EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR TRANSLATION

The Director-General

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EMT MID-TERM REVIEW 2017
REPORT ON THE STATE OF PLAY OF THE EMT NETWORK 2014-2019

Background

The European Master's in Translation (EMT), as a network of university translation programmes with a quality label, attaches importance to quality assurance within the network. As a minimum, institutions with an EMT label are expected to maintain throughout their membership the training standard that they had when they joined the EMT network in June 2014. Moreover, EMT university programmes are expected to continue to adapt to the changing circumstances of the translation profession and communicate their best practices with each other.

Launch

In 2014, when the current Network was selected, it was therefore decided to set up a mid-term review procedure which was launched on 17 October 2016. The representatives of all 64 member programmes where asked to reply to an online questionnaire with a view to checking if they continue to meet the EMT selection criteria. The programmes were also invited to declare best practices. The deadline for responses was the 15 February 2017.

Assessment

At the date of the Board meeting of 30 March 2017, all but one EMT members had sent in their reports.[1] 10 programmes declared no changes at all. The more detailed answers of the other 54 were checked by the Board by 28 April against the criteria for their impact on eligibility and quality.

Results

The overwhelming number of changes in the institutional structure, programme structure, programme content, trainer profile, infrastructure and market training were considered as

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[1] The missing MTR was sent in on 19 May 2017 and was still accepted for assessment because the report had not yet been finalised.

positive. 11 changes were qualified as neutral, i.e. they had no impact on the quality of the programme (for instance, change of address or name). In a limited number of 6 cases the description did not allow the assessors to judge if the change influenced quality in a positive or negative way. These responses were categorised as 'unclear'. In again six cases, the assessors also identified both positive and negative changes in the same category (for instance, institutional changes).

The assessors only identified 5 cases in which the changes clearly had a negative impact. This concerns three programmes. **In those three cases where changes to the programme were assessed to have a negative impact and bring potential risks, the Board has contacted the programme managers/directors and will work with them on how to address the risks.**

This means that the overall picture is very positive. While some positive changes were rather minor such as some new software licences, new rooms and new staff, quite a large number of programmes declare major changes, for instance in the programme structure and content in order to respond to market trends or to react to recommendations made in the selection feedback.

Breakdown by category of changes

Institutional structure:

Institutional structure: Changes affecting the institution responsible for delivering the programme (e.g. re-organisation or mergers, changes to faculties or departments, etc.)

		Answers	Ratio
Yes		14	21.88 %
No		50	78.12 %
No Answer		0	0 %

For YES, the assessors considered the impact of the changes as follows:

Neutral: 3

Unclear: 3

Plus: 5

Plus/minus:[2]   2

Minus: 1

All cases in which the changes in the institutional structure were considered as having a positive impact concerned the integration of the school running the translation

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[2]   Cases in which assessors found that the indicated changes in the same category had both a positive and a negative impact.

programme into a bigger university. This was deemed positive for the increased cooperation opportunities offered by such a change offers and for greater visibility of translation as an academic discipline.
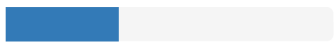
In two cases the assessors did not entirely share this positive impact but also noted a downside to the integration into a bigger university structure, namely concerning the (non-)use of the EMT logo on the university website.

In three cases the effect of the institutional change could not yet be established, hence the category 'unclear'. The category 'neutral' was given to four situations in which the change of the name/address was judged as having no impact whatsoever.

The only change judged negatively was a case where due to restructuring former staff had left and new staff members were not yet in place. Once the interim phase has ended, the problem may be resolved; however, the situation needs to be monitored.

Programme Structure

Programme Structure: changes affecting the organisation of the programme (e.g. extension of duration, introduction and/or suppression of strands or options, etc.)

		Answers	Ratio
Yes		22	34.38 %
No		42	65.62 %
No Answer		0	0 %

For YES, the assessors considered the impact of the changes as follows:

Neutral: 1

Unclear: 1

Plus: 17

Plus/minus: 2

Minus: 1

Roughly one third of the respondents declared changes in the programme structure, the clear majority of which were considered as having a positive impact on the quality. Such changes concerned the change to a credit-based system; or more ECTS added to the students' major subject. In other cases certain optional modules were made compulsory, or new courses for instance on professional skills, CAT tools, MT and post-editing were introduced and new specialisations (for instance on translations technologies) developed.
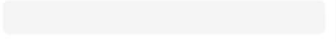
Other changes with a strong positive impact were a double degree with a translation programme in another country. In one case, the programme structure has changed in such a way that the EMT competences are clearly taught at Master's level. Previously some of the content was at the BA level; now there are only introductory and optional courses at the BA level, and the MA programme proper consists of 120 ECTS of translation and

interpreting. One programme has used university review to change their structure, in order to reflect new advances in translation research and real-world developments in the translation industry, ensuring also a better adjustment to the EMT wheel of competences. The students are offered greater flexibility in choosing compulsory courses, giving them opportunity to choose specialist translation modules. One programme has been streamlined in order to enable students to choose options corresponding to a coherent professional profile forming a feasible path towards employment. Flexibility of the entry points has caused changes in the acquisition of the study courses shifting from a year-long units to term based units, which is seen as a positive change, as it facilitates progression and ensures maximum timely completion of the course by the students. A new programme structure effective from September 2017 on will improve the teaching through diversification and specialisations linked to employability.

