service. Although it will not lower average staff age, this reform should in the long term contribute towards reducing somewhat the tension between supply and demand, assuming that accredited freelances, through assimilation, will acquire the right to work until 67.

c) Rehire of retired staff interpreters as freelances
So far this has been totally ruled out.

d) **Shortages**

In 2003-2004:

- The 9 May 2004 enlargement languages, both active and passive; however, it is to be expected that needs will vary from language to language.
- The EU-15 active languages mentioned at the end of sub-paragraph a) section 1 (above all DE – EN – F), but combined with selected passive languages (language profiles are established by SCIC every year – for further details see at: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/scic/interpreter/auxint](http://europa.eu.int/comm/scic/interpreter/auxint)).

From 2008 to 2013:

It is risky to make forecasts, given the uncertainty surrounding the practical implementation of multilingualism over the coming years, especially after the EU Council decision in December 2003.

While maintaining the principle of full language cover in meetings of the European Council, the Council of Ministers and a number of high level groups (notably in the area of justice and home affairs), the political authorities decided to reduce by half the number of working groups benefiting from interpretation (some of their needs admittedly were more virtual than real), and to grant only limited language cover, based on the priorities set by the permanent representations of old and new member states.

Of course the Council had already been practising a “real needs” policy for about twenty years, but it has now introduced into the new system a financial mechanism likely to give an incentive to member states to cut back their demand for interpretation: indeed, although until 30 April 2004 it had been the rule that all services provided by SCIC received common budget funding, the Council decided that in future interpretation provided to working groups would be paid for out of national envelopes (2 million € per language per year as part of an “on request system” -ORS), leaving it to the discretion of each member state concerned whether or not to draw on this envelope; if it decides not to request interpretation in certain meetings, the system allows it to obtain repayment of the balance (that is, up to 66%) in order to finance its delegates’ travel expenses.

The national permanent representations, therefore, will be able to decide once every six months whether they wish to avail themselves of the active or passive interpretation provided by DG SCIC. Until the start of 2004 the Council accounted for about 50% of DG SCIC’s business, and therefore it is clear that the new system could have a marked impact on the trend in overall demand, as the demand from other institutions is most unlikely to increase significantly.

As explained in the communication from Mr Kinnock (then commissioner responsible for DG SCIC) to the Commission on 13 July 2004, the new system in force in the Council already revealed major variations in demand in the first two months following the enlargement of 1st May 2004.

“During these two months, passive cover of the new languages fluctuated, in the Council of Ministers, from a minimum of 20% for Estonian to a maximum of 60% for Polish. Passive cover of Czech, Lithuanian, Hungarian and Slovak is now between 25% and 35%, the same as for a first group including some of the old 11 official languages, such as Danish, Swedish and Finnish. Passive cover of Polish is close to a second group including Dutch, Portuguese and Greek.”

In its Annual Activity Report for 2004, DG SCIC again took stock of the impact of the new system on the evolution of demand in the Council during the eight months following the last enlargement. It observed that many member states underused their envelope, sometimes by more than 50%. This under use concerned the new member states, but to a greatly differing degree: thus, the demand for Slovene was particularly low, so that even if the number of interpreters speaking this language is
low, DG SCIC had no major difficulty in providing the language cover requested. The introduction of the ORS has above all reduced to an unexpected extent the demand from old member states for such active languages as Danish, Swedish, Finnish, as well as Dutch, Portuguese and Greek. The Nordic languages have been those most affected by this phenomenon: between May and December 2004 (compared to the corresponding period in 2003) the reduction was 29% for Swedish, 33% for Finnish, and 34% for Danish. In total, for the same period, the demand for interpretation in the Council fell by 10%.

It is unlikely that the demand from other institutions serviced by DG SCIC will compensate fully for the decline in the Council demand, for the following reasons:

- requests for interpretation from the Economic and Social Committee and above all the Committee of the Regions increased significantly in 2004, but these two institutions represent only a fraction of SCIC business;
- it is unlikely that the Commission (40% of SCIC volume of work), which for many years has been used to working with smaller regimes, will greatly increase its consumption of interpretation in the future; the figures for the eight months following enlargement show that the impact of the new languages has been negligible and it is likely to stabilize at a low level.

Taking all the institutions together and despite - or perhaps because of - enlargement, DG SCIC saw a decline in its overall activity in 2004: it provided 127,000 interpreter days, a reduction of 6.4% compared to 2003. However, in view of the atypical nature of 2004 (new Commission, EP elections, unprecedented enlargement), we should not draw hasty conclusions.

Given these developments, it is difficult to predict how the demand for interpreting will evolve. For the new languages, it can reasonably be assumed that the Council of Ministers and the two Committees mentioned above will continue to show sustained demand over the coming years for a number of new active languages, such as Polish, Hungarian and Czech, to be followed in the near future (as of 2007, perhaps) by Romanian, Bulgarian and Croatian, and perhaps by Turkish (if a solution is found to the Cyprus problem, otherwise Turkey is not expected to accede for at least 10 years). For other active enlargement languages, it is more difficult to predict future demand, but it is reasonable to assume that they will remain in overall deficit until the end of the decade.

At the same time, many interpreters working in the most widely used older languages will be retiring in the coming years. Although this should lead to recruitment, it is unlikely to bring in much new blood, as one might have expected before the new system was brought in by the Council of Ministers. The French, German, English and Italian booths will need to be renewed; in contrast, the Danish booth, despite having the highest average of all, is unlikely to offer new opportunities anytime soon. The same applies to the young Nordic (Swedish and Finnish) booths.

All the above predictions are based on the assumption that the overall level of demand will remain stable in the coming years. But this can not be taken as much for granted as in the past. Indeed, prior to 2004 SCIC had never seen its turnover fall in the run-up to enlargement. The Council of Ministers’ new system might hold further surprises in store, for political as much as for budgetary reasons.

e) Success rates

Staff interpreters

There are no recent statistics for the EU-15 languages, since few competitions were organised between 2001 and 2004. However, on the basis of past performance, the success rate of candidates admitted to testing is 20-25%.

For the new languages, the success rate in inter-institutional competitions varied from 0% (Maltese)
to 25% (Estonian).

**Freelances**

- AIC tests (experienced freelances) for the 11 original languages: 30% in 2002;
- AIC tests for enlargement languages: 20% in 2002, 38% in 2003, 42% in 2004;
- insertion tests (beginners, up to end 2003): 19% in 2002.

**f) Reasons for failure in beginners’ freelance tests**

In summer 2003, SCIC authorized a pilot experiment during the last round of insertion tests for beginners (see paragraph h below). Selection panels were invited to fill in a questionnaire drawn up by the CdP listing 12 possible reasons for candidates failing. An analysis of 38 questionnaires gave the following breakdown in descending order of frequency:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor simultaneous technique</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor consecutive technique</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to convey message coherently</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inaccuracy and lack of faithfulness to original</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor command of mother tongue</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to analyse quickly</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor understanding of one or more passive languages</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powers of expression not lively or fluent enough</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of conviction and self-assurance</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate knowledge of current affairs</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of general knowledge</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice or elocution problems</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey shows that inadequate command of the two interpreting techniques and insufficient command of the mother tongue are the main causes of failure by new graduates and rank higher than inadequate comprehension of passive languages.

**g) Contacts with universities**

SCIC-Universities: Since 1998 this major get-together has been organised every year in February or March by DG SCIC. Representatives of some 60 universities and interpreting schools, together with other employers of interpreters and AIIC, meet in Brussels to exchange views and experience on multilingualism and interpreter training. To date, DG SCIC is the only interpretation service world wide to have taken such an initiative.

The 2005 event was largely devoted to an initial stocktaking in the aftermath of enlargement. It brought together over 150 participants, including representatives of about 60 universities. The information provided by international organisations made a substantial and valuable contribution to this report.

Cooperation programme with universities: this is structured around 4 types of action:

- Financial assistance to universities: the SCIC grants subsidies to some 15 interpreter-training programmes, with a view to facilitating the establishment of new programmes or maintaining existing ones (new member states or acceding countries), or to promoting interpreter training in
language combinations which are in serious deficit, or to support specific research projects (e.g. teaching interpreting in the B language, a joint project involving 16 universities affiliated to the European Master’s in Interpretation, launched in the late 1990s by the European institutions). For the academic year 2003-2004, this financial assistance amounted to €468,000 (almost the same amount was paid out by the EP, which belongs to the inter-institutional selection committee in charge of granting subsidies).

