



Optimising professional translator training in a multilingual Europe

Final Report

Public Part

Project information

Project acronym: OPTIMALE
Project title: Optimising professional translator training in a multilingual Europe
Project number: 177295-LLP-1-2010-FR-ERASMUS-ENWA
Sub-programme or KA: Erasmus academic network
Project website: www.translator-training.eu

Reporting period: From 01/10/2010
To 30/09/2013
Report version: Version 1
Date of preparation: 26/11/2013

Beneficiary organisation: Université Rennes 2

Project coordinator: Daniel TOUDIC
Project coordinator organisation: Université Rennes 2
Project coordinator telephone number: 00 33 2 99 14 16 87
Project coordinator email address: daniel.toudic@univ-rennes2.fr

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

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Executive Summary

The OPTIMALE project is targeted at academics and students engaged in Master degree level professionally-oriented translation programmes, and language industry employers, both in the commercial sector and in international language services. The partnership itself has been based on close cooperation between the 64 university members involved in translator training, and a professional body (the EUATC), representing European translation service providers.

The project has aimed to enhance the visibility and professional relevance of university level translator education and training in Europe, by:

1. Implementing an interactive map of 180 European professionally-oriented translation degree programmes. The map can be accessed from the main Optimale website (www.translator-training.eu/map), and enables users to locate existing institutions, to display short fact sheets for each programme in English and in up to two other languages. The map is designed for use by future students, academics, employers and university authorities and can be regularly amended by programme directors to provide up-to-date information on their programmes and courses.
2. Determining current and emerging competence requirements within the European translation industry, via an online survey aimed at employers throughout the industry, and via eight "regional" workshops bringing together academics and industry players from across Europe. The outcomes of the survey (over 680 respondents) and of the workshop discussions (attended by 87 translation industry professionals from 26 different countries) provide a pan-European snapshot of specific competence requirements for graduates seeking employment in the industry and for programme directors seeking to improve the employability of their graduates in the translation professions. An analysis of the overall survey results and workshop discussions can be found on www.translator-training.eu/competences-requirements.
3. Enhancing the quality of academic provision in the field of professional translator education and training by identifying and sharing good practice in a number of key areas, such as professionally-oriented practices in the curriculum, tools and technologies, domain specialisation and quality assurance. The resulting status quo reports, case studies and detailed recommendations for transferable good practice can be found on the project website at www.translator-training.eu/training and are designed for use by any translation department or individual teacher.
4. Organizing four training of trainer workshops for academic staff in different regional locations, on the implementation of best teaching and learning practice in the field of translator education and training.

Project results have been widely disseminated within and outside the network, electronically via the project website (www.translator-training.eu), which has attracted growing interest from the professional and academic translation community, via mailing lists, data sharing platforms and social networks, and face to face via participation in a number of professional and academic events (including national conferences organised by translation company and freelance translator organisations and academic conferences, including the final conference held in Rennes (see www.translator-training.eu/conference)).

The benefits of the project in terms of enhanced programme relevance and visibility are expected to be sustained by the updating of the interactive map, continuing cooperation with the professional associations and organisations associated with the project, the dissemination and updating of the employer survey results and the lasting impact of the reference frameworks, resource materials and training of trainers sessions implemented during the project's lifetime. **Project website:** www.translator-training.eu

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1. Project Objectives

The OPTIMALE project aims to enhance the visibility and relevance of professional translator education and training in Europe. Professional translator training is defined as including university programmes that aim to provide graduates not only with generic academic competences and advanced foreign and native language and intercultural competence, but also with a thorough knowledge of the translation industry, professions and processes, and with a range of competences that are relevant to professional requirements in this area. The OPTIMALE project has set out to do this by:

1. Identifying professionally-oriented advanced (Master's degree) programmes in translator education and training and enhancing their public visibility via an interactive online map. The standardized description of each programme in three languages, including its objectives and content, admission criteria and conditions, is designed to facilitate access to information on higher education translation programmes for students, public authorities, employers and the media, who often have difficulty in apprehending the extent and diversity of higher education provision in this area.
2. Monitoring the current state of the market and the current competence requirements of language industry employers in the context of a rapidly changing technological and economic environment via an extensive online survey and a series of consultation workshops. The survey of professional competences required by translation companies aims to provide a pan-European overview of the current situation which can be of use both to translation graduates and higher education programme directors and to the translation industry itself. The eight consultation workshops organised throughout Europe were designed to allow discussion and exchange on the survey results and their relevance to the training of translators, between academics in charge of translator training programmes and representatives of translation companies and professional bodies.
3. Identifying and describing good practise in a number of key areas of translator training (professional practices, translation technologies, specialisation and quality assurance) in order to provide examples of teaching and learning methodologies and resource materials which can be adopted by translator training programmes throughout the consortium and beyond.
4. Providing support for translation faculties and departments by disseminating specific reference frameworks and resource materials for key areas of translator training via a resource platform and organising training of trainer sessions on professionally relevant teaching and learning practices. These resources and sessions are designed for members of academic teams wanting to make their curricula even more relevant to professional needs in an increasingly global market.

