



BUREAU FOR INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE COORDINATION  
BUREAU DE COORDINATION LINGUISTIQUE INTERNATIONALE

**Minutes of the Steering Committee**

May 27, 2020  
Online Meeting

**National Representative Voting Members in Attendance**

Belgium	Snr. Capt. K. Heylen
Bulgaria	Ms. E. Nesheva, Ms. V. Eneva, Col. P. Petkov
Canada	Ms. J. Dubeau
Croatia	Ms. I. Prpić Djurić
Czech Republic	Ms. Ž. Nikam, Mr. J. Křivka
Estonia	Ms. M. Boltovsky, Ms. M. Kompus
France	Ms. E. Cleret, Mr. J. Collin
Germany	Dr. D. Sturges, Dr. S. Baltes-Ellermann
Hungary	LTC F. Banki
Italy	LTC. A. Giglioli
Latvia	Ms. G. Lauva-Treide
Lithuania	Ms. I. Katauskine
Netherlands	Mr. G. Seinhorst
North Macedonia	Ms. M. Gjurovikj, S. Stojanovska
Norway	Ms. B. Grande, Ms. H. Skilleas
Poland	LTC D. Ćwierzona
Portugal	LTCMR M. Gabriel
Romania	Col. C. Ispas
Slovakia	Ms. S. Gajdošová
Slovenia	Ms. T. Derman Zadavec
Spain	LTC. A. C. Lagares Overgaag
Turkey	Col. C. Kılıç
United Kingdom	LTC M. Sharp, Mr. J. Nowers
USA	Mr. C. Leishman, Ms. D. Moore

**Non-Voting Observers in Attendance**

Australia	LTC. P. Chua
Austria	Col. W. Zecha
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Capt. M. Brankovic
Finland	Ms. S. Patronen
Jordan	Col. M. Al Zyoud
Sweden	Mr. S. Haughey
Switzerland	Mr. P. Kohler
Ukraine	Col. M. Hrebeniuk

**NATO Bodies:**

NATO HQ (IMS)	Mr. P. Turner, Mr. E. Arnold
NATO SHAPE	Mr. M. Adubato



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**BILC SECRETARIAT**

Chair	Ms. B. Petek
Secretary	Ms. T. Hafner
Senior Advisor	Dr. R. Clifford
Associate Secretary	Ms. J. Dubeau
Associate Secretary	Ms. J. Vasilj-Begovic
Associate Secretary	Ms. P. Garza
Associate Secretary	Mr. K. Wert

**Item 1: Opening remarks**

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

Chair opened the proceedings, welcomed delegates and asked that all attendees introduce themselves.

- ii. Approval of agenda

Chair asked if all were in favour of approving the agenda. Approval was unanimous.

**Item 2: Information & Acknowledgements**

- i. Report on the BILC visits in the period May 2019 – May 2020:

- Iraq, November 2019 – Ms. Branka Petek

Chair introduced the topic of BILC visits in the previous period, and provided a report on the visit to Defence Language Institute, Baghdad, Iraq that took place in November 2019. She stated that she and Mr. Nowers from the UK conducted a five day workshop and offered limited training on developing programs IAW STANAG 6001. Because Iraq only trains personnel up to Level 2 proficiency, the workshop given did not go beyond this level. They also conducted a short scoping visit to First Military College in Rustimiah. This country would benefit from further BILC assistance.

- Iraq, English Teaching Faculty Development Workshop, Istanbul, Turkey, December 2019 – COL Petko Petkov

Ms. Eneva from Bulgaria reported on English Teaching Faculty Development Workshop that BILC facilitators conducted in December 2019 in Istanbul, Turkey for English Language Teachers from DLI, Baghdad, Iraq. The workshop took place under the auspices of DEEP, and its purpose was to give training in methodology to the Iraqi personnel. This team had also noticed that language training in Iraq did not go beyond Level 2, and had to adjust the content of their workshop accordingly. The team also observed that the Iraqi personnel had difficulty understanding, reconciling and applying different testing criteria, such as the IELTS standards, STANAG 6001 etc. Ms. Eneva thanked the delegate from Turkey for the most gracious hosting of this event.