- Grants: ranging from €2,000-3,000, awarded to final year students of interpreting with language combinations of particular interest to SCIC. Over recent years, these grants have primarily been awarded (approximately two thirds) to students from candidate countries. In academic years 2002-2004 and 2003-2004, SCIC awarded between 140 and 150 grants.

- Pedagogical assistance: at the request of interested training institutions, SCIC shares with them its experience of European institutions and the training expertise it has acquired over more than 30 years. Interpreter-trainers are sent for periods of 1-6 days to partner universities, where they work with academic staff and students, explaining the selection requirements in the European institutions, and adding a professional dimension to teaching. In academic year 2002-2003, the SCIC provided 558 days of pedagogical assistance (337 in the EU-15, and 211 in acceding and candidate countries). In academic year 2003-2004, the figure was 596 days (353 and 243 days respectively).

- Visits: on request, groups of students accompanied by tutors can spend one or more days in the SCIC, where they will be given general information on the DG and European institutions, and can practise in the dummy (silent) booth. In 2004, the SCIC received 463 visitors.

h) Integrating beginners

- Until the end of 2003, this took the form of the insertion scheme, access to which was reserved for beginners (with an interpreting diploma no more than 3 years old, little or no experience, and limited language combinations) who had passed an ‘insertion test’ (the same type of test as for AICs, but assessed less severely). Insertees were guaranteed 100 days work over a 6-month period, which eased them gradually into pulling their full weight in the booth by having them work with experienced tutors and the Head of Language Unit.

- This system came to an end in 2004, primarily because the three European institutions decided to jointly organise freelance accreditation tests, successful candidates being placed on a joint SCIC, EP and ECJ list. From now on beginners will be subject to the same tests as experienced interpreters, although test panels will no doubt be encouraged to make allowances for their lack of experience. In addition, in certain cases the new system gives a second chance to young candidates who were borderline failures, but show real potential, offering them - on certain conditions - internal top-up training in the institutions for a period of 4 weeks, followed by a new test. Successful candidates will then be guaranteed 60 days work, following a one-week unpaid introductory course.

FAO

FAO, a specialised agency of the UN family working in 5 of the 6 languages of the UN system (Russian might be added in the future), has a small interpretation unit. In 2004, only 3 of the 8 posts were filled. The Organisation recruits a large number of freelance interpreters. All posts in the Organisation are interpreter/translator positions.

a) Staff interpreters: numbers and age pyramid

The data provided reflect the situation as of October 1st, 2003 and apply to staff interpreters only:

- number of interpreters, for all languages: 3 (1 P-4 French, 1 P-4 Spanish, 1 P-3 Chinese)[2];
- average age: 49 years (45 to 53);
• interpreters 50 years and over: 1 (33%).

b) Retirement age of staff interpreters

Age 60, with possible extension to age 62.

c) Rehire of retired staff interpreters as freelances

This can be done, but FAO only resorts to this type of recruitment (local retiree vs. non-local freelance) for short meetings (one day).

d) Shortages

• **Staff interpreters:** 2 positions are being filled (one P-4 English and one P-4 Arabic) and a vacancy will soon be issued for a P-4 Chinese. This will leave 2 vacant posts, out of 8 in the organigram, to be filled. [3] From 2004, FAO plans to recruit at least three junior interpreters on P-3 posts, but initially recruited at P-2 level for a period of 2-3 years, then upgraded to P-3, which is the standard base grade for the recruitment of interpreters in the UN system. [4]

• **Freelances:** since a high percentage of meetings are serviced by freelance interpreters, FAO has identified a major shortage on the local market for the following active languages:
  - French;
  - Arabic;
  - Chinese;
  - Russian, which could become an official language if Russia joins FAO; passive Russian could then become a valuable asset in a language combination

e) Success rates

This is not really relevant to FAO, for the following reasons:

• **Staff interpreters:** FAO recruits staff interpreters through an open competition process. Following this procedure, a short-list of 5/6 candidates (out of 100 on average) is established, from which one is selected as prime candidate. With this procedure, it is therefore meaningless to say that the success rate was 1% (or 20% at the short-list stage). What is more meaningful, though, is to note that in 2003 a competition for a Chinese post had to be cancelled and readvertised, due to a lack of qualified candidates. [5]

• **Freelances:** for freelance accreditation, FAO does not organise tests for the time being, but lists new freelances in its roster based on their CV and on recommendations from other professionals and Chief Interpreters.

f) Why is “la relève” difficult at FAO?

The CdP member for FAO feels that part of the problem in recruiting new staff interpreters in FAO is due to the fact that the posts are mixed interpreter/translator positions, although in practice translation duties (which may vary from one language to the other) represent a low percentage of the workload (less than 10% on average). To this must be added the fact that living in Rome implies learning Italian, which is not usually a problem for the staff member, but can be a source of difficulties for the other members of his/her family (education, limited employment prospects for the spouse, etc.).

**International Monetary Fund**

The Interpretation Services unit of the IMF (based in Washington, DC) manages interpretation services, while staff interpreters belong to their respective language divisions (Arabic and Russian; Chinese, English and Portuguese; French; Spanish) and are required to translate when not assigned to interpretation.
a) **Staff interpreters: numbers and age pyramid**

- (as of 10/1/2003) : 11 staff;
- age categories:
  - 30 - 39 years: 1;
  - 40 - 49 years: 2;
  - 50 - 59 years: 6;
  - 60 - 64 years: 2.
- Ratio of interpreters aged 50 and over: 8 (72%).

b) **Retirement age of staff interpreters**

Set at 65 years of age by the IMF.

c) **Rehire of retired staff interpreters as freelances**

Retired staff may be recruited only in proven cases of freelance market shortages.

d) **Current shortages and future recruitment needs**

- at present: interpreters working from Arabic, French, Portuguese or Spanish into English and from English into one of these languages (both ways);
- in 5 years: the IMF representative on the Staff Interpreters Committee is not in a position to make projections, as the demand would essentially depend on the regions where the organisation will be called on to intervene, and crisis areas, by definition, are difficult to predict.

e) **Success rates**

- for staff positions: 1 out of 5 short-listed candidates (following the initial selection);
- for freelance interpreters: does not apply as they have been recruited on the basis of their CVs and references (without tests).

In summary, the IMF does not foresee a real problem of passing the baton to new personnel in the near future, despite the rather high average age of its staff interpreters.

**OECD**

The OECD, based in Paris - first conference centre in the world - has withdrawn from the Agreement between AIIC and the Coordinated Organisations, while remaining linked to the latter’s Common Procedures. It is hoped that the OECD’s own permanent staff of 20 interpreters together with locally recruited freelance interpreters will be able to cover the organisation’s interpretation needs. The OECD has two official languages (English and French), and all staff interpreters are required to work both ways. However, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Spanish and German are also in demand.

a) **Staff interpreters: numbers and age pyramid**

The following figures were supplied on 1st October 2003 and refer only to permanent staff.

Total number of staff interpreters: 20.

Of these:

- 3 were between 40 - 44
- 4 were between 45 - 49
5 were between 50 - 54
5 were between 55 - 59
3 were between 60 - 65

b) Retirement age of staff interpreters
65

c) Rehire of retired staff interpreters as freelances
Yes.

d) Current shortages and future recruitment needs

The Chief Interpreter does not believe that the OECD either now or in the near future will suffer from a lack of appropriate language combinations. He recruits a new bilingual permanent staff member every 2 years and supplements teams with freelance interpreters whenever necessary. Freelance interpreters cover approximately 40% of interpreted meetings per year. He would like it to be easier to recruit bilingual Russian-English, Chinese-English and Japanese-English or freelance interpreters with passive Spanish, but no longer with German, as demand for the latter is diminishing.

e) Contacts with Interpreting Schools

They are informal but permanent since a number of OECD staff interpreters teach and/or sit on examination boards at the ESIT, ISIT, ETI or the University of Leeds. Students and recent graduates are encouraged to use the dummy (silent) booth facilities available at OECD headquarters.

