

Common ground in LIT research and training: the Antwerp case

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1. INTRODUCTION

The results of the *Status Questionis* questionnaire published in 2008 as part of the AGIS 2006 project (Hertog/van Gucht 2008) can be called impressive in several ways: first because of the massive preparation work required for the questionnaire and the number of questionnaires that was sent (1119) in 27 Member States of the EU. Second, because it is astonishing to see the rather poor response rate (194), mainly of professional respondents, while the governmental respondents mostly remained silent: only 13 out of 27 Member States sent in governmental reactions to the questionnaire.

But most striking to us is the core conclusion of the survey which reads as follows, still in 2008:

The core conclusion of this survey on the provision of legal interpreting and translation in all Member States is twofold. Firstly, the survey shows that sufficient legal interpreting and translation skills and structures are *not yet* in place to meet these goals. Secondly, it shows a process of development to do so is in progress across the EU, albeit still variable in coherence, quality and quantity. (Hertog/van Gucht 2008: 189)

The objective of this article is to explain how continuous research in collaboration with others remains the only way to move forward and to find a common

ground for implementing “sufficient legal interpreting and translation skills and structures” that are most necessary in all EU member states. Our goal is not to show how other member states should proceed, but to describe how in Antwerp the research projects in collaboration with DG Justice have contributed to where we stand now, although we have experienced trial and error phases. At the same time, we are fully aware of the fact that there is still a lot of work to do, that fighting for quality and recognition of the LIT profession is a never-ending process and that ongoing research will further provide the impetus to ensure basic rights to all citizens in the EU in the best possible way.

In the first section of the chapter, we will illustrate how the LIT training programme in Antwerp was built, starting from the GROTIUS projects.

In the second section, it will become clear how the GROTIUS projects have led to the AGIS projects with the *Status Quaestionis* publication as a result that “focuses particularly on one such fundamental procedural safeguard, the right to access to justice across languages and culture or in other words, the right to a free interpreter and the translation of all relevant documents in criminal proceedings” (Hertog/van Gucht 2008: 1). The statements and results of the rather poor – or at least incoherent and very variable – legal translation and interpreting standards in the EU Member States were considered as the starting point for the creation of EULITA, the European Legal Interpreters and Translators Association.¹ These important steps in ensuring equal access to Justice for EU-citizens in all Member States illustrated that the right path was already paved, but at the same time they have also unfolded the necessity to continue on this path.

The Directive 2010/64/EU² on the right to interpretation and translation in criminal proceedings will be highlighted in the third paragraph as a giant step forward. For EULITA, a newborn association, this became the incentive to coordinate the TRAFUT³ project. The project underlines the necessity to streamline previous efforts by managing a systemic quality provision through transposition of the Directive in national legislation as well as through national registers of legal interpreters and translators, codes of ethics and modern communication technologies. These research results will be applied to the situation in Antwerp and by extension in Flanders and Belgium.

Simultaneously with the TRAFUT project, the *Building Mutual Trust* publication (Townesley 2011) reports on impressive common research efforts of no less than seven Member States of the EU between 2008 and 2011 (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Romania, Spain and the UK). We will therefore illustrate how this framework project for Implementing EU Common Standards in Legal Interpreting and Translation was of capital importance for the Antwerp training programme.

¹ EULITA: <http://www.eulita.eu/>.

² EU directive 2010/64/EU (English version), <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:280:0001:0007:en:PDF>.

³ <http://www.eulita.eu/sites/default/files/TRAFUT%20-%20final%20report.pdf>.

Before coming to our overall conclusion, the most recent projects will be described in section four: they prove that specific needs in the changing European (but also global) legal context have surfaced, like new technologies for remote interpreting (AVIDICUS)⁴, specific training for interpreter-mediated questioning in the pre-trial phase (ImPLI)⁵, close collaboration of all professionals involved in interpreter-mediated questioning of minors (Co-Minor IN/QUEST)⁶, QUALITAS⁷ on Assessing Legal Interpreting Quality through Testing and Certification, JUSTISIGNS (on Sign Language interpreting in legal settings) and last but not least specific and efficient training models for interpreters of LLD (Languages of Lesser Diffusion) that will be designed in the recently approved two-year TraiLLD-project (Training in Languages of Lesser Diffusion) and that will have a duration of 24 months, starting from March 2014. These are all aspects that are or will be integrated in the Antwerp training programme of LIT, or in modules that are not mandatory, but only meant for those LITs who want to specialize in specific areas.