Only one change following the re-organisation (merger) of the programme and involving a modified ECTS weighting was judged as having a negative impact because the new weighting penalises courses which are relevant for translators.

Programme Content

Programme Content: changes affecting programme courses or units (e.g. introduction or removal of courses or course units, changes to learning objectives and methods, etc.), in particular those relating to EMT standard competences.

		Answers	Ratio
Yes		38	59.38 %
No		26	40.62 %
No Answer		0	0 %

For YES, the assessors considered the impact of the changes as follows:

Neutral: 0

Unclear: 0

Plus: 34

Plus/minus: 2

Minus: 2

More than half of the programmes declared changes in the programme content. In most cases changes consisted of the addition of new courses, updating of technology courses restructuring of courses to increase the practical components in response to the selection feedback, changes concerning internships etc.

The following content related changes are listed to illustrate how the EMT programmes put into practice the commitment to constantly adapt their study programmes to the

evolving market needs, inter alia by adding courses on new competences and by exposing students to a professional work environment.

1. The programme has been changed to cover review/editing and quality control in a more intensive way. A module on project management and quality management has been added as a compulsory one. The following have been added as elective modules: a specialisation course in specific subject-areas, Internships in specialised translation, translation projects. Some minority/lesser-used languages have been added among elective courses.

2. Many new courses have been added to adapt the programme to new trends on the market, among them also a collaborative project to practise project management and other courses to deepen knowledge of the profession.

3. Presentations by translation professionals and researchers have been introduced, as well as practice of new technological tools and a new training course in social media for translators; including compulsory contribution to a blog have been introduced.
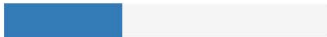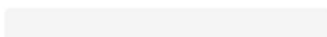
4. A group translation project (fictitious translation agency), a new module devoted to a project management software package and an optional work placement were added.

5. A course unit on translation project management and professional ethics has been added to the curriculum. The unit consists of group projects simulating professional practice and is designed to address one of the EMT evaluators' concerns by adding formal and explicit project management training to the programme.

Luckily only two changes to the negative were noted regarding the programme content: in one case it was due to a change of legal rules concerning the MA level: the number of hours was cut drastically and the programme struggled hard to maintain EMT standards. In the other case, the programme was reduced to the core modules. In both cases the situation needs to be monitored closely to avoid eligibility concerns.

Trainer Profiles

Trainer Profiles: important changes affecting the delivery of the programme

		Answers	Ratio
Yes		23	35.94 %
No		41	64.06 %
No Answer		0	0 %

For YES, the assessors considered the impact of the changes as follows:

Neutral: 6

Unclear: 2

Plus: 15

Plus/minus: 0

Minus: 0

The changes in the trainer profile were difficult to assess because it could not always be identified if the staff moves were deliberate choices or just normal business (succession planning). Most changes concerned recruitment of new staff, CPD activities (especially in MT and CAT), more staff available from other faculties thanks to integration into a university, new PhD students promising new candidates for staff recruitment.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure: changes affecting the physical infrastructure (technical resources, rooms etc.).

		Answers	Ratio
Yes		27	42.19 %
No		37	57.81 %
No Answer		0	0 %

For YES, the assessors considered the impact of the changes as follows:

Neutral: 0

Unclear: 0

Plus: 27
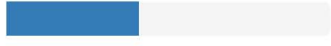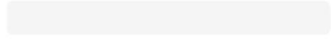
Plus/minus: 0

Minus: 0

The results concerning the changes in the infrastructure are very encouraging because they only had positive impacts. The acquisition of additional software licences for students was the most recurrent change. In many cases changes were linked to the move to new buildings with better IT facilities, more space, new computer labs, modernised audio-visual equipment etc., or they were brought about by the integration of the EMT programme into a bigger university which enabled the translation programme to benefit from the main university services, for instance making the libraries of other faculties better available for translation students.

Others programmes invested in interactive boards or streaming equipment, the latter being of interest not only for conferences but also offering the option of e-learning during traineeships and/or stays abroad.

It is also worth mentioning that these positive changes in the infrastructure were very evenly spread geographically.

Market Training & Employability

Market Training & Employability: changes designed to improve employability (e.g. mandatory internship, extension of internship duration, etc.)