UNOG[6]

a) Staff interpreters: numbers and age pyramid

The numbers given are based on the staffing strength of each booth, which may vary from booth to booth, according to the needs of the Interpretation Service.

At the time of the study, the total staffing strength is of 84 interpreters, with 80 encumbered posts and 4 unencumbered (4.76%). (Table 1) Unencumbered posts are occupied according to the needs of the service, thus the language distribution may vary.

It is a United Nations’ institutional tradition that the Chief of the Interpretation Service is always an interpreter who, as a professional, is more familiar with the workings of an interpretation service and its specific requirements, and with the intricacies of the profession.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Staffing strength</th>
<th>Encumbered</th>
<th>Not encumbered</th>
<th>Average age in 2003</th>
<th>Average age on recruitment</th>
<th>Number retiring at 60</th>
<th>Number retiring at 62</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The number used to calculate the age averages of interpreters in 2003, both on recruitment and on retirement, is the actual number of interpreters (encumbered), i.e. 80.

The average age of interpreters in 2003 was 49. The average recruitment age is 33. These averages vary according to the booth, as shown in table 2 below:

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Average age 2003</th>
<th>Average age on recruitment</th>
<th>Number retiring at 60</th>
<th>Number retiring at 62</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49 (66.25%)</td>
<td>33 (33.75%)</td>
<td>53 (66.25%)</td>
<td>25 (33.75%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) Retirement age of staff interpreters

According to the latest personnel policy, the retirement age at the UN is 60 for staff recruited before 1990, and 62 for staff recruited after 1990.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number retiring at 60</th>
<th>Number retiring at 62</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>53 (66.25%)</td>
<td>25 (33.75%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c) Rehire of retired staff interpreters as freelances

Retired staff interpreters are occasionally rehired, but preference is given to freelance interpreters.

d) Current shortage in language combinations

Traditionally, UN interpreters work into their mother tongue only. However, the Arabic and Chinese booths are required to go both ways, into their mother tongue and to give relay into either French or English.

For the English, French, Russian and Spanish booths, a minimum of 3 languages is required and there are not many interpreters with two booths, whereas for Arabic and Chinese booths, where interpreters have to work with two active languages, sometimes only two languages are required.

Traditionally, the English and French booths give relay from Russian and Spanish, even though
there are interpreters in other booths who have these languages in their language combination. Many interpreters have other non-UN official languages in their combination, or have two active languages.

e) Language combinations required

These vary according to the needs of the service. As of 2004 the most needed language combinations are English from Russian, and to and from Chinese.

f) Estimate of future language combination requirements

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>6[7]</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear from the table that from 2004 to 2013, a total of 40 interpreters will retire, i.e. 51.28%, a total per booth of:

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>2004/2008</th>
<th>Percentage for booth</th>
<th>Percentage of encumbered Staffing Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>45.45%</td>
<td>6.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>3.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>11.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>11.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>7.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>10.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>51.28%</td>
<td>51.28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vacant posts are filled through competitive examinations in the language combination needed. Staff are also transferred to and from different duty stations.

g) Candidates for interpretation posts (staff and freelance): statistics for the past 5 years (1998 to 2002)

Periodically, competitive examinations are held to recruit staff interpreters in all language combinations, according to the needs of the service. Accreditation tests are also carried out for freelance interpreters; however no statistics were available for the success and failure rates of either the competitive examinations or accreditation tests.

Geneva, November 2004

Study by E. Moggio-Ortiz

United Nations – New York Headquarters
In comparison with the detailed data provided by the European institutions, the information made available to the CdP representative by the UN administration is very generic.

In summary:

a) **Staff interpreters: numbers and age pyramid**

The total number should be 128 at the end of 2004.

**Average age: all interpreters: 49.44 years**

- English booth: 52.56 years;
- French booth: 51.18 years;
- Chinese booth: 50.25 years;
- Spanish booth: 48.44 years;
- Russian booth: 47.56 years;
- Arabic booth: 47.15 years.

In the E and F booths, 40 to 50% of the interpreters currently on the staff will retire within the next five years (any resignations will add to the number of vacant positions). In the other four booths, retirements will be spread fairly regularly over the next 20 to 25 years.

b) **Retirement age of staff interpreters**

60 for people hired before 1990; 62 thereafter.

c) **Rehire of retired staff interpreters as freelances**

Yes (in some cases, even 20 years or more after their retirement).

d) **Language combinations that are understaffed now or will be in the next five years**

English or French A with Russian C

e) **Success rates**

No information

f) **Contacts with training institutions**

No official information. This is most likely due to lack of contact and the fact that interpreter training institutions have essentially disappeared in the US, especially on the East Coast. In addition, most newly recruited interpreters already have extensive experience (10-15 years), but some of the most recent recruits are however newcomers to the profession (2 years experience or less).

**NATO – May 2004**

a) **Staff interpreters: numbers and age pyramid**

NATO currently employs 38 interpreters. The average age was 51.7 years in May 2004. Well over half of them (24, or 63%) have reached age 50 or more: 8 in the English booth (57%), 16 in the French booth (62%).

**Average age: 51.7 years (May 2004)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of birth</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over 60</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 x 1941</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b) Retirement age of staff interpreters

The minimum retirement age is 60, the maximum 65, with most showing no intention of retiring early. Retired interpreters can be recruited as freelances up to their 70th birthday if they contribute to the Provident Fund (CPIC).

c) Current shortages: strong B, especially English B

Rationale: Separate A language booths are only required for high-level meetings such as NATO Councils (Permanent Representatives), Chiefs of Defense, Ministerials or Summits. For most other meetings, some of which are heavily technical, booths are bilingual (EN and FR), with the greater part of the debates conducted in English, since the vast majority of delegates at NATO choose to use English rather than French (the other official language). Interpreters therefore work mostly into French, requiring an A or a strong B in that language, even though only a small proportion of delegates listen to the French interpretation. Should a statement be made in French, however, most participants will grab their earphones and listen to the English interpretation, in effect making performance into that language the litmus test by which most delegates probably judge interpreters collectively.
At high-level meetings involving non-NATO languages, freelance interpreters working mostly into an English B are recruited by national delegations. It is essential that they provide a good ‘retour’, as they are a relay to every other booth.

The bilingual nature of the organisation means that current recruitment needs cannot be met adequately by young graduates from Belgian schools of interpretation, where training is geared essentially towards European institution requirements, i.e. one A language + 3 or 4 Cs. B languages are taught for consecutive interpretation only and are to be used in simultaneous interpretation in exceptional situations when no A is available. It is therefore fair to conclude that graduates from Belgian schools fill neither the needs of the private (bi-active) sector nor those of a bilingual organisation such as NATO.

Future recruitment needs: will probably depend on retirements.

d) Rate of success/failure (applies both to staff and freelance interpreters)

- 2003: 9 candidates, 4 or 44% passed (4 rejected, 1 deferred)
- 2002: 5 candidates, 1 or 20% passed (1 rejected, 3 deferred)
- 2001: 14 candidates, 7 or 50% passed (1 rejected, 3 deferred, 1 no-show)
- 2000: 8 candidates, 2 or 25% passed (3 rejected, 3 deferred)

Most frequent reasons for failure:
- lack of general knowledge
- inaccuracy and lack of faithfulness to original
- poor understanding of passive language
- unsatisfactory proficiency in mother tongue!

Management has authorized a recruitment procedure for 3, maybe 4, new interpreters. Vacancies were first advertised in the summer of 2003; candidates were tested 12 months later. Overriding objections from both interpreters and translators in NATO, the administration has imposed a policy of recruiting new interpreters who would be required to translate for 25% of their time. However, translating in NATO is, 90% of the time, into French, and requires French mother-tongue, whereas our interpreting priority is to recruit English As. No one has been hired yet. The last round of recruitment (from our freelance pool) dates back to 2001.

5) Relations with universities and interpretation schools

Seven senior interpreters (3 EN, 4 FR) sit on examination boards in three Belgian schools of interpretation and one university in Paris. Two actually teach and sometimes organise dummy (silent) booth sessions. They also act as consultants for English B students, with virtually no English As to be found among students.