- Tunisia, February 2020 – Mr. Keith Wert

Mr. K. Wert explained that this scoping visit, long in the making, had been planned with NATO Defence Capacity Building Trust Fund to develop an 18-24 month program with the purpose



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of assisting Tunisia in development of STANAG 6001 testing capacity. The visit took part in February 2020. The three person BILC team, led by the BILC Chair, Branka Petek, with team members Keith Wert and Ingrida Leimanis, spent three days engaging in “expectation management” with the Tunisian authorities and the members of the Centre for Languages. During a series of productive meetings, the Tunisian counterparts gained a deeper understanding of the resources and commitments that would be required of them. The discussed plan was agreed to; however, the COVID19 pandemic has delayed further implementation indefinitely.

- Uzbekistan, September 2019 – Ms. Peggy Garza (1)

Ms. Garza stated that this visit to the Armed Forces Academy had a purpose of introducing ADL and online resources for English language learning, and of exchanging language teaching practices.

- Ukraine, February 2020 (FDW) – Ms. Peggy Garza

Ms. Garza mentioned that Faculty Development Workshops had been planned at 8 military institutes in Ukraine for 2020. A three-member BILC team was to conduct 4-day methodology workshops using a specially designed curriculum. In January, two workshops were conducted in Odessa and the rest have been put on hold. Ms. Garza also mentioned that she and Ms Petek participated in the DEEP Annual Review in May, and that during that event, a request was put forward to BILC for a course in Maritime English. Ms. Garza asked delegates to let her or the Chair know if they have such a course, and if they would be willing to share it.

- Bosnia and Herzegovina – Ms. Peggy Garza and Ms. Jana Vasilj-Begović

Ms. Garza stated that two events had been planned for BiH. The first one was scheduled for March this year, but had to be cancelled, and it will instead be delivered online in June. The first event included the Advanced Curriculum review and a workshop. The second event/workshop is intended for Advanced English instructors and is scheduled for July/August at PLTCE; however its status is currently under discussion. Ms. Vasilj-Begović added that the online workshop has as its objectives to familiarize participants with the application of STANAG 6001 for curriculum development purposes, and to show a model for enhancing a lesson from the American Language Course with additional, thematically related activities based on authentic content.

- North Macedonia – Mr. Keith Wert

Mr. Wert reported on this DEEP-sponsored visit in 2019, mentioning that a small BILC team addressed the host’s concern about their curriculum lacking alignment with STANAG 6001. Dr. Campbell from PLTCE gave a very successful workshop to address the issue. No follow-up visits have been planned.

ii. Update by nations on their BILC-related projects and international cooperation

- Military terminology project (School of Foreign Languages, Slovenia) – Ms. Tamara Derman Zadavec (2)

Ms. Derman Zadavec explained how heavily involved with terminology management her department has been. This work has entailed producing glossaries, participating in various terminology related conferences and projects, such as the one with Austria. Since BILC is a source of expertise, organizing a terminology conference under its umbrella should be explored. Ms. Derman Zadavec also mentioned that a survey of nations revealed a wide



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spectrum of experiences in this domain, ranging from well-developed terminology management systems to those in initial stages. In this respect, nations have a lot to share as they all face similar challenges. A 3-day conference has been planned to take place at Bled next year but was postponed to March 2022 due to current situation. Specialists from NATO will also be invited to this event.

Other

- BILC website – Ms. Branka Petek

Chair stated that ever since Slovenia assumed the Chair, it has maintained the BILC website. She invited everyone to visit the page and let her know if any changes or updates were required. She reminded everyone to ensure that only content they wish to have uploaded be sent, as once information has been published it is difficult to remove it from the web.

- BILC POC list – Ms. Branka Petek

Chair asked the delegates to verify if the POC list was up-to-date and to contact her if any changes were needed.

**Item 3: Action Items from Last Conference**

- i. Report on BAT2 – Ms. Peggy Garza (3) presentation

Ms. Garza provided the background of BAT2, the purpose of which was to offer a benchmark test against which nations could compare the results yielded on their national tests. Since BILC has invested significant efforts over the last 10 years into standardizing testing across nations, BAT2 had the goal of measuring standardization success. Eighteen nations participated in the project by administering 10 BAT tests to their selected candidates, and comparing the results, across the four skills, against those attained on their national tests. The analysis of results, conducted by a BILC team, showed a very high inter-rater reliability as well as alignment between the two sets of scores on the speaking and writing tests, especially. Not only did this project reveal that the standardization efforts have been highly successful, but also the project has provided ample additional speaking and writing samples that will be used to enrich the ALTS content.

