Terminology Coordination at the European Parliament
NOTICE

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Frequently used abbreviations

DG Directorate-General
DG TRAD Directorate-General for Translation
ELISE European Institutions Linguistic Information Storage and Exchange
EP European Parliament
HoU Head of Unit
IATE InterActive Terminology for Europe
TermCoord Terminology Coordination Unit
INTRODUCTION

The Terminology Coordination Unit (TermCoord) of the European Parliament has created this booklet to present its activities to external parties, individuals and organisations that are active in a related field and wish to collaborate with us or simply want to find out more about the work we do.

Who we are – background and history

Today European Union legislation is drafted in 23 official languages, with each language version considered authentic. Thus, translation is an integral part in the process of drafting and adopting legal acts. The European Institutions employ many hundreds of translators to cover the major part of these translation needs and the 506 language combinations. The translation system must be regularly brought into line with constantly evolving legislative procedures and technology.

For this reason, the importance of terminology has become increasingly clear. Back when the European Parliament worked with less than ten official languages a Terminology Division was created with the aim of collecting glossaries and other terminology material. Later on, this division was combined with the IT service, resulting in the creation of the Euterpe database (European Terminology for the European Parliament).

Alongside the development of interinstitutional translation memory systems (Euramis), previously separate resources such as the Commission’s Eurodicautom and Parliament’s Euterpe, were merged into the common interinstitutional terminology database IATE (InterActive Terminology for Europe), which has been used by the EU’s translation services since summer 2004. IATE was made available to the general public in June 2007. Today the database contains roughly 8.5 million terms and receives on average 3500 queries per hour from all over the world.

In 2008, Parliament decided to set up a service to coordinate all issues related to the IATE database and the terminology work carried out in the translation units.
IATE and Terminology Management

- IATE consolidation and update
- Coordination of LU’s terminology
  - IATE projects
  - macro results
  - term-jobs
  - term extraction
- EP IATE administration and user management
- Proactive terminology (in cooperation with CLOs, Planning, lawyer linguists etc.)
- Quality coordination
- IATE training
- Terminology training and workshops
- Interinstitutional activities
  - IATE MG and working groups
  - Coordination Services’ meetings
  - ECT terminology projects
  - ELISE MG
- IATE projects with universities
- Selection and supervision of translation trainees

IT and Communication

- Linguistic consistency of EP databases
  (Codict/Tosca: EP Establishment Plan /COMAP: EP political bodies)
- Import of EP databases into IATE
- Insertion of EP resources into QUEST
- Support to LUs on terminology tools
- Requests to ITS/DAS/ITEC (Gepro/TFlow/Plato/CAT tools)
- Construction of the interinstitutional TermPortal (IATE MG project)
  - Content management
  - Technical administration and support
  - Language-specific wikis
- Terminology Macro
- Interinstitutional glossary collections
- DocHound (interinstitutional reference page)
- Internal, interinstitutional and external communication
- Academic and institutional contacts
- Seminars and conferences
- Selection and supervision of Schuman trainees
At the start, the service was staffed by three permanent officials. The officials who were later recruited by the unit through internal competitions have been assigned specific tasks under the establishment plan presented in the above image.

Permanent staff are assisted by both graduate and undergraduate trainees, who contribute to the achievements of the unit by using their specialised knowledge and skills during a traineeship period of one to six months.

Terminology coordination involves constant cooperation with a network of about 100 terminologists responsible for terminology matters in their translation units and carrying out terminology assignments set by TermCoord; volunteer groups working on dedicated projects; and rotating terminologists seconded to the unit for three months. The rotating terminologists’ main responsibilities include participating in TermCoord’s work on IATE, in particular doing updates in their native language, and liaising with the translation units to identify best practices.
What we do

The main objectives of TermCoord are to facilitate terminology research and management in the translation units, and to increase the European Parliament’s interinstitutional contribution to the EU terminology database IATE.
General coordination

The Terminology Coordination Unit is principally concerned with Parliament’s contribution to the IATE database. This involves introducing new terms proposed by translators (either directly or via a macro), revising the terms and references in existing entries, inserting equivalent terms in missing languages, as well as coordinating the validation of terms.

Interinstitutional cooperation in the context of IATE

The IATE database receives support and funding from the three legislative institutions (Commission, Council and Parliament), the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, the Court of Auditors and the Translation Centre. The European Court of Justice, the European Investment Bank and the European Central Bank are also involved in providing specialised terminology, which is in some cases compiled in cooperation with national authorities. Finally, the contribution of all EU agencies, coordinated by the Translation Centre, is extremely valuable.