Recruitment of new freelance or staff interpreters is further complicated by the need to grant security clearance, a process requiring 6 to 18 months, depending on nationality. The security requirement also makes it impossible to establish internships or induction courses for young interpreters.

NATO Defense College (Rome)

In numerical terms, the NATO Defense College is the smallest body covered by the CdP study. Its interpreters also perform, to varying degrees, translation tasks.

a) Staff interpreters: numbers and age pyramid

As at April 1st, 2005, the NDC Linguistic Service consists of:
3 interpreters:
  - one double A French-Italian, with active English (AIIC);
  - one English A, with active French and Italian;
  - one French A with active English and Italian (AIIC);
  - one English translator from French and Italian.

The age range of the 4 linguistic staff is 57-60.

b) Statutory retirement age

65; however, retirement is possible earlier from 60 on without penalty.

c) Rehire of retired staff interpreters as freelances

Yes.

d) Gaps in language combinations

None to speak of, as the 3 interpreters cover the two NATO official languages as well as the host-country language.

The European Parliament

The Directorate of Interpretation at the European Parliament is the second largest interpretation service in the world, after the DG SCIC, with 223 permanent staff interpreters (on 1st October 2003), not counting the former interpreters now engaged in administrative work. In most cases this service ensures full cover of the official languages (11 languages at the time of the survey, 20 from 1st May 2004, following enlargement of the EU).

a) Staff interpreters: numbers and age pyramid

1. UE-15 Languages

The statistics show the situation on 1st October 2003 and cover only the staff interpreters:

- overall number of interpreters: 223
- average age of interpreters: 45.9 years
- interpreters aged 50 and over: 77 (34.5%)

These figures vary considerably across the linguistic units:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FR</th>
<th>DE</th>
<th>EN</th>
<th>IT</th>
<th>ES</th>
<th>NL</th>
<th>PT</th>
<th>EL</th>
<th>DA</th>
<th>FI</th>
<th>SV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average age</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall average</td>
<td>+0.4%</td>
<td>+1.9%</td>
<td>+0.4%</td>
<td>+3.4%</td>
<td>-0.6%</td>
<td>+13%</td>
<td>-0.4%</td>
<td>-0.3%</td>
<td>+12%</td>
<td>-14%</td>
<td>-8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of interpreters aged 50 or over (and percentage per booth):

- Booth FR 11 (39%)
- Booth DE 7 (33%)
- Booth EN 9 (36%)
- Booth IT 8 (40%)
- Booth ES 2 (11%)
- Booth NL 13 (57%)
- Booth PT 6 (33%)
These figures show that aging essentially concerns those booths which were in existence at the beginning of the European venture (NL, I, F) as well as the Danish booth, which has the lowest renewal rate.

The following graphs give details of the situation in general and per linguistic unit.

2. The Languages of Enlargement

As of 2003 the EP had taken on about 50 interpreters with auxiliary staff contracts, chosen from accredited freelances.

By the end of 2004, the EP will have recruited 64 staff interpreters: 20 who passed the inter-institutional competitions and 44 temporary staff into the new booths.

b) Retirement age of staff interpreters

Until the reform of the Staff Regulation for European civil servants, which came into force on 1st May 04, EP interpreters, like those in the DG SCIC and the ECJ, were governed by the following regulations:

- a minimum of 35 years of service gave rights to a full retirement pension;
- earliest age of retirement 60, and compulsory retirement at 65 years of age.

The reform of the Staff Regulation has stiffened these conditions: 37 years of service, retirement between 62 and 67 years of age (but this only applies to staff under 50 years of age or with less than 20 years of service on 1st May 04 - it does not therefore apply to those who are now 50 or over). The previous conditions will therefore continue to govern the situation of a large number of staff interpreters who will necessarily leave the institution in the next 15 years, during which time the reform will not provide any solution to falling numbers. Only after 2019 will the delayed departure of staff (by an average of 2 years) begin to attenuate the problem to some extent.

c) Rehire of retired staff interpreters as freelances

Totally ruled out so far, as in the other EU institutions.

d) Language combinations and passive languages in deficit

The most common passive languages in the language combinations of EU-15 staff interpreters at the end of 2003 were:
- English and French;
- followed by German, Spanish and Italian.

It is likely that these languages will remain important (although not exclusive) pivot languages in order to provide the necessary relays for multilingualism to work, especially since, with few exceptions, these are also the languages (or at least some of them) which are found in the initial language combinations of many interpreters from the new member states.

Passive languages considered to be in deficit in the EP at the end of 2003 were: Danish, Swedish, Finnish, Greek and Dutch. As one might have expected, the May 2004 enlargement started with a shortage in many of the new languages, where whole booths must be built up to work actively and where the passive knowledge in other booths is largely insufficient. Judging from the experience of previous enlargements, with languages that did not have international status before accession of the country concerned, it will take 5 to 10 years before most of the new booths (except, perhaps, the Polish booth) reach critical mass, or before sufficient interpreters of the "old" booths have learnt these new languages.

It is not easy for the EP to predict with any precision the demand for interpretation in the next 5 or 10 years, since past trends cannot necessarily be extrapolated into the future. For both budgetary and practical reasons, the political bodies of the EP decided to adopt a new "Code of Conduct on Multilingualism" in the Spring of 2004, whose Article 1 states that: "the rights (of members) shall be guaranteed on the basis of the principles governing controlled full multilingualism", the implementing arrangements of which are fixed in detail in the code, "in particular the priorities to be observed in cases where language resources are not sufficient to provide all the facilities requested ". These priorities are defined in the following order:

- the plenary;
- priority political meetings, such as meetings of the President, Parliament's governing bodies and the Conciliation Committee;
- parliamentary committees and delegations, and political groups;
- press conferences;
- other official bodies authorized by the Bureau;
- some administrative meetings.

Thus, in Brussels and in Strasbourg, full language cover will continue to be provided for the plenary and, generally, the major political groups and committees. Apart from plenary, language cover will be provided according to the real needs of members as laid down in the "language profile" of the body concerned, drafted at the time of its constitution. Other requests will depend on the possibilities of the interpretation service. Meeting organisers will therefore have to accept greater discipline when requesting interpretation. A "real needs" policy, practised since the 80's by the DG SCIC, is therefore being gradually applied in EP workplaces too.

For missions outside the usual places of work, the EP will consolidate the system which has applied for some time: limiting interpretation to a few active languages and, where need be, with additional passive languages, i.e. an asymmetric system.

We should also remember that interpretation will be provided in many meetings according to a "mixed" system (B or C into A only in some booths, A also into B in others) since the "retour" system will be necessary, at least initially, particularly for the interpretation of the rare languages of enlargement. This system will be reassessed at the latest at the end of 2008, "taking particular account of technological advances", with an interim assessment in mid-2006.

Given the volatile nature of these parameters, an analysis of the situation in 2004 does not allow the CdP to advance more than a few hypotheses of what seems possible in the future:
Booths frequently used as pivots (EN, FR, DE, ES and IT) and frequently used at meetings outside the usual places of work where limited language cover is provided will probably see the recruitment of staff interpreters in the coming 10 years, if only to replace the many staff from these booths who will necessarily retire. Generally speaking, the preferred language combinations will certainly be those which combine the passive languages most commonly used plus one or two rare languages (enlargement languages or those already in deficit: see above).

Booths with the highest average age of interpreters (cf DA, NL) should be at least partially renewed in the next 5 to 10 years, unless controlled full multilingualism were to have a considerable impact on the demand for these active languages or if the institution decided to compensate for the loss of staff interpreters through retirement by an increased recruitment of freelances.

Prospects for the other "old" booths are less clear, even though the full multilingualism required in the plenary and - generally speaking - in major committees and political groups will continue to generate a considerable demand. This will doubtless entail keeping relatively large numbers of staff in most booths.

The new booths will also be affected by the Code of Conduct. Their staff will probably only be increased if there is a real need for these languages in meetings.

e) Success / failure rates

It was not possible to obtain reliable statistics for the EP showing success/failure on selection of staff or FL before the introduction of inter-institutional competitions/tests. Such data was not previously established in a systematic or centralised way. In defense of the Directorate of Interpretation, it must be said that in the years preceding the inter-institutional competitions, the EP had held only a few selection tests/competitions, which meant that little data was available.