2. Project Approach

2.1 Increasing visibility

The aim of the Optimale interactive map is to provide an easily accessible and comprehensible source of information on higher education translator training programmes in Europe, filling a gap which is detrimental to student and professional mobility and to the visibility and credibility of academic programmes in this area. University websites are all too often difficult to navigate for outside visitors, and rarely provide information in more than a couple of languages, at best, while departmental or faculty websites and pages present the information on programme contents, admission criteria or work placement requirements in many different ways, using different terminology, and with varying degrees of detail.

The map takes the shape of an online application accessible from the main Optimale website, with a display feature using Googlemaps to locate existing institutions, and a data base including programme fact sheets for each programme provided by each institution, which can be displayed in several languages by clicking on the relevant icon.

Methodology

The Optimale project first set out to define a standard “fact sheet” designed to elicit information on translator education and training programmes (see a word version of the questionnaire below: <http://www.translator-training.eu/2013-01-24-16-55-06>). This covered the location and identification of the programme, a description in terms of duration, credits, languages of delivery and working languages, a list of course modules, information on translation technology tools used and taught and on mandatory internships or other forms of professional involvement, on graduate employment and job profiles, on admission criteria and conditions, and provided for additional information on doctoral programmes, links with industry, etc.

In order to make the information available in as many languages as possible, the fact sheets have been completed in three languages: the language of the institution offering the programme, English, and a third language, which can be either: French, German, Spanish or Italian. Some of the universities not in the Optimale partnership have limited the number to two languages (English plus home language).

Information can be entered directly and modified by programme directors via an access code, and new programmes can be added or obsolete programmes deleted, after validation by the project management and steering committee.

2.2 Enhancing professional relevance

For many years, employers in the translation industry have complained that graduates entering employment in the industry were not sufficiently prepared to meet the professional, economic and technological challenges that translation companies are confronted with in an increasingly competitive global market. Although it is generally recognised that a university education cannot be restricted to preparing students for the marketplace and that holders of Bachelor’s or Master’s degrees in translation may find employment in many other fields, depending on the local or national context, the Optimale project is very much about enhancing the relevance of the professional skills and competences taught and learned in advanced translation degree programmes.

From the onset, the project worked hand in hand with representatives of the profession. The EUATC (European Union of Associations of Translation Companies), has been a full and active member of the project partnership, and has greatly assisted in promoting the project

objectives among its member organisations. Its current and former general secretaries have personally taken part in a number of project activities and meetings. Representatives of national employer organisations have actively supported the project's initiatives and taken part in national meetings and in the first year conference. The project coordinator has been invited to a number of events organised by the EUATC and its member organisations to explain the project and to present the results of the employer survey (see below). Members and representatives of national freelance translator organisations have also been actively involved, whether as members of the advisory board, or as participants in consultation meetings and the first year and final conferences. Cooperation with the EU's institutional language services has also been a key feature of the project: a permanent dialogue with the European Commission's Directorate General for Translation (DGT) has been in place since the project's inception. A former leading member of the Commission's SCIC (Service commun d'interprétation de conférence) has been a leading member of the project's advisory board and has taken an active part in project activities.

Methodology

Using the well-established "Tuning" methodology¹, the Optimale project began by conducting research into current trends in the translation market (or markets) and competence requirements in the translation professions. This was done, whenever possible, by initially exploiting existing survey data published by national and/or international organisations, and then by a year-long consultation with employers and professional practitioners in the industry.

Employer consultation

The extensive employer consultation had three main aims:

- To determine current and emerging competence requirements within the European translation industry, i.e. identify the competences that employers seek when looking to employ new staff.
- To provide input for further analysis and discussion during eight "regional" workshops bringing together academics involved in Master's degree translator training programmes and industry players from across Europe.
- To provide a pan-European snapshot of specific competence requirements for graduates seeking employment in the industry and for programme directors seeking to improve the employability of their graduates in the translation professions.

