



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

**MINUTES OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
Online meeting
10 May 2021**

NATO COUNTRIES

Belgium
Bulgaria
Canada
Croatia
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
France
Germany
Hungary
Italy
Latvia
Lithuania
Netherlands
North Macedonia
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Slovakia
Slovenia
Spain
Turkey
United Kingdom
United States

ATTENDANCE

Sr. Capt. K. Heylen
Col. P. Petkov
Ms. J. Dubeau
Ms. I. Prpic-Djuric
Ms. Ž. Nikam
Mr. K. Kildevang
Ms. M. Kompus
Ms. E. Cleret
Dr. C. Loreck
LTC. F. Banki
LTC. A. Giglioli
Ms. G. Lauda-Treide
Ms. A. Narbutiene
Drs. G. Seinhorst
Ms. S. Stojanovska
Ms. B. Grande
LTC. J. Dudek
L. Cdr. C. Rolo
Col. C. Ispas
Ms. Gabriela Repova
Ms. T. Derman Zadravec
Col. F. Valencia Feijoo
LTC. O. Sakaryali
LTC. M. Sharp
Ms. T. Pope, Mr. C. Leishman

PARTNERS/OBSERVERS IN ATTENDANCE

Austria
Azerbaijan
Bahrain
BIH
Finland
Jordan
Kazakhstan
Sweden
Ukraine
Uzbekistan

Col. Thomas Fronek, Col. W. Zecha
Ms. G. Ahmadova
1st Lt. A. Althawadi
Capt. M. Pranjovic
Mr. J. Nummenpaa
Maj. A. Alkhalailah
Col. R. R. Isseyev
Ms. M. Martin
Col. M. Hrebeniuk
Mr. Ilya Zverev

GUEST SPEAKER



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Yale University, USA

Ms. M. J. DiBiase- Lubrano

BILC SECRETARIAT

Chair
Secretary
Associate Secretary
Associate Secretary
Associate Secretary
Associate Secretary
Senior Advisor

Ms. B. Petek
Ms. M. Grmek
Ms. P. Garza
Mr. K. Wert
Ms. J. Dubeau
Ms. J. Vasilj-Begovic
Dr. Ray Clifford



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Item 1: Opening remarks

- i. Introductions and recognition of the heads of delegations and observers

Chair welcomed delegates to the meeting, and asked heads of delegations to introduce themselves.

- ii. Approval of agenda

Chair asked participants to approve the agenda, and the agenda was approved with no changes required.

Item 2: Information & Acknowledgements

- i. Report on ETEE discipline and DCB projects – Mr. Keith Wert

Mr. Wert began his brief by defining the ETEE acronym as the Education Training Exercises and Evaluation, and highlighting how the importance of language has evolved over the years, as evident from NATO's interest in language testing and other seminars and workshops. One outcome of this interest has been the inclusion of language standards in an ETEE discipline. Mr. Wert also mentioned how over the last 15 years, we have witnessed an explosion of disciplines, and that department heads, which are usually specialists of an organization/school have taken responsibility for the discipline's subject matter. Within the ETEE, there are core and non-core areas, core areas stemming from the Allied Command Transformation (ACT) areas, and non-core from all else, with the common goal of fostering interoperability. These developments have been positive for BILC advancement, as BILC has been the recipient of NATO's financial support for various capacity-building endeavors, such as the projects involving Tunisia and Jordan with the goal of assisting these nations with the establishment of their national STANAG 6001-based testing programme, and the setting of the requirements process. In 2019, the project with Tunisia received funding and a scoping visit composed of a three-member team took place. The pandemic, unfortunately halted this cooperation. In January 2022, the cooperation with Jordan is scheduled to resume. When asked by the French delegation head, Ms. Cleret, if these support initiatives focused only on English or on French, too, Mr. Wert replied that the current focus was on English solely.