- ii. Report on STANAG Level 4 writing test development – Ms. Jana Vasilj-Begovic

Ms. Vasilj-Begovic provided the background of the WG on Level 4 mentioning that the Group, which was formed at the 2010 BILC Conference in Istanbul, has developed quite a few products, including a prototype Level 4 reading test. The WG is currently working on a Level 4 writing test development. This work stems from the interest testers showed at the STANAG Testing Workshop in Tours, France in 2019. The WG plans to finalize a draft test by October and begin the trialing process in a few nations, and hopefully also at NATO HQs.

- iii. Report on French STANAG – Ms. Julie Dubeau,

Ms. Dubeau provided a brief background mentioning that in the past, BILC had received multiple requests for assistance with French STANAG testing, as operations requiring French proficiency were intensified in the world. In 2018, France and Canada began collaboration, and as a result a Study Group convened at the BILC Conference in Tartu, 2019 with the purpose



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of determining the scope of work needed. In September 2019, the first meeting between France, Canada and SHAPE took place in Tours with the purpose of discussing and agreeing on terminology in French in order to interpret STANAG 6001, translating the table of text modes, reviewing the existing documents etc. A review of the LTS manual, which has been partially translated into French has also been planned. Ms. Dubeau presented on this work at the BILC Professional Seminar in Copenhagen in 2019, and that presentation is available on the BILC website. Currently, this project is limited to the bilateral collaboration between Canada and France. Eventually, the goal would be to produce French benchmark items for nations for calibration purposes of their own test items.

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

Chair introduced the topic and invited nations to volunteer to participate in the creation of the text for this document. Mr. Nowers from the UK asked about the purpose of this document, and after Chair explained that it was to describe BILC's mandate and its scope of work, Mr. Nowers volunteered to assist with the text formulation. Mr. Turner from NATO IMS said that he had thought a one-page document was needed to raise awareness among native speakers on the need to tailor their language in communication with non-native speakers. Chair agreed that more discussion was needed to define the purpose of the document. Ms. Cleret from France added that her department would be happy to assist in composing the text that explains the role and mandate of BILC, because recently she had an inquiry from her leadership (French general posted to SACT) about BILC, and a leaflet containing relevant information would have been helpful. Chair concluded discussion by proposing that an online WG be formed to produce this leaflet. Mr. Aduato from SHAPE and LTCMR Gabriel from Portugal volunteered as WG members.

**Item 4: New Business**

- i. Discussion on distance learning / on-line courses in times of coronavirus measures  
– Dr. Ray Clifford

Dr. Clifford presented on the experiences of the Brigham Young University with online language courses the university switched to as of March 12, impacting 9000 students and 60 language programs. A survey of teachers and students showed that teachers reported that more preparation was required for online instruction, that they felt less connected to the students and that they found students less engaged than in physical classroom settings. In addition, not all students were technologically equipped for online learning. Students reported that they found it more difficult to get teachers' attention; they felt too exposed, and less motivated to speak because of the impression their peers were not listening, etc. Dr. Clifford added that it was still unknown if the students had learned as much they would have learned in real classrooms, and that was yet to be determined via testing. Dr. Clifford emphasized once again the complexities of language learning and concluded that online teaching added another layer of complexity to the already challenging process. Col. Zecha from Austria, Col. Kılıç from Turkey, Ms. Cleret from France and Mr. Leishman from DLIELC stated that similar observations were made in their nations and instructional contexts.



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- ii. Discussion on issues connected with STANAG testing in times of coronavirus measures (certificates required for deployments) – Ms. Birgitte Grande

Chair invited Ms. Grande from Norway to introduce the topic of testing under these exceptional circumstances and Ms. Grande reported that a number of students have not been tested, and she wondered if they should be sent to their postings with certificates showing the required levels of proficiency, or if they should be tested at a later date. Col. Al Zyoud from Jordan, said that online testing was implemented after the lockdown, and that their nation had to find secure ways to conduct testing. Dr. Clifford said that extra resources had to be invested into remote proctoring. Conducting speaking tests online posed no problems. LTC Sharp from the UK reported that his organization had requested that their contractor offer online test delivery; however, that has not been accomplished yet. Face-to-Face testing is expected to be significantly reduced or delayed. Col. Zecha also stated that online tests were not problematic (screen-to-screen) and that his organization has lots of experience with this mode of test delivery.

- iii. Review of STANAG 6001 – Ms. Branka Petek

Chair mentioned that periodically BILC is asked if it wants to review STANAG 6001. Since a full review would be a huge undertaking requiring a significant time commitment, it was time for the SC to decide if such a review was warranted. Consensus from the delegates was that no review was required at this time.

