

AILA-EUROPE MEETING – MINUTES (APPROVED)

Present: Muiris O’Laoire (IRAAL), Katja Mäntylä (AFinLA), Mienke Droop (ANeLA), Aleksandra Gnach (VALS-ASLA), Krista Kerge (EAAL), Halliki Polda (EAAL), Antje Wilton (GAL, AILA-Europe Coordinator), Tamás Péter Szabó and Petteri Laihonen from 15.30h

Excused: Maria Pilar Garcia Mayo (AEsLA)

TOP 1: Reports

a) Junior Researcher’s Meeting Jyväskylä

Thanks go to Katja Mäntylä and AFinLa for hosting the JRM, making it very affordable (the conference fee of 200 Euros included all accommodation, catering and the conference dinner) at a great location. The social programme was well received, too. Katja reports that they initially received 120 abstracts and accepted 100 of them. However, due to a large number of last-minute cancellations (lack of funding), 60 papers and posters were given, together with workshops and question-and-answer sessions.

Several participants said that they would have liked a more pronounced presence of experienced researchers, giving them feedback and the opportunity to discuss questions. AILA-Europe representatives agree that a closer involvement of AILA representatives is desirable – such as in plenaries, workshops and in the audience. This will be considered in the invitation for the next JRM in Winterthur (see below).

The next JRMs will be in

2015: Winterthur in September – date to follow

2016: Tallin, most likely from 19-21 May.

b) AILA International: The AILA World Congress will be held in Brisbane, Australia, 11-15 August. Early Bird Registration is now closed, the website at www.aila2014.com provides all necessary information.

The AILA World Congress venue 2020 is to be decided in the Brisbane EBIC meeting. No proposals have yet been received, but it is highly probable that there will be a European application – discussions are under way in France and Ireland. AILA-Europe considers applying for a strand focusing on European issues should the World Congress come to Europe – similar to the European strand that was offered at the AILA World Congress in Essen in 2008.

c) Affiliates’ news

Estonia reports that at their annual conference, they have been organising more internationally oriented workshops.

TOP 2: European Journal of Applied Linguistics - Update

The journal is going well – affiliates are asked to remind their members of the opportunity to publish their research with European focus in the journal. Karlfried Knapp will be stepping down as General Editor, his successor will be Jan

ten Thijs. Karlfried Knapp sends his greetings to AILA-Europe. The representatives thank him for all his work, initiative and effort for AILA-Europe and Antje will send a message to him to that effect.

TOP 3: International Cooperation

To enhance international cooperation and exchange amongst AILA-Europe affiliates, representatives suggest installing a strand of papers at the JRM focusing on a specific topic. When invited to send a representative to the JRM, affiliates can select one of their members who represents the affiliate at the AILA-Europe meeting and contributes a paper to the strand. This way, the JRM might become more attractive to affiliates, and junior researchers can benefit from the expertise of experienced researchers. The specific issues should be a) related to Europe and b) appeal to young researchers. A focus on digital media/digital literacy is suggested for the JRM 2015 in Winterthur – a topic seen as particularly fitting as the JRM will be organised by the Institute for Media Linguistics by the Department of Applied Linguistics in Winterthur.

TOP 4: Surveys – Committees

In Dublin, representatives discussed the possibility to conduct two surveys:

“The idea to formulate a resolution to support language departments in European universities is further pursued. It is suggested that AILA-Europe affiliates should be asked to give information about the effect of the financial crisis on the language departments in their country. This information will then be used to formulate a strong-worded statement to relevant authorities and funding bodies to alert them to the situation and to make them aware of neglected areas or research that need funding.” (Dublin minutes)

Antje Wilton asks representatives for support in setting up the survey. Mienke Droop offers to gather information about a Dutch association which is strongly supporting language departments to collect ideas on how to set up the survey. She also offers to contact Jan ten Thijs once more, who had the initial idea to pursue this issue.

“Furthermore, it is decided that a survey addressing research priorities and preferences of individual AILA-Europe members should be conducted via survey monkey. This survey is then a kind of downsized follow-up on a similar survey conducted in 2007.” (Dublin minutes)

When planning such a survey, it should be made clear how the data will be used and why collecting such data is relevant.

TOP 5: Shephard Initiative

Antje Wilton presents the Shephard Initiative (see attachments) sent to AILA-Europe by Lorna Carson (IRAAL) together with the request to officially support the initiative. Representatives unanimously agree to give support; Antje Wilton will send the letter of support to Lorna Carson.

TOP 6: Situation of linguistics in Hungary – AILA-Europe support?

Antje Wilton reports on an email exchange forwarded by a member of *verbal*, the Austrian AILA affiliate, and with Tamás Péter Szabó, a colleague from Hungary, on developments in the Hungarian academic landscape.

From the documents circulated (see attachments), it becomes clear that the Hungarian government has founded a new research institute (with effect from April 2014, to take up work in 2015) which is directed, administered and funded by the government directly. The new institute will, according to the decree issued, conduct research into linguistic and applied linguistic topics following governmental interests.

This development is considered alarming and threatening by observers inside and outside of Hungary as the new institute falls out of the ethical guidelines that are constitutive and necessary for independent research and academic activity. It undermines and competes with the traditional, established academic institutions in disciplines that are prone to ideologically informed influence such as history, linguistics, sociology etc. Protests by these established institutions (see the statement in the attached file) are rejected by the supporters of the new institute.

The representatives discuss this issue with Tamás Péter Szabó and Petteri Laihonen who have a good knowledge of the Hungarian situation and offer advice and guidance. Representatives agree that AILA-Europe emphasizes that language policy should be based on research that is academically monitored (peer reviewed), public (open to evaluation and debate by other academics) and independent from any direct political influence. Furthermore, carrying out linguistic "research" that fails to confirm to such basic tenants of science undermines the credibility of linguistics as a science in general. Representatives discuss possible ways of reacting to this issue. The following options are discussed and agreed upon:

1. AILA does not yet have a regular national affiliate in Hungary. Antje Wilton will inquire with the AILA Executives if AILA should approach relevant institutions – Tamás Péter Szabó offers to act as a contact person – offering them membership in AILA either as regular or associate affiliates, depending on the kind of organisation, its membership, structure and aims. The application can then be considered by EBIC in Brisbane.
2. AILA-Europe sends an open letter of support to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, stating clearly that AILA-Europe supports and defends the ethical guidelines and principles of academic activity (see above). Again, Tamás Péter Szabó will act as advisor and contact person.

Any supportive activity should be discussed with the academic institutions in Hungary and has to be conducted carefully, with the needs of the institutions involved in mind.

TOP 7: Other

There is no other business. The meeting is closed.