Following the initial assessment of existing surveys and resources, it was decided that the Optimale survey would more specifically target commercial translation service providers ("TSPs"). Institutional translation service competence requirements have been extensively studied by A. Lafeber as part of her doctoral research project undertaken at Tarragona University under the supervision of Professor Anthony Pym², while freelance translator competences are the subject of regular international and national surveys conducted by professional associations. TSP employer surveys, on the other hand, whether at the national or international level, tend naturally to concentrate on market trends rather than on competence requirements. The survey did not, however, exclude respondents from translation departments within large organisations, institutional language services or freelance translators.

The online survey

¹ "Tuning Education Structures in Europe" 2000-2004 involved identifying and developing common learning outcomes and a common terminology in a number of academic disciplines.

² Lafeber, A. "Translation at inter-governmental organizations: the set of skills and knowledge required and the implications for recruitment testing", PhD Thesis, Universidad Rovira I Virgil, Tarragona, 2012.

The survey took the form of a short questionnaire to be completed on paper (in the initial stages of the survey) and online (from May 2011 onwards). The questionnaire was designed to be completed within five to ten minutes at the most, and therefore sought to elicit information that would be both meaningful and useful, both for the profession and for academics and students, while setting a limited number of questions.

The first basic premise of the consultation was that TSP employers are interested not only in translation competence *per se*, but in the whole range of competences required within a language service providing company. Hence the sections devoted to project management, translation technology or client relation competences.

The second premise was that the survey should not seek to elicit the obvious. It was therefore assumed that for translation positions, high-level language competence requirements, both in the native language and in the foreign working languages, were to be taken as a basic employer requirement which did need to be reasserted within the scope of this survey. Similarly, translation competences *per se* (i.e. source text and discourse analysis, cognitive skills, target message formulation, reader and user focus, etc.) were not deemed to enter the remit of this survey, as it was assumed that any employer seeking to employ a translator or his/her services, would require the said translator to possess the basic skills of his/her profession.

According to the same rationale, generic professional competences such as the ability to comply with specifications or deadlines, or to work under stress, were excluded from the questions.

Response rate and key results are discussed below in section 3.

Regional workshops

The remit of the workshops was to identify important trends and issues relating to current translation markets and practises, to discuss the findings of the Optimale employer survey relevant to the countries concerned, and to determine what existing or new professional competence profiles might be relevant in determining the learning outcomes for current and future academic degree programmes.

Eight regional workshops were organised in Brasov (Romania), Vilnius (Lithuania), Paris (France), Alcala de Henares (Spain), Ghent (Belgium), Guildford (UK), Trieste (Italy) and Vienna (Austria) respectively. They brought together practising professionals from the translation industry and academics and other stakeholders involved in the running of Master's degree-level translation programmes. Each workshop covered between 2 and 6 countries represented in the project (see list).

The workshop participants themselves illustrated the diversity of the language industry, with participants representing many facets of the industry, from independent freelance operators to major LSPs employing over 100 permanent staff, from very small TSP's whose bread and butter is mainly low volume, local "legal" translation contracts for individual clients, in single language or limited language combinations, to large multinational, multilingual operators specialising in high volume localisation work, from literary translation to highly specialised technical translation for high-tech industries....

Workshop organisation varied according to the local contexts, but was based on the following structure:

1. Presentation of market trends in the participating countries
2. Presentation of the survey results available at the time of the workshop (four of which took place only two months after the launch of the survey and four between five and six months after the launch).
3. Comments on the survey results by professional participants, in the light of their own experience in their sector of the industry.
4. Discussion of current translator training in the countries represented and of future competence profiles.

A brief outline of the workshop outcomes will be found below in section 3.

WP5 - Sharing good practise

Building on the key competence requirements identified during the consultation, the second year of the project focused on identifying and sharing good practise in four key areas of translator training:

- The teaching and learning of professional practices within the curriculum, via specific modules, project based learning, the participation of practising professionals, work placements, etc.
- Translation technologies in the curriculum: place and importance; range of technologies; theoretical knowledge vs. practical usage, etc.
- Domain specialisation in translator training: how early should students be expected to specialise, in what fields, how should specialisation be taught, etc.?
- Quality assurance: international and national QA standards applied to translation process and products; quality control at project level; proofreading and reviewing principles and methods.

Each of these areas covers a range of particularly crucial professional competences but are often the most difficult to implement within the scope of a translation degree curriculum. Four working groups were formed at the Brussels conference on the basis of these thematic areas and project partners were invited to register for one of the groups according to where they felt they could contribute and/or gain most. Each group had between 15 and 20 members.

Each group worked according to a set workplan:

1. Submission by each partner of a status quo report on current practice in the particular area of translator training within the group's remit, and drafting of a synthesis report, identifying existing good practice and/or needs for further development.
2. Drafting of a number of case studies highlighting specific examples of transferable good practice in the area under study.
3. Discussion and drafting of a reference framework containing recommendations on how to implement good practice in the specific area of translator training.
4. Identification of resource materials to be used in the classroom when implementing innovative teaching and learning methods.

