

Languages Service Sectoral Assembly (LSSA)

Minutes of the tenth meeting of the Bureau¹

Held via videoconference on Thursday, 20 April 2023, from 3 p.m. to 3.45 p.m (Part 1) and 4.00 p.m. to 5.45 p.m. (Part 2).

Attendees: Anna Aleksandrova (RTS), Esmá Belfalah (ATS), Jianjun Chen (CTS), Antia Collazo Ageitos (STS), Pauline Escalante (EDPU), Alexandra Gigant (FTS), Hassan Harrafa (ATS), Laura Johnson (President), Michelle Keating (Chief of LS, Part 2 only), Romina Merino (SDPU), Cristina Parrondo (STS)

Part 1

1. During Part 1 of the meeting, **the Bureau** discussed the concerns and questions about the proposed translation quality evaluation to put to the Chief of LS during Part 2, the need for a unified response and the importance of real staff-management consultations on this issue Bureau on the latest developments regarding the implementation of the translators' workload standard, including the disagreement at the Staff-Management Committee and the vote of no confidence. **The Bureau** discussed possible next steps following the vote.
2. **The President** briefed the Bureau on the latest developments regarding the implementation of the translators' workload standard, including the participation in the mental health day involving uncertified sick leave, the response received the day after from the Secretary-General, the appeal against the Tribunal judgment and the planned discussion at the Staff-Management Committee (SMC). **The Bureau** discussed the next steps.
3. **The President** had sent out a message regarding step determination and then follow-up responses to a number of affected colleagues (see annex 1).
4. **The President** had received a response from the Chief of LS about the questions related to the SHP (see annex 2).
5. **The Bureau** discussed the agenda items for the next DCM Staff Relations Management Group (SRMG) meeting, including office planning under the SHP, the regulation of monitoring assignments, the future of desktop publishing units and the inaccuracy of reprise calculation.

Part 2

1. During Part 2 of the meeting, the **Chief of LS** responded to queries about the planned translation quality evaluation, including concerns about the operation of the app, for example that all P5s could currently read even draft evaluations, and the effect on relations between colleagues and staff morale. She informed the Bureau that the project was still being piloted, that the specifics of the evaluation system could change, including in response to staff concerns, and about the possibilities

¹ Unless otherwise stated, the opinions reflected herein represent staff suggestions and views collected by their representatives and are aimed at promoting communication between management and staff. In order to avoid misunderstandings, any comments or requests for corrections to the minutes should be submitted to the President of the LSSA only, for inclusion in the minutes of the following meeting.

of requesting changes to the functioning of the app. She highlighted that she fully expected the vast majority of evaluations to be satisfactory, in line with performance evaluations and client feedback.

Annex 1

Text of message sent to all DCM:

There are guidelines to be applied for the recruitment of entry level language staff, which determine the step you should be placed at upon appointment depending on your relevant experience.

We have recently learned that these guidelines have not been consistently applied in Geneva, so that staff have been recruited at lower steps than should have been the case. If you were recruited within the past 12 months, and you were not placed at the step indicated in the attached guidelines, you can contact HR to request a review.

Unfortunately, if you were recruited before then, HR will not be able to make changes to your step. However, you may wish to seek legal advice through the Office of Staff Legal Assistance (OSLA), which you can contact here: <https://www.un.org/en/internaljustice/osla/contact.shtml>. You may be able to make the case that you could not have taken action within the deadline because you did not know about the existence of the guidelines.

Annex 2

Question from LSSA President

I am also starting to get more SHP-related questions in advance of our upcoming move. It seems there was a PowerPoint presentation circulated in January with detailed plans of our future offices.

This was then shared with all staff in some sections but not others. Perhaps you would consider sharing this document with the entire Service so that everyone has received the same information.

Also regarding the SHP, the editors raised concerns that there is a space on the fifth floor of AC building, which has no offices in it but will be opposite their own offices. They are concerned that this will be used for informal meetings, which would disrupt their work and request that the space be used for something more appropriate (I imagine even signs reminding people to be quiet would help). I also wanted to clarify whether any renovations at all will be done in the offices before we move. In particular, some people mentioned that they are allergic to the carpets currently there.

Response from Chief of LS

With respect to the SHP, we are now in the microplanning phase but as our move has now been delayed this was put in hold as we had to deal with other priorities this month including the HRC. I am planning on going to visit the building this month. Have you already been? Would you like to come with me? It's my understanding that the renovations have not been completed. This means that I cannot answer the question about carpeting unless I have more information about the exact office. Angelique or I can follow up as soon as we hear from you.

I take note of the point raised by Editors. I had made the same point when SHP had initially suggested putting touch-down desks in that space. I have planned to have a team-building with all SHP focal points later this year to discuss several points including the use of this space taking into account the proximity to offices. In brief there will be no touch-down space. I am happy to ask that signs be put up.