From the scattered information obtained by the CdP from some Heads of Unit, who are present during the selection procedures, the following were presented as reasons for failure amongst new graduates from the universities:

- lack of mastery of interpretation techniques;
- insufficient number of passive languages understood at the required level;
- shortcomings in general knowledge;
- poverty of mother tongue.

The EP was unfortunately not party to the pilot experiment using a questionnaire (implemented by the DG SCIC in summer 2003) which might perhaps have made it possible to refine and prioritize these statements.

Since December 2003 the EP has, however, been party to the inter-institutional competitions for the recruitment of staff interpreters (together with DG SCIC and ECJ). Inter-institutional tests for the selection of freelance interpreters should be organised from the end of 2004.

On the basis of these competitions and tests it should be possible for the EU institutions to establish reliable statistics on success/failure rates and the reasons leading to them, which could be of great use to schools involved in the training of interpreters.

f) Contacts with universities/ introduction of new interpreters

In many cases the EP works together with the DG SCIC to support the training of new interpreters, e.g. in the framework of the European Master’s programme, where it subsidizes participating universities' interpreter training courses on a 50/50 basis with DG SCIC. Both institutions take part together in missions to help set up training programmes e.g. in Croatia and Romania, with an eye to
future enlargement of the EU. Like the DG SCIC, the EP provides grants to interpreters wishing to add new languages which it requires. It also has a 'visitors' programme for final year students of interpretation wishing to see the institutions at work. It allows its interpreters to participate in the 'training of trainers' certificate course at ETI.

For newly graduated interpreters wishing to add a language in order to be considered for work in the institution, the EP runs a 'conference interpretation assistants' programme, whereby these graduates can go to an interpreter training establishment in the country of their chosen new language. In return for acting as teaching assistants for students there, they can themselves participate in the courses and obtain firsthand experience of the new language in the country in which it is spoken. About 20 new interpreters participated in this scheme in 2003. The few internships/training courses offered by the EP will be restarted for graduates from Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia and, perhaps, Turkey.

One problem encountered is the closure of UK university departments of interpreter training, depriving the EU institutions of partners specialising in the training of interpreters into English, where a deficit is becoming apparent.

V. Interpreting schools and universities

1. “Next Generation” (La Relève) Questionnaire sent to Universities

A. Content

A supplementary questionnaire was sent out together with the AIIC Training Committee survey to higher education institutions offering interpreter training. It asked schools the following questions:

As part of its study entitled “La Relève”, on the next generation of interpreters, AIIC would like to ask you some additional questions about your contacts with International Organisations (IOs) which may sometimes recruit your graduates.

1. Is your school/department in direct contact with any national or international organisations which recruit conference interpreters?
   - If so, which ones?
   - If so, what kind of support do you receive? (e.g. financial support; does the organisation provide you with guest speakers or pedagogical assistance; do representatives from the organisation sit on your exam juries, etc.)?

2. Do you think the IOs provide you with sufficient information on:
   - job opportunities for recent graduates?
   - language combinations which are currently in most or least demand?
   - the kind of general background knowledge a candidate would need to be hired, and thus recommendations for required or elective courses that should be offered as part of the curriculum in addition to actual interpretation courses (e.g. law, economics, contemporary history, political science, etc.)?
   - IO selection procedures and the way recruitment testing is conducted (by test, open competition, etc.)?

If your answer is no, what information would you like to receive from the IOs and how would you prefer to receive it?

3. As a response to changes in the demand for interpreters on the part of the IOs, over the last 5 years have you adapted:
the language combinations in which interpretation courses are offered? (Are there now more/fewer combinations offered? Have the combinations changed?)

actual course content?

If you have not, is it because you feel that:

no changes are necessary?

changes might be necessary, but there are insurmountable obstacles to change (in which case, what are these obstacles?)

4. Does your school/department belong to an academic network?

If so, which other universities do you cooperate with in the network?

If so, what are the goals of the network?

5. How do you think AIIC can support you in your contact with the IOs?

B. Responses to the questionnaire: analysis

Only the 19 universities listed below responded to the “La Relève” questionnaire:

Germany:
- Fachhochschule Köln;
- Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz in Germersheim;
- Ruprecht-Karls-Universität, Heidelberg.

Belgium:
- French-speaking: Haute École Léonard de Vinci (ISTI), Brussels;
- Flemish-speaking: Lessius Hogeschool, Antwerp;
- Flemish-speaking: Mercator Hogeschool, Ghent.

Brazil: Pontificia Universidade Católica, São Paulo.

Spain:
- Universidad de La Laguna;
- Universidad de Vic.

Finland: University of Helsinki.

France: Université Catholique de l’Ouest (UCO), Angers.

Hungary: ELTE University, Budapest.

Portugal: Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa.

United Kingdom:
- University of Leeds;
- University of Salford.

Sweden: Stockholms Universitet (TÖI)

Switzerland: Université de Genève

Taiwan:
- Fu Jen University, College of Foreign Languages
- National Taiwan Normal University.

This response rate from schools offering conference interpretation programmes is rather low, especially when one considers that in Europe alone there are more than 60 higher education establishments training conference interpreters. Only 3 universities outside Europe (one in Brazil, 2 in Taiwan) responded. A number of highly regarded schools (e.g. ESIT in Paris or Westminster University in London) did not participate in the survey. It was also disappointing to note that, apart from ELTE University in Budapest, universities in Eastern Europe, whose role is crucial in training truly professional interpreters who are specialised in enlargement languages, are conspicuous by their absence in this survey.
Nevertheless, the responses from the twenty or so universities listed above no doubt shed considerable light on the circumstances challenging many schools currently training interpreters.

**Question 1.**

Most schools (16 out of 19) confirmed that they have contacts with national or international organisations which recruit conference interpreters. Only the University of Vic in Spain, the Pontificia Universidade Católica de São Paulo in Brazil and the National Taiwan Normal University responded, saying that they receive no information or support of any kind from IOs and seem to be very isolated.

The organisations they mentioned are listed below in descending order: the EU Commission/SCIC (15 responses), the European Parliament (12), the United Nations (5), various national ministries of foreign affairs or foreign trade (3), the Council of Europe (2), the European Court of Justice (2), NATO, the European Patent Office, the European Central Bank, the ILO and ECOWAS (1).

These organisations provided support in the form of:

- pedagogical assistance (13 responses);
- participation in exam juries (8);
- hosting student visits to the IO (8);
- subsidies to the school (6);
- student scholarships (4);
- short training courses (1).

**Question 2.**

Just under two thirds of the respondents (12 out of 19) felt they received sufficient information from the IOs (about career opportunities, language combinations, general background knowledge required to be hired and selection procedures). Not surprisingly, the schools which felt they did not receive adequate information included schools with no IO contacts (see responses to question 1 above), as well as the University of Heidelberg, Mercator Hogeschool (East Flanders), the University of Lisbon and ELTE University in Budapest.

These 7 schools indicated the following problems or needs:

- the information provided to date by the IOs on career opportunities (i.e. open permanent posts and freelance contracts) is not sufficiently clear and not regularly updated;
- this kind of information is certainly available, but it is all too often obtained piecemeal and through informal channels: it should be made available in some official written form (i.e. hard copy documents, on the Internet, etc);
- language combinations most in demand must be clearly specified;
- the IOs should plan and publish a recruitment test calendar for an 18 month period, as well as the specific rules for admission to these tests;
- evaluation criteria for freelance accreditation tests and concours (open competition for permanent posts) are not clearly defined, especially for younger candidates;
- more information is required about career opportunities for interpreters with Portuguese in their language combination (São Paulo and Lisbon universities).

**Question 3.**

Most schools said that they have made changes to accommodate new IO requirements:

- 13 now offer interpreting training in a different range of languages;
- 17 have adapted their curriculum content.
Of the 6 universities which said they had made no changes, 4 indicated that they felt that some changes were necessary but that they were facing considerable challenges, specifically:

- extremely rigid academic structures, not particularly open to the professionalization of training; however, establishing Master’s programmes in interpretation may be one way round this;
- it is still very hard to find students with the new languages now in demand;
- it is difficult to find teaching staff with the relevant language combinations locally;
- there are few or no national or international organisations offering local job opportunities for graduates (universities in São Paulo and Taiwan).