The group discussions were carried out during two one-day workshops. The first of these took place in Aston, Prague, Salamanca and Cluj respectively, in the spring of 2012. The second workshop was organised for all four groups at Aston University in October 2012, to allow all the partners to share their findings and results, and identify the resources to be pooled.

WP6 – Training of trainers

Workpackage 6 was designed as the ultimate stage of the Optimale project, transferring the examples of good practices identified under WP5 to present and future translator trainers in the partner universities, beyond the circle of academics who had been involved in the project's earlier stages.

This phase took the shape of 4 regional training of trainer workshops, organised respectively in partner universities in Krakow (Poland), Plovdiv (Bulgaria), Tallin (Estonia) and Brussels. The rationale behind the choice of the locations was to place the emphasis on Central and Eastern Europe, in order to favour greater participation of colleagues from translation departments established during the EU enlargement process. As in the earlier phases of the project, each location was designed to act as a regional centre for participants from neighbouring countries, with the exception of Brussels, which was open to participants from all the "western" European members. Each workshop was to be attended by 15-20 participants, plus a number of local colleagues from the host institution. The trainers were experienced academics from EMT partner universities with a well-established track-record of translator training (names and details are available on the web site) and at least one representative of the language industry (designated by the EUATC).

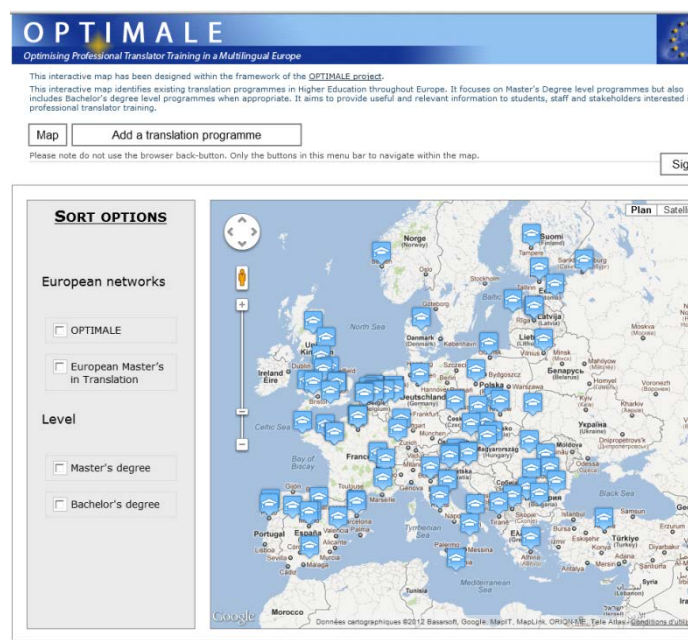
Each workshop was a two-day event organised in four half-day sessions. In Krakow, Plovdiv and Tallin, these were based on a common format: three half day sessions focussing more particularly on professional practice in the language industry, innovative teaching and learning practices and curriculum development, and a fourth session, focussing on particular areas of expertise of the trainers (specialised translation, quality assurance, terminology, etc.). The Brussels workshop, on the other hand, placed more emphasis on the use of tools and technologies in the translation classroom, student-centered learning and internships, and terminology for domain specialisation. The materials used were based, a) on the EMT training of trainers reference document designed by the EMT working group b) on the case studies and learning materials identified under WP5 and c) on specific materials developed by the sessions trainers within their own universities.

3. Project Outcomes & Results

Interactive map

The interactive map of university level translator education and training programmes is one of the most significant outcomes of the Optimale project. It marks a breakthrough in the dissemination of multilingual information on translator training in Europe, which had not previously been readily available. The map is intended as a gateway to and not as a substitute for the more detailed information on university and departmental websites, but the standardised display format and terminology are designed to favour transparency for students, academics, employers and other stakeholders in the world of professional translation.

The map of university level translator training programmes went online in April 2012. It is accessible from the main project website (www.translator-training.eu/map/) and displays existing university level programmes using the “Googlemaps” application, as illustrated below:



By clicking on a particular location and university, users can display the programme or programmes offered by that university: Sort options enable users to selectively display institutions according to their membership of the Optimale network, the European Master's in Translation network (EMT) or both, as the case may be, and programmes by level (Bachelor's or Master's, although the majority of programme belong to the latter category).

