

Training interpreters for the European project: the first interpreting internship of the European institutions

La formación de intérpretes para el proyecto europeo: las primeras prácticas de interpretación de las instituciones europeas

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Abstract: The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC, 1952), forerunner of the European Union (EU), was the first joint European project. It was followed shortly afterwards by the European Economic Community (EEC) and Euratom (1957). In order to succeed, these common projects had to provide effective communication in four languages (Dutch, French, German and Italian). This article is part of a comprehensive, broad-based study of the first interpreting service in what, over time, has become the European Union (EU). Based on written and oral sources, the study analyses the way in which the ECSC established and managed a dedicated linguistic service which included an interpreting section. The interpreting service at the ECSC developed its own in-house interpreter internship programme in 1957/1958. This article discusses the earliest years of the programme and makes a contribution to the history of interpreting as a profession within the EU.

Key words: interpreting; ECSC; EU; internship; training.

1. The content of this article represents the views of the author only and is her sole responsibility.

Resumen: La Comunidad Europea del Carbón y el Acero (CECA, 1952), precursora de la Unión Europea (UE), fue la primera articulación del proyecto europeo. Poco después, la siguieron la Comunidad Económica Europea (CEE) y Euratom (1957). Para lograr el éxito, estos proyectos comunes tuvieron que proporcionar una comunicación eficaz en cuatro lenguas (neerlandés, francés, alemán e italiano). Este artículo forma parte de un estudio amplio y exhaustivo del primer servicio de interpretación en lo que, con el paso del tiempo, se ha convertido en la Unión Europea (UE). Tomando como punto de partida recursos escritos y orales, el presente estudio analiza el modo en el que la CECA estableció y gestionó un servicio lingüístico especializado que incluía una sección de interpretación. El servicio de interpretación de la CECA desarrolló su propio programa interno de pasantías de interpretación en 1957/1958. Este artículo aborda los primeros años del programa y contribuye a la historia de la interpretación como profesión en el seno de la UE.

Palabras clave: interpretación; CECA; UE; pasantía; formación

1. INTRODUCTION

When the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was first established in 1952, it immediately became evident that the institution needed translators and interpreters, for the Community and its Member States had four official languages. However, interpreting was not a fully consolidated profession at the time; there were very few interpreting schools and not enough qualified interpreters to work for this first European Community. This need was exacerbated after the creation of the European Economic Community (ECC) and Euratom in 1957. Given the lack of qualified professionals, how did management structures cater for the needs of multilingual oral communication? As illustrated in this article, the ECSC first contacted training centres, then designed, developed and fine-tuned its own in-house interpreter training programme. This article is part of a more comprehensive study based on the ECSC documents that mention the 1957-1960 editions of the interpreter internship; this documentary evidence is held in the Historical Archives of the European Union. The author has analysed, interwoven and enriched these institutional historical documents with secondary sources, oral testimonies from direct witnesses, and photographs. The research focuses on the dimension resulting from the merger of two aspects, namely interpretation and the common projects that Europe was embarking on at the time (ECSC, 1952; ECC, 1957).

2. THE NEED FOR INTERPRETERS IN A MULTILINGUAL EUROPEAN COAL AND STEEL COMMUNITY

While the ideals of peace in Europe and of common European projects have been constantly pursued over the years (Bitsch 1996; Wassenberg 2012), the establishment

of the ECSC, a supranational entity, marked a turning point in the evolution of Europe. The ECSC was established in the Schuman Declaration (1950), proposed by France, was accepted by Belgium, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands and led to the signature of the Treaty of Paris (1951). This Community aimed to put an end to the selfish, national antagonisms that had been ravaging Europe for generations and centuries by developing a structure to which Member States conferred a part of their sovereignty and within which they cooperated. This first Luxembourg-based Community chose French, Italian, German and Dutch, the official languages of the then Member States, as its official and working languages. Interpreters and translators were thus needed for communication to take place in these languages (DG Traduction, 2010). The High Authority, the first functioning institution of the ECSC, set up a Language Service, first run by Rudolph Thomik, which included an interpreters section and which was immediately made available to other ECSC institutions, which included the Common Assembly, the Court of Justice, the Special Council of Ministers and the Advisory Committee (García Gato, 2016). In its first months, the section was headed by chief interpreter Günther Haensch, an interpreter and teacher at the School of Munich, soon to be replaced by Georges Spira, a former interpreter in the army who held the rank of captain (SDI, n.d.).