2. GROTIUS AND THE LITs PROGRAMME IN ANTWERP

The initial objective of GROTIUS I (98/GR/131) was “to constitute minimum benchmarks of training and practice standards which, if followed by each member state, would provide a basis for equivalent standards throughout the EU” (Hertog 1999: 14).

This was in any case very much needed in Belgium: reading Rosiers (2006: 50), we learn that following the research of Vanden Bosch, there was no legal protection of the LIT profession, nor any description of norms or quality claims. Rosiers (2006: 50) however adds that “in spite of this lack of legal ground for the LIT profession and low remuneration, many LITs try to do their job as well as they can with a lot of goodwill. However, there is no quality guarantee, so to speak” (our translation).

Unfortunately, the first gap in the law that Vanden Bosch is referring to is still there: the LIT profession is not protected, which means that anybody can present himself as a LIT and even when lack of competencies or bad conduct can be demonstrated, no legal instruments are available against this person (ImPLI 2012, *Final Report*, 59-60 & 73-74).

4 AVIDICUS (JLS/2008/JPEN/037), <http://www.videoconference-interpreting.net/BraunTaylor2011.html>.

5 ImPLI (JUST/2010/JPEN/AG/1562), http://www.arts.kuleuven.be/home/english/rg_interpreting_studies/research-projects/impli/index.

6 CO-Minor-IN/QUEST (JUST/2011/JPEN/AG/2961), http://www.arts.kuleuven.be/home/english/rg_interpreting_studies/research-projects/co_minor_in_quest/index.

7 QUALITAS, <http://www.qualitas-project.eu>.

Fortunately, training modules following practice standards were successfully implemented in the academic year 2000-2001 and still exist. The training programme is the result of collaboration between legal actors in Antwerp, i.e. the Court of First Instance (*Rechtbank van Eerste Aanleg/Tribunal de Première Instance*), the Antwerp bar association, the Antwerp police and what was at that time Lessius university college and is now part of the Faculty of Arts at KU Leuven. It aims at the training of new LITs but also of LITs who were sworn-in before 2000. Until that time there was no quality control whatsoever, with regard to the authenticity of degrees, the linguistic knowledge of the working languages of a LIT candidate, or translator or interpreter skills as such. Future LITs were accepted or rejected by the general assembly of the Court of First Instance, and afterwards the accepted LITs were invited to come to Antwerp to be sworn in. Subsequently, the new LITs did not receive any guidelines or rules on how to behave or which rules to follow. The only legally binding form they received was the one with the rates of pay (Rosiers 2006: 52).

Today, after a series of changes both in admission procedures and assessment procedures, the programme consists of the components described below.

In a first stage, admission exams are organized because classes are monolingual and taught only in Dutch, so there are no language courses as such (neither in Dutch nor in the several foreign languages of the candidates). For both languages (FL and Dutch) there are oral and written tests at B2 level (CEFR) where a minimum score of 80% is required to be admitted to the LIT training programme. An exception is made for people with a BA and/or MA diploma in philology or in translation/interpreting studies. Five modules are taught, i.e. legal system and ethical code, legal Dutch and terminology, legal methodology and sources of law, legal interpreting, legal translating and police module, for a total amount of 150 hours; at the end, the following exams are compulsory for all candidates: a written exam for law studies, terminology and methodology and, according to the choice of the candidates (to become a legal translator and/or legal interpreter), for the translators there is a written exam that consists in a recognition test (recognize (in)correct translations), a revision test of legal translations and the concrete, autonomous translation of a legal text. All tests are in both directions (FL-Dutch); interpreters have to interpret in a role play with a legal actor (also the assessor for Dutch, legal knowledge and professionalism) and a client (who is also the FL assessor) and are screened not only for linguistic knowledge, but also for the following interpreting techniques: short consecutive, long consecutive, whispered simultaneous interpreting and sight translation.

The programme is presented here in a nutshell: for further and more detailed information, see the website of the LIT programme in Antwerp.

Building on the achievements of GROTIUS I, GROTIUS II (2001/GRP/015) aims at disseminating the achievements of GROTIUS I to all member states and wants to start dissemination in candidate countries, so as to continue to discuss the main issues of GROTIUS I (training, codes, certification, working

arrangements and interdisciplinary arrangements) in a wider EU forum and derive from this discussion a comprehensive quality trajectory in LIT, not only in individual member states but throughout the whole EU (Hertog 2003: 10).