A further click on a programme name opens a standard format fact sheet describing the main features of the programme, including course contents, admission criteria, internship requirements, available resources, employment prospects, etc. The fact sheet is available in at least two languages (the home language of the institution and in English) and in one other language in many cases. New programmes can be added online after validation by the project steering committee and existing information can be modified at will by programme directors with private access.

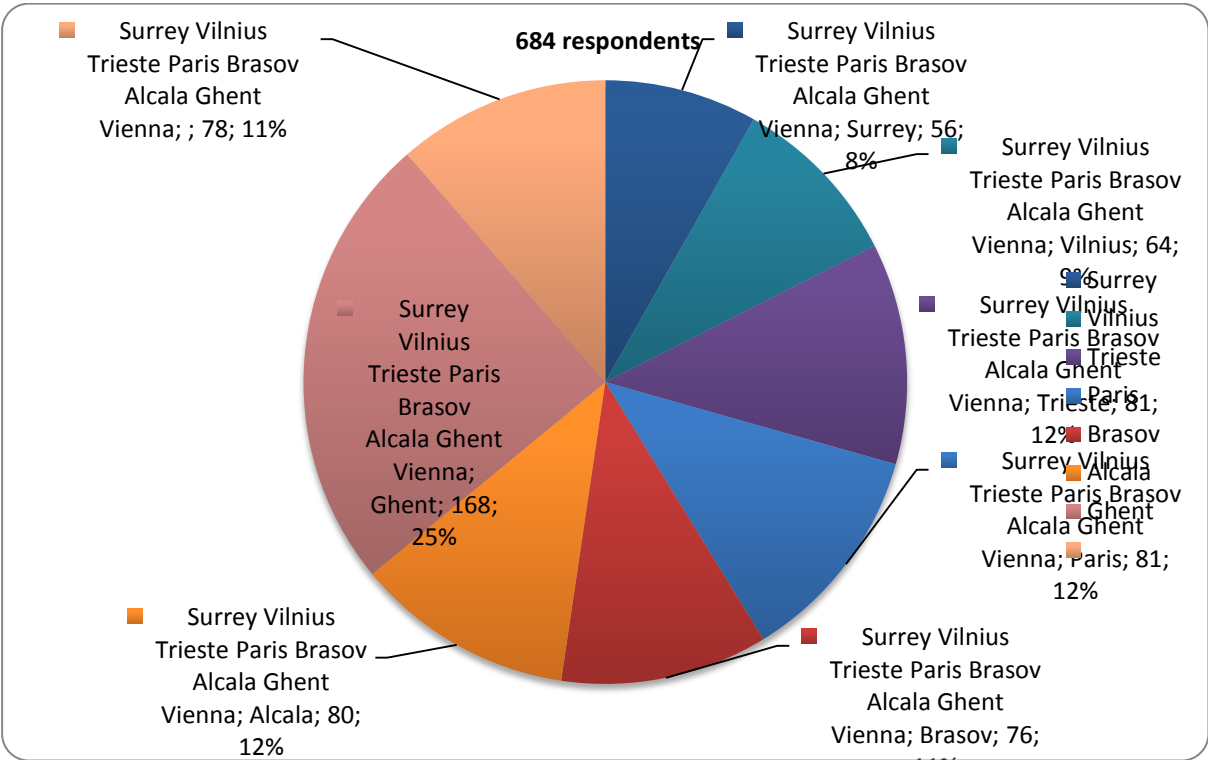
More than 110 institutions and 186 translation programmes (including 57 at institutions outside the Optimale network) are currently represented on the map. The fact that the number of programmes visible on the map has increased by over 50% since the progress report was drafted in April 2012 (mainly with information on programmes not directly connected to the Optimale network) indicates that the Optimale map has reached its target

and is now being seen as a legitimate source of information by academics in charge of and students interested in translator training programmes.

The employer consultation

The second major achievement of the project is the employer consultation conducted in partnership with the EUATC (European Union of Associations of Translation Companies).

The **online survey** (see presentation above) received over 680 responses from across Europe, with a well-balanced geographical spread between North and South, East and West, as illustrated below