From the beginning, Spira was aware of the scarcity of interpreters and the difficulties that setting up an interpreting service entailed (Spira 21.4.1953). His intention was to tackle the jobs that various ECSC institutions would assign by setting up a team of permanent staff and freelance interpreters. Yet, he was aware of the impossibility of meeting the needs of the ECSC solely with the staff and freelance interpreters then available. For a number of reasons, trained interpreters were hard to find. For one thing, interpreting was a profession that was still taking shape at the time, and qualified interpreters were in short supply. Another reason was that international conferences were gaining prominence, and they mostly took place at the same time of the year when the ECSC institutions needed them. In addition, the quality produced by the interpreters during those years was particularly unreliable.

Because the availability of qualified interpreters was uncertain, the chief interpreter did not choose to collaborate with already existing interpreter associations in London and Geneva (*ibid.*). Most likely, he did not trust the quality of many interpreters, as specialised schools were still few and far between. Woodsworth points out that the academic tradition of interpreting was short when compared with other disciplines such as medicine or mathematics (Woodsworth, quoted by Baigorri 2006, 102). In fact, the emergence of the first generations of trained interpreters from Geneva coincides closely with the period under study. The Geneva School, founded in 1941 by Antoine Velleman, offered clear proof of the assertion that «it was possible *to be made* an interpreter» (translated from Baigorri 1998, 22, as emphasised in the original). Other schools in Europe were founded later *inter alia* in Heidelberg and Germersheim (1946) in Germany, the *École des Hautes Études Commerciales* (HEC) in Paris (1948), Vienna and Munich (1952), Trieste (1953) and the *École Supérieure d'Interprètes et de Traducteurs* (ESIT) in Paris (1957) (Keiser 2004, 595-596; Kellett 2008, 1).

Thus, it was only to be expected that in order to work with quality interpreters who were familiar with the ECSC work environment, the chief interpreter would consider training to be essential. He was particularly keen on training interpreters in the language combination most sought after by the High Authority, namely German to French (Spira 21.4.1953). However, early training programmes to train ECSC staff interpreters were not organised in-house but rather through these specialised schools. Spira developed joint training with them in order to benefit from the contacts that he had, while also establishing new relationships with these recently-established training institutions.

For this reason, Georges Spira travelled to Geneva in 1953 to meet the Language Faculty representatives. He wanted to launch an advanced interpreting course for French-speaking interpreters whom he could later recruit as permanent staff in the High Authority's Language Service (Spira 18.5.1953). The quality of the interpreting material and teaching methods the Geneva School offered were so solid that Spira immediately started the administrative procedures for the School to prepare an interpreting course which would take place during the summer of 1953. The School was also organising a five-hour-per-day course on international institutions, which could easily be topped up with three hours of translation activities and also with consecutive and simultaneous interpretation practice. This course allowed High Authority interpreters to develop and improve their techniques. Holding the course in the summer was particularly useful because interpreters had no free time for training during peak conference seasons (Spira 16.6.1953, 127). As Walter Keiser explains, a team of teachers and interpreters worked with the participants for six weeks:

Ad hoc courses were organised on request by an employer. In 1953, M.A [sic] Spira, the head of the interpreting section of the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community asked the Geneva School to plan a six-week course of intense or advanced training for its interpreters. A crash course was organised. The School called the best of its teachers and some external professional interpreters. It was a success and this experience served as a model for some later courses in Geneva, Paris (ESIT) and elsewhere (author's translation from Keiser 2004, 597)

The interpreters considered the course a success as it contributed to the improvement of their techniques. The same goes for translators and other High Authority staff participating in the course, who would be later recruited as auxiliary interpreters. Therefore, this course organised outside Luxembourg paved the way for a new professional activity.

