



FIT HUMAN RIGHTS TASK FORCE

MEMO

1 of 2

TO: FIT Council
FROM: Human Rights Task Force
RE: Report 2014 and proposed activities 2015
DATE: February 22, 2015

This year has been both a supportive and an initiative one for the FIT Human Rights Task Force.

Afghan interpreters

The task force has worked with red-T, AIIC, IAPTI on the Afghan interpreters project focusing on further distribution of the Conflict Guide and on preparing a resolution for the XXth Congress and Conference on the suggestion of Norma Kessler of BDÜ. The resolution was adopted and distributed.

The task force has agreed to read and if necessary suggest revisions in the proposed handbook being developed by red-T and AIIC, as well as to assist in distributing the finished product. As part of the general support of Afghan interpreters, FIT has signed off on a number of open letters to heads of government whose armed forces have employed native interpreters and have received requests for asylum from these.

In August the HR Task Force served as moderator of a panel discussion at the XXth FIT World Congress in Berlin with planned participants from FIT, red-T and AIIC, as well as a guest presentation from a representative from IAPTI. The panel discussion was conceived, structured and hosted by the Task Force and was well attended and much discussed. The participant presentations are part of the proceedings.

Ebola pandemic

After establishing contact with Lori Thicke, founder of Translators Without Borders, the HR Task Force received a call for help in finding translators who can work in four West African languages to assist in the work combating the Ebola virus. A general call was sent to all member organizations, as well as to red-T, AIIC and IAPTI. In addition several specific calls were sent to sources in academic circles. The need was met as requested.

As a result, the Task Force initiated a discussion on how FIT can structure a more permanent pool of translators to languages in conflict zones and medical areas that might need the services of special language combinations.

ICORN

The Task Force chair has initiated contacts with the international organization ICORN. This organization works with national and local governments on finding refugee cities for artists and authors from conflict zones. The thought is to study the possibility of adding translators and interpreters in the eligibility lists.

After several meetings the question is not yet resolved and seems difficult.

International organizations

The correct venue for regularizing the rights and the employment status of native interpreters has been discussed with other organizations and will continue. FIT HR intends to participate in those discussions and to find ways to involve FN, EU, UNESCO, etc in this process.

And then there is next year →

Focus areas during 2015

Within the general framework of our purpose, the HR Task Force will continue its efforts to become a vehicle within FIT and for its member organizations bringing our varied language skills and our own international structure to conflict cities and zones around the world: to deliver support to onsite organizations such as Translators Without Borders; to establish that linguistic tools are a vital part of protecting the human rights of life in conflict sites and medical emergency areas. We feel this is a professional and human responsibility we cannot avoid, either as an organization or as individuals.

This said and believed, the task force is and must be constrained by its resources and those of its parent organization. Therefore we will focus on the following areas during 2015 aiming not only at carrying out the work we have begun, but also finding ways to expand our membership and thus our resources.

1. To the extent possible we will continue our co-operation with Red-T, AIIC, IAPTI and Translators Without Borders as already initiated and described in our 2014 report.
2. We will increase our communications within FIT in order to add members to the task force and thus increase our capacity for meeting our purpose. This will include participating in FIT regional meetings where this is possible and economically feasible.
3. Given that our current focus is on supporting interpreters and translators in conflict zones and the many European nations are actors in these, our work with external international organizations will be limited to the European Union and NATO.
4. Our regular budget needs will be met within the \$500 allotment indicated.

Sincerely yours
Sven Borei, chair

Regular and corresponding members during 2014-15

Sven H.E. Borei
Silvia Disiervo
Sultan Dogan
Margarite Montez Heintz
Alide Drienisienia
Ravi Kumar
Jørgen Wind Nielsen