

Languages Service Sectoral Assembly (LSSA)
Minutes of the sixth meeting of the 2019/2020 Bureau¹

Held on Thursday, 16 January 2020, from 2.30 to 4 p.m., room E-6123.

Attendees: Edith **Bourion** (FTPU), Jianjun **Chen** (CTS), Pauline **Escalante** (ETPU), Hassan **Harrafa**, (ATS), Laura **Johnson** (ETS), Ahid **Manja** (LSU), Olivier **Meyer** (President), Bruno **Nissou** (FTS), Kristina **Redesha** (RTS), Francisco **Rovira** (STS), Luz María **Urquizu** (STPU), Mei **Wang** (ES)

Topics discussed:

- Activities of the President
- Quality v. productivity
- Preparation for the meeting with Mr. Movses Abelian on Monday 20 January
- Preparation for the meeting of the Staff Relations Management Group (SRMG)
- Recruitment to the Languages Service
 - Reclassified posts
 - Geographical diversity
 - Gender balance
- Other business

Summary of discussions:

1. *Activities of the President:* The **Bureau** noted that the President had not been invited to attend a meeting with the Chiefs for some time. The President had received replies from management about some issues raised at the previous meeting: Michelle Keating will speak to Corinne Momal-Vanian about the possibility of a more flexible approach to compensatory time off (CTO); in the future LS offices, two or three “focus booths” will be available per floor, which ETPU staff will be able to reserve for use as reading rooms; no change to the number of G posts is foreseen in the 2020 budget and the new P posts will be outside LS.

2. *Quality v. productivity:* The **Bureau** noted reports that Mr. Abelian (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management) might wish to increase productivity standards for translators, despite the rejection of such an increase by the General Assembly. The Chief of LS and the Director of DCM have both stated their opposition to any such change. At a meeting in New York, Mr. Abelian acknowledged that quality in translation was a top priority and non-negotiable.

3. *Preparation for the meeting with Mr. Movses Abelian and Geneva Staff:* The **Bureau** agreed to ask Mr. Abelian to state his position on productivity clearly. The Bureau members will ask for input from their respective sections and put together a coordinated list of questions.

4. *Preparation for the meeting of the Staff Relations Management Group (SRMG):* At the upcoming SRMG, the **President** will raise the issues of productivity standards, fair implementation of CTO and flexible working arrangement (FWA) policies and difficulties in obtaining part-time contracts.

5. *Recruitment to the Languages Service:*

- *Reclassified posts:* The attention of the Bureau was drawn to budget document A/74/7, which includes information about the planned reclassification of posts in 2020, broken down by section. The Bureau will seek clarification as to how the creation of new P5 posts will contribute to achieving a diamond structure.

- *Geographical diversity:* The **President** has received confirmation that recruitment to LS will continue to be based on merit rather than geographical representation. The Bureau noted that it would nonetheless be desirable to increase geographical diversity in the French, English and Spanish Translation Sections. The **President** will request an update on the outreach programme.

- *Gender balance:* The **President** has been shown statistics which confirmed that LS has achieved gender balance in recruitment and promotions. It was confirmed that decisions are made based on merit, but that gender balance can be a criterion to decide between equally qualified candidates.

6. *Other business:*

- ETPU staff are concerned that one of the two G6 staff will shortly be retiring and there has been no confirmation that a replacement will be recruited. Support staff in general would like more information about the impact of possible changes to the work flow involving the pre-formatting of documents and XML tagging. The **President** will seek clarification.
- The **Bureau** underscores the important contribution of the work of TPUs to the translation process quality, especially as regards proofreading.

Note: The next LSSA Bureau meeting will be held on Thursday 13 February 2020.

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.