3. THE 1957/1958 PROGRAMME: LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR AN IN-HOUSE INTERNSHIP

It took another four years until the Language Service of the High Authority designed its in-house interpreter training programme in 1957. The shortage of qualified interpreters

had not been fully addressed; worse still, further scarcity of quality professionals was expected in the wake of the foundation of the EEC and Euratom after the signature of the Treaties of Rome (1957) (Dinjeart 29.6.1957, 012). These two new European Communities, which were made up of the same Member States, would share elements with the ECSC, including the language regime, the range of subjects, the objectives – alike, albeit not identical, in their continuation of the economic integration of Member States – and the same geographical reach. Baron Jean-Charles Snoy et d’Oppuers, president of the Interim Committee for the Common Market and Euratom, sought the High Authority’s advice on a number of issues in this regard, which the latter gladly provided. The supply of translators and interpreters was among the main concerns, especially since competition between the institutions in this area was detrimental to all of them.

Joseph Dinjeart, then director of Personnel and Administration, suggested to the president of the High Authority that he should set up an in-house internship within the ECSC so as to build a pool of young interpreters over the next three-year period. These interpreters would be able to sit European Community competitive exams after having completed their internships. The High Authority already had the structure, means and experience; hence, it took the lead in the programme (Dinjeart 29.6.1957, 012, 015).

The precise definition of the interpreting programme remains unclear, though. The head of the Language Service calls it an «internship» while the chief interpreter, who endorsed the programme, uses both the term «student-interpreter» (*élève-interprète*) and «intern» (*stagiaire*) (Spira 3.12.1957). Most of the historical documents used for this study refer to the participants as «student-interpreters» with references to «training the candidates». Already used in 1904 in the US State Department (Bowen *et al* 2012, 255), the term «student interpreter» was nothing new.

The confusion surrounding these terms can be seen clearly in a written note preserved to this day. The note’s aim was to unify the terms used to refer to the categories of the language staff. Hence, it defined «staff or intern translators or interpreters», «auxiliary translators or interpreters», «interim translators» and «student translators or interpreters» (Rossi 26.9.1957). This attempt at disambiguation leads one to think that misunderstandings were frequent. Despite the efforts to standardise the terms used to refer to programme participants, even those in charge were uncertain as to what they ought to be called. The struggle to coin an appropriate term is also a reminder that this training activity was a novelty in the Community.

Bernard Heidelbergger was one of the 12 young participants selected through an entry test to take part in the first programme. He had just finished an academic training programme in interpreting at ESIT in Paris (Heidelbergger, personal interview, 6.6.2015). As a recent graduate with an interpreting diploma, he qualified for a secondary school teaching certificate in France (*CAPES*) and was preparing for exams to obtain an *agrégation*, the highest teaching diploma in the French public system. However, he decided against a career in the educational sector and pursued an opportunity in the Community institutions instead. Heidelbergger did not recall his participation in the programme as «training», nor did he consider himself a «student interpreter». He

did, however, emphasise the working component of the internship. For administrative purposes, he was called an «intern», albeit one who was working.

It might be more suitable to categorise this activity as an in-house specialisation course or professional immersion training, since most participants were already fully-fledged interpreters trained at interpreting schools. For the sake of this article, I will use «interns» and «internship», as such terms seem more appropriate.

The internship started on 18 November 1957 with a programme that was outstanding in its variety of theoretical and practical activities (Spira 3.12.1957). Since the purpose of the internship was to integrate its young participants into the institution as interpreters, no means were spared to provide them with the best possible learning tools and environment. The training exercises included performing some of the High Authority's real daily tasks.