- iv. Update on BILC courses – Ms. Peggy Garza (5), cancelled courses and updated schedule

Ms. Garza updated the Committee members on the status of the language testing and teacher training courses offered at PLTCE and the new projected dates for the courses that have been cancelled.

- v. Shared Item Bank project – Ms. Peggy Garza (6),

Ms. Garza reported on the new and exciting collaborative project that came out of the STANAG Testing Workshop in Tours, 2019. A number of nations have agreed to create a shared item bank of reading test items. Specifications have already been produced, the format established, decisions taken on national contributions (2 items each per level). Item moderation has been planned for the Bucharest STANAG. The Project Leadership WG consists of the following nations: EST, LAT, HRV, ROM, SVN.

- vi. DEEP Mauritania – Ms. Branka Petek and Ms. Julie Dubeau

Chair introduced the topic by stating that Ms. Dubeau and Col. Petkov conducted a DEEP-sponsored scoping visit to Mauritania in September 2018. The team wrote a detailed report that included their observations and a set of recommendations. DEEP is now requesting that another visit take place in October this year. Ms. Dubeau explained that Mauritania was in



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initial stages of establishing a language training program. The country rarely sends delegates to BILC events, and also does not allocate a lot of hours to language training. The country needs operational English training tools. The personnel have little understanding of STANAG 6001, and it is also unknown if they have even implemented any of the recommendations outlined in the report. The hosts did not speak English, and most meetings were conducted in French. Currently, Canada cannot commit to this project so Ms. Dubeau had to decline to participate in this visit. Chair concluded discussion by asking nations to consider participating in this visit and to contact the Secretariat in case they are willing to take part in this project.

- vii. Invitation to nations to take over the BILC chair in 2022 – Ms. Branka Petek,

Chair reminded delegates that Slovenia had assumed the BILC Secretariat Chair for a period of 3 years, that is, for the period from 2019-22. She invited nations to discuss with their superiors the possibility of their country to take over BILC chair, and to declare their intent at the May 2021 BILC Conference. Takeover would happen in May 2022. In case they need more information, they should contact Chair or the previous Bulgarian Secretariat.

**Item 5: Future Events**

- i. Events in 2020 (testing workshop in Romania) (7)

Col. Ispas informed the SC that due to restrictions, the Ministry of Defence has cancelled all international events until further notice. Romania can neither host such events, nor participate in them abroad.

- ii. Professional seminar in Portugal.

LTCMR Gabriel confirmed that the Professional Seminar was still planned for October. The new dates are 18-22 October. There has been no confirmation whether it would be possible to organize a cultural program as everything is still closed. Chair suggested that social events be removed from the program and delegates only focus on professional meetings.

- iii. Future hosts

Chair stated that there was no future host for BILC Conference 2021 because the country that had planned to host the Conference had to withdraw its offer. Chair asked delegates to consult with their superiors about the possibility of hosting the Conference in 2021 and other BILC events in the following years, and inform the Secretariat. LTC Giglioli from Italy confirmed the organization of 2022 conference, but was not able to provide much detail. Chair responded that there was plenty of time left to plan and discuss this event, and asked LTC Giglioli to contact her by email and send her the official letter, once it is ready. Col. Kılıç stated that Turkey was already planning for the 2023 BILC conference, and the official letter would be sent in the near future. Lithuania confirmed the organization of 2021 BILC Professional Seminar and Germany confirmed the organization of STANAG 6001 Testing Workshop.



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**Conferences**

2021 conference: TBC

2022 conference: Italy (TBC)

2023 conference: Turkey (TBC)

**Seminars**

2020 seminar: Portugal (confirmed by a formal letter)

2021 seminar: Lithuania (TBC)

**STANAG 6001 Testing Workshops**

2020 workshop: Romania (cancelled)

2021 workshop: Germany (TBC)

**Item 6: Acknowledgments**

- Contributions
- Secretariat

Chair thanked the delegates for participating in and contributing to the SC meeting discussions. She expressed her gratitude to the Secretariat members for helping her organize the meeting, and to Col. Brasse and Mr. Leishman from DLIELC for making the meeting possible via ZOOM.

On behalf of the Secretariat and the BILC community, Ms. Dubeau thanked Mr. Turner from NATO IMS, who is retiring, for his invaluable and countless contributions to BILC, and especially for deepening BILC's understanding of NATO operations.

Minutes prepared by J. Vasilj-Begovic, Associate Secretary

Reviewed by J. Dubeau and Ms. P. Garza, Associate Secretaries

Approved by B. Petek, BILC Chair