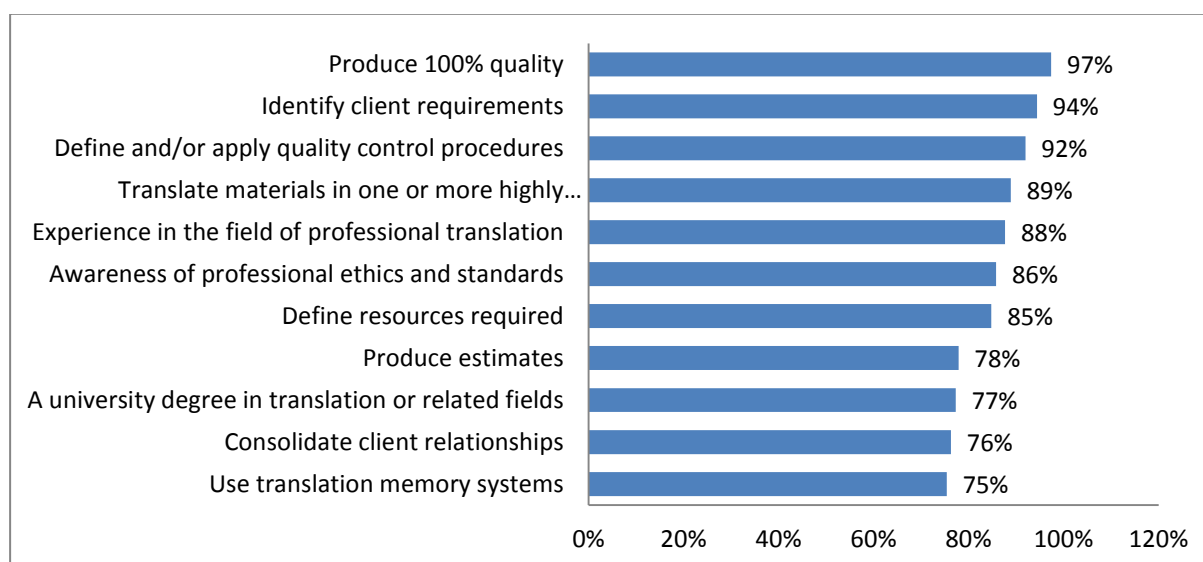


Note: Responses have been grouped according to the “regional” working groups used to organise the consultation workshops. The country groupings were as follows: Surrey (UK, Ireland, Norway, Iceland); Vilnius (Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Finland); Trieste (Italy, Slovenia, Malta); Paris (France); Brasov (Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey), Alcala (Spain, Portugal); Ghent (Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany, Denmark); Vienna (Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary). The overrepresentation of the “Ghent” group is due to the large number of translation service providers in Belgium.

Over three quarters of the respondents were commercial translation service providers, with around 15% representing translation services or departments within other business organisations. Public sector translation services were not specifically targeted by this survey and represent fewer than 10% of the responses. The respondents generally reflected the diversity of the translation industry in terms of size and turnover, with over half the respondents employing fewer than 5 salaried staff and declaring annual sales of less than €200,000, while at the other end of the scale, 15% had a payroll of over 30 (including a number of large operators employing several hundred translators, revisers and project managers) and generated revenues of over €2m. It must of course be remembered that

although it concerns a global industry, the survey covers countries with very different costs of living, wage levels, and standard translation tariffs.

Of those who completed details on their activity, size and language combinations, between 530 and 580 answered the series of questions on competences sought by employers when recruiting new staff. A full presentation of the results can be found on the project website (www.translator-training.eu/competences-requirements). The following table summarizes the ten competences most consistently classed as “essential” or “important” (figures show the percentage of respondents to each question having identified the following qualities or abilities as “essential” or “important”):



A detailed breakdown and analysis of the survey results can be found on the project website, along with a report summarizing the outcomes of the 8 joint regional workshops, and a video recording of the session of the first Optimale Conference, on December 1 2011, during which ten of the professional partners who had taken part in the regional workshops were invited to react to the overall consultation findings.

Due to its European dimension, and the number of responses received, the employer survey has been welcomed as a ground-breaking initiative, giving academics and students, for the first time, an insight into the needs of commercial translation service providers across Europe. The survey results have been quoted in a number of publications and presented to various academic and professional audiences at conferences and lectures across Europe (Brussels, Paris, London, Portsmouth, Alcala de Henares, Budapest). It is hoped that a new survey can be undertaken in the coming twelve months, to monitor changing attitudes to translation technology competences in particular.

WP5 Sharing good practice

Workpackage five was the central part of the Optimale project and the one that involved the most direct extensive partner participation. All the workpackage's deliverables called for input from all the project partners, whether it be in the status quo reports, the case studies, the reference frameworks or the resource materials. During the four initial workshops, group members discussed the reports and the issues raised, presented examples of specific teaching and learning methodologies relevant to each thematic area, and established criteria for the selection of case studies to be expanded and used as a basis for the development of reference frameworks for the definition of learning outcomes in each particular area of

translator training. In the second stage of the work package, detailed reference frameworks were produced for each specific area and resources materials were identified. Each reference framework details the learning objectives to be achieved in each specific area of translator training, the methodologies that can be applied to achieve the objectives, the material and human resources required for implementation and suggestions for policy-makers at the university and/or regional or national level.