In the first part of the course, interns attended conferences on the objectives and methods of European integration, its practical operation and the set-up of the institutions. Similarly, the programme encompassed weekly courses on the use of statistics.

In its second part, the course relied on more art-related content such as films. The interns also practised consecutive and simultaneous interpreting and attended sessions devoted to the theoretical study of Community-related topics.

A third component of the course was interpreting in real situations. Interns were allowed to interpret in meetings alongside seasoned colleagues from the first days of the program. This was very useful, as they learned by example and through the on-site observation of experienced interpreters (*ibid.*; Heidelberger, personal interview, 28.6.2015). The educational potential of working with veteran interpreters had already been suggested and put into practice by Antoine Velleman in the League of Nations (1919), predecessor of the United Nations (1946) (Baigorri 1998, 22). This pragmatic approach, coupled with the immersion of young interpreters in the steady, daily rhythm, gave the impression that interpreting was more of a job than an internship.

However, as specified in written sources, this exercise was limited to the most eligible interns only. Naturally, and in line with the aforementioned idea, the programme seemed to rely on the presumption that meetings which were entrusted to junior interpreters were less significant and implied them assuming less responsibility. Even if these meetings may have been considered less important in formal terms, they were not necessarily easier to interpret, as the content was often highly technical in nature. Bernard Heidelberger confirms that during his internship he was assigned to technical meetings concerning the ECSC (Heidelberger, personal interview, 6.6.2015). Also, as High Authority interpreters were occasionally sent on missions, interns could also work outside of the Luxembourg headquarters (Spira 3.12.1957, 268).

A fourth part of the programme consisted of a series of meetings, some of which were organised by other institutions, such as the Council of Ministers or the Common Assembly; intern interpreters attended these meetings but they did not interpret. Through attendance only, they familiarised themselves with the contents and

terminology employed but also with how the sessions were conducted and what the peculiarities of each type of meeting were. This involvement was useful to build up their knowledge of their future job and, if matters evolved according to plan, the High Authority would recruit them at a later stage.

At the end of the first two weeks, junior interpreters had to submit several essays on the topics taught during the course, as well as exercises and assignments related to the work they had accomplished. Their work was assessed in order to check whether they had learned the contents (Spira 3.12.1957, 269).

A series of tests organised in April marked the end of the internship. By this time, the person in charge of the course would already have had a clear idea of the interns' achievement levels from the daily monitoring of their accomplishments (Spira 20.1.1958, 271). The results of the programme were sufficiently good for the chief interpreter to call for another one. He was pleased with the outcomes not only because they fulfilled his own expectations but also because the program led to a select few junior interpreters being offered promotions and to many participants being offered jobs with the service immediately after the internships.

The system proved to be effective in its conceptual framework and practical operation; if candidates showed their capacity to work independently, the internship became a bridge towards a job with the High Authority, one which had realistic promotion opportunities.

4. THE 1958/1959 PROGRAMME: ADAPTING THE INTERNSHIP TO NEEDS

The experience gained during the first internship was applied to the following year's programme, which underwent some modifications, as detailed below.

The second internship was better structured (Spira 13.11.1958). Proof of this is the fact that the programme now clearly stated its objective: the internship was meant to be a platform for improving interns' work methods and for providing them with the training required to work specifically in the European Communities (*ibid.*).

A second significant difference between the two editions is that, while the first year's programme (1957/1958) did not state the entry level, the chief interpreter required candidates in the second year (1958/1959) to demonstrate solid knowledge of their languages before joining the programme. Simply because the first year programme did not explicitly require previous interpreter training did not mean that it was not necessary. This is how Raoul S. Alt recalls his participation in the internship: He did not pass his entrance exam the first year and had to enrol with the Munich School to study interpreting, since, in the words of Albert Coppé, a member of the High Authority, he knew languages but lacked interpreting technique. After his training, he worked at the 1958 Brussels International Exhibition and later was able to join the High Authority

internship programme (Alt 1997, 66). His memories coincide with those of Bernard Heidelberger, who also participated in a training course prior to joining. Many of Alt's and Heidelberger's colleagues attended interpreting schools in Geneva, Heidelberg, Munich, Paris and Germersheim.