GROTIUS II shows how, thanks to these projects, solid networks have been built up and the final conference of the project demonstrates that even specific issues like Sign Language and the debate on codes of ethics and good practice were tackled already ten years ago; it also presents a concrete example of a model of implementation of a quality trajectory in the Netherlands.

In this respect, the Netherlands and Belgium (Flanders, Antwerp) have played – although with trials and errors – an important pioneering role for other member states, and it is thanks to the exchange with the network partners of different member states that quality trajectories have been improved and new insights about specific needs are gained.

3. AGIS AND THE TRAINING OF LEGAL ACTORS

In the preface of GROTIUS II, Erik Hertog writes that “GROTIUS indeed is not the end, as is signaled by the Commission itself by initiating a new framework program called AGIS that shares many of the GROTIUS aims and concerns” (Hertog 2003: 11).

The first AGIS project (JAI/2003/AGIS/048) is definitely a step forward, as we can read in the proceedings of the project, called *Instruments for lifting language barriers in intercultural legal proceedings*:

It contains viewpoints and practical ideas for members of the judiciary working with interpreters and translators. It builds on the European Commission's Proposal for a Framework Decision on certain procedural rights applying in proceedings in criminal matters throughout the European Union, published in 2004. The authors of the articles in this book presented their opinion on several articles of the Proposal and put them in the perspective of their own practice and country. (Keijzer-Lambooy/Gasille 2005: 3)

A striking element in this publication is the fact that the project partners have taken a look outside the EU borders, exploring the right to interpretation and translation in criminal proceedings not only in Norway, but also in the United States. This could only contribute to the seriousness and the constructive thinking to accomplish a mature Framework decision.

It is very stimulating to see that what has started modestly in GROTIUS under “Possibilities” (the title of Part II in the proceedings) and a round table during the Grotius conference programme (14-16 November 2002) with amongst others Loraine Leeson as an academic and practitioner in sign language, has now become a large part of the proceedings dedicated to vulnerable groups of citizens involved in criminal proceedings: no less than three chapters are

dedicated to sign language interpreting in the court. The contribution of Helga Stevens – a deaf member of the Flemish Parliament and Senate in Belgium – in this regard is (already) clear from the title: “Justice must be seen to be done” (Stevens 2005: 77-83).

The most obvious and clear-cut evolution from GROTIUS to AGIS is the fact that more and more legal actors – members of the judiciary, police or ministries of Justice – are involved in the complex process of reflection on procedural rights in criminal proceedings. As a result, all parties involved in criminal proceedings – not only language specialists such as translators and interpreters – recognize from now on that language barriers can hinder equal access to justice and thus equal treatment.

All these members of the judiciary system “formed a network that created awareness of each other’s position in legal proceedings, paving the way for equal treatment of suspects, irrespective of language barriers” (Keijzer-Lambooy/Gasille 2005: 1). In other words, the raising of awareness finally starts to gain ground.

In Antwerp, this awareness is translated into concrete actions: the police module becomes a “real-life” experience where police officers meet the would-be LITs and teach them about “police life” and interviewing techniques, exchange rules of the ethical code, but they themselves also learn about the difficulties that translators and interpreters are confronted with. This fruitful exchange of ideas is then summarized in role plays that imitate scenarios of every day police work.

Moreover, police trainers such as those at police schools inform us that they started to create awareness through short introductions on the interpreter-mediated interview, if possible with role plays. But they admit there is still a long way to go: the total course time dedicated to interviewing techniques is limited to about 20 hours, so little time is left to introduce the LIT’s intervention and role. Role plays are artificial since police schools do not have interpreters that can be assigned this “real life” role.

The same goes for other legal actors such as judges, lawyers, investigating judges and so on: occasionally a training day, workshops or role plays are organized but there is still no systematic training for awareness raising amongst the users of LIT services in the judiciary.