**Question 4.**

14 out of the 19 respondents belong to one or several academic networks, specifically:

- CIUTI (6 responses);
- EMCI (European Master’s, 5 responses);
- PLUG (British universities);
- UCO + ITI-RI Strasbourg + University of Ljubljana (Slovenia);
- Taiwanese universities: Fu Jen + National Taiwan + Changrong + Monterey Institute.

The stated objectives of these networks are:

- to exchange ideas, best practice and teaching materials (10 responses);
- to promote quality teaching (5 responses);
- to work together to define programmes and guidelines for exams (5 responses);
- to encourage faculty and student mobility (3 responses);
- to promote new languages (2 responses);
- to organise joint interpreter training seminars.

**Question 5.**

One university answered this question with a question mark and another said that the question was not yet relevant, suggesting perhaps that some schools do not yet appreciate the need for AIIC support. However, the 17 other respondents said that they thought that support from AIIC would be helpful, if AIIC (either individual members or as an association) could serve as mediator between IOs and schools:

**a) Working with Universities: AIIC members, both permanent and accredited freelance interpreters, could:**

- regularly relay to schools updated information on recruitment (e.g. general IO policy, short- and medium-term needs, specific job opportunities, language combination profiles, statistics);
- participate actively in cooperation IO programmes with schools (student visits to IOs, pedagogical assistance offered to universities, advice to teachers and students, teaching materials, etc.);
- inform universities about profiles in demand on different (non-IO) markets (e.g. the demand for bilingual interpreters for domestic private markets);
- visit universities more frequently to meet students and teachers;
- provide schools with contact details of:
  - the person responsible for selection and hiring in each IO;
  - alternatively, another contact person (e.g. a permanent staff member for each IO), if possible a member of the AIIC Staff Interpreters' Committee familiar with the IO internal recruiting policy;
- encourage networking and contacts with other universities training interpreters.
b) Working with the Organisations: AIIC members could

- encourage their administrations to use the newest information technology (Internet sites) to publish their hiring requirements, in particular their selection and testing procedures, in a clear and publicly accessible manner;
- encourage their employers to observe a minimum of continuity and consistency in their hiring policy by not changing the conditions every year (e.g. one school complained about the constant changes made to the highly regarded SCIC “insertion” programme [induction programme for new interpreters] between 1997 and 2003; this programme has since been discontinued;
- help integrate newly recruited colleagues by offering advice and by example;
- actively encourage some IOs (especially the UN) to drop recruiting restrictions based on nationality (a problem highlighted by the universities in Taiwan).

2. IAMLADP work

A. IAMLADP Questionnaire sent to universities

In 2002, the WGT (Working Group on Training, chaired by Mr N. Muylle, SCIC, Director) sent a questionnaire to 75 universities which train not only interpreters, but also other language industry professionals (translators, minute writers, etc). 35 schools replied, of which 31 offer interpreter training. This chapter summarises the conclusions distilled from these 31 responses.

- Most universities indicated their awareness of the changes experienced by many IOs since the 90s, largely as a result of:
  - the increase in importance of new conference languages, such as the EU enlargement languages or Chinese;
  - the increase in the use of relay in conferences offering many languages in interpretation, and hence a need for training in relay;
- the increased integration of new technologies in the profession:
  - computerized documentation and research tools;
  - videoconferences and interpreting for the media.

Many universities say they have at least begun to adapt their curriculum to accommodate these changes and to respond better to market needs.

The respondents were unhappy about the mediocrity of the students knocking at their doors, in terms of both their linguistic skills and their general background and cultural knowledge. Many deplored the poverty of the candidates’ native language skills, and would like to have a freer hand to implement a stricter admission selection procedure (in some countries, academic rules still sometimes preclude any admission selection procedure).

A number of universities said they are open to expanding the range of languages in which interpreting training is offered, if they can obtain the funding they would need to open new language sections. They said funding is also going to be needed if students are to spend more time abroad as an integral part of their studies.

Generally speaking, universities would like to see more IO support for their students, perhaps in the form of student grants or scholarships, and visits and short training courses on IO premises. In return, the universities stated their willingness to provide help with the training of trainers.

The universities emphasized that their ability to adapt was limited by budgetary constraints. They said they would welcome not only subsidies for concrete projects, but also IO support in convincing the national authorities of the need to support essential reforms.
The respondents called upon the IOs to provide them with a clearer indication of their current and future hiring needs (i.e. with better planning), and to understand that training true booth-ready professional interpreters and academic curriculum design together form a complex and long-term undertaking.

Some schools pointed to the need to pursue the recognition and protection of the professional title of conference interpreter: this will enhance the professional status of the interpreter and thus attract talented young candidates to the profession.

**B. Other IAMLADP work: the Standing Committee**

At the IAMLADP annual assembly held in Geneva in July 2003, the WGT’s proposal to create a Standing Committee (SC) was approved: its role would be to liaise between the IOs and the universities, with the goal of “ensuring a smooth transition from the classroom to the workplace”. The SC is comprised of:

- all interested IOs (UN family, European institutions, etc);
- universities, represented by the spokespersons of the different networks (EMCI, CIUTI, ELC - European Language Council, TNP - Thematic Network Project for Languages - and PLUG - Professional Languages in Universities’ Group).

The first SC meeting was held on 11 March 2004 in Brussels, at the same time as the WGT meeting and the SCIC-Universities Conference. Its remit was defined as follows:

- "to be the contact point between the intergovernmental organisations and training establishments;
- to facilitate the exchange of information;
- to facilitate cooperation and better relations between the two parties, in order to better anticipate future trends.

In order to fulfill its remit, the SC:

- will serve as a forum for discussion on questions of common interest to both parties;
- will define its priorities and its work programme on an annual basis;
- will establish recommendations and codes of best practice;
- will provide information on trends of interest to both parties."

For the year beginning in 2004, the SC approved two co-chairs (N. Muylle for the IOs, and B. Moser-Mercer for the universities), and a secretary (B. Fox, SCIC, Head of Multilingualism Unit).

For 2004, the SC decided to focus on 2 priorities:

- to define clearly the professional profiles sought after by the IOs;
- to identify research projects and continuous training programmes offered by universities which could be of interest to staff interpreters (e.g. distance learning, enhancement courses, specific modules).

The SC will also explore the following ideas:

- developing specific initiatives: e.g. visits to IOs, short training courses on IO premises, pedagogical assistance, teaching materials, induction courses for new interpreters entering the profession;
- designing ways of enhancing the status of professional linguists in order to continue to attract talented young candidates from diverse backgrounds;
- studying the impact of new technologies on the language industry professions;
identifying new skills required of linguists and their impact on academic curricula.

IAMLADP will soon have its own website (website currently hosted since 2004 by WIPO) with a forum and places to post information (e.g. career opportunities, notice of open competitions, profiles, etc.). This is intended to facilitate the exchange of information among SC members.

NB: The IAMLDAP Task Force on the Status of the Language Industry Professions will continue its work independently of the WGT. This Task Force will focus on questions relating to access to the profession and accreditation exams, as well as the cost of language services to the IOs.

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

1. The International Organisations

a) Aging of permanent staff

This is noticeable everywhere, even if the numbers of staff, at the date of this study (2003), vary considerably. From the smallest to the largest IO:

- NATO Defense College: 3
- FAO: 3
- Italian Chamber of Deputies: 6
- IMF: 11
- OECD: 20
- NATO: 38
- UN Geneva: 80
- UN New York: 128
- Government of Canada: 203 (this figure covers Official Language interpreters, including accredited freelances)
- European Parliament: 223
- European Commission (DG SCIC): 446

Two parameters were analysed:

- Average age of staff interpreters;
- Proportion of interpreters aged 50 and over.

An analysis of these parameters shows that the IOs studied (including the Translation Bureau of the Government of Canada, which is actually a national service) are all affected by the problem of aging interpreters, but with considerable differences from one organisation to the other.