Just like in its first edition, the following year's internship was geared towards integrating interns after a few months of immersion. The programme was divided in two parts, one general and one specialised each of which increased in difficulty over the course of the programme (Spira 13.11.1958, 275).

The theoretical component in the general part did not change much in comparison with that of the previous year. The organisers wanted to instruct the interns on the problems and characteristics specific to the Community by offering them seminars, conferences and documents to study (*ibid.*). One of the learning activities was to study the ECSC Treaty, a document that could be cryptic and dense at times and that held many technical and legal challenges (Alt 1997, 66-67). To ease the effort, interns secretly read comic strips when they became overwhelmed (*ibid.*). Nonetheless, the Treaty and documents which would be discussed in the sessions were basic work-related material, hence the importance of having a thorough knowledge of it. In addition to the study of the ECSC Treaty and other documents, the Personnel and Administration Division together with the Language Service held an introductory course for all language interns with the aim of providing them with an overview of the work at the High Authority in which the staff itself was requested to participate by informing the 30 young translators and interpreters about aspects related to their work.

I would like to ask you if, as long as your responsibilities allow you, you would agree, or in your absence your deputy, a colleague or the secretary of your division to give a one-hour presentation on a subject of your choice that seems particularly useful for the training of interns and is linked to the work in your division, preferably in French or German (author's translation from Thomik 27.9.1958)

As seen above, the pattern was to use French and German as the preferred languages for presentations. These were also the most frequently used languages in the daily sessions at the High Authority.

Viewing films on Community-related topics in the first-year edition had clearly proved useful, as this also featured in the programme in the second-year edition. Undoubtedly, these films enabled interns to put Community issues into a broader context and form a bigger picture. In addition, participants were encouraged to attend information meetings organised by the Press Service (Spira 13.11.1958, 274). In the first part, the programme included additional field visits to steel plants (*ibid.*). Logically, the High Authority's competence in the steel sector led to numerous work-related visits by Community officials, and interpreters were invited along. Furthermore, the experience of learning in context offered higher learning potential, since interns assimilated information in a more natural and easier way, as opposed to desk study.

The programme also featured weekly consecutive and simultaneous interpretation practice during what were known as «language only» seminars, as Raoul S. Alt recalls. General topics were used during these seminars. The specialised and technical subjects were reserved for the second part of the training process.

Access to this second part was not automatic. After the first month, candidates had to demonstrate their knowledge in an eliminatory test, as Raoul S. Alt recalls (Alt 1997, 67). The reasons why candidates were eliminated in this test are an indication of some of the lines along which the interpreting training criteria were developed. The fact that a colleague was criticised for having a regional accent seems to suggest that a neutral one was preferred. This shows concern for content, but also for form: conveying the message was indispensable, but the way it was done was equally important.

Raoul Alt recalls another colleague who barely managed to jot down «Mister President» in longhand in a consecutive exercise before he lost the thread of the intervention: he was unable to take notes so as to interpret consecutively. Thus, it was clear that interpreters did take down notes, but that they had to do it selectively and rely mainly on memory. One could think that, academically, the programme's approach was strongly influenced by existing interpreting training schools which the institutions maintained contact with.

The eliminatory test confirmed that participants had assimilated domain knowledge in certain fields and possessed «perfectibility». This is an interesting concept that goes beyond having certain aptitudes or being able to memorise data. Participants were expected to be able to progress and fine-tune their language skills and expert knowledge. These features would allow them to improve and build a future in the profession. The notion of «perfectibility» also encompassed the need for lifelong learning in interpreting, as terminological concepts have to be constantly updated and enhanced in order to keep pace with the evolution of knowledge.