We will come back to this later in this contribution, but Ann Corsellis in her conclusion phrases perfectly what is at stake:

It is inevitable that legal services and linguists are going to have to work together, so we might as well programme ourselves to succeed, rather than to fail, in our important tasks. We are all, I fear, coming to a point where the pressures of a multi-cultural, multi-lingual society have overtaken the structures and skills we currently possess. (Corsellis 2005: 133)

As stated before, the *Status Quaestionis* publication (as a result of AGIS II, namely AGIS JLS/2006/AGIS/052) wanted to check “the state of play in the field”. The full title of the publication says it all: *Questionnaire on the Provision of Legal Interpreting*

and Translation in the EU and we consider it a turning point in that everybody involved in LIT has been jolted awake by it: the equal access to justice in criminal proceedings was described as far from ideal, if not rather poor, although some steps in the right direction had been taken. The issue, however, is not (yet) of great interest in the different Member States, which is reflected in the low response rate.

The recommendations of the authors on the necessity to move forward are very clear and explicit:

1. The competent authorities, in each Member State, should have their attention drawn again to the relevant legal and good practice requirements in relation to legal interpreting and translation. They should also be encouraged to pass that information down to legal service practitioners [...]
2. Relevant data should be collected, collated, analysed and disseminated as a basis for nationally co-ordinated and informed future planning for meeting requirements in relation to legal interpreting and translation, and to monitor progress. (Hertog/van Gucht 2008: 191)

It is here that the networks created thanks to the previous projects joined forces and decided to create EULITA, the organisation that wants to bring together professional associations of LITs, as well as general translation and interpreting associations with LITs as their members, or all individuals committed to the legal domain and its quality improvement in Europe. With joint efforts, EULITA constantly wants to take to heart these recommendations, as we can read in its mission statement. We believe it must be explicitly quoted here to underline the strength of the words and intentions:

EULITA is committed to promoting the quality of justice, ensuring access to justice across languages and cultures and thus, ultimately, guaranteeing the fundamental principles of human rights as enshrined in the European Convention of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

EULITA is further committed to promoting quality in legal interpreting and translation through the recognition of the professional status of legal interpreters and translators, the exchange of information and best practices in training and continuous professional development and the organisation of events on issues such as training, research, professionalism, etc. thus promoting judicial cooperation and mutual trust by the member states in each other's systems of legal interpreting and translation.

EULITA, finally, aims to promote cooperation and best practices in working arrangements with the legal services and legal professionals. (<http://www.eulita.eu/mission-statement>).

If we “translate” the birth of EULITA to the daily practice in the Antwerp interpreters training programmes, we can see that the EULITA website is an established reference not only for all LIT students, but also for students of the

Master in Interpreting at the KU Leuven Antwerp Campus to show them how research efforts continuously contribute to improving best practices in the field.

The SQ publication has to be considered an eye-opener for having helped to found EULITA. Likewise, the very explicit recommendations of the SQ that were mentioned earlier have certainly paved the way for the EU Directive 2010/EU/64, a document of capital importance to more equal justice for every citizen in the EU.

4. DIRECTIVE 2010/64/EU, BMT AND TRAFUT

The Directive 2010/64/EU on the right to interpretation and translation of essential documents in criminal proceedings hardly needs introduction: everybody can find the full text in the language of his Member State through the Official Journal of the EU. The Directive clearly does more than stating these rights as such: it explicitly mentions the same rights for people “with hearing or speech impediments” (Art. 2 (3)); it wants Member States to meet the costs of interpretation/translation (Art. 4) to avoid a situation where the most vulnerable are not able to afford an interpreter/translator and see their right to justice denied; it furthermore requires a transparent quality control mechanism (article 2 (5), (8); article 5 (1)) of the Member States through record keeping (article 6) and training (article 7).

The Building Mutual Trust⁸ publication (Townsend 2011) reports on common research efforts of no less than seven EU Member States (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Romania, Spain and the UK) on how to efficiently implement a qualitative training programme. This framework project for Implementing EU Common Standards in Legal Interpreting and Translation was of capital importance for the Antwerp training programme and certainly not only for Antwerp, considering the broad dissemination activities of the BMT partnership with a final conference, a written publication and an electronic publication accessible to everybody as well as an extremely useful website.

The different chapters of the BMT publication allow everybody to build a consistent training programme that in Antwerp (where it was implemented already in 2000) has proven to be effective, although continuous exchange of best practices and updates have been and remain necessary: the benchmark core competencies for LITs allow the implementation of core modules for LIT training such as knowledge of legal systems, transfer skills, professional code of ethics and so on. Continuous improvement has been made in Antwerp in selecting candidates for the LIT training and in the assessment of those core competencies from 2009 on, with trial and error phases, until 2012 when a more reliable and

⁸ BMT (Building Mutual Trust) website (general), <http://www.buildingmutualtrust.eu>, <http://www.buildingmutualtrust.eu/images/pdf/BMT%20Report.pdf>.

valid testing was introduced which underpins a solid assessment procedure. Given the limited space of this contribution, we refer to our presentation of this new assessment procedure and related research at the *InDialog* conference⁹ in Berlin and to the book of abstracts of the conference (Salaets/Balogh 2013: 77-78) in anticipation of the final publication.