The average age of staff interpreters in 2003 was as follows:

- 42.9 years DG SCIC (not including the ‘new language’ interpreters from the last enlargement)
- 45.9 years EP (excluding new languages)
- 49 years UN Geneva and FAO
- 49.4 years UN New York
- 50.4 years OECD
The proportion of interpreters aged 50 or over in relation to the overall number:

- 23%  DG SCIC (before enlargement)
- 33%  FAO
- 34.5% EP (before enlargement)
- 50%  UN New York
- 51%  UN Geneva
- 63%  NATO
- 64%  Conference Services, Government of Canada
- 65%  OECD
- 72%  IMF
- 100% NDC

This last parameter is even more significant than that of average age when it is related to the age on retirement, which in some organisations starts at 55 (Government of Canada) and nowhere at the moment exceeds 65 years of age (cf. the reformed Staff Regulations for the European Civil Service will allow staff in European Institutions to continue working until 67 years of age, but the effects of the reform will only start to be felt from 2024 onwards).

Furthermore, recent sociological studies tend to show that businesses and administrations with more than 35% of their employees aged 50 or over generally suffer more than others from a lack of dynamism and capacity to adapt to change, and it is unlikely that interpretation services should be an exception to this empirical rule. Of the IOs studied, only the FAO, DG SCIC, and the EP (even before the arrival of interpreters from the new member states) are below this threshold.

The DG SCIC and the EP (as well as the ECJ, which unfortunately did not take part in this study) are also a case apart in that they do not allow their former staff interpreters (any more than their other former staff administrators or assistants) to work for them as freelances in their retirement, which has meant that these institutions give all the more support to training the future generation of interpreters in general, both staff and freelances.

b) Language combinations in demand (in the next 5 years)

Some IOs stated in their replies that they did not believe they had a problem with the future supply of interpreters (IMF and OECD). Of the others, a distinction must be made between those IOs which need to renew their interpreters and have a constant language régime - for whom aging is the sole factor of renewal - and those which, additionally, have seen an explosive increase in the number of official languages, i.e. the European Institutions after 1st May 2004.

IOs with a stable language régime: they need to renew their staff in the following language combinations:
Translation Bureau of the Government of Canada:
- ES into EN and P into EN,
- ES into FR and P into FR,
- Bi-active EN-FR.

United Nations (UNHQ and UNOG)
- EN and FR booths, especially from RU;
- Chinese booth with retour into EN or FR;
- Arabic booth with retour into EN or FR,
- ES booth.

It should be remembered, furthermore, that the UN transfers interpreters between the different working locations (New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi).

NATO: FR booth with retour into EN (cf. for future recruits 25% of working time will be given over to written translation).

The European Institutions

These must both renew aging booths in the 'old' Eur-15 languages and create new Eur-10 booths as a result of enlargement in 2004.

To rationalize the recruitment of both staff and freelances, the 3 institutions with an interpreting service (the EC, the EP and the ECJ) decided to pool their selection procedures: thus the first inter-institutional competitions were held from December 2003 to October 2004 for the Eur-10 languages, and inter-institutional tests for the accreditation of freelances started in November 2004. Those passing the competitions are shared amongst the 3 institutions and the accredited freelances may work for any of the 3 institutions. (In the past, candidates had to apply for competitions or tests separately at the DG SCIC and the EP, whilst the ECJ used the lists of the other two institutions.)

EUR-15 languages

Staff will need to be recruited in the near future for the following active languages:[8]

- The major vehicular languages often used as pivots and for which the average interpreter age is high:
  - FR booth with 2 to 3 C languages;
  - IT booth with 2 to 3 C languages;
  - DE booth with 2 to 3 C languages;
  - EN booth with 2 to 3 C languages.

- Some have a particularly high average age, especially in the EP:
  - NL booth with 2 to 3 C languages;
  - DA with 2 to 3 C languages.

Further recruitment in the SCIC will depend on demand, following the changes made when the 'on request' system was introduced in the EU Council. 'Controlled Multilingualism' in the EP may also limit the number of new recruits (see chapter IV).

EUR-10 languages

Given the meagre results from the first inter-institutional competitions (only 77 successful candidates, with considerable variations from 0 for Maltese to 19 for Polish), all the enlargement languages are considered to be in demand in 2005 and new competitions will shortly be organised for these languages. Some will be recruited at the new basic grade A5 and others at a considerably higher grade (A9).
For the A5 competitions the most likely profile will be:

- A language + 2C;
- or A language + B (retour including in simultaneous).

Depending on the results of the next competitions, the impact on the DG SCIC of the new 'on request' system for interpretation in the EU Council, and the effects of 'controlled multilingualism' in the EP, eventually some Eur-10 booths will reach critical mass and will no longer be considered to be in demand. It is too early to know which languages they will be, but they will probably be those of the most populous nations (particularly Polish) and will remain in high demand for both political and demographic reasons.

At the last SCIC-Universities conference, on 4 March 2005, Mrs. Baviera Betson, Head of the Interpretation Service at the ECJ, underscored the fact that her institution was woefully short of interpreters in the Lithuanian, Slovene and Czech booths. It should be noted that the ECJ generally needs interpreters with at least a good understanding of French, which is the procedural language of the institution and is vital for reading the files when preparing cases.

In 2007 and 2008 Bulgarian and Romanian, and in the longer term Croatian and Turkish (Turkish could become an official language even before the accession of Turkey if a solution is found to the Cyprus problem) will be added to the Eur-10 languages. These languages will certainly remain in deficit for the first years after the accession of the countries concerned.

c) Integrating young interpreters

Only a minority of the IOs in this study have introduced a system to facilitate the integration of young interpreters with little experience into their staff or to induct them into the service.

- The Translation Bureau of the Government of Canada has set up an 'internship' enabling graduates from the University of Ottawa, accompanied by experienced staff interpreters, to be integrated into the staff teams or to be added to the list of accredited freelances within 2 years of obtaining their diploma.
- DG SCIC had an 'Insertion Scheme' for young interpreters from 1998 to 2003. This guaranteed those who passed an insertion test 100 days of work over a period of approximately 6 months, ensuring a gradual increase in responsibility in the booth, together with guidance from experienced tutors. At the end of the insertion period, the interpreters took a freelance accreditation test. It was subsequently found that, during the competitions organised over that period, there was a high proportion of former 'insertees' among the successful candidates. This scheme was, however, terminated in 2004. In order to facilitate the induction of new freelances in the future and in the framework of a system of tests common to all the EU institutions, DG SCIC is considering the possibility of 'saving' on an ad hoc basis young candidates who just fail the test but who show real potential. They would be able, under certain conditions, to participate in a 4-week 'brushing-up' course in the institutions before resitting a freelance test. Those successfully passing this second test would then be offered a guaranteed 60 days of work, preceded by a week of unpaid familiarization. (This scheme is awaiting confirmation and is not yet in practice). The DG SCIC gave approximately 70 Eur-10 interpreters temporary contracts in order to facilitate the integration of a number of young interpreters from the new member states.
- The EP does not have, as such, a selection procedure targeted at young graduates, but has enabled many of these young interpreters to spend time on training courses in the institution, allowing them to train in dummy (silent) booths and familiarize themselves with the institution. Furthermore, by giving auxiliary contracts in 2003 to roughly 50 interpreters from the accession countries, the EP facilitated the integration of a number of them as staff
interpreters when they passed the competition in 2004, and as temporary staff or freelances for the others.

The other IOs prefer to recruit experienced interpreters onto their staff, especially the UN, where age on recruitment is rarely below 30 (33 on average but with variations from one booth to another).

In the past, however, the UN has organised training courses for different language combinations, especially in Geneva. It opens its doors to young graduates and allows them to listen to public meetings and practise in dummy (silent) booths. Moreover, it periodically organises exams to test young graduates who, if successful, are recruited as freelances at beginners' level, with the possibility of later reclassification.

Starting in 2004 the FAO launched the recruitment of 3 junior interpreters for an initial period of 2 or 3 years at P2 level with rapid reclassification to P3.

The technical nature of the subjects dealt with at NATO is such that the organisation can hardly recruit beginners, whose recruitment is further complicated by the need for security clearance procedures (positive security vetting), which may take up to 18 months to complete. Finally, the OECD traditionally only recruits experienced interpreters to its permanent staff.