Ten out of 13 interns passed the test and were admitted to the second part, which was divided into three specialisations (Spira 13.11.1958, 275), each relating to a major domain of the ECSC's work. Interestingly, individual interns or groups of interns were assigned to different strands, depending on their profiles. It would be logical to think that they were classified by their background or personality traits.

Firstly and unquestionably, the creation of supranational Communities for sectorial integration, all of which were to be based on a legal construct, meant that interpreters needed to specialise in the language of law and economics. The legal nature of the meetings organised by the various divisions of the High Authority serves as a case in point (Ollenhauer 28.10.1957). All this was done with specifically recruited freelancers and also with staff interpreters of the High Authority's Language Service who were working for all the institutions, including the Court of Justice, and operating in these highly specialised areas which required sound knowledge of the law and legal issues (García Gato, 2016). The first specialisation of the in-house interpreting course was, therefore, economic and legal.

Secondly, a technical specialisation was necessary to cater for national experts, or those working within the institutions in technical fields, who gathered to share and exchange views and then to reach agreements regarding the progress in a number of scientific domains. In the period under study, these domains flourished to such an extent that the interpreters' working environment, rather than political, became increasingly technical, as Stefan Priacel explains:

[...] in a world where development and application of scientific discoveries spawns more and more international conferences, where diplomats and politicians are overshadowed by technicians and experts, freelance interpreters rarely have to interpret debates at a policy-making level. Instead, they are constantly bound to switch between transport in steel plants and enterology or poliomyelitis, between a commission on agrometeorology and a working group on aeronautics, between a symposium on poultry farming in the Middle East and a meeting on solar or wind energy (author's translation from Priacel 1957, 40).

Lastly, the parliamentary and ministerial specialisation reflected the political and diplomatic nature of some meetings. By definition, Council of Ministers' meetings were gatherings of politicians and Member State representatives. The Common Assembly, a regular user of interpretation services, required expert understanding of each country's state of affairs, but it particularly needed good speakers capable of making speeches underpinned by solid arguments and rhetoric. Here, one can even sense the slight influence of the Geneva School, which had a specific course for parliamentary interpreters (Keiser 2007, 1). The concept of «parliamentary interpreter» had already been used by Jesús Sanz in 1931 when referring to conference interpreters at the institutions in the interwar period (quoted by Baigorri 2000, 87-91).

The specialisation training did not mark the end of the internship, which is indicative of the willingness to spare no efforts to train participants. Indeed, staff interpreters, who worked during the preparatory stages for establishing the International Atomic Energy Agency, received specific training on nuclear energy terminology, which was the epitome of technical and complex vocabulary. The Language Service decided to also offer similar training opportunities to interns who excelled in scientific and technical fields. Indeed, the fact that the director of Euratom himself wanted to participate in the training course on nuclear issues was indicative of just how serious the approach was to preparing and delivering specialised domain training. This offer was especially significant, as there is nothing better for interpreters than receiving first-hand information from frontline professionals. Moreover, this initiative highlights the fact that various international organisations had a predisposition to work closely together.

To complete the internship, the Service was quick to equip participants with a tape recorder and at least one daily newspaper in each of their working languages (*ibid.*). The eagerness to facilitate access to technical devices and to the press fulfilled two purposes: the need for practicing and for being well informed about world events. The tape recorders were useful to play back original audio material and also and to record

and listen to interpreter output. These exercises afforded a range of training benefits. The availability of press in several languages was important for interpreters to make sure that they followed current affairs in their mother tongues and that they read press coverage in their foreign languages, too. However, it was equally important to become familiar with expressions used in various disciplines to be able to mimic the speaker's corresponding style in debates. All this contributed towards enhancing their knowledge of languages.