The training material chapter concretely illustrates what the different training modules can consist of and the Materials Bank offers more than 150 pages of highly valuable LIT training material in Danish, English, French, German, Italian, Romanian and Spanish (again in printed and electronic format).

What definitely still remains an ongoing challenge on the Antwerp Campus is CAIT (Computer-Assisted Interpreting Training), which of course requires time and infrastructure, two precious requisites that are not easily obtained. The same goes for the training of the trainers for LITs and the training of the members of the legal services working through LITs. The training of trainers is not yet implemented, except for an occasional workshop on the new assessment procedure. This means that trainers have to work from their own experience (resulting from their legal, linguistic, interpreting or translation background) and with written documents and publications as the only support. This also requires big efforts from the trainers – “for the good cause”, because most of it is voluntary work.

The training of the members of the legal professions to learn to work with interpreters and translators also exists but is equally sporadic and does not yet happen on a long-term structured base.

There is a very simple explanation for this basic lack of training for members of legal professions, which again has to do with time: it is not easy to find occasions for gathering professionals of the legal and pedagogical domains (police, lawyers, judges, and also trainers, linguists, terminologists etc.). To take them away from the shop floor, their daily busy agendas and professional occupations is not an easy task. Therefore, we plead for the implementation of training sessions on working with interpreters for all professions in the society (be it in the asylum context, for social work, in medical contexts, in the legal system etc.) during their training at University in Social Sciences, Medicine, Law, Communication Sciences, and so on (Salaets 2012: 191-203). Since we live in a global world where people (will) continuously move from one continent or country to another – not only for economic or safety reasons but also for other purposes like travelling, health care and so on –, the students of today and thus professionals of tomorrow, have a very high chance of getting in touch with people that do not speak one of the languages they master. Moreover, the question is much more complex than “mastering a language”. Here it seems fitting to mention the acronyms BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills) and CALP¹⁰ (Cognitive Academic

⁹ 15-16 November 2013, <http://www.indialog-conference.com/programme.php>.

¹⁰ BICS and CALP, <http://www.wce.wvu.edu/Resources/CIRCLE/Articles/Jim%20Cummins.pdf>.

Language Proficiency), introduced by Jim Cummins in 1979 and “intended to draw attention to the very different time periods typically required by immigrant children to acquire conversational fluency in their second language as compared to grade-appropriate academic proficiency in that language”.

Although the terminology and acronyms strictly speaking come from the pedagogical and language learning domain – where they have also been criticized – they are frequently used to refer to the different levels of language mastery in daily conversations where one can manage to make himself understood with a reduced set of vocabulary, syntax knowledge etc., versus the more specialized language an individual needs to exactly describe a witnessed scene to a lawyer or to explain to a doctor during a visit what exactly is going on or which specific part of the body is injured etc., just to give a few concrete examples. The moment a conversation becomes slightly technical or more specific and goes beyond everyday talk, professionals can encounter serious problems in providing the same service, just like they would when speaking with somebody who shares their mother tongue. Creating awareness amongst the professionals of this very delicate situation and the risk of decreased service appears to be a process that moves at an extremely slow pace.

The TRAFUT project (JUST/2010/JPEN/AG/1549) meets the needs that exist for effectively exchanging good practices, for models and recommendations regarding the Directive 2010/64/EU, for all stakeholders: the European Commission DG Justice, the Secretariat of the EU Council, the European Court of Justice, the European Court of Human Rights, the European Criminal Bar Association, the Council of Bars and Law Societies in Europe, the European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters, along with many judges, prosecutors, lawyers, professional associations of legal interpreters and translators, academics and trainers.