- ii. Report on recent Partnership Training and Education Centers (PTEC) activities and initiatives – Ms. Peggy Garza

Chair invited Ms. Garza to report on PTEC activities and Ms. Garza mentioned that there was a brochure on PTEC on the NATO website. PTECs are education & training centres, which offer courses and seminars. There are thirty-three PTECs from NATO and PfP nations, and language training is considered a critical part of PTEC offered training. There



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are four PTEC school with a language focus (English), and they are located in Bulgaria, Slovenia, Germany and Jordan (Arabic). Collaboration among PTECs is important, and for example, NATO may benefit from the expertise of the PTEC with a robust programme in helping teaching faculty improve their English skills, by offering such expertise to another PTEC or partners. NATO has requested assistance in supporting the Colombian International Demining Center (CIDES) with a review of their English training programme and its alignment with STANAG 6001. The first virtual meeting took place on April 19, 2021.

iii. Report on ELTEC2 and the NATO Writing Strategies Course - Ms. Peggy Garza

Ms. Garza continued her brief by introducing the NATO Writing Strategies Course, and explaining its origin. She mentioned the Language Needs Analysis (LNA) conducted at NATO in 2017, which determined that the staff officers found the writing skill the most challenging in performance of their work. She also explained the link between the English Language Training Enhancement Course (ELTEC) 2 team, and its involvement in the feasibility study with 8 nations the aim of which was to analyze the need for a NATO writing course, and blending it with ELTEC2. After a survey was sent to nations inquiring about the interest in this course, and responses from sixteen nations were received, the course was designed, the micro-lessons and dates of delivery selected (May 18-June 24). This pilot course iteration, comprised of asynchronous and synchronous portions (approximately 40 hours in total) will be attended by eight officers from seven nations. After the pilot course, further iterations will be planned.

iv. Report on Introduction to Research online workshop – Ms. Mary Jo Dibiase

Ms. Di Biase stated that a need was identified for professional development in the field of research, and the workshop aim was to familiarize participants with basic principles of research design, the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research methods, development of research questions and selection of appropriate data collection and analysis methods. The workshop, in the duration of three hours, was delivered via Zoom, and it included group activities in breakout rooms to set up research design based on the individual concerns, and align it with data collection methods. To date, three workshop iterations have been conducted, with a total attendance of 38 participants from 23 nations. Because of the workshop popularity, more iterations are expected.

v. Defence Education Enhancement Programme (DEEP) lessons learned workshop in November 2020 and Strategy Development conference in April 2021- Ms. Branka Petek

Chair informed the delegates of two events. One was the Lessons Learned Workshop that took place in November 2020, and included five Working Groups (WG). The WG5 was led by BILC and this WG dealt with best practices and lessons learned from Covid-19 times. A report was written and published, and it captures the experience of sixteen nations. In April of this year, this work continued as DEEP wants to develop strategies for distance learning and training in the future. The WG5, composed of thirty participants from fourteen nations, continued discussing the development of faculty and technology for future online training. A report is forthcoming.



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- vi. Report on the BILC advisory activities in the period May 2020 – May 2021:
- Ukraine, report on current activities and plans for 2022 – Ms. Peggy Garza

Chair invited Ms. Garza to report on the virtual support provided to Ukraine. Ms. Garza stated that nine virtual meetings had been convened to assist this nation with item bank development. Testing specialists from Bulgaria, Romania and US/PLTCE participated in the quality review of Level 2, and the first batch of Level 3 items. The review of Level 3 items will continue. This project is proof that moderation panels can be conducted successfully online, at low cost. Ukraine also requested BILC advice regarding courses for teachers and testers, and both virtual and in-person meetings have been planned. Individuals interested in assisting as volunteers with this project should contact Ms. Garza.

- Iraq, December 2020 (online workshop) – Ms. Branka Petek

Chair informed delegates of an online workshop, dedicated to programme development that was given to the DLI in Baghdad in December 2020. Twelve participants took part in eight hours of synchronous activities. Participants had also been assigned twelve hours of asynchronous work. The workshop was deemed highly successful, and feedback received was extremely positive. Participants felt eager to incorporate the newly learned content in the classroom, and requested workshop. The second workshop will be delivered in person in June 2021 by a colleague working in Baghdad.