Before finishing the programme, candidates had to sit an individual test that included a simultaneous interpreting exam—and foreseeably a consecutive interpreting test, as interns had also practiced this technique—before a panel of staff interpreters representing all the relevant languages (Spira 4.3.1959a, 4.3.1959b). Apparently, the simultaneous test was not decisive but was merely a formal exercise that would serve to confirm or dispute the provisional pre-classification marks given by the managers. With only ten participants, those in charge were able to closely monitor each individual participant's progress throughout the course. This exam was neither the first nor the last to be completed during training. The Service paid close attention not only to providing interns with adequate resources, but—when the schedule allowed—to considering setting a second exam if interns failed the first one (Spira 4.3.1959b). In view of these practices, it may be concluded that underperforming exam results did not necessarily mean that trainees were invited to leave, for programme leaders knew that interpreting techniques could be polished on the job. It is interesting to note that the Service needed newcomers and tried to help them attain the necessary standards. Nevertheless, the Service made no compromises with regard to the language level required.

The managers' commitment to the internship should also be highlighted. This fact is also shown in a note drafted by Joseph Dinjeart. At one point, he grew impatient because of the lack of news regarding the development of the course and asked the chief interpreter, who was closely involved with the running of the internship, for progress reports (Dinjeart 8.2.1959). Even though student interpreters completed their internships within the Language Service of the High Authority, the training programme and its outcomes had repercussions beyond this service or institution. Aware of the responsibility that this professional training entailed, the chief interpreter and staff in charge of the internships reached out to other institutions and experts to get them involved in the programme. This was done on the grounds that, in the long run, benefits could be reaped from the collaboration of both knowledge domain experts and seasoned professionals in training interpreters. The more often trainees interpreters could attend meetings, the sooner they would become familiar with the subjects dealt with at them.

When comparing the first and second cycles, it is clear that one element from the first is missing from the second. While during the 1957/1958 cycle interns were in charge of some meetings and participated in missions, during the second cycle of internships (1958/1959) the functions assigned to interns were limited. They could attend the meetings as supernumeraries but they could not «under any circumstances» replace a

professional interpreter—either freelance or staff—and bear the burden of the meeting (Spira 13.11.1958, 275). Interns were prevented from having full responsibility in meetings, as it was deemed that only staff and freelance interpreters were suitable for this task. This drastic decision leads one to suspect that something happened during the first year which triggered this. What is more, as opposed to the first cycle, during the second one interns were only allowed to attend meetings from the specialisation phase onwards, namely, a couple of months after they joined (the internship started in November 1958 and ended in April 1959) and after having passed an exam.

It is uncertain whether these indications also applied to work on «missions» or external assignments. Two months before drafting the programme, the chief interpreter requested permission to prepare administrative procedures for interns who had to «accompany» or «replace» interpreters during missions (Spira 29.9.1958, 115). Clearly, the pressing needs of reality and its resulting necessities sometimes overrode regulations, regardless of whether those in charge of the programme were reluctant to let interns do the job of professional interpreters. This is what happened once when a civil servant refused to travel on a mission to Paris. The task was re-assigned to an intern who was in the last phase of the programme, who felt that it was his duty to prepare thoroughly.

At the end of the internship, the language regime of a meeting on labour law in Paris was such that I was the only one qualified to go, as the civil servant who could have done it refused to accept this mission. Three weeks before the meeting, Marion Tissier admitted that my assignment had raised some suspicions and criticism and that it would be convenient for me to become familiar with the topic. From morning till night, I devoted all my spare time to the study of labour law. It was worth it, hearing the meeting president's congratulations: «The interpreter's knowledge of labour law is as good as ours,» he told one of the ladies [...] who whispered in German (author's translation from Alt 1997, 67)

The president's praise, which highlighted the competence of the intern interpreter from the German booth, was proof that the effort had indeed paid off.

After this successful second cycle, a third one was organised.