By identifying and sharing good practice in terms of well-proven or innovative teaching and learning methodologies and environments, the project has benefitted all of its members via the internal dissemination of case studies, recommendations relative to innovative teaching and learning practices and resource materials. It will also benefit the wider academic community involved in translator training through the dissemination of the resulting synthesis reports, case studies, and reference frameworks, which are all freely available on the Optimale web site. These are designed to be of use in particular for translation departments wishing to implement new training modules and to introduce more professionally-oriented practices in the classroom. The resource materials are available on a Moodle platform, only accessible to the 70 members of the Optimale consortium.

One of the goals of the Optimale project was to encourage more universities to apply for membership of the EMT network. Several of the Optimale member institutions not already members of the EMT have decided to put in their application in the current round, and clearly state that the Optimale experience has helped them reshape their curriculum or introduce new teaching and learning practices in line with EMT requirements.

WP6 Training of trainers

The four workshops were attended by some 80 participants in all, including at least 20 persons who had not been actively involved in project activities. The detailed programmes of the four workshops are available here: www.translator-training.eu/training/training-of-trainers/training-sessions. Evaluation forms were distributed at each event and showed a high degree of overall satisfaction with the contents and organisation of the workshops. Interaction between the participants themselves and with the trainers was encouraged and participants were able to present and discuss their own pedagogical practices and share their experience with colleagues from other universities in the light of the case studies and reference frameworks produced under WP5.

Dissemination

Project information and outcomes have been disseminated via day to day communication, and via the project website and project events. Sub-workpackage leaders under WP 5 (good practice) have implemented communication and data sharing within their working group via GoogleDocs, Dropbox and other online data sharing platforms.

1. Regular electronic communication on ongoing project developments has taken place between the project management and project members.
2. The project website was set up in January 2011 (www.translator-training.eu) and provides an overview of the project, its objectives and its main outcomes to date. A members-only section allows project members to access and to share information relating to ongoing activities. 30455 connections to the website have been registered since February 2011.

Access to the online employer survey was via the project website and registered over 770 connections.

The interactive programme map can also be accessed via the website (www.translator-training.eu/map). 5704 connections have been registered since April 3rd 2012.

3. Since the onset of the project, several project events have been open to participants from outside the project membership. This was of course the case in the eight “regional” employer consultation workshops, where some thirty translation company managers and representatives of national professional organisations were invited to take part, alongside students and staff from the organising university. This was also true in the first project conference, designed to highlight the project’s first year outcomes. The conference took place in the Commission’s Charlemagne building and was attended by the project membership, by members of the EMT network not involved in the Optimale project, by ten industry representatives (both companies and freelance translators) from ten different countries and by DGT staff.

4. The Optimale Final Conference was a major two-day event held at Rennes 2 University on June 6th and 7th 2013, attracting over 120 participants from 34 countries.

The first day placed the focus on research, with 26 papers investigating the role of the human translator in a field increasingly dominated by translation technology and automated processes. Many of the papers approached the theme through its impact on the training of translation professionals. The full programme, plus presentations and videos of the proceedings, can be found here: <http://www.translator-training.eu/conference> . A round-table brought together various players from different sectors of the translation industry to discuss the impact of the “technological challenge” on translation companies and freelance translators.

The second day was devoted to the actual results of the project, presenting them to the wider academic and professional translation community beyond the network itself. A formal “Optimale Declaration” encapsulating the premises, aims and recommendations for the enhancement of translator training in Europe was agreed by all those in attendance and has been sent to Rectors, Deans and other decision-makers in the 32 countries involved (100 authorities contacted). A second round table involving both academics and language industry professionals examined the impact of current changes on translator training programmes across Europe and beyond.

5. Optimale members have also represented the project, its objectives and results at a large number of national or international professional and academic conferences and events, including two annual EUATC conferences, in Brussels, Paris, London, Madrid, Rome, and other venues listed in the confidential report.

Third country participation: as provided for in the workplan, the Third Country partners were only actively involved in work packages five and six (years 2 and 3). Not all the partners were equally active, but their contributions provided a useful extension of the perspective on academic translator training in Croatia, Russia and Albania in particular.

4. Partnerships

From the onset, the OPTIMALE project has worked in close partnership with a number of professional and academic networks at the European and national level:

1. Professional organisations:

The EUATC is the umbrella organization bringing together national translation company associations from across Europe. It is a fully-fledged member of the OPTIMALE consortium and is represented in all the network's activities.

Several of the national translation service provider associations have invited representatives of OPTIMALE to their annual events and have actively cooperated in promoting the employer survey and other activities.