- Uzbekistan, April 2021 (online meeting) – Ms. Branka Petek

Chair had a discussion of how BILC could assist this nation with its language training and testing system. This nation is looking for a bi-lateral cooperation with a country willing to exchange instructors, help with the establishment of the STANAG 6001-based testing system, etc. Chair invited nations interested in this collaboration to contact her or the Secretariat.

- vii. Other
- BILC website – Ms. Branka Petek

Chair informed the delegates of the new materials available on the BILC website mentioning that significant efforts were invested in the website, that content and resources were added, including presentations from BILC seminars and workshops, as well as the updated calendar of BILC events.

- BILC POC list – Ms. Branka Petek

Chair asked delegates to inform her of any changes in the PoC information to avoid cases of undeliverable Joining Instructions. Chair then introduced the topic of Iraq's request for French training materials asking the nations to contact her should they wish to contribute such materials. Another request came from Bulgaria inquiring about the possibility for one of their teachers shadowing a Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) course in order to be able to prepare their own courses for students taking on future JTAC posts. Chair asked for information about any institutions offering such courses.



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Col. R. R. Isseyev from Kazakhstan gave the next brief in which he requested BILC support to his nation with the establishing of its separate STANAG testing commission because Kazakhstan would like to test its military slated for deployments using the STANAG 6001-based tests, as that would contribute to interoperability. For that purpose, a strong proposal that the MoD would find acceptable needs to be drawn. The delegate asked nations to share references to academic papers and other resources that would help in the standing up of this commission. It is expected that about 1000 candidates would be tested annually. Chair invited nations to contact her if they wished to offer support to Kazakhstan.

Item 3: Action Items from Last Conference

i. Shared Item Bank Project – Ms. M. Kompus

Ms. Kompus informed delegates that for many years nations had asked for development of test items that could serve as benchmarks in the listening and reading tests. After the 2019 Testing Workshop in Tours, France a collaboration was launched among seven countries with the goal of creating an item bank that would be available to test developers. After test specifications and meta-data table were drawn, these seven nations submitted reading items at Levels 1, 2 and 3. Online moderation sessions followed and 47 items were placed in the bank. Level 2 items are ready for pre-testing. The next phase of work will include Level 3 items, followed by large-scale piloting and statistical analysis. Other nations are welcome to join.

ii. Proposal to create a one-page BILC leaflet for distribution in NATO HQ, NATO ACT and NATO ACO

Chair stated that at the 2019 Conference in Tartu it was suggested that a one-page BILC leaflet be produced. A small WG was formed; however the group fell apart and if this project is to be completed, it needs to be reinitiated. Chair invited volunteers interested in this project to contact her.

Item 4: New Business

i. Update on BILC courses – Ms. Peggy Garza

Ms. Garza gave an update on BILC courses during the second half of 2021, as in the first half of the year, all courses had to be cancelled. In July, the LSAS course will be open to fully vaccinated individuals. It is still not known yet what other conditions might have to be met in order to enter Germany or a US military base.

ii. Proposed changes to BILC events – Ms. Branka Petek



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Chair stated that early last year she had met with the French delegates, and then with the Secretariat to discuss the proposal to separate more clearly the audience for conferences and seminars. BILC Conferences are intended primarily for management, heads of institutions and academies, commandants, ministries, policy-makers etc., whereas the Professional Development Seminars are more suited for practitioners, teachers, and testers. In the future, the Conference will be dedicated to management-related topics, to the opportunities for sharing organizational and development side of language training. The Seminar will include more hands-on and interactive activities conducive to professional development of teachers. Some changes will be gradual, but one change should be immediate and that is that along with their presentations, presenters submit a half to one-page long summary of their presentations in order to make them more accessible and understandable, especially in the case when a presentation has lots of visual content but little text.

iii. DEEP ADL WG Computer Adaptive Language Testing – Ms. Branka Petek

Chair continued by stating that the Advanced Distributed Learning (ADL) programme has asked BILC to review this new testing tool called Computer Adaptive Language Test (CALT) and provide feedback and recommendations. Ten members from five nations will familiarize themselves with this project, sign onto the platform, and assess the tool and provide feedback to the ADL group. This work is in its initial stages.