In their final report, the TRAFUT partners sum up the most salient features that came out of the presentations, i.e. the transposition of the Directive into national law, the issue of cost and quality, the issue of a national register of LITs, the use of modern technology, and (further) training of both legal professionals and LITs.¹¹

Of course, some of these elements go beyond the power and policy of an individual university or campus, like KU Leuven Campus Antwerp: we continuously try to observe quality control in training, take care of the practical organization of training initiatives with all parties involved, reflect on the implementation of available modern communication technology and so on. On the other hand, we do not have any legal or decision power to have the 2010/64/EU Directive transposed into national law: at the time of writing this paper, Belgium had not met the deadline of 27 October 2013. We can now only put pressure on the Ministry of Justice to take up the matter before the report date, due on 27 October 2014!

¹¹ <http://eulita.eu/sites/default/files/TRAFUT%20-%20final%20report.pdf>, pp. 8-9.

The same goes for cost issues: it is up to the stakeholders to store and archive data on interpreting and translation hours, needs, costs etc. to build a policy on that basis.

Finally, a national register of LITs is a basic requirement we in Antwerp have been pleading for since the start of the projects (in 2000). Especially in a small country like Belgium, a national register is indispensable, with two language frontiers and thus three linguistic zones (Flemish – French – German), not to mention sign language as an official language. As long as every judicial district in Belgium lays down different criteria to train (or not train) LITs, to hire professional (or ad-hoc) LITs, to control (or not control) quality, as long as there are no standard criteria in admission procedures for the entire legal system in Belgium, Antwerp will remain an island and all the efforts are sometimes perceived as carrying coals to Newcastle. Still, as the expression goes: standing still means falling behind, so moving ahead is the only option.

5. CHALLENGING RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

One of the necessary steps forward is the use of new technology in LIT, in training as well as in practice. This has been shown through the AVIDICUS I (2008-2011) and II (2011-2013) projects, and is still ongoing with the new AVIDICUS III project (2014-2016). The reason for the long period of implementation of these significant programmes is obvious: remote videoconferences in criminal proceedings are a highly complex matter, but they have become a crucial and more widely used instrument.

The use of videoconferences (VC) in criminal proceedings, especially for hearing witnesses or experts, has been allowed under EU legislation since 2000 (Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters between EU countries, Art. 10). A 2008 survey by the European working group on e-Justice shows that VCs are now widely used in criminal proceedings to speed up cross-border cooperation, reduce costs and increase security. (<http://eulita.eu/avidicus>)

The efficiency and availability of VCI (videoconference interpreting, e.g. the hearing of a person at a distance with the interpreter at either one of the locations) and RI (remote interpreting, with the interpreter not physically present)¹² has been studied thanks to a survey-based approach and a series of empirical studies in the AVIDICUS projects. It has been put forward for time and cost-saving reasons, for security reasons (no transportation of people is required) or for solving the lack of availability of qualified interpreters, especially in LLD (Languages of Lesser Diffusion).

¹² See further definitions: <http://www.videoconference-interpreting.net/iDefinitions.html>.

The outcomes and conclusions of the research are not straightforward and this should not come as a surprise. In interpreting quality issues (compared to face-to-face LIT in the empirical study material of the project), there are a lot of possible technical obstacles that must be tackled or at least faced like image quality (at the local and remote sites), sound quality, possible technical incompatibility, number and distribution of participants, rapport with the remote interlocutors, communication management and the working environment, all of which makes the project partners conclude:

At present, until further research has been conducted, video-mediated interpreting should only be used for low-impact crime and short procedures (<http://eulita.eu/avidicus>, see: Avidicus outcomes report to the e-justice group).

Recommendations are then formulated in the same report for public/judicial services, legal practitioners, police officers and interpreters on how to proceed when working with VC or in remote settings. In this regard, the complete publication of the project is of utmost importance and can be consulted electronically (<http://www.videoconference-interpreting.net/BraunTaylor2011.html>) or in printed form (Braun/Taylor 2012).

For the Antwerp training programme, there is still a lot of work ahead: the training chapter (Braun/Taylor 2012: 233-288) which aims at “raising awareness of the novel forms of video-mediated interpreting” and “to provide opportunities for hands-on practice of different forms of video-based interpreting” has not yet been implemented in the LIT program; this is to say that the introduction of a hands-on practice module is among the aims of the organizers.

In the meantime, the UNITI partners (University Network of Interpreting Training Institutes)¹³ wanted to put into practice one of the purposes of their cooperation agreement – i.e. to be a network for exchange of research and other forms of cooperation – and decided to answer a call for proposals regarding the 2010/EU/64 Directive.