National freelance translator organizations have also been represented at the OPTIMALE conference and a prominent member of the French freelance translators' association sits on the advisory board.

2. DGT – EMT:

The OPTIMALE consortium was launched under the aegis of the DGT's European Master's in Translation network, and includes 35 of the EMT's member institutions. Close cooperation with the DGT has enabled the organisation of the two main conferences and several steering committee meetings back to back with EMT events, so as to leverage funding and cross-fertilize input from both networks. The EMT's working group themes have been tailored to avoid duplication with OPTIMALE's thematic groups and outputs.

3. OTHER EU PROJECTS:

OPTIMALE has links through its members with 3 other projects on translation selected by the European Commission:

- AGORA, a 3-year project coordinated by the University of Bologna under "Cooperation between Higher Education Institutions and Enterprises." The project aims at establishing a solid network composed of both Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and translation companies that will both facilitate the implementation of transnational internships for advanced translation students in the short term and foster graduates' employability in the long term.

- QUALETRA, an EC funded project (JUST/2011/JPEN/AG/2975, Criminal Justice Programme | European Commission Directorate General Justice) coordinated by Thomas More / University of Leuven. The main goal of the project is to improve translation in criminal proceedings.

- TRANSCERT (Trans-European Voluntary Certification for Translators) addresses the need for continuing professional development and European-wide certification for translators.

Since OPTIMALE was the first EMT spin-off project, the three others benefitted from the OPTIMALE deliverables but also from the discussions and outcomes. Indeed, most of the members of these three projects were also part of OPTIMALE, which clearly enhanced the synergies between the four projects.

4. Several of OPTIMALE's French member universities are leading members of the French Association of Professionally-oriented Master's Degrees in Translation Studies (AFFUMT <http://affumt.fr/>) and have reported on the project's initiatives in the area of employer competence requirements and good practice dissemination. The close links that OPTIMALE's French members maintain with translation companies and professional bodies within the translation industry were instrumental in increasing employer participation in the online survey and consultation workshop.
5. Links with academic research into professional translation-related issues have been established through cooperation with the European Society for Translation Studies, the DGT's research initiative, the study of translator status in Europe conducted by Professor Anthony Pym, and individual contributions to academic conferences by participating members of the consortium on issues related to or deriving from work conducted within the project.
6. The coordinator of the OPTIMALE project has also been a longstanding member of the Board of the European Language Council (www.celelc.org) and has reported regularly on project progress, linking up with ongoing ELC initiatives such as the special interest groups on public service translation and interpreting, university language policy, the multilingual classroom and degree programmes in modern languages.

5. Plans for the Future

The benefits of the project in terms of enhanced programme relevance and visibility will be sustained by the updating of the interactive map, continuing cooperation with the professional associations and organisations associated with the project, the dissemination and updating of the employer survey results and the lasting impact of the reference frameworks, resource materials and training of trainers sessions implemented during the project's lifetime.

An overall analysis of the results of the employer survey has been conducted and made available on the project website. An update of the survey will need to be undertaken, in order to take into account changing market circumstances and technological advances, particularly in the field of machine translation.

The reference frameworks and resource materials have been made available via a resource platform accessible via the project website. Selected resources will be disseminated towards the wider academic community (providing intellectual property rights are granted by the authors). The research impact of this work will be enhanced by the publication of selected papers presented at the Optimale research symposium on the role of human translators in a changing technological environment, organised jointly with the final project conference (6-7 June 2013). In the latter event, the final project outcomes were presented to a wide-ranging panel of experts including representatives of the DGT (Brussels and Paris), professional organisations (employers and freelance), a Spanish students' organisation and the President of the European Language Council.

Further network projects deriving from and carrying forward the work conducted under OPTIMALE were discussed during the final year of the project. An (unsuccessful) application for an accompanying measure, which would have aimed to update the employer survey, conduct a European-wide translation graduate employment survey and produce easily usable learning materials, was entered in 2013.

6. Contribution to EU policies

The OPTIMALE project is central to the pursuit of the EU's multilingualism agenda, as the training of professionally competent high-level translators is key to maintaining communication and mobility for individuals and the free circulation of goods and services throughout the Union without imposing the use of a lingua franca. Directive 2010/64/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2010 on the right to interpretation and translation in criminal proceeding is yet another example of how EU policy will significantly increase the need for qualified translators in the next few years.

Prior projects and the status quo reports drafted under WP5 of this project have shown that discrepancies still exist in the objectives and methodologies implemented at Master's Degree level in the teaching and learning of professional translation. Without attempting to apply a single model, it is therefore essential to ensure optimal convergence in the learning objectives and methodologies applied. This is what OPTIMALE has aimed to achieve.