		Answers	Ratio
Yes	████████	38	59.38 %
No	██████	26	40.62 %
No Answer		0	0 %

For YES, the assessors considered the impact of the changes as follows:

Neutral:	1
Unclear:	0
Plus:	36
Plus/minus:	0
Minus:	1

Since the inception EMT has emphasised the importance of market training with a view to preparing the students as much as possible for professional working environment and enhancing their employability. It is therefore very encouraging to note that the majority of the EMT programmes continue to make efforts in this field and that the overwhelming majority of the changes introduced since the last selection round were judged as having a positive impact on the programme quality. There is only one case in which the declared change was not considered as having a particular positive or negative effect.

The only negative impact under this category was linked to an institutional change. It had as a consequence that all MA students have been merged into one Career Management Skills course, the content of which is no longer linked directly to the translation market any longer. It remains to be seen if this posited negative assessment will actually have a negative impact in reality.

All the other changes under this category are clear improvements in how the EMT programmes prepare their students for the job market. In response to the experts' recommendations in the selection feedback most of the programmes reinforced the linkage to the private and the public sector, introduced or improved the already existing career events with language industry representatives offering students more exposure to a wider range of prospective employers, stepped up the internship opportunities, and participated in international projects aiming at increasing employability (TraduTech, joining the AGORA consortium or the European Graduate Placement Scheme (EGPS)).

Best Practices

In order to promote innovation within the EMT network, the member programmes were invited to use the MTR as an opportunity to share their best practices. 42 programmes followed this invitation and declared best practices in their MTR reports showing the wealth of innovative projects in the network. These practices could be broken down into

the following types: university-industry cooperation, dissemination and cooperation, collaborative projects, alumni monitoring and involvement, innovative teaching and learning, translation 'skills labs', translation technologies and resource sharing.

The good practices under 'university-industry cooperation' include organising [Translating Europe Workshops](#) and training events with professional organisations; series of talks with professionals from all sectors of the T&I industry; professional accreditation certificates available to translation graduates through partnership with a professional body; cooperation with international organisations (e.g. NATO) on specific projects; collaborative terminology projects with EU institutions; cooperation with film-directors on dubbing and subtitling projects; the use of social media to promote contacts with PSIT professionals and many more.

Dissemination of the EMT added value and cooperation beyond EMT is one of the priorities of the framework of activities 2014-2019. The programmes developed the following good practices in this respect: setting up joint MA degrees; helping to set up new translation degree programmes in other countries; helping refugee students to translate and draft their CV in the language of the host country, organising train-the-trainers seminars for the African PAMCIT network.

The EMT members were also active in a range of collaborative projects, for instance involving the translation of published books by teams of students in cooperation with professional translators, or international multilingual collaborative translation and terminology projects or intensive collaborative translation projects involving both EMT and non-EMT universities.

A couple of programmes developed good practices concerning regular alumni surveys (usually 6 / 18 / 30 or 60 months after graduation) and activities to promote information on career opportunities, e.g. through meetings between alumni and students.

Not surprisingly most of the good practices shared concerned 'innovative teaching and learning' activities. These included integrated learning, involving translation, quality assurance, interpersonal competences, CAT-tools, thematic knowledge, corpus and glossary building; a specialist unit on entrepreneurial skills; courses on native language competence and creative writing, the introduction of e-learning in all modules, and international cooperation projects aiming at enhancing project management skills.

EMT programmes also set up simulated translation bureaus, multilingual translation workshops as mandatory course units, team translation work for university libraries, research units and not-for-profit organisations and in one case even a commercial translation bureau serving the university needs.

Translation technology is of course an integral part of all EMT programmes, and therefore also a clear focus for the development of good practices, for instance using MT@EC in translation classes, localisation projects involving full use of tools, the development of a computer-assisted revision tool or an autumn school on machine - translation, to name only a few.

In the spirit of the EMT network the member programmes also actively shared resources via an online wiki of T&I teaching and learning methods and, by giving EMT members access to web conferences of webinars of key professional presentations.

An overview of the above-mentioned good practices was presented at the EMT network meeting on 31 March 2017. The network members agreed to exchange more about all these activities, by organising best practices workshops at future EMT meetings around the following topics: virtual learning environments; machine translation and post-editing;

writing skills, technical writing and creative writing; public service translation and interpreting; localisation projects; research and professional practice, and implementing certification agreements with professional associations.

Conclusion

Out of 64 member programmes, only 10 reported no changes at all: This shows that the overwhelming majority of EMT programmes adhere to the agreed commitment to constantly work on the quality of their training by adapting their curricula and training methods to the developing market requirements. They took into account the experts' feedback from the selection process and introduced changes to respond to their recommendations. According to the assessors' judgment, the majority of the changes had positive effects on the quality of the programmes. Therefore it can be established that the development of the EMT network as whole is positive.

There were small number negative developments, mainly triggered by changes in national regulations. However, judging from the comments by the programme representatives concerned, they are aware of the negative impact on the EMT criteria and try to find solutions to remedy difficulties and maintain EMT standards. The EMT Board will continue to monitor the situation of these programmes closely.

The EMT network has developed from a large group of quality translation study programmes to a real 'team' pursuing excellence, ready to cooperate and share experiences for the wider benefit of translator training and the translation profession(s).