The result of this cooperation was the ImPLI-project (Improving Police and Legal Interpreting, JUST/2010/JPEN/AG/1562) a small-scale project (18 months) with a very concrete focus on pre-trial since this is the key phase to allow a fair trial with equal access for everybody. The objective of the project is twofold:

- to give interpreter training institutes the opportunity to better understand the interviewing techniques developed by police, customs and prosecution and so enhance their training methods
- to inform police and prosecution officers about interpreting techniques and how they can help interpreters in their jobs provided they are properly implemented.

¹³ UNITI network, http://www.arts.kuleuven.be/home/english/rg_interpreting_studies/research-projects/impli/index.

The outcomes of the project have proven to be very useful to interpreting research and practice, as is the case in the Master in Interpreting curriculum as well as in the LIT program at KU Leuven Campus Antwerp.

The final report is a useful source of information for students in two ways: the thematic chapters give an overview of the themes that matter in legal interpreting – such as interpreters' recruitment, the role of the interpreter and its perception in the police context, just to name a few – while the country sections give an overview of every participating Member State (Belgium/Flanders, France, Germany, the Czech Republic, Italy and the UK/Scotland) as far as LIT is concerned (training, quality control mechanisms, working conditions, remuneration, interviewing formats and so on). A very convenient instrument in the final report are the country tables that give a very quick, but detailed overview of the LIT situation in the five partner countries.¹⁴

Another deliverable of the project has turned out to be a very useful pedagogical tool that is used in Antwerp in the interpreting programmes and police schools, i.e. the six educational films on how to proceed in an interpreter-mediated questioning of a witness, suspect and victim.¹⁵

Finally, the future promises more exciting evolutions in LIT in the sense that the ongoing or forthcoming projects announce a new trend in the existing training programmes: the trend of high expertise and increased specialization.

In that sense, the Co-MINOR-IN/QUEST project (JUST/2011/JPEN/AG/2961) – the acronym stands for cooperation in interpreter-mediated questioning of minors – focuses on the rights of victims following the 2012/29/EU Directive.¹⁶ More specifically, in article 7 it is stated that in criminal proceedings an interpreter must be provided when the child victim and the legal practitioner do not speak the same language. However, the right to interpretation and the right to be heard also extend to interview situations involving child witnesses and suspects. It is obvious that these painful situations for minors become extremely delicate and complex when they see not only the interviewer (e.g. a police officer, an investigating judge, or a lawyer) in the room, but maybe also a support person, a psychologist/social worker and a fourth or fifth person, i.e. the interpreter, when the minor happens to be in a country whose language he does not speak. To the partners of the project, it seems necessary that the different parties involved in interpreter-mediated questioning of minors in the pre-trial phase get to know each other better, because it is precisely this stage that is capital for the rest of the criminal proceedings. Moreover, for obvious psychological reasons, this interview is often the first and final questioning. Trying to understand how different professionals can collaborate in the best possible way during an interview with

¹⁴ http://www.isit-paris.fr/documents/ImPLI/Final_Report.pdf, pp. 58-71.

¹⁵ <http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLx15JSWFqoqCm5ycG6CKzxAQHE-YfrgIj>.

¹⁶ EU Directive 2012/29/EU (English version), <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2012:315:0057:0073:EN:PDF>.

a minor was the main aim of a workshop in May 2012. During this workshop, the police officer as well as the judge, lawyer, social worker, psychologist and the interpreter tried to identify and explain to the others what their ways of working and their specific needs are. They also formulated questions, doubts and criticisms mostly concerning the other professionals involved in the interview. The reasons for these criticisms or doubts often lie in the fact that professionals know their own job very well, but know little about what the others are doing, e.g. the police officer knows very well which interviewing technique he wants to apply in a certain situation while the interpreter is not aware of that. Or vice versa, the police officer thinks that the interpreter is a kind of machine: you push the button and he translates literally what has been said. The ultimate goal is of course to transform this situation – which is by definition frightening and unpleasant for the minor – into an experience in which he gets the feeling he can express himself freely, surrounded by a team of professionals working together to achieve the best possible results for the minor in the first place, without any additional stress caused by tensions in the interview room.

Subsequently, a survey was conducted in the countries of the project partners (Belgium, France, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands and the UK/Scotland) to obtain information about the needs and doubts of the professionals and practitioners involved in interpreter-mediated questioning of minors. Once these findings have been mapped, they will be the foundation of a more professional approach towards minors in criminal proceedings when they do not speak the language of the judicial zone/system (well enough) to be ensured a fair trial. In the future, these insights will be used as a basis to design highly-specialized training for LITs experts in questioning minors.