iv. Basic Faculty Development Workshop – Ms. Branka Petek

Chair informed delegates of another project that has just started. The rationale behind it was the continual request by PfP nations for faculty development. As it would be very difficult to deliver the existing 2-week course at various locations, five national representatives will work on a shorter version of a basic faculty development workshop that will cover the objectives of teaching the productive skills, using the communicative approach and familiarizing the participants with the STANAG 6001 interpretation. A report will be given at the next BILC event.

v. New information on BILC website (UK proposal) – LTC Matthew Sharp

Chair invited LTC M. Sharp from the UK to present. LTC. M. Sharp proposed that a list of national BILC representatives be included as an open source on the BILC website. The list would include basic information about the representatives. Adding such information would enhance communication and networking among the nations. The UK delegate invited the SC members to vote on the proposal.

Chair stated that she had already spoken about this last year with LTC Sharp and invited nations to comment. Among the comments there were those highlighting that in some countries public posting of email addresses was not allowed, that such a practice would open the door to hundreds of emails, many of them being spam, and that might pose security problems. The French and Danish delegates said that publishing such information should be voluntary. Chair suggested that NATO delegates vote and the result was 17 in



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favour and 13 against the proposal. Chair said that she would organize another round of voting via emails as more delegates voted than NATO nations present.

vi. Discussion on the new BILC chair (May 2022 – May 2025)

Chair reminded everyone that Slovenia had taken over the BILC Secretariat in 2019, and its mandate would finish in 2022. Last year, she had invited nations to consider taking over for the period from 2022-2025. One nation has expressed interest, but it did not get approval, and is still looking into the possibility of confirming its interest. Col. Ispas from Romania said her nation might be interested; however, she would need to gather more information as to the volume and type of work required. Chair said she would be happy provide relevant details and invited nations to contact her should they wish to express intent of assuming the role of Chair. Once the official letter has been received, silent procedure would follow via email. By the next Steering Committee meeting in 2022, it is vital the new Chair be identified.

Item 5: Future Events

- i. Events in 2021
- ii. Future hosts

Chair introduced the topic expressing her hope for future in-person events and invited Ms. Garza to brief the plenary on the STANAG 6001 Testing Workshop.

Ms. Garza informed the delegates that the next STANAG 6001 Testing Workshop would take place in Garmisch-Partenkirchen in September 2021. It will probably be of a hybrid type. The in-person attendance would require full vaccination. Suggestions for content are welcome from testing organizations.

Conferences

Chair invited Ms. Narbutiene to talk about the Professional Seminar. Ms. Narbutiene stated she hoped there would be a change in travel restrictions, and that in-person Seminar could take place. One condition will be that participants are fully vaccinated. The number of attendees will be capped at 45, and social distancing will still be a requirement.

2022 conference: Italy (TBC)

Chair invited the Italian delegate to present on the 2022 Conference. LTC Giglioli confirmed Italy's willingness to host the event; however, she added that not too many details were known currently as organizing events is very challenging in Covid-19 times. There could be restrictions concerning vaccinations as well as a cap on the number of participants. She suggested the Conference might take place in June instead of May and nations expressed agreement.

Germany agreed to host the 2022 Testing Workshop



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2023 conference: Turkey (TBC)

Turkey had volunteered to host the 2023 Conference, but has not yet confirmed by letter. Chair invited representatives to consider hosting future events as hosts were needed for the seminar 2022, the testing workshop and seminar in 2023.

Item 6: Acknowledgments

- Contributions
- Secretariat

Chair thanked everyone who made this conference possible. She also expressed her gratitude to the delegates and PLTCE for the technical support. Chair adjourned the meeting.

Report drafted by: Jana Vasilj-Begovic, BILC Associate Secretary

Reviewed by Julie Dubeau and Peggy Garza, BILC Associate Secretaries and Branka Petek, Chair