The IATE database is managed by an interinstitutional team chaired in turn by one of the institutions contributing to IATE and its funding. It is currently chaired by the Translation Centre, which caters to all the Commission’s agencies and also houses the team responsible for the technical maintenance and improvement of the database. TermCoord represents the Parliament in the IATE Management Group. The latter puts in place task forces and working groups in order to constantly improve the content, interface and functions of IATE.
Trainees’ projects

As of July 2010, participating in a terminology project has become an integral part of translation traineeships in order to give trainees the opportunity to develop their terminology skills. All trainees work either on one of the ongoing thematic projects prepared and coordinated by TermCoord staff and trainees, or on a language-specific project run by the translation unit. Trainees are helped by their unit’s terminologists who revise and validate their results, which are then inserted into IATE.

Our terminology projects encompass a wide range of topics which are constantly being adapted depending on current needs. So far, we have carried out projects in areas such as human rights (the EP is responsible for this thematic area in IATE), financial markets, EP’s Rules of Procedure, LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) basic terms, IT terminology and term mining with the help of extraction tools. The final results of all these projects allow us to enrich the IATE database with new and updated terminology.
Terminology macro

In collaboration with the IT service, TermCoord launched the Terminology Macro in 2010, enabling translators to propose terms to insert into IATE. These terms are stored in repository tables and filtered by TermCoord according to relevance and workability. The terms which fulfil basic criteria are then checked against terms already held in IATE and the following steps are taken with the involvement of the units’ terminologists: creating new entries in IATE, adding equivalent terms in missing languages to or updating existing entries, consolidation, deletion etc.

Proactive terminology and documentation

TermFolders

With the help of the various services involved in the legislative process, TermCoord keeps track of the ordinary legislative procedure proposals which contain specialised terminology and are likely to undergo numerous amendments. In order to assist translators with the complex terminology in such important legislative procedures, we prepare subject-based files in advance, so-called TermFolders, containing links to webpages with useful information about the procedure, links to specialised glossaries, as well as to the relevant national legislation of the Member States and other related texts.

This proactive approach to terminology support has been recently modified, and currently the main focus is on high-priority procedures in which the EP is responsible for verifying the legal language and translating the final agreed text to be published in the Official Journal. Besides relevant glossaries and other support material related to the procedure, the new TermFolders provide English explanations or contexts for a list of selected terms that are not yet in IATE and which may cause difficulties for the translators.
Glossary Links and DocHound

In 2011, in collaboration with the Development and Application Service, we introduced the “Glossary Links” tool to enable users to search in our collection of glossaries by keyword, language, source or category.

The database currently contains links to about 1100 multilingual, bilingual and monolingual glossaries and dictionaries publicly available online. The glossaries are categorised according to the various domains featured in parliamentary texts.

Another helpful resource is the recently updated DocHound page - a one-stop reference page with links to various document types used in EU institutions or their respective search pages, where translators can find all kinds of reference documents they might need for their translations.

Ensuring the linguistic quality of EP databases

In our efforts to ensure linguistic quality and consistent terminology in all EP databases, we work closely with other directorates-general within the EP. We are involved from the very first stages in creating new names of political and administrative entities within the Parliament, liaising between the creators of new names for EP entities and the DG TRAD linguists. Once the translation process is finished, all the relevant data are imported into IATE.
We organise terminology-related seminars for translators, interpreters and terminologists from all EU institutions, under the comprehensive title ‘Terminology in the Changing World of Translation’. These seminars regularly attract a large audience to the historic setting of the original European Parliament Chamber in Luxembourg. These seminars have so far dealt with terminology in legislative procedures, computer-assisted translation, terminology management, lexicography and e-lexicography, as well as neologisms in the digital age.
TermCoord also regularly organises various kinds of workshops and training courses for translators and terminologists, including comprehensive terminology and IATE training sessions on a basic level for newly recruited translators and on an advanced level for terminologists, as well as more customised IATE and terminology workshops for terminologists (e.g. about merging and marks, referencing principles, tips and tricks for day-to-day work in IATE).

In addition, four times a year, we hold a IATE training course, as well as a briefing for new trainees, where we present our activities, the terminology projects in which the trainees of all translation units are to be involved, and an introduction into theoretical and practical aspects of terminology work in general.
Institutional cooperation

Cooperation within the Parliament

Since terminology work within the EP heavily relies on the contribution of the terminologists and translators of the translation units, we meet the terminologists of all units twice a year at the Terminology Network meetings in order to discuss the most important issues related to terminology, and we invite each unit to more informal so-called TerminoCafés, where we can focus on particular questions relevant to each unit. On request we also organise “guided tours” for the translation units in order to give them a brief overview of the available terminology resources, tools and services, or we demonstrate any tool in more details to interested colleagues.