The most recent project (running from March 2014 to March 2016) wants to tackle an urgent problem LIT is confronted with: in all member states, in order to comply with Article 5 (2) and Article 6 (3) of the European Convention, with the European Charter and with Directives 2010/64/EU (on the right to interpretation and translation), 2012/13/EU (on the right to information) and 2012/29/EU (on victims' rights), there is a need to provide appropriate quality in legal interpreting for LLD (languages of lesser diffusion). Especially because of the current scale of migration – not only within the EU but also to and from third countries – and multilingualism in Europe, there is a growing demand for interpretation in legal proceedings. Multilingual situations are likely to become so frequent in this context that the training of legal interpreters for languages of lesser diffusion needs to meet certain standards so as to guarantee good quality interpreting afterwards.

The aim of the TraiLLD-project (Training in Languages of Lesser Diffusion - JUST/2013/JPEN/AG/4594) is to share expertise in training legal interpreters among the project partners and in this way to design a new methodology and strategy that focuses on how to train these LLD interpreters. However, all partners are still confronted with differences in quality between interpreter

training for main/traditional languages and the one for LLD. To eliminate these quality differences with interpreters of the main languages, we will for instance test a framework of best practices in training methodologies.

The main objective is to formulate and disseminate recommendations for all member states – through description of models and guidelines for future training in LDD – to ensure fair trial, also for speakers of LLD. The ultimate goal is to be able to implement an LDD-training at KU Leuven Campus Antwerp, based on the demand for LLD-interpreters in Belgium.

It is obvious – since quality is a returning issue in interpreting and since reliable and valid assessment is a tool to grade this quality – that the QUALITAS project has to be mentioned because it focuses on Assessing Legal Interpreting Quality through Testing and Certification. Since the project has not been concluded yet, the activities of the partners in workshops and consortium meetings, the provisional results and/or deliverables can be found on its website.

Finally, a new specific project on the use of Sign Language and SL interpreters in criminal proceedings will start in 2014, with the title Justisigns. While the website of Justisigns is under construction, information on all the recent projects can always be found on the website of the Interpreting Studies research group at KU Leuven.¹⁷

6. CONCLUSION

By giving an overview of some of the main EU-projects supported by DG Justice that KU Leuven Campus Antwerp (formerly Lessius) has participated or is participating in as coordinator or partner, we wanted to show the importance of research, the usefulness of sharing expertise and how it improves best practices in the field.

The Justisigns project – to mention only one project – is an excellent example of the importance of the interconnection between research, research outputs and best practices: it shows how the chapter in the Grotius publication at the beginning of this century with the modest title “Possibilities” (where sign language is only mentioned occasionally), has received growing – and well deserved – attention to become an “autonomous” issue in research on LIT through a research project.

It must be added that this description only provides a quick overview of a tradition that has already lasted for almost 15 years, focusing mainly on interpreting. Other projects with an emphasis on legal translation are not mentioned here.

The salient point of this summary is that the outcomes and results of this research have resulted in tangible products in LIT practice: these range from

¹⁷ http://www.arts.kuleuven.be/home/english/rg_interpreting_studies/.

an entire training course to some awareness raising training classes (at least), or modules for all participants of the legal field; strategies and materials for trainers; available databases, websites and freely accessible documents on interpreting research, training and practice in the legal field; educational films; well-considered selection and assessment procedures; new technologies for LIT; growing specialization and expertise e.g. LIT in LDD, for minors and so on.

However, this does not mean that everything has already been accomplished: there is still a long way to go in awareness raising, mostly among national and local authorities. They have to be convinced that European directives have to be transposed in national legislation to meet the requirements that are stipulated there, i.e. the right to interpretation and translation in criminal proceedings.

They have to be convinced that quality control is one of their competencies that can be accomplished through research and training organized by academia.

They also have to be persuaded that one of the pillars of quality assurance consists in the protection of the LIT profession through proper legislation and a national register.

In short: dissemination has to be more persistent and wider; in particular, it has to go far beyond academia and a selective group of enthusiastic legal actors that “fight for the good cause”. Dissemination of research results, best practices and awareness raising have to reach everybody who is involved in criminal proceedings, not least the authorities, because all actors involved are equally responsible for (un)equal access to Justice if people can(not) be heard because of communication problems.

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