

UNOG Staff Union

Languages Service Sectoral Assembly 2022-2023

Report on the activities of the Bureau

1. Between July 2022 and May 2023, the LSSA Bureau held 11 meetings. The online format made it easier to be flexible and rearrange meetings, which allowed us to hold one every month. The minutes of those meetings can be found here <https://unogstaffunion.org/languages-service-sectoral-assembly/>. After a campaign to encourage interested staff to stand, representatives from all translation sections, the Editing Section and two desktop publishing units were appointed to the Bureau. It is hoped to increase the number of represented units during the next term.

Organization of work

2. In line with the LSSA rules of procedure, a programme of work was adopted at the start of the term. Most of these issues were discussed at some point, in addition to other urgent matters that arose in the course of the term. Discussions in the Bureau were rich and the subjects detailed below are far from an exhaustive list of those raised during the term.

3. Four of the Bureau's meetings included other participants. The Bureau held a question-and-answer session with the Director of DCM and the Chief of LS and a special meeting on the proposed translation quality evaluation system with the Chief of LS. Two other meetings included guest speakers who gave presentations on the collaborative revision project and the learning and knowledge management programme. In all cases, the Bureau members also met separately to coordinate and discuss other matters.

4. Three DCM-level Staff Relations Management Group (SRMG) meetings took place during the term. On each occasion, the Bureau advised the President of the issues to be raised. An additional Bureau members attended one of the meetings.

Implementation of the translators' workload standard

5. The dispute with DGACM senior management on implementation of the workload standard and on the planned introduction of reprise discounting was ongoing throughout the term. At almost every Bureau meeting, the President briefed the participants on developments (see report of the President for more details) and sought their input on the way forward and staff reactions and opinions.

Reviewing practices across the Languages Service, with a view to promoting best practices, eliminating harmful practices and harmonization

6. As the Bureau has representatives from all sections, most meetings include a comparison of practices. At one of the SRMG meetings, an agenda item was dedicated to certain practices causing concern among staff, including those related to evaluation, feedback and management styles, which are not applied in all sections and therefore can be changed. It was suggested to discuss this at a meeting with the Chief of LS, which will need to be requested during the next term.

Strategic Heritage Plan and impact of the move

7. During the year, concerns arose about the lack of sufficient office space for particular sections, a lack of transparency in office planning, the carpets in the new offices posing a

problem for staff with allergies and the potential use of certain areas for disruptive informal meetings. These concerns were raised at SRMG and in communications with the Chief of LS. We were assured that the issue of insufficient office space would be resolved. Often, no answer could be given because of the repeated delays with the move.

Technological issues – gDoc 2.0 and the reprise calculator

8. Staff continued to experience difficulties in using gDoc 2.0 and problems with relying on the productivity data. Towards the end of the cycle, at the request of Bureau members, the President requested flexibility on the use of the data in performance evaluations at a DCM townhall. Issues with the reprise calculator were discussed at several Bureau meetings and at an SRMG meeting.

Quality evaluation system

9. A new quality evaluation system is being piloted for future Geneva-wide implementation. The Bureau discussed this on several occasions, noting the unpopularity of the TQE system used in New York and raising concerns about the possible impact on relations between colleagues. The Bureau requested a special meeting with the Chief of LS to discuss the pilot project and their concerns and to request staff consultations before the definitive adoption of any system.

Concerns of desktop publishing staff

9. In response to some messages circulated containing speculation about the future of the desktop publishing units, the issue was raised at an SRMG meeting. Staff representatives were assured of the continued relevance and necessity of their work. Pablo Gonzalez Silva, former LSSA Vice-President wrote an [article](#) promoting their importance in UN Today, which was circulated to all LS staff. During the term, the Bureau asked about and followed up on delays in the recruitment of two DPU Chiefs.

Determination of step upon recruitment

10. The Bureau was informed that the DGACM guidelines for determination of step on recruitment had not been consistently applied in Geneva, which meant some staff had been recruited at a lower step than should have been the case. The President circulated the guidelines to all DCM staff to inform them of the possibility of review if recruitment had taken place within the last year.

Unfair crediting practices for editors

11. As the editing and translation workload standards are calculated based on English, those working from or in languages with a lower wordcount than English are disadvantaged. This was raised during the DGACM staff-management consultations. The particular impact of this on editors was included in the programme of work and discussed during a meeting with the Chief of LS and affected staff.

Volunteer translators

11. After a call went out in a UNOG broadcast for non-professional volunteer translators for the UN Geneva website, Pablo Gonzalez Silva wrote on behalf of the UNOG Staff Union to the website team and the Chief of LS. The President circulated the prompt response to all LS staff.

Collaborative revision

12. The relaunch of the collaborative revision project was presented at a Bureau meeting and the members agreed to put out a call for volunteers. Unfortunately, the project was shelved owing to a lack of volunteers. The Bureau agreed that the lack of volunteers was related to productivity pressure and that the project should be reconsidered in the future.

Brown bag lunch

13. The Bureau agreed to send a representative to attend an event organized for newly recruited staff, to explain the functioning of the Sectoral Assembly.