We also cooperate with the relevant services of other directorates-general on request or if a particular area of mutual interest is identified. For instance, we have established such cooperation with the Directorate-General for Interpretation, including training and access to each other’s websites and resources.

In 2012 TermCoord’s resources have also been made available to all directorates-general through the EP Intranet. All EP colleagues can now access a wide range of databases, tools and material related to terminology and documentation which can be particularly useful for Members of the European Parliament and their assistants when they draft legislation.
Cooperation with other institutions

The Terminology Coordination Unit represents the European Parliament in the two committees managing the interinstitutional tools IATE (InterActive Terminology for Europe) and ELISE (European Institutions Linguistic Information Storage and Exchange tool): the IATE and the ELISE management groups.

We also participate, in tandem with the IT service, in the interinstitutional Language Technology Watch Group, where we are responsible for evaluating and testing automatic term-extraction tools.

Furthermore, TermCoord organises regular videoconferences with the Terminology Coordination services of all the European Institutions in order to discuss terminology issues of common interest other than IATE. We also encourage and help with the organisation of interinstitutional videoconferences among terminologists from specific language communities.

External contacts and presentations

Terminology is a dynamically evolving discipline of our age that has gained more and more importance over the last few decades. TermCoord believes that it is very important to stay up-to-date with the evolution of terminology science and practice, and to connect with the actors of this discipline in order to exchange valuable expertise and terminology material, which can be shared with our translators. For this purpose we keep in contact with a large number of universities, terminology bodies and experts through our public website (www.termcoord.wordpress.com), numbering now more than 130 000 visitors, as well as through our memberships in important associations, such as the European Association for Terminology (EAFT), the International Information Centre for Terminology (Infoterm) and the International Network for Terminology (TermNet). Our FaceBook page (www.facebook.com/term.termcoord) is another important means of communication.
Thanks to our academic contacts, we have received different groups of university students and lecturers for one-day visits, as well as researchers for longer Erasmus and study visits. We have also welcomed a university student, Agnieszka Antosik, as a trainee, who wrote her master’s thesis on the role of terminology in the European Parliament, focusing on the way our unit coordinates terminology work (original title: “Rolle der Terminologiearbeit im Europäischen Parlament. Am Beispiel von TermCoord.”).

Furthermore, TermCoord has participated in several conferences and has given presentations on different aspects of terminology and IATE work carried out within the EP and the other EU institutions. Among others, we gave a presentation about terminology consolidation in IATE in the EU institutions at the JIAMCATT conference in Turin; another about terminology work at the European Parliament at the 8th International Conference of the Greek Society on Terminology in Athens; and also a talk about the terminology and information sharing tools used in EU institutions at the Terminology and Knowledge Engineering Conference (TEK 2012) in Madrid and at the JIAMCATT conference in Luxembourg.
Both to keep the terminologists and translators of Parliament up to date and to facilitate the cooperation within the EP and between the Institutions mentioned above, TermCoord uses various means of communication. Besides e-mail exchanges and meetings (both in person and through videoconferences), the internal websites are used extensively as important channels of communication. The need for a public website arose from our wide-ranging contacts with universities and terminology bodies worldwide, since the EU institutional websites are only accessible on internal networks.

We regularly publish posts on current issues related to terminology and provide a wide range of useful information, material and resources related to terminology and translation in order to facilitate our translators' and terminologists' work. We use both websites for publishing material from seminars, workshops and training sessions, as well as links to important terminology databanks and other terminology-related sites. Furthermore, our websites contain a number of other
interesting items such as terminology and translation book reviews, information about international linguistics conferences, information about traineeships and study visits within the Parliament and theses on terminology.

Awareness campaigns, newsletter, brochures

Every year, we launch a campaign to raise awareness among translators about the importance of and latest developments in terminology. In 2012 we promoted the training possibilities offered by our unit to translators, terminologists and trainees, while the 2013 campaign encourages translators to participate more actively in terminology work and in enriching IATE.

We publish an outline of our principal activities in a quarterly newsletter for the information of our colleagues in the Parliament and in the other EU institutions. We have also compiled a brochure, published by DG TRAD, which promotes the IATE database and the significance of terminological consistency for accurate legislative drafting and good quality translations by presenting a selection of terms from the human rights domain, which is the responsibility of the European Parliament within IATE.