5. THE 1959/1960 PROGRAMME: COST-EFFECTIVENESS CONCERNS

From the chief interpreter's perspective, a sound reason for continuing the programme was to escape the constraint of continuously having to rely on freelance interpreters. If, in the long run, the demand for interpreters was expected to grow, it would be more cost-effective to train future permanent staff rather than continue to pay higher rates for freelance work. Thus, the benefits of the programme were threefold: interpreters would become more familiar with subjects discussed at meetings, they would be immediately available, and the costs would be less. The latter encompasses

one of the underlying elements of the evolution of interpreting as a profession: collective bargaining for interpreters (for instance via the AIIC, the International Association of Conference Interpreters) who would start claiming higher fees.

Another benefit of these internships was that they were a means to create a certain degree of loyalty to the High Authority among the candidates, because once they were trained to carry out the job, if they were offered a post, they used Luxembourg as their professional address. This decision meant lower costs for the High Authority, since the payment of travel expenses would not be required and a staff with local residency would make managing interpreting services easier.

The interpreting internship, therefore, yielded positive results. Nevertheless, one of the chief interpreter's major concerns with regard to the programme suggests the idea that the programme could become a victim of its own success, as the costs associated with training and the follow-up on the participants' fledgling careers could become a problem (Spira 17.7.1959). Interns received a meagre remuneration (Heidelberger, personal interview, 6.6.2015), which did not seem to cause difficulties. However, once the training course was over and satisfactory outcomes had been proved, the Service would see it as its duty to offer interns a job. To decrease the cost of this responsibility, both the programme's selection process and recruitment phase were adjusted. In the selection process, preference was given to those whose language combinations matched the Service's needs. Hence, the French and German booths, which had been top priority in the ECSC's early years, were side-lined, and Dutch and Italian came to the fore. In addition, programme managers could propose that participants whose performance in the booths was highly proficient should discontinue their internship before the official end date and immediately join the service as professional interpreters (Jaurant-Singer 8.12.1959).

It follows from the above that simultaneous interpreting was perceived as the final and most difficult step in the learning process, the step which required the most practice. It was assumed that interns who had reached the booths were well past the beginner's level and able to work on their own. The ability to control one's technique and interpret autonomously was key for moving from «intern» to fully-fledged professional. The focus of the internship programme was professional rather than academic, as the two main requirements for completing it show: interns needed to complete the training programme by the official end date and prove that they could work on their own in the booth. However, programme completion was not mandatory to secure a position, as vacant posts could be filled with interpreters who held a university degree or who already had skills in interpreting.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This detailed account of the gradual establishment of the first interpreting internship in the European Communities leads to the following conclusions:

1. Languages were not a mere ornament in the construction of the European Union: Multilingual oral communication was one of the fundamental elements that the pioneers of the contemporary European institutions had to address. During this process, there was an unquestionable need for interpreters and interpreter training.
2. When challenges arose, such as an acute shortage of qualified interpreters coupled with the absence of a strong academic tradition in interpreting, political and institutional leaders sought collaboration and shared solutions, first between institutions and schools, and then among the different bodies of the European Community. These collaborative efforts relied on mutual assistance as well as sharing expertise and experience(s).
3. The all-encompassing design of the internship programme testifies to the seriousness of the approach: interpreting techniques were important, but the content and context of interpreters' future work were also considered extremely important. Training was thus adapted to real job requirements, and training tasks lead to the development of specialisation(s) which matched the thematic domains required in real assignments. Moreover, interns were provided with a wide range of learning activities and environments.
4. After their initial establishment, internships continued with a pragmatic approach, but the structure of these training programmes became further defined and the activities were made clearer over time. This evolution underlines the eagerness of the European institutions to improve interpreter training over time and to react to changing historical and political circumstances. As a result, interns experienced progress and the capacity for improvement became a centrally important concern.
5. The early development of this type of internship programmes in the European institutional setting lead to the first attempts to professionalise interpretation in the early stages of the European Community.

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