2. Interpreter training courses

This part of the conclusions will be much shorter and more nuanced since the replies to the CdP questionnaire (appended to the survey carried out by the Training Committee), were so few (19) that it would be presumptuous to say that the sample studied is representative of all the conference interpreter training establishments throughout the world. It is interesting to note that only 3 non-European universities (one in Brazil, the other 2 in Taiwan) answered the questionnaire, and that well known and highly respected establishments (such as ESIT in Paris or Westminster University in London) did not reply to the CdP survey. It is also a pity that, apart from ELTE (Budapest), the eastern European universities whose contribution is so important to the training of true professionals with enlargement languages were conspicuous by their absence.

Nevertheless, interesting information was gleaned from the barely 20 replies studied, as well as from the survey conducted in 2002 by the Working Group on Training in the IAMLADP family, which recorded the views of 31 universities.

Most universities training interpreters already have numerous contacts with the IOs who are potential employers, above all the European institutions. They particularly appreciate the teaching assistance they have received (the DG SCIC is the only IO with a structured programme in this field, but mention must be made of the EP, which sends language assistants to the universities of enlargement countries), participation in exam juries, visits by students to the IOs, and subsidies (from the EP and DG SCIC) to start or maintain courses in language departments which would otherwise not be viable.

Whereas most training establishments believe they receive sufficient information on career opportunities from the IOs, others do not share this opinion and would like to see this information, which they sometimes obtain informally, made available officially in writing, on the Internet if possible. Some universities maintain that they do not know what the evaluation criteria are for IO selection procedures, or when tests or competitions are to be held. This confirms the observation made in the IAMLADP survey that the universities want the IOs to give them clearer information, through better planning, about their present and future recruitment needs.

The great majority of universities assert that they have started to adapt to the new requirements of IOs by diversifying the range of languages they offer and the contents of their curricula. However, they emphasize difficulties linked to rigid academic structures, whilst welcoming the support given
by the EU institutions to the European Master’s programme in conference interpretation, which gives a more professional dimension to training and permits selection on entry.

Most establishments belong to one or more academic networks for the exchange of ideas, best practice and teaching material.

Many universities expect that members of AIIC should, where useful, possible and necessary, play a bridging role between the IOs and the training establishments by facilitating the circulation of relevant information and by actively participating in all IO initiatives that aim to maintain the quality of the teaching of interpretation and enable students to grasp the realities of the profession. They should also encourage the IOs to plan and provide clear information on their recruitment requirements. Clearly, members of the CdP and the TC have a particularly active role to play in this field.

Some universities stress that it would be useful to have AIIC members on their teaching staff, if they are willing to invest their time, or to invite more professionals to come and talk about their work and the real career openings.

3. Recommendations

a) To the IOs

All IOs are urged to ensure the timely renewal of their permanent staff. An interpretation service built upon permanent staff is the best way to guarantee continuity of quality, safeguard the memory of the institution and its own special thesaurus, and transmit the values of that organisation through successive generations. A service which is outsourced to the extreme cannot safeguard the principles that are fundamental to the proper functioning of the IOs. But at the same time the IOs must also support the training of all future interpreters, including freelances, who in many cases will be the staff of the future.

It is clear that some IOs, particularly the European institutions, have made real efforts in recent years to communicate openly with training establishments (the annual SCIC-Universities meeting is an eloquent example of this). The CdP and TC urge these IOs to continue along this path and invite the others to develop and further institutionalize contacts with universities and schools of interpretation.

The most dynamic IOs are encouraged to continue their support activities for universities, especially those that are most receptive to the requirement for a truly professional approach to the training of interpreters.

A number of IOs are still unaware of the problem of aging permanent staff and the need to replace them in the medium term. Some IOs, it seems, do not apply modern management principles of human resource forecasting and are unconcerned about the imbalance in their age pyramid. This can impinge on career development and the need to adapt continuously to a changing environment. The IOs concerned are advised to analyse these problems and to take a longsighted view of recruitment.

Even those IOs who do plan recruitment in the medium term are asked to aim as far as possible for continuity in the rules of the game (by defining, publishing and updating their selection criteria, language profiles and induction schemes, where they exist, etc.), so that universities investing several years in interpreter training have a minimum guarantee of a return on their investment. A 3-year recruitment timetable, published by each organisation, would help to clarify matters for both teachers and students.

Whilst understanding that the degree of specialisation of some IOs means that they have to recruit experienced interpreters, it is recommended that in general organisations should try to give young talent a chance, since otherwise renewal is impossible. This implies thinking about the ways these
new recruits could be given the support of experienced staff and instituting internal organisational measures. The cost/benefit ratio will, however, almost always be positive.

IOs should alert the representatives of their member states to the fact that students in general have a mediocre command of their mother tongue. The majority of universities complain about this deficiency, which is a noticeable cause of failure on entry into training and during IO graduate selection procedures. The problem, sourced well upstream of higher education, must be brought to the attention of national Ministries of Education and specialised organisations such as UNESCO.

b) To training establishments

The AIIC and IAMLADP studies show that a good number of universities have evolved over recent years by adapting language combinations, curricula etc. to a more diversified and often more challenging demand. The CdP and TC welcome these efforts and urge universities to redouble them, by aligning with the principles established by the European Master's consortium, which is increasingly becoming an international reference standard.

Training establishments should apply rigorous criteria for admission to conference interpretation studies. Experience has shown that without selection numbers are unnecessarily high. This affects the quality of studies and diminishes the chances of success, even for students with good potential.

Universities are reminded that training by professionals who are practising interpreters and specialised in this branch of teaching is a guarantee of success.

It is encouraging to see that a number of universities are linked by cooperation networks. Those who are still isolated are urged to seek correspondents and exchange ideas. In Europe a university twinning programme could be set up, bringing together each time one university from the west and one from the east of the continent.

It is recommended that universities try to benefit from the technical and financial aid provided by the more dynamic IOs. They are urged - aside of disputes over the principle of the independence of universities - to include IO representatives on the juries for final year exams.

c) To AIIC and its members

AIIC Council is requested to ensure the widest possible dissemination of the results of the present study to IOs and universities, particularly those who were kind enough to take part in the ‘Next Generation’ project.

Wherever possible, AIIC staff members (but also the freelances) should become involved in the training of future generations of interpreters in order to transmit the good practices and professional ethics which alone can safeguard the future of conference interpreting. They should strive to invest in this field, either within their own organisation or by working with universities. Within their IO they should not hesitate to support young recruits with help and advice.

The CdP, the TC and PriMS should be encouraged to continue to cooperate closely on these questions in order to provide the Association with regularly updated information about openings, sought-after language combinations, good training establishments, etc.

AIIC is urged to take the initiative once again of organising a meeting with the Chief Interpreters of IOs, in order to keep abreast of the matters dealt with in this study.

We recommend that the TC carry out another survey of interpreter training courses in the near future, drawing conclusions from the 2004 report, which was the foundation of this study; in addition to e-mail, other more traditional methods will probably also need to be used in order to elicit a better response.
It could be useful for AIIC to finance from time to time visits by authorized teaching interpreters (members of the TC or designated by it) to training establishments in order to facilitate the exchange of information.

AIIC, and in particular the DRP group, is encouraged to continue its efforts to consolidate the interpreter's status, the weakness of which is said by some universities to adversely affect the number of students.

It is proposed that AIIC request observer status with IAMLADP in order to be informed of any new developments in the sector of the linguistic professions.

Claude DURAND
Coordinator of the 'Next Generation' project

[1] IAMLADP (Inter-agency Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications) which comprises United Nations Agencies, European Institutions and the ITU.
[2] New data as of April 1st, 2005: A P-4 Arabic was added in June 2004
[3] New data as of April 1st, 2005: The P-4 Arabic has now been filled, the P-4 English had to be readvertised and is being processed, and the incumbent P-3 Chinese has been promoted to the vacant P-4.
[4] New data as of April 1st, 2005: Plans for 2005 are now limited to two P-2s: one Arabic, one French. The selection process is underway for the French; the P-2 Arabic has been readvertised.
[5] New data as of April 1st, 2005: A P-4 Arabic was added in June 2004.
[7] 3 in 2004
[8] Profiles for future competitions are not known at the time of drafting of this report, but will probably involve 2 or 3 C languages of the EU, one of which is in demand (e.g. in the SCIC: German or one EUR-10 language for the F booth).

Recommended citation format: