The Development of Interpreter Training Networks: the Case of EMCI

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to provide a historical overview of the European Masters in Conference Interpreting (EMCI) and to analyze prior collaboration attempts between the European institutions and interpreting schools and faculties. The analysis will consider the Consortium's inner structure, its principles and functioning. Comparisons will be made with other academic harmonization projects within the European Union and elsewhere. Particular emphasis will be given to Virtual Master Classes as an innovative means of teaching and providing remote feedback, and exchange programs among Partner Universities. Based on a consideration of past trends and current shifts towards more demanding linguistic combinations, the conclusion will evaluate how the Consortium and the profession may continue to evolve.

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The Development of Interpreter Training Networks: the Case of EMCI

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to provide a historical overview of the European Masters in Conference Interpreting (EMCI) and to analyze prior collaboration attempts between the European institutions and interpreting schools and faculties. The analysis will consider the Consortium’s inner structure, its principles and functioning. Comparisons will be made with other academic harmonisation projects within the European Union and elsewhere. Particular emphasis will be given to Virtual Master Classes as an innovative means of teaching and providing remote feedback, and exchange programs among Partner Universities. Based on a consideration of past trends and current shifts towards more demanding linguistic combinations, the conclusion will evaluate how the Consortium and the profession may continue to evolve.
1. Aim of the thesis

One of the principal purposes of the Consortium is “to meet the demand for highly-qualified conference interpreters, in the area of both widely and less widely-used and less-taught languages and in view of the expansion of the Union” (EMCI, 2013). Conceived in 1997 and fully operational in 2001, this type of academic network was unprecedented. Indeed, the 2004 European enlargement heralded the arrival of nine new official languages. Although the 2004 enlargement was the most substantial one in the history of the EU, it was not the first. Previous enlargements had also entailed the addition of new working languages, e.g. Finnish, Swedish and Greek. How did the European Institutions coordinate the teaching of less widely-used languages before the creation of the EMCI? In-house interpreter training as well as collaboration with Interpreting schools in Europe from 1952 onwards is part of the answer. The setting up of the EMCI Consortium is closely intertwined with the wider issue of teaching interpretation and with the evolution and the harmonization of academic curricula in European universities and schools. Without going into a detailed analysis of teaching methodologies, it is interesting to outline the premises that eventually led to the standardization of the interpreting teaching curriculum.

It took four years to turn an invitation for a submission of interest into a fully operational network of Europe-wide Masters courses. There were many players involved: the European Commission’s Joint Interpreting and Conference Service (SCIC), the European Directorate on Education (DGXXII) and the Thematic Network Project in the Area of Languages. At first, the idea circulated in the form of a pilot project. After many meetings, drafts and proposals for a core curriculum, a formal agreement was signed in May 2001, establishing an out-and-out Consortium, consisting initially of eight Universities. The number of member Universities has changed over time, as has the very purpose and nature of the Consortium. Particular attention should be paid to the recent reform of 2010-2012, which formally turned the previous European Consortium into an international one, called EMCI Consortium II, endowed with its own Constitution clearly stating the rights and duties of the member Universities.

As stated in the aims of the programme, “The Programme shall make use of new technologies where appropriate and shall contribute to the dissemination of their application” (EMCI, 2013, para. 3). One notable success in this respect has been the establishment of Virtual Classes. The latter, combined with the exchange programs among
member Universities as well as visits of the European Institutions, has contributed to the “creation of a unique learning platform”.

Thanks to the aforementioned reform, which prompted a revision of the Consortium’s structure, this network has been able to keep up with the latest changes concerning the linguistic needs of the European Union. The conclusion of this research considers what the future evolutions of the Consortium and of the profession as a whole may be, given past trends and current evolutions in European Union linguistic policies, as well as potential new member Universities in the candidate countries.
1.2. Research method used

This thesis is based on an analytical research method. This makes it possible to consider the interactions between different subjects and areas of interest (history, organization, practices). It also allows for comparisons with other systems and other attempts at academic harmonization (Bologna declaration, European Master’s in Translation and the Panafircan Master in Conference interpreting). Common patterns can thus be found – not only between different topics in the same context (EMCI), but also between similar topics in different contexts.

Most of the information concerning the EMCI Consortium itself, such as its history, core curriculum, agreements and constitution, has been retrieved from its official site. The publication section of the site also provides documents, verbatim reports of conferences and studies commissioned by member universities. Only the latest EMCI Consortium agreements are available online. It was therefore necessary to conduct interviews with Manuela Motta, Lecturer at FTI, and Barbara Moser-Mercer, Director of the Interpreting Department of the University of Geneva. They provided information on agreements that predated the formal establishment of the EMCI Consortium. An interview was also conducted with Professor Wolfgang Mackiewicz, former Director of the language center of Freie Universität Berlin, President of the European Language Council (Conseil européen pour les langues) and coordinator of the Thematic Network Project in the Area of Languages. All interviews were of a mixed type – “a combination of structured and unstructured questions, which resembles what is usually done in practice” and have the advantage of a “realistic approach that yields comparable answers plus in-depth insights” (Aswathappa, 2005: 164). With the exception of a standard set of questions concerning the initial difficulties and evolution of the Consortium, interviewees were free to contribute their personal ideas and experiences.

Some of the EMCI documents are confidential. Only publicly available information has been taken into consideration.

As far as the history of collaboration between the European Institutions and Universities is concerned, as well as the evolution of academic curricula, literature is scarce but consistent. Essays and publications on the topic were found at the FTI library, and at the virtual library of the Interpreting Department of the University of Geneva. More up-to-date information was retrieved from the DG SCIC official site and AIIC’s official site. The former
also provides useful verbatim reports, webcasts and PowerPoint presentations of the SCIC – Universities conferences, i.e. annual meetings that began in 1997 and paved the way for the creation of the EMCI consortium. Useful information was also provided on the official websites of partner universities, particularly regarding their core curriculum.
2.1. Collaboration between EU institutions and European universities in the field of conference interpreting since 1952

Since its formation, the European Union has taken the issue of multilingualism among its member States very seriously. Interpretation is thus a *sine qua non* of European meetings: “il y a eu lieu de préserver aussi ce que l’Europe a de plus original et particulier: sa diversité culturelle et le multilinguisme qui la caractérisent” (Reding, 2002). The constant demand for qualified and well trained interpreters by the EU often could not be met due to a lack of consistent and unified interpreting training across Europe.

The notion of official languages in Europe after World War II dates back to 1952, thus even predating the creation of the European Economic Community in 1958 (DG Interpretation, n.d.). The European Coal and Steel Community was founded after the war. Robert Schuman declared that one of its purposes was to “make war not only unthinkable but materially impossible” (European Union, 2013, para. 4). This unprecedented international organization had four official languages, those of the six Member States: Dutch, French, German and Italian. At that time, the organization and planning of interpretation at meetings was notoriously flawed: “nous ne pouvions voir ni la réunion, ni les délégués. [...] Il arriva parfois au micro de tomber par terre... [...] Dans les réunions normales où je travaillais en cabine française, je n’avais ni micro ni écouteurs; lorsqu’un flamand ou néerlandais prenait la parole, on me tendait les écouteurs idoines et un micro et je traduisais sans avoir du tout suivi les travaux de la réunion” (Methorst, 2000, para. 14).

There is enough evidence pointing to the lack of interpreter training at that time: “dans l’après-guerre immédiat et pendant une bonne dizaine d’années, les interprètes issus d’une école d’interprétation étaient en minorité” (Kaiser, 2004: 595). Nevertheless, the demand for qualified interpreters was to skyrocket:

The creation of the first interpreting schools followed on logically from this: after the University of Geneva (1941) came Heidelberg and Gemmersheim (1946), Paris HEC (1948), Vienna and Munich (1952) (ibid.). The ECSC was the first to lay the groundwork for successful cooperation between a European institution and an interpreting school. In 1953, the chief interpreter of the organization, M.A. Spira, asked the Geneva School of Interpretation to launch a six-week training programme for its interpreters. Interpreting without prior training couldn’t have been an easy task – as an active interpreter of that time recalls, “je partageai un bureau avec l’excellente Ursula Wenmaekers, littéralement morte d’épuisement à force de chuchoter entre Jean Monnet et le vice-président allemand, M. Etzel” (Methorst, 2000, para. 10). This initiative turned out to be a success: in the years to come, many similar courses were held in other schools for the benefit of the newly established European Institutions (Kaiser, 2004). In fact, the Geneva School took on a significant role in the immediate post-war period: it was on account of the acclaimed interpreter Antoine Velleman that, with a forward-looking approach, the University of Geneva set up a special Interpreting Department, “en arguant que la demande serait considérable dans l’après-guerre immédiat” (Kaiser, 2004: 579). Moreover, there was the pressing issue of a need for interpreters who could interpret simultaneously rather than consecutively. There was little consistency in simultaneous interpreting training: “[there were] differences in the attitudes of program administrators and instructors to simultaneous interpretation in the late forties and early fifties […]. In Geneva, the prevailing sentiment was initially against the teaching of simultaneous interpretation” (Sawyer, 2004: 46). This mismatch becomes clearly apparent if we draw a comparison between the Nuremberg Trials of 1946 and the Venice Conference of 1956, which paved the way for the subsequent creation of the European Economic Community and Euratom. The former was a globally renowned example of the first large-scale use of simultaneous interpretation (Jalòn, 2004). The latter, albeit held ten years later, was served by a team of just two interpreters who worked in consecutive, although six Foreign Ministers were speaking four different languages (DG Interpretation, 2007).

Two years later, in 1958, the Treaty of Rome establishing the European Economic Community and the Euratom Treaty came into force (DG Interpretation, 2002). The number of official languages remained the same (Council Regulation EC No 1, 1958), although the then-President of the Commission Walter Hallstein set up an Interpreting division with 15 staff members, which was not the case for the ECSC (DG Interpretation, 2012).
In 1964, the EU interpreting services decided to set up their own interpreter training: “le Service commun Interprétation-conférences a décidé, dès 1964, d’entreprendre lui-même la formation d’une partie de ces effectifs” (Hoof-Haferkampf, 2002: 3). There were many reasons for this, directly evoked by the then-Director General of SCIC (Service Commun Interprétation-Conférences in the French abbreviation) – insufficiencies in terms of level of proficiency and necessary language combinations, but also “trop de formations ne correspondant pas aux exigences de la profession” (ibid.). This remark implies that more than ten years after the creation of the first European international organization, the relevant interpreting schools were still lagging behind and failing to supply adequate numbers of proficient interpreters. A plan for an in-house interpreters training of 6 months was therefore rolled out, for the benefit of all University graduates. This program was so successful that “des experts du monde entier viennent en observer le fonctionnement” (ibid.). The Commission of the European Communities, as it was called at that time, wished that this experience could in the future “servir de base à une méthode de formation des interprètes de conférence” (ibid.) – a self-fulfilling prophecy, since its core curriculum became the reference some 40 years later for the drawing up of the EMCI curriculum (Moser-Mercer, 2005). Indeed, the conclusion of the report commissioned by the SCIC to Danica Seleskovitch points out that the Commission should “assurer l’harmonisation et la reconnaissance des diplômes d’interprètes de consécutive et de simultanée” (Seleskovitch, 1989: 267). Unlike the successful harmonisation triggered by the creation of the EMCI over the last 15 years, the overall situation of interpreter training in the 1960s was inconsistent. Danica Seleskovitch carries on with her assessment:

“Malheureusement tous ces interprètes ne sont pas également bien formés. Contrairement à la plupart des métiers responsables, l’exercice de l’interprétation ne requiert aujourd’hui ni formation ni diplôme reconnus. Chacun peut se dire interprète pour le meilleur avantage ou pour la pire déconvenue de ceux qui ne peuvent communiquer que par le truchement d’un tiers” (ibid.).

At that time efforts still had to be made for the acknowledgement of a diploma in conference interpreting, whereas nowadays we are able to focus on curriculum homogenization. Hence, Danica Seleskovitch and Marianne Lederer’s final recommendation to the European Commission was to try and establish an appropriate training and to make the relevant University degree a *sine qua non* for the practice of
the profession. A somewhat forward-looking wish tops off the advice: “il apparaît hautement souhaitable que […] une Institution Communautaire assure l'harmonisation et la reconnaissance des diplômes d’interprètes” (ibid.).

From 1973, two new languages joined the European family: English and Danish, with the United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark becoming new Member States. Much attention was given to teaching and practice as far as the two new languages were concerned. Also, the Interpreting division of the European Commission became a Directorate (DG Interpretation, 2002).

In 1979, more than ten years after the set up of in-house training, tailored training activities began to be organized in the Member States universities (ibid.). Technical assistance was also needed in countries outside the European Union, and a training programme for Chinese interpreters began in the same year. The accession of Greece (1981), Spain and Portugal (1986) to the EU brought with it three further official languages. It was precisely at this stage that staff interpreters of the EU were sent on behalf of the SCIC to candidate country universities to help train and recruit young talent (DG Interpretation, 1997), something which is now officially called Pedagogical Assistance and is regulated according to detailed rules of eligibility.

Almost 10 years later, in 1995, three new countries joined the European family bringing two new official languages: Austria, Finland and Sweden. As far as Finnish and Swedish were concerned, tailored interpreting courses for these two languages had already been organized in some Universities, particularly at the former ETI in Geneva. These programmes continued for some time following the accession.

In 1997 a sea change took place in terms of the cooperation between European Institutions and relevant interpreting schools and universities: “In-house interpreter training is discontinued in application of the subsidiarity principle and in order to concentrate the SCIC's efforts on its core task interpreting” (DG Interpretation, 2002). It was precisely at this point that SCIC started working on the so called DG SCIC – Universities conferences, which represented the founding block of the future EMCI Consortium. These symposia, held on annual basis, brought together many stakeholders in the field of interpretation, including national authorities. They involved more universities than the actual members of EMCI, including academic institutions of candidate and partner countries.

As stated by the Head of Service Marco Benedetti (2003), SCIC started preparing for the largest enlargement ever (that of 2004) in 1991, 13 years ahead of time. The
number of participants in these conferences had been steadily on the rise since then, with 68 Universities and 29 countries in 2002, also including important non-member states such as China and Vietnam. The following year there were 74 universities.

The topic of enlargement has occupied a preeminent role in these talks. Marco Benedetti also underlined at the same conference that partnership and cooperation are crucial: “enlargement concerns not only the Candidate Countries but also the current Member States if they want that their future interpreters know the new languages and if they want that their languages will be known by the new countries. [...] Universities [should] continue working together, with the support of the national authorities.” (ibid.).

The problems and challenges which surfaced during these meetings will be analyzed more thoroughly in chapter 3.

And now a final word on Pedagogical Assistance, Grants for training in Conference Interpreting, and individual bursaries. These are an innovative and unparalleled means of promoting the teaching of conference interpretation in close collaboration with Universities. As already mentioned, DG SCIC stopped its in-house interpreting courses in 1997, with the relevant Universities taking over its training programmes. Nevertheless, collaboration with academic institutions became closer than ever – in fact, the list of universities closely collaborating with DG Interpretation goes far beyond the number of EMCI members, and includes countries as far away as Vietnam, China, Mozambique and Ghana (DG Interpretation, 2013), reaching a total number of 76 institutions, in Member States, Candidate Countries and Third Countries.

An integral part of this collaboration is in the form of Pedagogical Assistance. In order to provide enough qualified conference interpreters, DG Interpretation, upon request from an eligible University, is entitled to: send experienced interpreters to enhance training practices, sit on examination boards and provide pedagogical material such as speeches and manuals. The objectives of this programme are mainly to promote integration, teaching and coverage of less widely used official languages, cooperation among academic institutions and the tailoring of pilot projects. It is interesting to note that the official web page for future applicants quotes the EMCI website as a reference point for assessments, examinations and the content of training programmes (DG SCIC, 2012a). In 2012, 72 Universities benefited from DG SCIC Pedagogical Assistance in one way or another (DG SCIC, 2012b). Study visits to the European institutions are also included in this programme. As many as 44 out of 72 Universities benefited from these

Grants for action to support training in conference interpreting share the same objectives as the Pedagogical Assistance, although in this instance actual financial support is provided to those academic institutions which promote “actions related to the organization of post-graduate courses in conference interpreting; […] special projects aimed at promoting Conference interpreter training” (DG Interpretation, 2013, para. 6). Again, the European Masters in Conference Interpreting plays a special role as a benchmark for the generally accepted quality standards, which figure among other suitable “actions”, e.g. implementation of languages needed by the EU Interpretation services as well as that of general teaching requirements, innovative technologies, cooperation with other academic institutions, cost-effectiveness of the project and others. As many as 17 actions grants have been awarded for the academic year 2012-13.

If grants qualify as financial help for virtuous institutions, individual bursaries are also available for eligible students. Priority is given to those students who have rarer language combinations, with at least one widespread European official language and one less widespread one. A candidate who succeeds in gaining this study bursary must, upon passing final examination tests and subject to the result of the entry inter-institutional European test give first call to the EU institutions for the first three years (DG Interpretation, 2013).

All of the aforementioned means and the historic overview clearly show how eager the EU institutions are to maintain quality standards and foster good practice in teaching interpretation in Europe and beyond.
2.2. Towards a harmonization of the academic curriculum among preeminent European schools

The unprecedented academic harmonization witnessed with the set up of the EMCI project is the result of 50 years of maturation and fine-tuning in the outline of the core curriculum. Many entities participated in this process, including universities, AIIC (Association Internationale des Interprètes de Conférence), and International Organizations including the European Union. The main achievements in this sense are: a). teaching of both consecutive and simultaneous interpretation; b). teaching of interpretation as a post-graduate degree only; c). teachers and assessors being experienced interpreters and d). standard procedures for the entry and final exams.

As already stated in the previous chapter, the overall situation of academic curricula among the European interpreting schools was far from consistent in the immediate post-war period. Furthermore, accounts and records of the teaching methods applied in the forties and fifties are scarce (Moser-Mercer, 2005). The only certainty concerns the unrelenting evolution of the curriculum itself. As David Sawyer points out:

“[…] The interpreter educator comes to realize that curriculum is by definition in a state of flux. To attempt to freeze it in place and leave it unaltered despite advances in knowledge, technological and social progress, shifting value systems, and changes in political and economic life is to condemn it to becoming outdated and increasingly dissociated from the educational needs at hand” (Sawyer, 2004: 46).

One giant leap forward in the field of interpreter training was without any doubt the integration of simultaneous interpreting. The pioneer is surely to be found in the University of Geneva:

“Savez-vous qu’il me semble qu’il faudrait introduire, à l’Ecole des interprètes, l’enseignement de l’interprétation simultanée? Il y aurait évidemment pas mal de difficultés techniques, mais cela voudrait la peine de les vaincre – car ce type d’interprétation, extrêmement pratique, demande tout de même pas mal d’entraînement” (Rosé (Skuncke) 1946 : 4; Moser-Mercer, 2005).
This considerations arose after the massive employment of simultaneous interpreters during the Nuremberg Trials in 1946. International organizations opted for simultaneous interpretation basically because it saved time (Mackintosh, 1999). Still, it took some time to make it an integral part of the curriculum with proper final examinations: after an initial mention on the diploma stating “a suivi un cours d’interprétation simultanée pour telle et telle langue” (Kurz 1991:2), final exams testing simultaneous interpretation were introduced in 1951 and this technique became an integral part of the curriculum two years later (Moser-Mercer, 2005). The firm belief that simultaneous interpretation would carry the day spread quickly throughout the other schools, in particular to the Interpreting department of the University of Vienna (ibid.), and later on to others. From this point onwards interpreting schools mushroomed: in Paris HEC (1948), ESIT (1958), ISIT (1959); in Germany the Germersheim school (1946), Saarbrücken (1948), Heidelberg (1950); in Austria Graz joined the aforementioned University of Vienna in 1947 (Mackintosh, 1999).

As early as in 1959, AIIC had discussed a “school policy” during several of its General Assemblies, laying down common criteria, one of which was that simultaneous interpretation should be taught only at postgraduate level (Seleskovitch, 1999). This principle was reinforced with the implementation of the Bologna Declaration (AIIC, 2001). The role of the teacher deserves special attention. Towards the end of the 1940s, “several interpreters demonstrated at the École d’interprètes in Geneva and at the HEC (Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales) in Paris that interpreters knew how to train students” (Seleskovitch, 1999: 58). Notwithstanding the cooperation between interpreters and interpreting schools, “their input was not given much weight in the curriculum and often they were not even entitled to sit on examination boards” (ibid.). Furthermore, at that time there were still several misgivings about teaching interpretation, with some professionals convinced it was all about an innate gift – “interpreters are born, not made” (ibid.). Nevertheless, “the number of schools and international gatherings devoted to interpreter training suggests that indeed, interpreters are no longer born, but made” (Mackintosh, 1999: 67). Sixty years later, no one would question the importance of having active interpreters teaching the fundamentals of the profession: “among interpreters there is an overwhelming agreement that training should be the sole responsibility of practicing interpreters” (ibid.). This is also a key principle of the EMCI consortium, stated in the Course Structure and Workload: “Interpreting sessions shall be conducted by practicing/experienced conference interpreters with teaching skills” (EMCI, 2013, para. 4), although there is no detailed account of what these teaching skills actually mean. This
A guideline was also mentioned in a brochure published by AIIC in 1997, *Advice to students wishing to become conference interpreters*. Besides the teacher being a practicing conference interpreter, special attention is also paid to the composition of the Diploma Examining Board, which “should be made up of tutors having taught on the course and external examiners who are practicing conference interpreters” (AIIC, 1997). This is in fact perfectly reflected in the outline of the final examinations of every EMCI member: “The panel shall be composed of a majority of experienced interpreters. The panel shall also include at least one external member. The European institutions, other international organizations, and other member institutions of the EMCI consortium shall be invited to send a representative” (EMCI, 2013, para. 5).

The ‘born’ and the ‘made’ camps nonetheless found common ground with regard to the admission test: nobody questioned the importance of an aptitude entry test, required to single out students who displayed aptitude for the profession (Seleskovitch, 1999). The need for this test has been further reiterated by AIIC (1985, 1992, 1997) as a result of several symposia and workshops: “admission to CI training shall be on the basis of an entrance test, which verifies language skills, cultural and general knowledge, aptitude for interpretation” (AIIC, 1997, np.).

As Mackintosh points out, the fact that all the aforementioned requirements (teaching of both consecutive and simultaneous interpretation at post graduate level only with teachers being professional interpreters and standardized entry and final tests) are a *sine qua non* of the EMCI curriculum “confirms that there is no longer any fundamental disagreement over the training aims and content” (1999: 77).
3. Launch of the EMCI project

3.1. From Pilot Project to a European-wide Consortium

As already stated in the previous chapter, in 1997 in-house interpreting courses had been discontinued by the DG SCIC in application of the subsidiarity principle (DG Interpretation, 2002). This meant that all of the teaching and fine-tuning that has been previously done directly on the premises of the European Institutions had to be shifted on to the relevant interpreting schools in Europe, which were nevertheless still entitled to receive pedagogical assistance and grants. The main stakeholders in this project are European Commission’s Joint Interpreting and Conference Service (SCIC), DGXXII (European Commission’s Department for education, training and youth) and the Thematic Network Project in the Area of Languages. The latter represents the first fully determined effort to coordinate policies between academic institutions and other stakeholders in order to meet present and future challenges concerning language needs on the European labour market (TNP3, 2013). These thematic networks are co-operation projects designed to “overcome the frequently observed disconnection of higher education programmes from the needs of the non-academic environments and from research” (2013, para. 1). This sentence provides a concise summary of the situation regarding the shortage of qualified interpreters within the European institutions towards the end of the 1990s. TNP also revealed that “there is a limit as to the degree of innovation that the universities can achieve on their own. They need to consult with other stakeholders - notably the professional and economic environments - and they need to do so on a regular basis” (para. 3). This was one of the main aims of the EMCI project in the first place.

The main SCIC and DGXXII proposal to the TNP coordinator Wolfgang Mackiewicz was to create a pilot project that would later pave the way for a Europe-wide network of post-graduate Masters in conference interpreting. Some time after, the European Parliament also took part in the negotiations. As mentioned in a brochure published on the official DG SCIC website (2013), the project was prompted by increasing requests by young European graduates who were looking for a post-graduate degree in conference interpreting. Often, these requests concerned less widely used languages, both as passive and active languages within a given combination, for which academic offer was poor or
non-existent (ibid.). Diversity and excellence were quoted as main objectives: diversity in the languages offered (with schools at that time proposing as few as 3 or 4 languages) and excellence through the exchange of best practices by mobility programs involving teachers as well as students. Also, consistent dialogue with the European Institutions could ensure a far-sighted approach based on actual needs of the labour market, an issue lying at the heart of the Thematic Network Project.

The following is a summary of an interview held with Wolfgang Mackiewicz (2013, pers. comm., 30 May), former Director of the language center of Freie Universität Berlin, President of the European Language Council (Conseil européen pour les langues) and coordinator of the aforementioned Thematic Network Project in the Area of Languages. When the EU realized that the enlargements of 2004 and 2007 would bring with them more than 10 new languages, they understood they couldn't contact the single universities and outline tailored programs. Hence, DG SCIC and DGXXII approached the TNP, whose principal aim was to address the disconnect between higher education programmes and changing needs in the social, professional and economic environments and in higher education itself. This is exactly what the EU institutions were striving for at that time. The initial project covered all sorts of branches involving languages: modern languages, ancient languages, languages taught to non-linguistic professionals, applied linguistics and so forth. The SIGMA pilot project had two major results – the launch of the first TNP and the creation of the CEL/ELC. One of the ten TNP sub-projects focused on the training of translators and interpreters and the training of trainers. The European Commission – notably SCIC and DG XXII – subsequently approached Wolfgang Mackiewicz in his capacity as TNP coordinator with a view to launching a project for the Joint development of a university programme at advanced level (master's type) in Conference Interpreting. As also stated by Professor Barbara Moser Mercer (2013, pers. comm., 27 May), the project turned out to be a major challenge – not only because of differences between Eastern and Western Europe, but also because the representatives of the partner universities and EU professionals held different personal views on the training of conference interpreters. As a result, a fairly large number of meetings had to be arranged over a period of four years.

One of the major challenges at that time was that in many of the participating universities the teaching of conference interpreting was incorporated into faculties or departments of modern philology. It was here that TNP1 with its emphasis on the need for building bridges between higher education institutions and the labour market played an important role. TNP
realized that the creation of a separated Department for Conference interpreting was crucial in order to meet the needs of the market and assure quality teaching. Under the heading “Translator and Interpreter Training in Central and Eastern Europe” it recommended that “Translation and Interpretation should be taught as subject areas in their own right, clearly distinct from general language and literature programmes, and, whenever possible, under the responsibility of a separate T&I department or school” (TNP, 1997: 4). Since Council Regulation N. 1 of 1958 on multilingualism, Brussels has relentlessly implemented its own legislation concerning language policies. Eastern Europe certainly lacked this comprehensive legal framework and suffered from a much more severe fragmentation. TNP’s major contributions was certainly to spot and single out the crucial linguistic needs in different labour areas: private business, institutional environments, legal branches and social services. Needs and demands are not immutable and TNP certainly met the challenge of fully understanding the market issues at stake.

One of the major concerns was the question of the percentage of applicants admitted to a conference interpreter training programme. The scope varied broadly from one country to another and from one school to another. The University of Geneva, in the words of Professor Mackiewicz, did indeed set an example to follow for the other schools of the Consortium: a pass rate fluctuating between 10% and 15% might definitely be qualified as demanding. That was one of the reasons why the TNP and the other stakeholders agreed on selecting only one school/department per country for the project. This decision was also made after a careful analysis of the results of a survey conducted among higher education institutions in 13 EU Member States and 30 major academic institutions in Central and Eastern European countries. This report, completed in 1997, thoroughly assessed the overall situation of interpreting teaching and practice in several countries in Europe that had expressed their interest in the pilot project. Among these were Austria, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and United Kingdom, as well as some countries in Central and Eastern Europe (TNP, 1997).

It is precisely the assessment of the latter countries that is of the most interest. As stated in the introduction of the report, Eastern European countries had a long-standing tradition of translation and interpretation, both academically and in the working environment. The quantity and quality (language combinations) of interpreters was strictly regulated by central governments. Communication with the West was scarce and language combinations usually reflected the political landscape of that time. As affirmed by
Professor Wolfgang Mackiewicz (2013, pers. comm., 30 May), many of the interpreting and translation courses provided in Eastern Europe were never granted independence and an autonomous status. Moreover, interpreters struggled to gain the deserved recognition, as Aleksandr Schweitser recalls:

“Interpreters were treated like second-class citizens. [...] All international regulations were ignored. We worked as long as necessary and were often asked to do written translation in between the spells of the cabin. [...] During an international conference of communist parties in the late 1960s, we were kept on standby all day until the Romanian delegation had its position approved by its party bosses in Bucharest and got just peanuts for half an hour of actual interpreting” (1999: 28).

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the TNP report carries on, demand for more translators and interpreters skyrocketed. With political barriers crumbling, the demand for Russian and Spanish declined sharply in favour of English and German (Toudic, 1997). Still, “the significant imbalance between offer and demand, combined with the legal and social status of the profession itself, caused the national markets in these countries to be flooded by an influx of untrained lay "translators" and "interpreters" who discredited the profession by providing cheap and poor quality services” (Toudic, 1997: 106). With government control over university programs a thing of the past, academic milieux were left alone, struggling to resuscitate T&I curricula that no longer matched market needs. At the beginning of the 1990s, two major European projects were launched: the Programme of Community aid to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (PHARE) and the subsequent Tempus project. The latter “supports the modernisation of higher education and creates an area of co-operation in countries surrounding the EU” (European Commission, 2013, para. 1). The Tempus project ultimately managed to provide not only academic know-how, but also technological support that eventually led to a slow but steady update of T&I programs (Toudic, 1997). The report carries on by stating that with a European market stretching from the Atlantic to the Black Sea and the prospect of an unforeseen European enlargement ahead, governments of Central and Eastern Europe acknowledged the urgent need to train a new generation of translators and interpreters to the highest possible standards (ibid.). The TNP survey underlined the major differences among interpreting courses in this geographical area, particularly between pre-accession countries and those whose accession to the European family was still not on the table.
Only the Hungarian and Latvian authorities replied directly to the questionnaire, stating that official permission had to be obtained in order to exercise the profession. Nevertheless, as in Western Europe, the status of the profession was only loosely recognized and regulated at that time. Only legal and court interpreters had to hold official certification. For instance, in Romania, annual public examinations for translators and interpreters were arranged regardless of the University degree held. In Poland, relevant regulations were up to the single professional associations, with ensuing mismatches between the standards applied.

Only one third of respondents in Central and Eastern Europe said they had separate schools and departments delivering T&I courses. “In most cases” the courses were part of the Arts and Humanities Faculties (ibid.). Nevertheless, joint degrees with EU institutions became more common during the 1990s, enabling Eastern and Central European students to acquire a degree recognized at the European level (e.g. the Diplôme d'Université of ITI-RI in Strasbourg).

As a result of this survey, the Scientific Committee on Translation and Interpreting (sub-project # 7) of the TNP in the Area of Languages drew up recommendations for Central and Eastern Europe as well as the Baltic countries that were officially adopted in 1999 during the 2nd ELC conference (TNP, 1999). The recommendations included: 1). T&I course should be taught as subject areas in their own right 2). Governments should encourage and implement T&I courses both at undergraduate and postgraduate level 3). All graduates should be proficient in “retour” interpreting (A > B) 4). “[…] every effort should be made by EU institutions and national governments to support the development of study programmes through student and staff mobility, joint curriculum development projects as well as other research and development projects” (1999: 5). This last recommendation seems to reflect perfectly what later would become the groundwork of the EMCI agreements.

Initially, as much as 30 higher education institutions came forward and showed interest in the joint pilot project by June of the same year (EMCI, 2013). Nevertheless, the initial working group consisted of 7 Universities (later 8), all from different countries, working together with the aforementioned institutions, i.e. SCIC, DG EAC, TNP and the European Parliament. The selection of the academic institutions has been made on the basis of geographical spread as well as “pool of expertise” (EMCI, 2013). The four non-academic partners insured a cross-sectional representation of interests and sectors of expertise. All of the stakeholders met in Brussels on 20 June 1997. The coordinating role was entrusted
to the University of Westminster with financial help being granted by the European institutions.

The work on a core curriculum started on 1st September 1997 and lasted 12 months. Between September and February of the same year, 5 meetings were held. Partners agreed on pivotal issues and key elements to be integrated in a core curriculum ideally tailored for a Master of this kind. The draft circulated among the 30 higher education institutions that had expressed their interest in the first place, giving them the opportunity to propose amendments. The initiative received a great deal of attention as the project was advertised not only on the SCIC web site but also during one of the famous SCIC – Universities conferences that started the very same year. The revised draft curriculum was trialled during the 1998-99 academic year in all of the partner Universities with constant monitoring. During the following two years, SCIC-EMCI seminars were added on top of the already existing SCIC – Universities conferences. These seminars focused in particular on the issue of quality assessment during final examinations.

Four years later, in 2001, a formal agreement establishing a fully-fledged Consortium was finally reached. On May 9th, 2001 (which also happens to be Europe Day, as Robert Schuman delivered his historical speech on this day) (European Union, 2013), a signing ceremony was held in the European Parliament, formally establishing the Consortium. It now consisted of 15 Universities, including 3 Universities in the candidate countries. These institutions were: Karl Franzens Universität (Graz), Hoger Instituut voor Vertalers en Tolken (Antwerpen), Handelshøjskolen (Copenhagen), Universidad de la Laguna (La Laguna), Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle (Paris), Universidade Do Minho (Braga), Stockholms Universitet (Stockholm), University of Westminster (London), Johannes Gutenberg Universität (Mainz), Turku University (Turku), Eötvös Loránd University (Budapest), Università degli Studi di Trieste (Trieste), Charles University (Prague), Université de Genève (Geneva), Uniwersytet Warsaw (Warsaw) (DG SCIC, 2013).

These developments were very warmly welcomed by the interpreting community. Seleskovitch stated that “co-operation between institutions and agreement on a common curriculum will certainly be a valuable contribution to better quality interpretation” (1999: 65), although later on she points out that an appropriate teacher training is needed for quality interpretation in Europe and worldwide. The same point is remarked by Jennifer Mackintosh, who points out that “as the membership of organization changes (e.g. EU enlargement) and shifts in the political and economic power-balance bring forth new requirements, CI training provision has to adapt to accommodate new languages and
modes of interpreting (teleconferencing)” (1999: 77). It is interesting to note that those remarks date back to the very dawn of the EMCI project and thus could not foresee the possible evolutions, in particular as far as technological advances are concerned. New modes of interpreting, as they are called by Mackintosh, did indeed make headway and are now an integral part of the EMCI Consortium. They take the form of Virtual classes, which will be analyzed more thoroughly in chapter 6.

The number of partner universities has changed over time. From the initial 7, with a subsequent 8th joining later, the number rose to 15 by the time of the signing ceremony in Brussels in May 2001. The record high stands at 18 members (Virtual Institute, 2012), whereas currently the network consists of 11 universities. Such a decrease can be explained 1) by the closure of some of the courses, for instance the one held at Copenhagen Business School and the former coordinating institution of University of Westminster and 2) by the Consortium reform of 2010-2012, which imposed stricter entry requirements that could not be satisfied by some of the previous members (Motta, M., 2013. Pers. comm., 31 May). The University of Westminster, for instance, has restored a Master in Conference interpreting, but one which contains half of the total amount of hours devoted to interpreting courses (University of Westminster, n.d.). In the core EMCI curriculum, which will be thoroughly analyzed in chapter 4, special emphasis is given to the total workload of the program, with at least 400 class contact hours. The new Westminster program thus fell short of the aforementioned requirements.

The main challenges concerning harmonisation as presented in an interview by Barbara Moser Mercer, Director of the Interpreting Department in Geneva, were of course agreeing on the content of a unified academic program as well as the setting of quality standards. As stated in almost every piece of literature and agreements regarding EMCI, the main objective at the beginning was the teaching of interpretation with less widely spread languages. This purpose is now of lesser importance, since the demand by the European Union for these languages has been more or less satisfied to the present day. Following the establishment of EMCI Consortium II, the main rallying cry has been quality. This had been relentlessly pointed out by many chief interpreters of various international organizations during the 70th anniversary of the Faculty of translation and interpretation of Geneva, as well as during a virtual Q&A virtual session between the European Parliament and the Faculty of Translation and Interpretation of Geneva (Cosmidou, O. 2013, pers. comm., 15 May).
As stated by Marco Benedetti, Director General of DG Interpretation, SCIC started preparing for the biggest enlargement ever, that of 2004-2007, far back in 1991 (Benedetti, 2003). During the Soviet era and immediately after the fall of the Soviet Union, the teaching and practice of interpretation in Eastern Europe followed different guidelines compared to the way it was taught in Western Europe. Not many people from those countries had the chance to travel abroad, carries on Barbara Moser-Mercer, and interpreters from the Eastern block underwent relentless checks against delivery by delegates who shared their mother tongue, particularly in consecutive. This is indeed well documented by Ghelly V. Chernov. In the West the “rules of the game” concerning interpretation appeared firstly during the Paris Peace Conference and later in the League of Nations: “the speaker preferred to deliver his/her statement in one piece uninterruptedly, and there were enough people in the audience to listen to the original while it lasted”. On the other hand, “that was not the case in [Soviet Union]” (Chernov, 1999: 43). As far as simultaneous is concerned, the main issue in Eastern Europe, whose schools followed the Soviet model, was literal interpretation. Virtuosity and stylistic re-elaboration were not accepted in the booth, where speeches had to be interpreted verbatim.

After the fall of the Soviet Union interpreting schools, associations such as AIIC and the European institutions grew increasingly curious about the teaching methods of a world that had been secretive so far. Already before the proposal of a unified European network, some Thematic Network Projects were created in order to investigate academic milieus beyond the former Iron curtain. Barbara Moser-Mercer, for instance, was member of an AIIC committee which travelled to Latvia, Lithuania, Czechoslovakia and Romania. The aim was to exchange common practices and take stock of the interpreting teaching methods in Eastern Europe. Professors and other personalities met during this mission turned out to be crucial later on for the set up of EMCI. Many issues were at stake: although these countries displayed deep interest in European integration and were motivated to make the necessary steps for catching up with the Western European schools, still some cultural clashes had to be overcome. In fact, it was two long-standing teaching traditions facing each other, with defensive attitudes being triggered during these encounters.
3.2. The reform of 2010-12: Consortium II

During the two final years of ETI as co-ordinating institution, the organization of the Consortium began to come under pressure, mainly for funding reasons (Moser-Mercer, pers. comm., 27 May, 2013). Until that time, the EMCI had been funded through European Union grants, a type of funding that is analyzed in the previous chapter. Two types of grants are issued according to article 108 of the 2003 European financing regulation: action grants and operating grants. The former aims “to finance an action intended to help achieve an objective forming part of a European Union policy”; the latter “to finance the functioning of a body which pursues an aim of general European interest or has an objective forming part of European Union policy” (European Commission, 2012: 204). Nevertheless, “indirect costs should not be eligible under a project grant awarded to a beneficiary who already receives an operating grant from the Commission during the period in question”. (DG EAC, 2003: 4).

During its appointment as the coordinating institution of the EMCI Consortium, ETI received both grants from the European Union - the action grants were provided by the Directorate General and the operating grants were awarded by the European Union. The latter were accorded to the University of Geneva within the framework of bilateral Swiss-EU agreements: funding for research “which pursues an aim of general European interest or has an objective forming part of a European Union policy” (DG EAC) is granted by the European Union with the proviso that the Swiss government pays it back at a later date. Under provisions of article 108 of the European financing regulation, the (former) School of Translation and Interpretation of Geneva could not afford to receive two different types of grants simultaneously. At the expiration of its coordination office, the University of Geneva had to pass this duty on to another partner institution, the University of Prague (as of 2013).

Two main possibilities were discussed before and during the talks for a more far-reaching reform of the EMCI Consortium: 1) turning the Consortium into a legal entity with headquarters in Brussels, thus dodging the funding issues previously mentioned or 2) maintaining its “framework” status through memoranda and agreements, with stricter entry requirements and quality standards. Barbara Moser-Mercer (2013, pers. comm., 27 May) stated that she had been working for a whole year on the possibility of turning the
Consortium into a legal entity, but eventually had to drop this idea because of bureaucratic hindrances concerning the creation of an international association under Belgian law. The stricter rules concerning entry requirements and quality assurance standards introduced by the Reform triggered a drop in the number of partner universities, which currently stands at 11. Westminster University, as previously mentioned, does not appear on the list anymore because of the closure of the program. The Copenhagen Business School, however, is expected to start a new course somewhere in the near future (ibid.). According to Barbara Moser-Mercer, stricter criteria equate to a higher status. The new Consortium now provides for a general annual review of all partner universities, as well as additional check-ups every three years.

Manuela Motta, Lecturer at the Interpreting Department of the University of Geneva and former assistant of the Virtual Classes, also explained some of the reasons behind the aforementioned reform.

Indeed, if FTI (former ETI) had wished to continue as Coordinating Institution, the whole consortium would have had to become a legal entity, with its headquarters on European territory, possibly in Brussels, as Professor Moser-Mercer had stated. This detachment would have resulted in headquarters not being at any of the partner institutions. After one year of work on this option, with round tables and draft proposals, the major stakeholders realized that such possibility was far from being feasible. One of the main issues which arose was the financial aspect underlying the creation of an international organization: the estimated costs of the project were too much of a burden for Universities already experiencing tough economic times. On top of financial constraints, the rigid structure of the organization would have hampered its functioning. Thus, the cost-benefit ratio turned out to be unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, a revised and streamlined version of the previously cumbersome structure turned out to be useful for the new Consortium II. The organization of the previous Consortium (2001-2010) lacked a clear attribution of rights and duties among partner Universities – apart from ETI holding the coordinating role, the other institutions accomplished different tasks not because of formal appointment, but rather out of personal interest in a defined branch. ESIT in Paris, which had taken on responsibility for research into interpretation into a B language (see chapter 4.2), is an example of this procedure. One of the reasons for choosing a more rigid structure was linked to the funding of the Consortium – it was thought that a well-defined organization coupled with subject-specific projects would attract more investments. Although for the time being the Consortium is entirely funded by the European Commission and European Parliament,
more specific research areas would allow investments from specific Directorates, such as DIGIT (Informatics), EAC (Education and Culture) or the Lifelong Learning Programme of the EU. Another advantage of this structure is quality assurance standards. As already mentioned by Professor Moser-Mercer, the new Consortium places emphasis on stricter quality requirements. During the early years of the organization, quality check-ups were carried out on an almost informal basis. Professors were invited to observe partner universities for the final examinations as well as during the academic year, but their assessment role was not clearly specified. With the new Consortium, professors’ duties are now clearly defined (for instance, a detailed report has to be filed at the end of every exchange, be it during the academic year or final exams). These stricter measures are in line with the overall evolution in the academic world, which is now marked by increased competition and higher quality standards. Since the EMCI wanted to endorse and continue its tradition as the watchdog of high-level Masters in conference interpreting, it had to have a well-defined structure that would in a way confirm this position. That is why the Consortium is now endowed with a Quality Assurance and Membership Committee, currently chaired by the FTI in collaboration with Ljubljana and Istanbul. The drop in the number of members, as previously stated, is due to a general quality check carried out during the passage from Consortium I to II. After the reform, although the adjective “European” was left in the official name of the Consortium, the notion of “international” has been added. This makes it possible to accept candidacies from countries not officially in the European Union but still geographically close to the Old Continent, where the academic offer for interpreting courses is scarce.
4. Core curriculum

1. Common practices: learning, teaching and testing

The core curriculum forms the basis of the whole Consortium, setting out “those elements agreed by participating institutions as being essential to a post-graduate university programme in Conference Interpreting” (EMCI, 2012). It is interesting not only to note what these components are, but also to remark that the core curriculum did not change after the recent reform. The five pivotal components are: 1). The theory of interpretation 2). The practice of interpretation 3). Consecutive interpretation 4). Simultaneous interpretation 5). The EU and international organisations.

The primary aim of the theory of interpretation is to make students aware of the distinction between translation and interpreting, as well as “theoretical aspects of interpretation; aspects of research findings in disciplines that have a bearing on interpretation, for example, the language and cognitive sciences” (EMCI, 2012, para. 3). Language and cognitive sciences is indeed a replacement of the previous version, which stated “psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, communication and discourse studies” (EMCI Agreements, 2007). This is the only, and merely pro forma, modification between the first and the second version of the core curriculum. For the sake of consistency, only FTI’s academic program will be presented more in detail as an example of the implementation of the EMCI core curriculum.

Theory of interpretation is indeed a fully-fledged course at Geneva’s Interpreting Department, lasting for the whole of the first semester. As presented in the official Faculty curriculum, the purpose of the course consists of “introduction aux théories de l'interprétation : présentation de différents modèles de l'interprétation, capacités cognitives et communicatives chez l'interprète, fonctionnement de la mémoire ; introduction à la recherche” (Université de Genève, 2012). Furthermore, “[students] will learn about interpreting as an object of study, the interpreting process, and the notions of quality and expertise in interpreting. Students will gain a thorough understanding of the research cycle and become familiar with internationally accepted norms of scientific writing. The course will provide students with the tools they need to write their MA thesis” (Virtual Institute, 2012). The 14-hour course consists of 6 activities, namely: the history and evolution of interpreting, the interpreting process, the research cycle, the writing of an MA thesis,
performance assessment in interpreting and expertise in interpreting. Every activity is coupled with a group assignment. Students are encouraged to change the composition of their groups from one activity to another, thus fostering team work.

As stated in the core curriculum, the practice of interpretation: “should include elements such as communication skills, e.g. voice coaching, public speaking; conference preparation techniques such as terminology, information retrieval and other uses of information technology; professional ethics; conference procedures; working practices and conditions” (EMCI, 2012, para. 3.2). Although defined as an individual component of the curriculum, it is not a stand-alone course, since all of these complementary practices are taught and monitored over the entire academic path. Indeed, the Interpreting Department offers interpreting students voice workshops providing voice coaching. These workshops focus in particular on enunciation and conveying of a wide array of emotions through different voice modulations. Public speaking is very well trained during the Consecutive general classes, where students deliver their interpretation while standing in front of their classmates and Professors.

A special emphasis is placed on professional ethics, particularly during the general simultaneous classes (classes in which all students participate, regardless of language combination). At the FTI, ethical issues in the booth are usually tackled at the beginning and end of the class. Students are called upon to suggest solutions to different scenarios that might crop up in official working situations – for example interpretation of confidential matters or playing down of possibly offensive content. Management of working conditions is also extensively discussed in the class, with teachers sharing their own experiences and delivering useful advice about the acceptability and negotiation of certain working conditions, contract provisions and payment issues.

Probably the most crucial of all ethics-related topics is the so-called “booth hygiene”, i.e. abiding by a given set of manners in the booth. Respectful and discreet conduct in limited available space is the key to fruitful and enjoyable working cooperation. Hints on such manners are almost countless. They include, for instance, not leaving the booth for the entire length of a colleague’s turn (not only because the colleague might need help, but also to keep track of conference procedures); not making annoying background noises (pouring water, pen ticking, leafing through conference papers etc.) while on-air; help, when possible, the colleague or refrain from doing it when not requested; always turn off the microphone whilst not interpreting and “never to say anything in the booth that might be utterly disastrous to be picked up by the microphone” (Matt Perret, 2010). Purely
technical expedients include turning the volume to zero when finished and, on a more
general note, leaving the booth as one expects to find it.

The next core element for a CI curriculum, as stated in the EMCI Core Curriculum, is
consecutive interpretation. The official EMCI description states:

“At the end of the programme students should be capable of giving a fluent and
effective consecutive interpretation of a speech lasting at least 10 minutes,
accurately reproducing the content of the original and using appropriate terminology
and register. Training in these skills will require a variety of exercises, such as
content analysis and memory exercises, consecutive interpretation without notes,
summarisation, sight translation and note taking techniques” (EMCI, 2012, para. 3.3).

Consecutive interpretation is the first subject to be taught in almost every interpreting
course. For instance, at FTI in Geneva it covers alone the entire first semester and
overlaps with simultaneous in the second half of the first year. At ESIT in Paris the entire
first year is dedicated exclusively to consecutive interpretation (which is also the reason
why only the second year of the Master is an official EMCI course) (Moser-Mercer, B., pers.
comm., 27th June 2013). The information retrieved from the official websites of the partner
Universities shows that there is no timeline consistency concerning the teaching of
consecutive and simultaneous. Some of them prefer to kick off the Master with
consecutive only (FTI Geneva, Cluj, Ljubljana, ESIT Paris), whereas others tackle both
consecutive and simultaneous interpretation during the first term (Budapest, Istanbul,
Lisbon, Prague, Trieste, Warsaw).

“Speeches used should confront the students with a diversity of subject areas, styles, and
registers, and their length, information density and degree of technicality and specificity
will increase as the programme progresses” (EMCI, 2012, para. 3.3). Geneva’s
Interpreting Department created the so called “expected levels of progress” that reflects
the gradual increase in speech difficulty as presented in the EMCI core curriculum. In the
initial weeks teaching is focused on memorising speeches lasting up to 3 minutes and an
introduction to consecutive note-taking. Special emphasis is placed on memorization
techniques, which play a crucial role in consecutive interpretation. The next stages move
from “a fairly comprehensive rendition of a [4 minutes] speech of medium difficulty: more
than a simple description, yet free of complex argument”, to “a complete rendition of a
more demanding speech with structured argument”, achieving a professional level by the
end of the first year (Virtual Institute, 2010). Consecutive classes per language combination last the first two semesters, whereas the third semester only involves general consecutive classes covering all of the language combinations.

The fourth point of the curriculum is simultaneous interpretation:

“At the end of the programme students should be able to provide a fluent and effective simultaneous interpretation of speeches of at least 20 minutes, accurately reproducing the content of the original and using appropriate terminology and register. While training in these skills will build on the same kind as those used to practice consecutive interpretation, additional exercises specifically designed to establish and consolidate the SI skills will be required. Furthermore, students should be trained in booth techniques and team interaction. Speeches used should confront the students with a diversity of subject areas, styles, and registers, and their length, information density and degree of technicality and specificity will increase as the programme progresses” (EMCI, 2012, para. 3.4).

As mentioned previously, simultaneous interpretation is not taught on the same time scale in all of the partner universities. Some of them devote only the second year of studies to it, others the whole Master. At the FTI, teaching of SI only starts at the beginning of the second semester, with a 3-day introduction covering a wide array of issues. The expected levels of progress for SI start with the “ability to interpret an improvisation containing redundant language and devoid of complex argument [4-5 minutes]” to achieve the “ability to deal with more structured speeches at sustained speeds, both improvised and read, variety of accents [of 10 minutes]” at the end of the second semester (first semester of SI) (Virtual Institute, 2010). The third and last semester represents a quantum leap in terms of the expected performance. Speeches last at least 15 minutes and cover a variety of subjects, accents and types: recorded interviews, debates, round tables, powerpoint presentations and so on and so forth. Classes common to all students are divided into technical and general, with the former dealing with more specific areas of expertise, e.g. medicine and engineering. Team work, as stated in the EMCI excerpt, is constantly encouraged through sharing of glossaries and documents encountered during preparation, as well as in-booth collaboration. Every simultaneous class embraces two modes of interpreting from the third semester: improvisation and SI with text, as indeed provided for in the EMCI core curriculum: “once they have acquired simultaneous interpreting skills,
students should also be taught how to interpret with the text in front of them”. After a brief introduction at the end of the second semester, students are required to familiarise themselves with this mode of interpreting throughout the summer – because not only does SI with text become an everyday reality in the third semester, it also accounts for half of the mark in the final examinations. This is particular to the FTI. The other partner universities, although they provide the necessary teaching and practice for SI with text, do not include this exercise in their final exams.

The last part of the EMCI core curriculum regards the EU and its institutions – “In studying the EU and International organizations the focus should be placed on how these institutions operate in order to familiarise students with institutional processes and procedures”. No provisions are made with regard to how these studies should be taught – in other words, whether they require a fully-fledged course or can be integrated into other, more general lessons – “it may be taught in the form of discrete modules or be integrated into interpreting classes” (EMCI Quality Assurance Standards, 2012: 5). At FTI, the course name is Organisations internationales, procédure parlementaire et terminologie de conférence. Its objective is to acquaint students with the “grandes organisations internationales recourant à des services d’interprétation. Étude de la langue des réunions internationales : terminologie et phraséologie du discours public dans le cadre des conférences internationales (prise de parole, remerciements, débat, vote, travail de rédaction, etc.), typologie des discours, registres et nuances, traditions rhétoriques. Étude des règles qui régissent la conduite des réunions internationales” (Virtual Institute, 2012). This course structure is similar in the partner institutions as presented on their official websites, although in some of the most recent member states of the European Union (Hungary, Romania, Slovenia) and current candidate countries (Turkey) special emphasis is given also to the integration process.

Course structure and workload also experienced a sea change after the 2010 reform. Before, the study programme provided for only 60 ECTS credits, (credits from the European Credit Transfer System conceived as part of the Bologna reform). It was generally possible to obtain this number of credits in one academic year. Many of the partner universities courses provided exactly for this time span, with final exams taking place in June. Under the new course outline, the number of credits can go up to 120, thus covering a two-year program. The minimum number of contact class hours is 400, “of which a minimum of 75% will be devoted to interpreting practice” (EMCI, 2007, 2012). Of crucial importance is autonomous and group practice. At the FTI, for instance, these group
sessions are called *entraînement supervisé*, and amount to no less than 8 hours per week. Groups are organized taking into account individual language combinations, so that every student can work from all of his or her passive languages with feedback provided by somebody who shares his or her mother tongue. *Supervisé* means that teaching assistants are entitled to participate to these sessions, and provide feedback without giving marks. The frequency of their participation gradually decreases over the academic cycle, as students are expected to develop reliable self-assessment skills throughout the Masters. Contact classes, group sessions and self-directed study (glossaries, radio, TV and other media) should total no less than 800 hours (although the pre-reform course structure stated 1000). EMCI partner universities agreed to appoint only professional interpreters as teachers, thus complying to decades of guidelines, whose pioneer was certainly AIIC (1997). Also, “where simultaneous interpreting is taught into B, the class will be conducted by an interpreter with an A in the target language” (EMCI, 2007, 2012, para. 4).

Aside from the Core Curriculum, the EMCI Course structure also explains what the ideal profile of the candidate should be. The candidate profile, entry (aptitude) tests and the outline of the test panel remain unchanged. Eligible candidates should hold a recognized University degree in any subject; have an excellent command of their mother tongue as well as excellent understanding of their passive languages; offer one of the following combinations: A-CC, A-B-C, A-A or A-B(sim) for less widely used languages and have a good overall knowledge of current affairs. Furthermore, ideal candidates should display good powers of concentration and memorization, ability to work under pressure, motivation and readiness to accept advice. The test panel should include a majority of professional interpreters; represent all of the languages of the candidate (with at least one assessor sharing the same mother tongue of the candidate); final decisions should be made by consensus. The actual aptitude test should include: oral reproduction of a 2-3 minutes speech from C/B>A and B>A, general knowledge test and, additionally, a sight translation, a brief oral presentation on a given subject and other (for more detailed information on the entry tests, see annex 1).

One of the most delicate issues regarding a master of this type is student assessment. This has been indeed a crucial topic of research since the dawn of interpretation training. Although quality assessment procedures were outlined during initial talks, an additional seminar was held in Graz in 2008 (EMCI, 2008). Assessment during the final examinations had already been agreed upon in 2001 and remained unchanged after the last reform.
Final exams cover both consecutive and simultaneous interpretation (at least 5 and 10 minutes respectively) in all the relevant linguistic directions for a given student. If a student with an A-B-C combination fails in one of the exams from A to B (or additional Cs) but manages to pass all the other exams, he still “may be awarded a degree with an A-C-C combination” (EMCI, 2007, 2012, para. 6). The degree certificate must clearly display the language combination awarded. “Candidates will be assessed on the mastery of their target language(s), comprehension of their source language(s) and their interpreting skills” (ibid.). As stated before, assessment of an interpretation performance is a delicate task. Nevertheless, a set of criteria has been outlined for this purpose. For instance, in Geneva the final mark for every performance is made up by three criteria: fidelity (50%), style (30%) and presentation (20%). According to the EMCI official site, “the panel shall be composed of a majority of experienced interpreters of whom at least two must have the mother tongue of the candidate in their combination, including one who is a native speaker of the target language of the examination” (2012, para. 6.2). Consortium Partners as well as the European Institutions are entitled to send their representatives. As with the entry test, the final decision should be taken by consensus.
4.2. The importance of a B language

The enlargement of 2004/2007 brought to the fore issues of political, economic and linguistic nature. On 1st May 2004, nine new languages joined the EU family, thus making them official languages of most parliamentary proceedings. Two additional languages were to follow three years later. As stated by Professor Barbara Moser-Mercer in *Can Conference Interpreters Adapt to New Political and Economic Pressures?*, many doubts arose about the new linguistic regime to be implemented. Cutting down on the number of working and official languages was unthinkable – it would have been in contravention of Council Regulation No. 1 and subsequent amendments legislating on the languages to be used in the European Union. “There are many things at stake: democratic legitimacy and decision-making, the need to actually understand what is being said by others, political difficulties in deciding which languages are cut, and ultimately, the relatively low cost of language services” (Moser-Mercer, 2005: 137). Indeed, according to the latest figures published by DG Interpretation, the cost of the European interpreting services is of 0.26 Euros per European citizen per year (European Commission, 2013). The adaption of linguistic regimes within International Organizations is a long-standing issue which has been analysed and documented by many. In the essay *Gérer le plurilinguisme européen: approche économique au problème de choix* (1997), Professor François Grin managed to systematically categorize the possible and existing linguistic regimes in a chart (below). This repartition shows almost every existing regime in the IO, including the EU. If $n$ represents the total number of languages in a given International Organization, $k$ is the number of languages for which interpretation is guaranteed, thus $k \leq n$. The most extreme scenario provides for only one official language ($k=1$), that might be an official language of a Member states or of none.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Number of official languages</th>
<th>Nature of the official languages</th>
<th>Number of interpretation directions to ensure</th>
<th>Necessity to learn a foreign language**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monarchic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Language of a Member State (<em>e.g.</em>, <em>Language A</em>)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>The A language for all those who don’t speak it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinarchic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>esperanto*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>esperanto*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oligarchic</td>
<td><em>k</em>, where 1&lt;k&lt;n</td>
<td>Languages of <em>k</em> Member States (<em>if k=3, languages A, B, and C</em>)</td>
<td><em>k</em></td>
<td>Languages A, B or C for speakers of other languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panarchic</td>
<td><em>n</em></td>
<td>Languages of every Member state</td>
<td><em>n</em>(n-1)</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egemoniac</td>
<td><em>n</em></td>
<td>Languages of every Member State</td>
<td>2(n-1)</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tecnocratic</td>
<td><em>n+1</em></td>
<td>Languages of every Member state + esperanto</td>
<td>2<em>n</em></td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*: or any other official language, dead or language which is not official in any of the Member states

**: for the officials of the Member states and staff not including translators and interpreters

(Grin, 1997)

The linguistic regime in force at the European Commission is mainly the oligarchic: only the most relevant working languages have a booth. Nevertheless, there is a major difference between, for instance, the system in force at the United Nations and at the European Commission: if for the former interpretation is insured only from and into the 6 official languages (a fully-fledged oligarchic scenario), for the latter most of the time an “asymmetric” system is used. This means that “if we proceed on the assumption that active language proficiency is more difficult to achieve than passive comprehension proficiency, we can conclude that allowing people to speak their native language in a multilingual environment is essential, whereas obligating them to listen in one of their 38
passive languages could be justified” (Moser-Mercer, 2005: 137). This system implies a limited number of booths which passively represent every spoken language but work actively only into some of them (mainly the most widespread). At the European Parliament, however, a panarchic regime is in use most of the time. Indeed, one of the major challenges the EU had to meet before the 2004-2007 enlargement was the arrangement of interpretation services: should existing interpreters be trained to interpret from the enlargement languages or should native speakers of enlargement languages also be taught to interpret into a widespread European language? Patrick Twidle, Director of Interpretation at the European Court of Justice, states that “in 1995, Finnish became the first language for which retour and relay interpretation was systematically adopted in European institution meetings. The initial objective of the founding EMCI members was to draft a core curriculum for a one-year post-graduate course. As time went by, it became increasingly apparent that the programme should move beyond its original scope and introduce the teaching of “retour” into a second active language” (pers. comm., June 11, 2013). An EMCI report published within the framework of the European Masters Co-operation Project remarked that “with enlargement, the European Institutions will probably need interpreters from accession countries who can work back into a B language, as there is for the time being a shortage of interpreters in other booths with a sufficiently sound knowledge of candidate country languages” (EMCI, 2001: 1). Again, ideological and theoretical issues concerning interpreting practices arose due to differences between Western and Eastern Europe, the report continues. Behind the former Iron Curtain, interpreting into a B language had been common practice for a very long time – it was thought that understanding of an A language is superior to a C language, and therefore leads to greater quality. Nevertheless, this report defies the aforementioned assumption, since “in today’s world with ample travel opportunities and access to foreign media […] interpreters can be expected to have full understanding of their B and indeed their C languages” (ibid.). Still, during the transition period experienced by the EU before and some time after the biggest enlargement in its history, sound interpretation into B languages from less widespread languages was required. Moreover, interpreters working into their B had to be used as pivots for all the other booths working in relay during major international meetings. Indeed, “it appears then that one type of regime could meet the needs of enlargement while at the same time preserving quality of service: the mixed regime with asymmetric language coverage and bi-directional booths” (Moser-Mercer, 2005: 138). In conclusion, although the training of qualified interpreters from less-widely
used languages remained a long-term goal, interpretation from these languages into a B became a short-term conceivable solution. Still, many issues had to be met – for instance, although some booths such as the Arabic, Chinese, Finnish or Vietnamese have a long-standing B language tradition, this was not necessarily the case for the new EU Member states (ibid.). As seen in the previous chapter, most of the time the B language par excellence in Eastern Europe was Russian, a lingua franca during the Soviet era. The main concern for EU was to avoid double or even triple relays: although French and English as B languages could defend against such a scenario, this might not be the case, for instance, with a German B (ibid.). Hence, the 2001 EMCI report, referring to the teaching of interpretation into a B language, pointed out that it was necessary to “take stock of existing training activities and research, to reappraise methods used in view of new expectations and requirements and to define best practice” (EMCI, 2001: 1). Since all of the partner institutions were involved in setting the standard for a European Master in CI, all of the research findings on interpreting into a B language had to be disseminated throughout the partner institutions, thus fostering common best practices. ESIT in Paris has been at the helm in this regard. As stated in the previous chapter, there were no clear roles assigned to the EMCI members prior to the Reform. Duties and research areas were assigned according to one’s own interests and means – if ESIT was in charge of researching into a B language, the former ETI made headway in the area of remote interpreting and so forth.

In 2002, ESIT in collaboration with other partner Universities published a report called Teaching Simultaneous Interpretation into B, resulting from a workshop held in Paris. Client expectations play a crucial role in the assessment of an interpretation into B. Previous research findings point out that the key elements for a sound SI into B are clarity of message, synchronicity and correct use of technical terms. Voice skills, accent and grammar seemed to hold less importance. The workshop analysed the findings of an EMCI survey which examined user satisfaction with interpretation into a B. This issue was important, as the amount of interpretation into a B was set to increase with 2004 and 2007 EU enlargements. Only participants with a sound interest in the conference proceedings were included in the survey, since it is thought that the more attention participants pay to the conference, the greater the reliability of their interpretation assessments. Respondents were familiar with interpretation and indicated that “the message transmitted should incorporate both semantics and pragmatics, should include style and should convey the thrust of the speaker’s reasoning” (EMCI, 2005: 47). Other elements included
synchronicity and lack of hesitation. In no instance was the interpreter’s accent, pronunciation or grammar mentioned. Although these drawbacks are typical of SI into B, the actual difference between SI into A and B was difficult to grasp from the respondents’ answers. One interviewee said that the he “listened to the meeting and not to the interpreters” (EMCI, 2001: 6). Some of the participants preferred interpreters working into B. In one instance a respondent expressed a preference for an interpretation he thought was into an A, but which was actually into a B. One of the research survey findings is that there is greater quality deterioration into B rather than into A under pressure. In conclusion, the importance of quality interpretation seems crucial for listeners. Thus, specific training into B simply had to be taken into account in the EMCI framework.

As stated previously, “Working into the B language has always been part of the interpretation practice in Central and Eastern European countries, in some cases, it has become dominant” (EMCI, 2001: 13). This trend is justified by the fact that most of the time interpreters in these regions are recruited locally, thus making double directionality preferable. If a conference with, for instance, Polish, Czech, Hungarian, Romanian and other Eastern European languages is organized, it would be almost impossible to find any one interpreter with a linguistic combination comprising all of the necessary languages. Sometimes relays in Eastern Europe meetings are organized into and from languages that are not even officially present at a given conference, such as English or German. Almost every interpreter respondent in Central and Eastern Europe affirmed working in both ways on equal basis. Since “SCIC’s strategy for 2004 specifically states that with 22 official and working languages it will be indispensable to employ all interpretation techniques, including relay and working into the B language” (ibid.), EMCI partners had to adopt specific strategies when confronted with teaching interpreting into a B based on the greatest difficulties encountered when working in this direction. Among these figure: 1). the interference of an A language when interpreting into B 2). a faster performance deterioration and 3). on a more general note, speaking in a language whose nature is not self-evident to the interpreter. Moreover, although native-speakers are not exempt from making mistakes, most of the time these are unrelated to actual linguistic knowledge. On the other hand, interpreters working into a B might commit errors that are unacceptable for a native speaker.

The EMCI report therefore listed guidelines for teaching SI into a B. The student should pay attention to accent, stress and intonation. He/she also has to pay attention to false friends, acronyms and in general have a command of his/her B language “which allows
him to express not only his own communicational needs but enables him to produce propositions in the target language for external consumption” (2005: 16). As explained by Christine Adams, an active AIIC member who took part at this workshop, teaching interpreting into a B should essentially train students, among others, to: keep it simple, focus on the message, know the appropriate terminology, explain cultural references and tailor place and name pronunciation to the target language.

It is particularly important to set appropriate entry and final tests for a linguistic combination displaying a B language. At the end of the workshop, preliminary conclusions were outlined. Entry aptitude tests, for instance, should focus firstly on comprehension of the B language and subsequently on its active use: in fact, part of the teaching should focus on activating and not creating from scratch common vocabulary and register in the B language. Key skills for a successful candidate to an EMCI master with a B language are: 1). Resourcefulness, i.e. flexibility in language use 2). Robustness, i.e. summary of a preset message that shows “likely ability of B language to hold up under the pressure of SI” (2005: 16), given the lack of choice concerning the content, register and vocabulary of the speech 3). Motivation, i.e. cultural questions that show student motivation to explore and widen its knowledge of foreign cultural references 4). Quality of A language, particularly for candidates who have grown up in a bilingual environment where the quality of an A language might deteriorate 5). Teachability, i.e. “attitude and ability to react appropriately to advice and criticism” (2005: 47). This last point is crucial for any linguistic combination.

A great deal of teacher comments concern student’s personality, for instance voice, posture, language and presentation. Assessors are therefore encouraged to make remarks on candidate performance as early as the oral entry test to gauge students’ reaction. This test should consist of a 3 minutes long improvised speech containing certain amount of redundancies. One aim of a teaching into B should be to “enhance predictive ability” (2005: 60). Predictive skills in language proficiency are obviously weaker in B than in A, and teachers should therefore prompt students to work particularly on collocations, i.e. larger units of meaning, rather than strictly on vocabulary. Identifying errors is essential. Particularly under pressure, errors in a B language are commonplace. Students are encouraged to listen and actively analyze their B language whenever possible. Great importance is also attached to preparing standard speech openings and closings that should then become automatic. Moreover, students with a B language must deliver their own speeches during class exercises. On a more general note, B language courses
should focus on higher units of language rather than sterile lexical comments concerning single words.
4.3. **Comparisons with other attempts of academic harmonization within the EU and elsewhere**

The Bologna process was decisive in the creation and organisation of a network of Masters in conference interpreting – in fact, it somewhat delayed the work on harmonization before and during the EMCI talks (Moser-Mercer, B., 2013, pers. comm., 27 May). Although Switzerland adapted quite quickly to the Bologna reform, this was not the case for other institutions, particularly those in countries where university programs were structured in a completely different way (e.g. Eastern European countries). Universities hosting interpreting courses in Warsaw, Graz and Prague managed indeed to adapt quickly (ibid.).

This mismatch between an EMCI course (tailored to the Bologna reform) and former University courses did produce double programs in some schools, for instance in Prague, where a four year program mixing interpretation and translation is offered, and Paris ESIT, where only the second year of Master is a certified EMCI course, whereas the first year, during which only consecutive is taught, is not. ETI’s master also had to adapt to this reform, switching from a two semester to a three semester program because of credit requirements: 90 credits was not a feasible workload to cover in 9 months (ibid.).

The Bologna declaration is a good example of a major harmonization attempt on the EU territory, although it is strictly structural and not subject-specific. It is seen in many regards as a historic turning point in the European higher education landscape (European Higher Education Area, 2009).

The idea of a shared academic structure on EU territory and the creation of a European master in conference interpreting coincided, as both projects were conceived at the end of the 1990s. In 1998, Education Ministers Claude Allegre (France), Luigi Berlinguer (Italy), Teresa Blackstone (United Kingdom) and Jürgen Rüttgers (Germany) met in Paris on the occasion of the 800th anniversary of the Sorbonne University. The meeting resulted in the signing of the Sorbonne Joint Declaration. The following is one of the key excerpts: “Universities were born in Europe, some three-quarters of a millennium ago. [...] An open European area for higher learning carries a wealth of positive perspectives, of course respecting our diversities, but requires on the other hand continuous efforts to remove
barriers and to develop a framework for teaching and learning, which would enhance mobility and an ever closer cooperation" (Sorbonne Joint Declaration, 1998, para. 2). The main objective of this initiative was therefore to foster European mobility and clearly subdivide courses into graduate and postgraduate. Together with easily understandable programs and degrees, “quality assurance has played an important role from the outset, too” (European Higher Education Area, 2009, para. 2). A year later, and eleven years after the 900th anniversary of the University of Bologna, the Bologna Declaration was signed by 29 Education ministers (Bologna Declaration, 1999). Among these figured countries at that time outside the European Union, such as the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania and Slovenia, some of which are partners in the EMCI Consortium.

The pivotal aims as presented in the Declaration are: 1). Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees 2). Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate 3). Establishment of a system of credits - such as in the ECTS system - as a proper means of promoting the most widespread student mobility. 4). Promotion of mobility 5). Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance. (ibid.).

Quality and quality assurance tools seem indeed to be the key recurring words whenever an academic project of cooperation crops up – “quality assurance in higher education can be understood as policies, procedures and practices that are designed to achieve, maintain or enhance quality as it is understood in a specific context” (EACEA, 2012: 60).

The evolution and creation of The European Network for Quality Assurance could be said to resemble the maturation of the EMCI network. It also started in the 1990s with a Pilot Project financed by the European Union, namely the European Pilot Project for Evaluating Quality in Higher Education (1994-95). Dissemination of good practices and sharing of experiences also constituted a crucial value in this project (ENQA, 2013). This network, unlike the EMCI, became a fully-fledged association in 2004 with its headquarters based in Brussels, an option which arose also during the EMCI reform (see chapter 3.2.). It is also funded through grant support by the European Commission.

The Bologna Process is closely intertwined with the issue of quality assurance. Since 2005, a Stocktaking Report has been published every two to three years on Bologna University’s official website. The latest available report was issued in 2012 and devotes an entire chapter to the issue of quality assurance, often citing the 2005 Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. These guidelines are a result of the Berlin communiqué of the same year, in which Education Ministers expressed
their willingness “to develop an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance, to explore ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system for quality assurance” (2005: 3). The subsequent guidelines thus included: 1). Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards 2). Assessment of students 3). Quality assurance of teaching staff 4). Learning resources and student support (ENQA, 2005).

The EMCI Quality Assurance Standards comprise similar guidelines: formal programme approval procedures by a body other than that teaching the programme; monitoring of the progress and achievement of students; regular periodic reviews of programmes and regular feedback from employers, labour market representatives and other relevant organizations. Student assessment should “be undertaken by people who understand the role of assessment in the progression of students towards the achievement of the knowledge and skills associated with their intended qualification” (ENQA, 2005: 17); where possible, judgements should be provided by the widest possible range of assessors and “be subject to administrative verification checks to ensure the accuracy of the procedures” (ibid). “As far as learning resources are concerned, these vary from physical resources such as libraries or computing facilities to human support in the form of tutors, counsellors, and other advisers” (ENQA, 2005: 18). Furthermore, “higher education institutions have a responsibility to provide information about the programmes they are offering, the intended learning outcomes of these, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, and the learning opportunities available to their students” (ibid.).

As underlined in the Bologna Process Implementation Report, mutual trust between institutions is essential for a successful quality assurance system (2012). In particular, evaluation by agencies and institutions from beyond national borders demands a significant degree of trust: “one significant measure of how far trust is developing, is whether governments enable higher education institutions to be evaluated by a quality assurance agency from another country when aware, for example, that the agency works in full compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines” (EACEA, 2012: 62). This is a key element of what the ENQA report calls “external quality assurance”. Assessment by external agencies or institutions can have significant outcomes, since “formal decisions made by quality assurance agencies have a significant impact on the institutions and programmes that are judged” (ENQA, 2005: 20). Subsequent reports “should be structured to cover description, analysis (including relevant evidence), conclusions, commendations, and recommendations” (ibid.). An assessment procedure should not end once a report is
published. Indeed, a follow-up procedure is crucial for adequate and rapid implementation of recommendations where needed.

The report also highlights the essential role played by students in the development of quality education. Academic betterment should not be seen as a top-down process, but relies on “student participation in governance structures, in review teams, in the preparation of self-evaluation reports, in decision-making processes and in follow-up procedures” (: 62). To this end, the European Students Union has been publishing an annual European-wide report called Bologna With Student Eyes since 2003. The reports highlight the progress made and the challenges ahead. The latest available report is that of 2012. It points out that as far as European students are concerned, the Bologna Process is far from being achieved. In particular, the global economic crisis has hampered the implementation of the Bologna reform, affecting the very foundations and funding of academic institutions. The 2012 report highlights backward steps in areas such as: mobility, with funding questions arising; scarce or non-existent follow-up on employability; the reduction in student participation in academic governance and “decision-making on financial issues, staff policies and organizational structures”; the mismatch between different national systems in terms of overall academic harmonization (ESU, 2012).

In conclusion, the development of the Bologna Process and the complementary ENQA has much in common with the establishment of the EMCI network. As well as creating a shared standard framework of higher education qualifications (1st, 2nd and 3rd degree), the Bologna process has established entry requirements (for the institutions to be part of the Bologna system and for the students to access degrees on a national level) as well as student mobility programs, the creation of which is part of the implementation of the broader European right to free circulation of people, goods and services.

Indeed, not all of the countries which applied to the Bologna Process were accepted, because of strict entry requirements. Although most of the rejections were for bureaucratic reasons (countries such as Kyrgyzstan, Northern Cyprus, Israel and Kosovo are not members of the European Cultural Convention of the Council of Europe), there is still one instance worth mentioning: the case of Belarus. This country was not accepted because “the principles and values of the Bologna Process, such as academic freedom, institutional autonomy and student participation in managing higher education, are not being upheld sufficiently in Belarus” (Kaczmarek, 2012: para. 1).

The Bologna Process opened up the opportunity of spending one or two semesters abroad to more students than ever before. Although student exchanges had been
established as far back as 1987 with the Erasmus program (European Commission, 2013), the academic homogenization brought about by the Bologna Accords turned this program into an real success. The EMCI mobility programs are analyzed in chapter 6.

It is of particular interest, after having drawn comparisons with the Bologna Process, to try and compare the EMCI Consortium with a subject-specific network – the European Master’s in Translation, for translation is the closest discipline to interpretation.

This project was designed and launched in 2006, some time after the creation of the EMCI. Follow-up conferences have been held on an annual basis. Combatting the shortage of professional translators for less widely used languages was one of the main aims of this network. As we know, the shortage of professional interpreters was also discussed at the initial EMCI meetings. Also, the issue of quality seems to be omnipresent – “the main goal of this project is to establish a quality label for university translation programmes that meet agreed standards in education” (European Commission, 2013). The European Commission’s Directorate-General for Translation (DGT) thus decided to summon European Universities offering a Master in Translation to the conference Towards a European Master’s in Translation (EMT), held in Brussels. 93 institutions attended, including 3 Universities from outside the European Union (Euroalert, 2009). Of these, 34 were eventually singled out to become active members of the network. Again, the purposes of the EMCI and the EMT seem to overlap, for the nature of their stakeholders is the same (European Institutions in collaboration with higher education institutions). In 2010, an EMT Strategy was laid down after the founding meeting held in Brussels. Two main issues were identified: “the rapidly growing need for high-level linguistic services […]; the increase in the number of official EU languages from 11 to 23 between 2004 and 2007, which brought to light the vulnerability of the labour market for translators and the short supply of qualified professionals” (DG Translation, 2009: 1). As stated in the EMT Strategy document, membership is open to programs, and not institutions. Contrary to the EMCI Consortium, EMT does not impose any limits on the number of applicant programs per country. As stated in a FAQ document of the EMT,

While both [EMCI and EMT] aim to set and keep up quality standards, the main difference between the two approaches is due to the different nature of markets for translation and interpretation. The translation market usually offers a higher number of job openings for graduates (2013, para. 11).
In the last 20 years, increasing numbers of translation degrees have been created throughout Europe. As mentioned in chapter 3, one issue which arose during the establishment of a European Master in Interpreting was that in Eastern Europe much of interpreting teaching was carried out by faculties of philology. During the preliminary stages of the creation of the EMT, an expert group set up by the DGT in 2007 highlighted similar issues. According to this panel, the Bologna Reform prompted many European Institutions to establish translation programs with the underlying aim of recycling former language teachers. Nevertheless, “the question arises of whether such translation programmes may exist in name only, owing to a lack of analysis of requirements, a lack of understanding of the demands of the profession, and a lack of qualified teachers” (EMT expert group, 2009: 1).

Establishing a core curriculum was essential in obtaining a quality label. However, the EMT core curriculum is far from being as detailed as that of the EMCI. It lays out the ideal profile of a translation graduate, rather than minutely defining courses and best practices. Indeed, the aforementioned expert panel issued a publication called *Competences for professional translators, experts in multilingual and multimedia communication*. The rationale behind the lack of a detailed syllabus is that “the training objectives, expressed in terms of competences to be acquired, appear to us to be priorities, before defining a programme in which the content also depends on the resources (human, financial, institutional and technical) available in a given context” (ibid.). The objectives include translation service provision competence; language competence; intercultural competence; information mining competence; thematic competence; technological competence (mastery of tools). The concept of translation service provision competence is in some way similar to what is defined as “practice of interpretation” in the EMCI core curriculum. Indeed, what is defined in the latter as “working practices and conditions” is explained in greater detail in the EMT standards. The components of these competences (competence meaning “combination of aptitudes, knowledge, behavior and know-how necessary to carry out a given task under given conditions”) include, among others: “knowing how to organize approaches to clients/ potential clients; [...] knowing how to negotiate with the client; [...] knowing how to clarify the requirements, objectives and purposes of the client; [...] knowing how to comply with instructions, deadlines, commitments, interpersonal competences, team organization; [...] knowing how to comply with professional ethics; [...] knowing how to self-evaluate” (: 4). These are all elements that, given personal academic experience at
the UNIGE Interpreting Department, are indeed taught but are not listed in detail on the EMCI core curriculum. Other key elements in the EMT competences comprise more translation-related aptitudes similar to the practice of consecutive and simultaneous in the EMCI curriculum - knowing how to produce a register appropriate to a given situation; knowing how to grasp the presuppositions, the implicit, allusions, stereotypes and intertextual nature of a document; knowing how to draft, rephrase, restructure, condense, and post-edit rapidly and well; knowing how to search for appropriate information to gain a better grasp of the thematic aspects of a document and much more.

Although the EMT network is not endowed with a detailed syllabus or core curriculum, its organisational structure was defined from the outset, unlike that of the EMCI Consortium, which only laid out an official organizational structure as part of the latest reform. The EMT organizational chart as published in the 2009 report included a steering committee; a working group; a group of eight experts and a network of university programs. Later, a board (currently consisting of 10 university representatives, plus 2 representatives from the DGT) was created. Just as is the case for the as EMCI, the EMT is involved in many research projects in collaboration with DGT (EMT, 2011). However, the EMT does not have an official website to date (August 2013).

A final mention should be given to an interpreting project similar in nature but concerning a wholly different continent: the African Project. This is a Consortium project was conceived on the occasion of the First Pan-African Project on Conference Interpreting, Translation and Public Service Interpreting, held in Nairobi in 2009 (DG SCIC, 2013). Major international organizations present on the continent or collaborating with it (UN, EU, African Union, ACP Secretariat, Organization International de la Francophonie etc.) acknowledged an increased need for professional interpreters, since

“L’Afrique connaît, en effet, un processus d’intégration régionale de plus en plus poussé avec l’apparition d’institutions de plus en plus nombreuses […]; sur un continent aussi vaste, caractérisé par une multiplicité de langues et dialectes, la disponibilité d’interprètes et de traducteurs qualifiés n’est pas un luxe mais bel et bien un facteur d’intégration régionale” (Kekeh, 2013: 2).

The conference resulted in the signing of the Gigiri Declaration. This declaration highlighted the lack of technical equipment and adequate training in CI in Africa. African
citizens who want to become conference interpreters have to move to Europe or North America in order to acquire such competences (Annie De Benedectis, 2010). As a result, all the stakeholders committed to creating an interpreting network of excellence on African soil. As seen on numerous previous occasions, a project of this type can only be successful when it is built on one type of foundation: a core curriculum. Indeed, the participating institutions should follow this common curriculum and harmonize “their approaches to selection, teaching and certifying training. They are structured as a network of centres of excellences, located in the different linguistic zones of the continent, which will allow for student and trainer mobility within a pan-African network” (European Commission, 2013, para. 6). The European Union, represented by DG SCIC and DG INTE, could rely on its previous and successful EMCI experience in launching this similar project. The collaboration with DG SCIC is thus a quality label, and it helps in drawing up curricula, providing training for trainers and pedagogical assistance. To sum up, all of these elements, together with a sound mobility program, seem to constitute a conditio sine qua non for a successful international consortium in conference interpreting and related subjects. Furthermore, the EMCI and the African Project have evolved in similar ways: both started out as pilot projects, only later becoming a Consortium. Currently, the African Consortium consists officially of 5 universities – the University of Nairobi, Universidade Pedagogica de Maputo, ASTI in Buea, the University of Accra and the University of Ouagadougou, with further courses planned at the University of Cairo and Wittwatersrand University in South Africa (European Commission, 2013).
5. Inner organization of the Consortium

5.1. Former Consortium agreement

This chapter will analyse the inner structure of the EMCI Consortium before and after the latest reform. It will also discuss the new core activities of the network, in particular those of the Quality Assurance and Membership Committee.

As stated by both Barbara Moser-Mercer and Manuela Motta at the FTI, actual roles and task repartition within the EMCI has always been mutually agreed, albeit never formally implemented. This can actually be seen if one considers the former agreement, which resembles a Memorandum of Understanding rather than a binding agreement.

The current structure bears the name *Consortium Constitution*, whereas the former accord was called the *Consortium Agreement*. The following is a summary of the key elements of the agreement that was in force from 2001 to 2010. For reasons of consistency, the former agreement and the new constitution are analysed in two separate chapters.

The Preamble of the former agreement explains why there was a need for the creation of the Consortium. The participating institutions, for instance, “[note] that Europe’s political landscape has changed fundamentally over the past decade; […] [are] mindful of Europe’s resolve to preserve and promote multilingualism and multiculturalism; [are] convinced that the growing complexity of political decision-making and political debate at the highest European level requires language professionals whose educational background matches that of policy-makers and decision-makers; [are] aware of the shortage of high-quality language professionals working with less widely used languages […]” (EMCI, 2006, see appendix 2). Considering all of the aforementioned conditions, partner universities agreed to form an independent Consortium based on a core curriculum. As seen in the previous chapter, the core curriculum did not change significantly with the reform. What actually changed is its compliance enforcement.

Apart from the commitment to constantly update the programme and resources, the agreement provided for: staff and student mobility, “to foster the exchange of information and experience”; life-long learning, with “distance-learning technologies […] employed where appropriate”; teacher training, “with a well-structured education programme for teaching staff designed to meet the need of both young and more experienced interpreter
trainers”. Additional activities included a clearing house and consultancy service, with information and advice being delivered to students, academic institutions willing to apply or update their programmes and potential employers. Moreover, Consortium partners were entitled to conduct market analyses of professional requirements together with other stakeholders in the field. Special importance was attached to research, particularly as far as the use of new technologies was concerned. Much of the research, along with many workshop findings, produced by Consortium members is published on the official website (one area of research being interpretation into a B language analyzed in chapter 4.2).

The initial structure of the Consortium resembled the current structure of the European Master’s in Translation, tackled in the previous chapter. At the outset, the network consisted only of the Council of Representatives, a Co-ordinating institution and a Secretariat. The Council of Representatives was similar to the EMT Board, although the former comprises one representative per partner institution (these being less in number). Duties of the Council included taking decisions “on issues of common concern such as admission to the Consortium, regular financial contributions, quality control, revision of the curriculum and joint grant applications”. Representatives were summoned at least once a year and meetings were, as a general rule, chaired by the Co-ordinating institution. Travel expenses were to be covered by the individual universities. The Co-ordinating institution was appointed for a period of three years and managed issues related to the financial affairs of the Consortium as well as the internal and external clearing house. Again, personal interviews conducted with Professor Barbara Moser-Mercer and Lecturer Manuela Motta revealed that in actual fact additional agreements were in force between the partner institutions.

Conditions of membership were also part of the former agreement and were manifestly less demanding. Conditions for fully-fledged membership included: offering an EMCI course at least every third year, compliance to all the criteria set out in the core curriculum and observance of a financial contribution towards the Consortium. If the basic (thus not all) requirements were met, institutions were eligible to submit their applications. Where necessary, an observer status could be granted so that candidate institutions could bring their courses fully in line with the Consortium standards. This special status could be revoked if the candidate institution failed to comply to these standards within one year. This observer status still exists but is given much less coverage in the new constitution. Previously, an institution could become an observer provided it offered a post-graduate course in conference interpreting, and a full MA course was not a prerequisite. A simple
majority of members was enough for observer status to be granted. The candidate institution had to report regularly about progress made at every Consortium meeting and officially apply for full membership “at latest two years after having been granted Observer status”.

Together with observer institutions, the former agreement provided for two classes of membership, e.g. full membership and associate membership (plus the applicant members). “Associate members are members who cannot comply with all conditions […]. They cannot offer the core curriculum at least every third year, but participate otherwise fully in the work of the Consortium and pay the membership fee” (see appendix 2). The new constitution, on the other hand, provides only for one class of membership. Applicant members are observers who were able to comply with all of the conditions set out in the core curriculum within one year. Failure to do so entailed revocation of the applicant membership. In such a case, “unsuccessful applicants may reapply once”, states the former Agreement.

Associate and full members had the right to vote, whereas observers and applicant members did not benefit from this right.

A withdrawal procedure was also possible, provided that the institution wishing to withdraw notified the co-ordinating institution six months in advance. The date of withdrawal was set on the 30th of September of every year.

The last provision of the former agreement concerns membership fees. These were agreed every year in relation to the annual financial report and budget prepared by the Co-ordinating institution. The actual amount of the fee was agreed by the Council of Representatives.
5.2. New Consortium Constitution

The 2010-12 reform brought in a new set of agreements that constitute the new Consortium Constitution. Differences between the two forms of organization are clear. Legal accountability and specific rules of procedure are certainly one of the most important features of the new Constitution. The following is a summarised account of the most important provisions (for the integral Constitution, see appendix 3).

The Constitution consists of 13 articles. The first article concerns Consortium name, seat, duration and language of the Consortium. The issue of the headquarters of the Consortium was already mentioned in chapter 3, in the interviews held with Professor Barbara Moser-Mercer and Lecturer Manuela Motta. Both of them underlined the delicate managing of Consortium evolution – either it had to become a legal entity, or its framework status had to be preserved but with stricter requirements. In both scenarios the headquarters had to be on European Union soil. This is why the new constitution recites “the seat of the Consortium is in the European Union. The seat of the Consortium may be transferred to any other location in the European Union by decision of the Governing Board”. As the seat was previously in Geneva, it thus had to be transferred elsewhere. As of 2013, the President of the Governing Board, and consequently the seat, is the University of Prague. What were called core and additional activities of the Consortium in the former agreement, became an article on its own called “Aims and Objectives of the Consortium”. Additionally, all members “should adhere to EMCI Quality Assurance Standards and to the EMCI Core Curriculum”. EMCI Quality Assurance standards are perhaps the most consistent innovation of the new organization, together with the new governance and funding provisions.

The new Constitution clearly stipulates under article 3 how Consortium activities ought to be financed, mainly: membership fees; voluntary contributions; any other contributions by private or public sources.

Article 4 of the Constitution is entirely devoted to the network governance. What was previously called Council of Representatives became the General Assembly, with new rights but unchanged in its composition. Its “exclusive, non-transferable and inalienable jurisdiction” includes, among new duties: elect members of the Governing Board; elect the President and Vice-President of the Consortium; endorse the selection of the Secretary General and the Treasurer; approve the appointment of an auditor; elect the
members of the Standing Committees; amend the Constitution and Approve amendments to the EMCI Quality Assurance Standards. Moreover, the General Assembly is entitled with a vote of three quarters to dissolve the present Constitution. Obviously, these new rights are a result of a general rearrangement of the Consortium Governance, since many new appointments came to the fore. Duties of the Council of the previous agreement remain unchanged. The new constitution also clearly stipulates working and voting procedure for each new body of the Consortium. Procedures often set deadlines for meetings: for instance, the General Assembly should meet at least once a year within 6 months from the end of the fiscal year (“commencing on October 1st and terminating on September 30th of the following year in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards”); with a 30-days fore notice, it is also possible to summon an exceptional session if at least 50% of the members or the Presidency and Vice-Presidency agree to do so. The General Assembly has also to comply with a specific voting procedure. One vote equals one member (that might be however represented by more than one delegate). “Resolutions of the General Assembly should be adopted by a majority vote of all the Members”, and at least 50% of the Members has to be present at any voting for the vote to be valid; if a quorum is not reached, a further meeting should be set forth. A rise in stature of the Consortium might also be seen in the stipulation of the voting procedures, completely absent in the previous agreement. As a general rule, voting should be done by show of hands, but might be also done by electronic means if three quarters of the Assembly agree to do so. However, in case of voting for the admission for new members, the constitution provides for a secret ballot, that might be requested also for other votings by the majority of members.

An entirely new appointment is represented by the Governing Board, whose main purpose is “[fulfilling] the aims and objectives of the Consortium”. The composition of the Governing Board is voted by the General Assembly and should possibly reflect more and less widespread languages as represented by the Consortium Members. Excluding the President and Vice-President, the total amount of members in the Governing Board should not be less than 3. Members remain in charge until the third General Assembly from their election and can not be elected for more than two consecutive terms.

Main functions of the Governing Board include: proposing to the General Assembly a tri-annual work program; considering applications for membership; verifying, and agree upon, the annual accounts and the activities report; proposing amendments to the EMCI Quality Assurance Standards. On a more general note, the Governing Board should insure the
correct functioning and working of the Consortium. Governing Board procedures stipulate that this organ should meet at least twice a year; only a simple majority is required for a vote to pass; all of the meetings are chaired either by the President, the Vice-President or the most senior member present.

The General Assembly and the Governing Board are collective panels. On the other hand, the new Consortium is also endowed with 4 officers: the President of the Consortium; the Vice-President of the Consortium; the Secretary General and the Treasurer. The president, among others, is the Consortium’s designated spokesperson. The secretary general holds mostly an organizational role, insuring a sound coordination of activities among the partner institutions. Thus, for the sake of consistency, he “should come from the same Member institution as the President of the Consortium”. The Secretary General in some way resembles in its function the duties of what was called in the former agreement Co-ordinating institution. Indeed, the Secretary General presides to activities such as management of administrative and financial affairs; preparation of the annual budget, accounts and activity report; Consortium promotion. The treasurer on the other hand is “responsible for communications of the Finance committee”.

Article 5 of the Constitution stipulates on membership and designation of new members, which is now submitted to a much tighter control if compared to the provisions of the former agreement. Indeed, the condition to offer an EMCI course every three years completely disappeared from the new Constitution. A candidate member must be a University level institution as accredited by national institutions; it has to offer a full post-graduate course in CI; it has to formally agree with the Constitution, as well as wholly fulfill the core curriculum and quality assurance standards. If the Government Board accepts an institution candidacy, its final approval is submitted to the decision of the General Assembly, where this time a ¾ majority is required.

The new Constitution also provides for exclusion or suspension of a member. The General Assembly decides on the exclusion of a Member if it no longer satisfies the Quality Assurance standards, no longer complies with the principles of the Constitution or fails to pay the annual fee. A member may also be suspended and, if deems the decision unjust, should “provide proof that the causes of the suspension have been rectified”.

A new feature set forth after 2010 is the creation of the so called Standing and Ad Hoc Committees. Among the former figure the Quality Assurance and Membership Committee (FTI Geneva); Finance Committee (Artesis Hogeschool) and Projects Committee (FLUL Lisbon). Quality Assurance and its appointed institution will be treated later. The Finance
Committee “shall review the annual budget and financial results. It will also examine and comment upon the annual report of the auditor(s)”. Since “members shall be chosen with particular attention to their qualifications in financial matters”, this is one of the few instances where experts are not obliged to be affiliated directly with the Consortium and its partners.

As its title implies, the Projects Committee “contributes actively to the development of new projects to be undertaken by the Consortium and in the drafting of related grant applications”.

Consortium’s budget is submitted by the Governing Board to the General Assembly and need the unanimous consensus of all Members to be approved. The budget includes membership fees as well as third parties contributions on account of, for instance, international organizations.

The last article of the Constitution (XIII) stipulates on the dispute resolution, which are to be mediated by appointed ombudsmen, and should follow Standards of Practice as laid down by the IOA (International Ombudsman Organization).
5.3. Quality Assurance Standards

Much attention has been given so far to the EMCI Quality Assurance Standards without analyzing them thoroughly. A dedicated document is available in the EMCI official website (for the integral document, see appendix 4).

Members should conduct a self-evaluation questionnaire annually. This compliance questionnaire is submitted at the end of every year to the EMCI President. In case of dubious replies the relevant institution may be contacted for clarification.

One of the main means of evaluation is peer assessment. Its purpose, as laid in the aforementioned document, is to verify institutions’ compliance to the core curriculum and EMCI Constitution. In case shortcomings or failings crop up, remedies are suggested in form of recommendations. A follow-up procedure takes place within one year on behalf of the two assessors and the institution involved. In case of further non compliance, the assessors must hand in a relevant report to the Governing Board, which “will refer it to the appropriate EMCI Standing Committee, the Quality Assurance and Membership Committee” (para. 5). The General Assembly is entitled to suspend the institution concerned. Suspension, as stated in the Constitution, should not exceed one year and be voted by two thirds of the Assembly by secret ballot. Peer assessment is also envisaged for applicant institutions, although obviously its goal is to grant full membership and not insure its continuation as in the case of actual Members.

Assessor must be active conference interpreters of one of the EMCI institutions and should not be affiliated with the assessed institution (what is called in the Bologna Reform as external quality assurance assessment). Any institution can appoint only two assessors. These should be given appropriate assessment guidelines and attend a one-day training course if necessary. Travel and subsistence costs are covered by the Consortium.

Contrary to the annual self-assessment questionnaire, peer assessment should be carried out every three years.

Procedures regarding assessment are organized in two stages. The first comprises the actual visit (at least one-day) of the examined Institution. Assessors should attend classes and contact staff and students. The second stage concerns attendance of final exams. At the end of both stages assessors fill in a report indicating met and not met criteria. The first entity to receive this report is the examined Institution, thus giving it leverage to implement recommendations. The report should subsequently be submitted to the relevant Standing
Committee which, in collaboration with the assessors and the examined Institution “the final version of the report, with the latter indicating measures planned to address any non-compliant criteria” (: 4).

These criteria are divided into core criteria and recommended good practice. A consistent difference in comparison with the former agreement is the frequency at which the EMCI course should be offered – “the EMCI course should be offered at least every 2 years for members and at least every three years for programs that are recognized by the EMCI” (: 5). The last instance is provided only for those institutions offering CI in less widely used languages, whose coverage might not be insured annually.

Recommended good practice includes elements falling outside the core curriculum but nevertheless crucial for a sound CI teaching. For instance, language combinations should reflect market needs at hand. Courses should offer access to speechbanks and video conferencing equipment (more on the issue in the next chapter). Interpreting booths, either fixed or mobile, should comply with ISO standards. In general, use of new technologies is highly encouraged and students should be exposed to new modes of interpreting as much as possible. To consult the integral Quality Assurance Standards, see appendix 4.

All of the practices concerning EMCI Quality Assurance are carried out by the Quality Assurance Standards and Membership Committee, currently chaired by FTI Geneva.

This Standing Committee is composed by no fewer than 3 persons, who “act in a consultative capacity”. Findings, reports and any other relevant documentation are firstly submitted for approval to the Governing Board, and secondly to the General Assembly for adoption. Among others, the Quality Assurance and Membership committee is entitled to propose amendments to the aforementioned standards; review periodically QA procedures and its compliance by EMCI Members; formulate recommendations concerning non compliant institutions; prepare an annual report; evaluate applications for membership and deal with alleged violations of the EMCI Constitution on account of its Members.
Since its inception, the EMCI Consortium stated and enacted its commitment to promote the use of new technologies in the field of conference interpreting. Among the official aims of the Consortium, “the Programme shall make use of new technologies where appropriate and shall contribute to the dissemination of their application” (EMCI, 2012, para. 3). The Consortium Constitution goes further by “leveraging new technologies in interpreter training with a view to sharing pedagogical resources across the Consortium’s membership, and integrating new technologies in the exercise of the profession” (Article 2.1. of the EMCI Consortium Constitution).

The issue of new modes of interpreting has been often discussed during the SCIC-Universities conferences. The opening remark at the 13th SCIC-Universities conference by Marco Benedetti, Director General of DG Interpretation, highlights that use of new technologies enables the access to quality pedagogical material, such as the Speech Repository, ORCIT modules or the EMCI archives. Moreover, according to him Virtual Classes strengthen exchanges between Universities and the potential future employers, namely the Interpreting Services of the European Institutions (2013).

This teaching method is called *blended learning*. It means combining new technologies, such as Virtual Classes, speech repositories and other technological means with more traditional methods – in other words, the traditional contact classes. According to Marco Benedetti, there is no danger of seeing the new technologies replace teachers; on the contrary the former can deliver to professors a new role for teaching skills and knowledge necessary in today’s world (2013). The introductory remark also mentions the importance of individual training, which is underlined in the EMCI core curriculum. Nevertheless, individual training relies largely on resources such as speech repositories. Marco Benedetti cites the SCIC speech repository, which boasts hundreds of speeches divided by language (24 official languages of the EU and others), topic and difficulty (from beginner to test-type). Access to this speech bank is given to every student attending an EMCI master in conference interpreting; it is also provided to Universities collaborating
closely with DG SCIC. Additionally, some of the EMCI member universities rely on their own speech banks – this is the case, for instance, of FTI Geneva and ESIT Paris. These repositories work in a similar fashion, although the language pool covers only the languages offered by the faculty.

During the 17th SCIC – Universities conference another issue related to speech repository emerged – that of auto-assessment of one’s own performance, given the self-directed nature of the exercise. One of the EMCI’s goals it to teach students reliable self-assessment techniques throughout their academic path. Nevertheless, a student might want to have its performance assessed by someone not directly associated to their learning programme: for instance, teachers or students from other Interpreting faculties in Europe. Marco Benedetti therefore encourages the use of SCICrec, i.e. the possibility to record one’s performance and share it with whom it may concern. At FTI Geneva, students are encouraged to do the same by posting their recordings on a dedicated page, where they can receive feedback from assistants.

In 2006, a symposium involving EMCI Universities was held in London, called *The future of the Profession*. Many issues had been discussed, such as the increasing predominance of English on the international arena, the changing status of interpreting and the use of new technologies (EMCI Projects, 2013).

Claire Donovan, active AIIC member and teacher at ESIT in Paris, mentioned that “technology-driven changes are viewed with more wariness, in particular the possible move towards more remote interpreting” (2006: 5). According to Donovan, there are two immediate reasons for this sort of innovation: costs of traveling and available space, particularly for conferences providing for many languages. In the last few years environmental awareness has been on the rise – a 2006 advertisement by France Telecom stated “remplacer une réunion par une visioconférence, c’est aussi proteger un iceberg” (ibid.). At its very dawn, distrust about remote interpreting run high: limited available bandwidth resulted in poor transmission, which in turn put interpreters under strain. Remote interpreting concerns somehow indirectly also what was earlier called the changing status of interpreting. For instance, the Council of the European Union suggested that “rather than building vast meeting rooms, with wall to wall booths, one might go for remote interpretation. Under this option, the team would work from screens at a separate location – and so release much needed space in the meeting room itself” (DG Interpretation, 2007). Although technically possible, it remains expensive both on the human and technological plane. Moreover, interpreters “feel it as a dehumanizing
experience, which detracts from their ability to communicate” (ibid.). Indeed, a study by the European Parliament showed that “interpreters complained of greater feelings of tension, irritability, fatigue and burnout” whilst interpreting remotely (Euractiv, 2006). Nevertheless, Donovan stated that “students need to be prepared for video conferencing and remote interpreting” (2006). This is the only way for the students to understand the pros and cons of this mode of interpreting in collaboration with their teachers. This will in turn provide them with fine-tuned skills so that “they will be able to respond appropriately to requests – realistic or otherwise – to work with them later as professional interpreters” (ibid.). As a final remark in her speech, Donovan wished that video-conferencing could become a reality integrated in the curricula of CI Masters, thus hoping to share speakers with less widespread mother tongues and trainers feedback across partner institutions.

This will become a reality a year later. As recalled by Lecturer Motta (2013. pers. comm., 31 May), the first script for a Virtual Class dates back to 2007. ETI was one of the key players involved in the launch of this project (ibid.). At that time, this was indeed one of the few faculties endowed with state of the art technical equipment allowing remote interpreting. Remote video and audio transmission is not the only crucial element for remote interpreting. On the other hand, at that time ETI was the only faculty in the EMCI consortium to have the possibility to record entirely these virtual sessions and subsequently upload them on a dedicated portal – going by the name of live FTI (former live ETI). As the co-ordinating institution of the Consortium, ETI was implicated in every conference till recent times. At the very beginning virtual classes were held between ETI, European Institutions (be it DG SCIC or DG INTE) and other faculties. Given the lack of appropriate equipment in other member schools, multilateral conferences could be arranged only in consecutive mode. Befitting installations for other faculties were often available only outside the actual T&I faculty, i.e. in other departments of the same university. This implied making reservations for rooms and contact relevant technicians for the audio and video arrangement - at one point, simultaneous virtual classes were made possible between ETI, Prague and Lisbon. However, coordinating simultaneous classes between three different institutions turned out to be quite cumbersome. There was no official and unique standard of webstreaming – technicians, therefore, had to switch from one system to another in limited available time. According to Jesus Gonzales, audvisual technician of the University of Geneva, the main issue concerned the use of different streaming media
servers (e.g. Windows Media Player, Quick Time, VLC) by the universities and European institutions. This procedure meant that, instead of having the universities plugged to a single server managed by the DG SCIC or DG INTE, they relied on their own media server, thus multiplying uselessly the number of transmissions. DG INTE is currently working on the set up of a single server that would function as connection point to every other participant to the virtual class (2013, pers. comm., 18 July). A part from technical issues, the University of Prague was flooded and had to replace its equipment from scratch (Manuela Motta, 2013, pers. comm., 31 May). On the other hand, other universities still lagged behind and could not always provide for stable audio and video transmission during simultaneous virtual classes. For all of the aforementioned reasons, the Consortium had to take a step back and return to consecutive mode during multilateral virtual classes; simultaneous mode remained possible only between ETI and DG INTE or DG SCIC. However, according to Manuela Motta, in recent times other faculties of the Consortium managed to upgrade their equipment and are hoping to be able to provide good quality simultaneous webstreaming soon (e.g. Prague, Lisbon, Istanbul and Ljubljana). European Institutions did the same, upgrading their system in order to support webstreaming. This implies that, if ETI’s presence used to be crucial, now virtual classes can be organized without its participation.

EMCI virtual classes are also mentioned in a publication on the blog The Interpreter Diaries, where are listed some of the advantages of this teaching method from different perspectives (2011). “If you ask the students, I’m sure they’d say the best thing about it is the chance to get feedback from someone other than the same […] teachers they hear from day in, day out during the course”. From the point of view of the participating universities, the post goes on, the most patent advantages are the dissemination of good practices, deepening of cooperation and the possibility to listen to speakers of less widely spread languages. For the European Institutions involved, it gives the opportunity to have a sneak-peak of “their next generation of interpreters” (ibid.). According to Lecturer Manuela Motta (2013, pers. comm., 31 May), DG SCIC and DG INTE are investing profusely in virtual classes and manage to arrange them with universities outside the EMCI Consortium. As stated in the DG Interpretation Management Plan 2013, “SCIC also puts considerable efforts into stimulating the use of new technologies in interpreter training, such as the unique e-learning tool Speech Repository and
bilateral and multi-point virtual classes which are run in cooperation with the other Institutions” (DG SCIC, 2013).

According to Claude Durand, Head of the Multilinguism Unit of DG SCIC, in the year 2010-2011 14 universities run regular bilateral virtual classes in cooperation with DG SCIC, with several “expected to join the ranks soon” (e.g. Warsaw, Krakow, Budapest, Vilnius, Cluj, Tallin, Stockholm). Moreover, Claude Durand clearly states what are the aims of this project in the eyes of DG SCIC: 1). supplement traditional pedagogical assistance 2). see how students behave in a formal and stressful setting 3). provide students with feedback from professional interpreters and expose them to a setting in a way similar to that of an accreditation test (2012). Susanne Altenberg, Head of Unit for Multilingualism Support and e-learning of DG INTE, further remarks the aforementioned points. In 2012, there had been a further increase in the number of participating universities, that rose up to 18; a remarkable increase also concerned the amount of virtual classes, standing at 51. Both Claude Durand and Susanne Altenberg point out the difference between multi-point virtual class (MVC) and bilateral virtual class. MVCs consist of sheer videoconferencing for consecutive and webstreaming for simultaneous. MVCs are held, according to the presentation of Susanne Altenberg, only with EMCI members. On the other hand, bilateral virtual classes are arranged with universities in cities like Sofia, Saint Petersburg or Astrakhan. The patent benefits for the EU interpreting services also include spreading quality norms used in Brussels and presence of the institutions at limited cost in distant places.

From a practical point of view, virtual classes between EU interpretation services and EMCI members follow a script (for a sample, see appendix 5). The MVC is based on a given topic, for instance Personalized Medicine (2012) or Major Health Challenges for the 21st Century (2011) (LIVE FTI, 2013). Selected speakers deliver their own speech on the subject, be it an interpreter in Brussels or a teacher in a participating university. The speech can be either interpreted consecutively, simultaneously, or both. As shown in the script, more often a single speech is interpreted 4 times: two simultaneous interpretations in Geneva, plus two consecutive performances in the other institutions. Obviously this pattern varies in relation to its setting during the academic year (simultaneous at FTI Geneva begins only in the second semester), language combinations and number of students. Usually, there are three speeches per Virtual Class, thus providing a maximum of as many as 12 different interpretations.
At the end of the last interpreting performance for a given speech, assessors in Brussels provide their personal feedback on the performances, in order of delivery. A more detailed written feedback is sent to the participating universities at a later stage. These assessments state whether certain criteria (fidelity, style, presentation etc.) were met or not.
2. Mobility programs and visits of the European institutions

As stated in the EMCI core curriculum - “in order to foster exchange of information and experience and also the dissemination of good practice participating universities welcome visits from staff and students from member institutions of the EMCI Consortium”.

Student mobility across Europe started as far back as in 1987, with the Erasmus program (EuRopean Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) (European Commission Education & Training, 2013). This was a result of a 5 years pilot project lasting from 1981 to 1986. According to its official page, it represents the most successful exchange program in the world, with more than 230000 students taking part every year.

The EMCI Consortium also offers students and staff mobility. Nevertheless, the exchange usually lasts for two weeks. Agreements for prolonged stays are done only on bilateral basis and fall outside the EMCI mobility program.

Students at FTI are usually encouraged to visit institutions offering their mother tongue in their selection of languages. However, this applies mainly to the most widespread languages. For students speaking languages such as Turkish (Boğaziçi University), Romanian (Cluj), Slovenian (Ljubljana), or Hungarian (Budapest) it is obviously harder to find a partner university offering one of these languages.

The EMCI mobility program had been fully financed by the European Union until the 2011-2012 academic year, providing a partial refund of the travel and board and lodging expenses for every student. However, this provision has been discontinued since the 2012-2013 academic year.

These exchange programs represent a useful and enriching experience. Students are given the opportunity to get in touch with teachers other than their own, as well as get acquainted with courses that might be taught in a different fashion from their original institution. An additional advantage is to be seen in the “mark-free” feedback provided by teachers in the receiving institution. The student can therefore detect any changes in his or her performance in more or less stressful or known environments. Contact with students and teachers of the receiving institution, moreover, can provide useful exchange of information concerning working needs and demands for the geographical area at hand.
Great importance is given also to visits to the European Institutions, although such possibilities are not limited to the EMCI members but rather include all the universities collaborating closely and regularly with DG SCIC (2013). These visits cover usually up to three to four days of visits to the European Commission and European Parliament. The visit done by 2nd-year FTI students on September 2012 started with a general presentation of the interpretation services of the European institutions by an accredited interpreter. The welcome speech focused on the entry tests, the difference between freelance and staff interpreters, interpreting for the European Court of Justice, general advantages of working for the EU as well as possibilities of grants and interpreting-related competitions within the European institutions. Volunteers among students were invited to go in the booths to interpret the delivered speeches. The presentation went on with the introduction of the DG SCIC speech repository and the new recording function (SCICrec™), already mentioned in the previous chapter.

Aside from getting acquainted with how multilingualism and the European institutions work, one of the purposes of the visit is to practice dummy-booth in real-life meetings at the European Institutions. In the afternoon the students were introduced to another staff interpreter at the European Parliament, who in turn presented interpretation services in this institution. Afterwards, students were invited to participate in a reunion at the Parliament and practice dummy-booth, which was also practiced at the European Commission the day after. The interpreters met during the visit were very helpful in replying to all of the questions and doubts expressed by the students, particularly concerning less patent and advertised aspects concerning employability.

Students were given the possibility to meet the chief interpreters of their respective booths both at the Commission and at the Parliament. Chief interpreters welcomed very warmly the students and explained thoroughly what is needed to be called by the Institutions in order to sit the accreditation test, how this test takes place and among all what are the most needed languages. Language combinations vary broadly from one booth to another, although the common advice is that of combining more widespread languages (English, French, German, Italian, Spanish) and less widespread languages for gaining more chances to work both in the Commission and the Parliament.
7. Foreseeable evolutions

1. The future of the Consortium

The reform of 2012 already represented a sea change in the structure and nature of the Consortium. The number of partner universities drop from a maximum of 18 to the current 11. Nevertheless, as stated by Professor Moser-Mercer (pers. comm.), as a result of the reform the Consortium gained in stature and relevance, which in turn meant stricter entry requirements for new members.

Professor Moser-Mercer, for instance (2013, pers. comm., May 27) expressed her hope to set up a double degree program somewhere in the future. This would allow students to attend their first year of studies in one institution and the second in another.

In 2006, an EMCI workshop called “The future of the Profession” was held in London, at the Westminster University. One of the main issues tackled during this meeting was the role of technology in the training of interpreters. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Virtual Classes are now an integral part of the EMCI training program.

There are many other crucial issues at stake concerning interpreting courses and their potential betterment. During the same symposium, Clare Donovan quoted a survey carried out by Claude Durand and published on the official AIIC website (Donovan, 2006). Not only “un écart tendait à se creuser dangereusement entre la demande des employeurs […] et l’offre d’interprètes produite par les filières d’enseignement” (AIIC, 2006), but there is also a growing concern about the failure rate at the IOs accreditation tests, with pass rates at the European Commission currently standing at 20%. This rate would “indicate a gap between training and recruitment requirements” (Donovan, 2006: 1). One solution to this problem, as envisioned by Claude Durand, is to bring interpreting schools curricula in line with the EMCI standards.

Another issue regards that of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) speakers. In Ols such as OECD or NATO, carries on Clare Donovan, it is not unusual to see speakers apologizing for delivering speeches in a language different from English. This trend towards English spoken by non native speakers affects the quality of interpretation directly, since interpreters have to deal in this case with a variety of accents. Although this is considered an intrinsic factor at the United Nations, where only 6 official languages exist, Clare Donovan points out that this trend is now increasingly common in the European
institutions as well. A 2004 AIIC survey mentioned by Lynda Profitt, speaker at the same Westminster symposium, states that interpreters’ dissatisfaction “is primarily related to pervasive changes in the working environment restricting the interpreters’ ability to do their job properly. The top dissatisfaction factors are the rise of Global English that leaves many interpreters frustrated – and/or bored, if they happen to work in the English booth and the lack or tardiness of materials to prepare properly” (AIIC, 2005, np.).

The best way to tackle the issue would be that of “innovative language enhancement classes that focus on speech-giving conventions, student exchanges, invitations of outside speakers from various backgrounds” (Donovan, 2006: 5). Indeed, the focus on a “variety of styles and registers” is an integral part of the EMCI core curriculum. According to Donovan, interpreting schools are facing predicament, particularly concerning their language offer. If the latter is expected to be flexible and adjust to market and IOs requirements, on the other hand academic institutions now have to cope with budget constraints. This means not only that kicking off new courses is increasingly expensive, but also that once a course is available it “may be hard to remove it” (ibid.). This is particularly relevant for EMCI members, being the dissemination of less widely used languages their primary commitment and aim.

A delicate issue also concerns the changing status of the profession, already mentioned in the previous chapter. An informal survey conducted by Donovan and mentioned during the same presentation revealed that nowadays professional interpreters “deplore the profession’s declining prestige and would not encourage young people in this career choice” (Donovan, 2006: 4). The decline in the profession’s standing in turn makes the academic recruitment of young people increasingly difficult. The question is therefore whether the schools will experience a general decline in the number of students. Notwithstanding general pessimism on behalf of practicing interpreters, it seems that interpreting studies do still appeal to young students. Moreover, the status of the profession managed not to deteriorate throughout its history – “interpreting posts are still ranked as equivalent to grade A managerial posts” (ibid.). Still, in order to maintain such status schools have a crucial role to play, by insuring close cooperation with employers (be it IOs or the private market) and continuous bargaining with recruiters for appropriate working conditions.
During the London symposium a mismatch between graduates command of new technologies (e.g. video conferencing) and the actual standards in use among IOs surfaced. Also, internet changed completely the access to information valuable for a conference preparation. If before interpreters used to struggle to find up-to-date information and spent days looking for it, Internet revolutionized this approach. However, the problem shifted from the lack of access to information towards information overload. Courses should therefore focus on teaching how to sort this information, recognizing the bias of Internet and knowing how to properly manage digital and online glossaries. The result of the EMCI London symposium on the future of the profession and the role played by interpreting schools pointed towards hope for more cooperation between schools, which boasts the exchange of best practices and language combinations. Moreover, the crucial role of teachers has been underlined, who not only have to be practicing interpreters, but also be openminded towards the use of new technologies, while at the same be uncompromising in defending high standards of professional performance and working conditions (ibid.). In conclusion, these regular EMCI symposia underlined some of the most crucial elements for a well functioning Consortium of this type, particularly as far as the assessment and the quality assurance standards are concerned, raising issues over who should be entitled to assess and by whom. Years of best practices surely delivered their fruits, but perhaps more impartial features like figures on postgraduate employability may add value to the already established reputation of the Consortium.
Appendix 1

Course structure

EMCI Core Curriculum Contents

1. Preamble
2. Aims of the Programme
3. Core Curriculum
4. Course structure and workload
5. Admission to the programme
6. The final examinations
7. Mobility
8. Joint programmes

1. Preamble

In early 1997 the European Commission’s Joint Interpreting and Conference Service (SCIC) and DGXXII approached the Thematic Network Project in the Area of Languages (SOCRATES-ERASMUS Programme) about the possibility of launching a European pilot project for the joint development of a university programme at advanced level (Master's type) in Conference Interpreting to remedy the shortage of highly qualified conference interpreters, particularly with language combinations which include less widely used and less taught languages. As a result of this initiative, in late April, the TNP Coordinator circulated a pilot project proposal amongst higher education institutions specialising in the training of conference interpreters, inviting them to submit expressions of interest. The proposal and expression of interest form were also publicised on the SCIC and TNP Web sites. In a further development, the Interpreting Service of the European Parliament also became involved in the initiative. Out of a total of 30 institutions that had come forward by early June, seven were invited to form a working group to develop a core curriculum for a ‘European Master’s’ in Conference Interpreting, with an eighth joining subsequently. The selection was made on the basis of such principles as geographical spread and pooling of expertise. The project partners met in Brussels on 20 June 1997. At that meeting the coordination of the pilot project was entrusted to the University of Westminster and at the request of the other members. Financial support was pledged by the SCIC and the European Parliament. Between September 1997 and February 1998 the members of the working group, who were assisted in their deliberations by representatives of the SCIC, DGXXII, the European Parliament and the TNP, held a total of five meetings at which they identified a number of key issues, reviewed current programmes and agreed a number of elements regarded as being essential to a programme of this kind. They drew up a draft core curriculum which was circulated amongst all institutions that had expressed their interest in the project and all participants in the second SCIC-Universities Conference in December 1997; it was also publicised on the SCIC Web site. All interested organisations were invited to comment on the working draft. After careful analysis of the comments received the group produced a revised draft which is found under item II below. An agreement to formally establish the EMCI Consortium was signed on May 9, 2001, at a signing ceremony hosted by the European Parliament. Work on transforming the EMCI Consortium into an international Consortium began in 2010 and concluded in 2012 with the signing of the new EMCI Consortium Constitution.

The basic format of the core curriculum is that of a curricular framework rather than a detailed syllabus.

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1 Retrieved from http://www.emcinterpreting.org/?q=printpdf/13
2. Aims of the Programme

Within the framework of the European Union's drive towards the promotion of knowledge through wider access to specialist education and of the objective of improved employability through the acquisition of specialist competence, this programme is designed to equip young graduates with the professional skills and knowledge required for conference interpreting. It seeks to meet the demand for highly-qualified conference interpreters, in the area of both widely and the less widely-used and less-taught languages and in view of the expansion of the Union and of the Union's increasing dialogue with its non-European partners. The curriculum was developed in consultation with the European Institutions and continuation of this cooperation is an integral part of the programme.

In developing the programme, the participating institutions combined their individual expertise, and it is their aim to optimise their use of resources through transnational cooperation in the delivery of the programme. In order to honour their commitment to quality maintenance as laid down in the EMCI Quality Assurance Standards, the participating institutions shall regularly review changing needs and new developments and permanently update the programme. The Programme shall make use of new technologies where appropriate and shall contribute to the dissemination of their application.

The partner institutions shall pursue a common policy on student recruitment and assessment, based on the aims of the programme and on the Quality Assurance criteria, as laid down in the Quality Assurance Standards, which underpin the core curriculum. The participants aim to contribute to spreading good practice across Europe.

3. Core Curriculum

This curriculum sets out those elements agreed by participating institutions as being essential to a post-graduate university programme in Conference Interpreting. The content of the programme shall comprise the following:

the theory of interpretation
the practice of interpretation
consecutive interpretation
simultaneous interpretation
the EU and international organisations

These need not be discrete modules. In addition, a range of optional courses may also be offered.

3.1 The theory of interpretation. Students shall be made aware of the distinctions between translation and interpretation; theoretical aspects of interpretation; aspects of research findings in disciplines that have a bearing on interpretation, for example, the language and cognitive sciences.

3.2 The practice of interpretation. In order to prepare the students for their future professional careers, the programme shall include elements such as communication skills, e.g. voice coaching, public speaking; conference preparation techniques such as terminology, information retrieval and other uses of information technology; professional ethics; conference procedures; working practices and conditions. A study visit to the European Commission, the European Parliament and/or international organisations will be organised by the universities in order to familiarise students with the working environment of conference interpreters.

3.3 Consecutive interpretation. At the end of the programme students shall be capable of giving a fluent and effective consecutive interpretation of a speech lasting at least 10 minutes, accurately reproducing the content of the original and using appropriate terminology and register. Training in these skills will require a variety of exercises, such as content analysis and memory exercises, consecutive interpretation without notes, summarisation, sight translation and note taking techniques. Speeches used shall confront the students with a diversity of subject areas, styles, and registers, and their length, information density and degree of technicality and specificity will increase as the programme progresses.

3.4 Simultaneous interpretation. At the end of the programme students shall be able to provide a fluent and effective simultaneous interpretation of speeches of at least 20 minutes, accurately reproducing the content of the original and using appropriate terminology and register. While training in these skills will build on the same kind as those used to practise consecutive interpretation, additional exercises specifically designed to establish and consolidate the SI skills will be required. Furthermore, students shall be trained in booth techniques and team interaction.
Speeches used shall confront the students with a diversity of subject areas, styles, and registers, and their length, information density and degree of technicality and specificity will increase as the programme progresses. Once they have acquired simultaneous interpreting skills, students shall also be taught how to interpret with the text in front of them.

In studying the EU and International organisations the focus shall be placed on how these institutions operate in order to familiarise students with institutional processes and procedures.

4. Course structure and workload

This full time post-graduate university programme is designed to correspond to between 60 and 120 ECTS (i.e. the equivalent of one to two years of full time study) under the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The programme shall normally offer no fewer than 400 class contact hours, of which a minimum of 75% shall be devoted to interpreting practice. In addition, students shall devote time to group practice of simultaneous and consecutive interpreting and other self-directed learning (i.e. background reading; use of information sources, e.g. radio, TV, Internet; preparation of glossaries). The programme is based on the expectation that the number of class contact hours, group work hours and self-directed study shall total no less than 800 hours.

Interpreting sessions shall be conducted by practising/experienced conference interpreters with teaching skills. Where simultaneous interpreting is taught into B, the class shall be conducted by an interpreter with an ‘A’ in the target language.

5. Admission to the programme

5.1 Candidate profile In order to be eligible for admission to the programme candidates must: hold a recognised University degree or equivalent (in any subject); have an excellent command of their mother tongue (A language) over a wide range of topics and registers; have an in-depth knowledge of their working languages (B and C); offer at least one of the following language combinations: A-CC or A-BC or A-A (where the language combination is offered by the University concerned), A-B(sim) may be offered for less widely used languages and in the light of market requirements; have a good overall knowledge of international affairs and be well-informed of the economic, social and cultural background of the countries in which their working languages are used. In addition, candidates shall be expected to have: good powers of concentration, analysis and synthesis good communication skills a high degree of motivation the ability to work under pressure and a readiness to accept feedback during training.

5.2 Admission Tests Admission to the course is subject to success in an aptitude test which is designed to assess suitability for training in conference interpreting. The test panel shall: include a majority of professional interpreters and interpreter trainers represent all the languages for which a candidate is to be tested and include at least one assessor with the candidate’s A-language arrive at a decision by consensus. One member of the panel shall normally be present throughout to ensure consistency in decision-making. The complete admission test shall include: the oral reproduction of short and structured speeches (2-3 minutes) from the candidates C and B languages into A and, where appropriate, A into B a general knowledge test an interview with the candidate. Additionally the test may include: sight translation a brief oral presentation by the candidate on a subject chosen by the panel written tests.

6. The final examinations

The students shall be assessed at the final examination in both consecutive and simultaneous modes of interpreting into their A language(s) from all the other languages in their combination. Candidates offering a B language in an A-B-C combination shall also be assessed in consecutive interpretation from their A language into their B language. Candidates who offer an A-B combination shall pass both consecutive and simultaneous examinations in that combination.

In order to be awarded the EMCI certificate, candidates shall be required to pass all examinations for each language pair at one and the same session. However, candidates who do not achieve a pass in interpretation from additional C languages or into their B language in an A-B-C combination
may be awarded a degree with an A - C - C combination. The degree certificate shall clearly state
the language combination for which it has been awarded.

6.1 Assessment. The examinations shall comprise speeches on a variety of subjects in different
registers. The speeches shall be prepared to a standard commonly encountered by professional
interpreters and delivered as if impromptu by practised speakers. Speeches will be approximately
5-8 minutes for consecutive interpretation and 10-15 minutes for simultaneous; their length shall be
consistent for all candidates within one and the same training programme and examination session.
Candidates shall be assessed on the mastery of their interpreting skills, using the criteria defined in
the present Core Curriculum (sections II.3 and II.4). They shall demonstrate sufficient competence
to be able to join a team of professional conference interpreters. Recordings of the final
examinations shall be kept for one year.

6.2 Assessors. The panel shall be composed of a majority of experienced interpreters of whom at
least two must have the A-language of the candidate in their combination, including one who is a
native speaker of the target language of the examination. The panel shall also include at least one
external examiner. The European Institutions, other international organisations, and other member
institutions of the EMCI-Consortium shall be invited to send a representative. If necessary, the
panel may invite speakers or observers who are entitled to take part in the deliberations without
voting rights. The final decision on the candidates' performance shall be taken by consensus.

7. Mobility

In order to foster exchange of information and experience and also the dissemination of good
practice participating universities welcome visits from staff and students from member institutions
of the EMCI Consortium.

8. Joint programmes

Partner institutions propose to organise joint intensive and/or degree programmes bringing
together students and staff of different member institutions of the EMCI-Consortium.

Note 1 : Definition of working languages

ACTIVE LANGUAGES
A: The interpreter's native language (or another language strictly equivalent to a native language),
into which the interpreter works from all her or his other languages in both modes of interpretation,
simultaneous and consecutive. B: A language other than the interpreter's native language, of which
she or he has perfect command and into which they work from one or more of their languages.
Some interpreters work into a 'B' language in only one of the two modes of interpretation.
PASSIVE LANGUAGES
C: Languages, of which the Interpreter has a complete understanding and from which she works.

(version 28 September 2012)

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Appendix 2²
Former Consortium Agreement

Preamble

The undersigned institutions, partners in the project for the joint development of a university programme at advanced level (Masters type) in Conference Interpreting - hereafter called “The European Masters in Conference Interpreting”(EMCI),

Noting that Europe's political landscape has changed fundamentally over the past decade and that the states in Europe are moving towards closer integration, Mindful of Europe’s resolve to preserve and promote multilingualism and multiculturalism, Being convinced that the aim of a multilingual and multicultural united Europe can only be achieved if language professionals of the highest quality ensure day-to-day communication at every level of policy-making and decision-making, Convinced that the growing complexity of political decision-making and political debate at the highest European level requires language professionals whose educational background matches that of policy-makers and decision-makers,

Aware of the shortage of high-quality language professionals working with less widely used languages, herewith agree to form an independent Consortium, whose principal aim will be the implementation of the "European Masters in Conference Interpreting" (EMCI). This agreement will take effect as of 1 October 2001.

1. Consortium - core activities

1.1 European Masters in Conference Interpreting (EMCI) The members of the Consortium will offer the European Masters in Conference Interpreting as an intensive postgraduate course (as defined in the core curriculum) designed to equip young graduates with the professional skills and knowledge required for conference interpreting at the highest level. Member institutions will optimise their use of resources through transnational co-operation in the delivery of the programme. They will regularly review changing needs and new developments with a view to keeping the programme up to date.

1.2 Staff and student mobility To foster the exchange of information and experience and the dissemination of good practice, participating institutions will develop a structured approach to visits from staff, students, and recent graduates from member institutions. Members will invite staff from other institutions in the Consortium to sit on juries for aptitude tests and final examinations to ensure adherence to the highest level of quality.

1.3 Life-long learning Member institutions commit themselves to engage in continuing education for the purpose of upgrading conference interpreters’ professional skills. Distance-learning technologies will be employed where appropriate.

1.4 Teacher training In order to maintain a high level of quality in interpreter training, member institutions will provide the Consortium with a well-structured education programme for teaching staff designed to meet the needs of both young and more experienced interpreter trainers.

2. Additional activities

² Former EMCI Agreement currently unavailable on-line.
2.1 Clearinghouse and consultancy The Consortium will act as a clearinghouse for information and advice

• to students;
• to applicant institutions of higher education in the process of setting up new and/or revising existing conference interpreter training programmes; and
• to employers of conference interpreters and to the conference industry at large.

2.2 Market research and needs analyses Consortium members regard it as one of their tasks to analyse professional requirements (language combinations, working conditions, the use of new technologies, etc.) and evaluate the results jointly with employers of conference interpreters, professional associations of conference interpreters and industry representatives.

2.3 Research Consortium members will engage in research relevant to the training of conference interpreters and to the profession of conference interpreting. In particular, they will seek to assess the implications of and the benefits to be derived from the new technologies for training programmes and for professional practice.

3. Structure of the Consortium

3.1 Council of Representatives The Consortium will convene a Council of Representatives made up of the representatives of the member institutions. Each member institution will be represented on the Council by one representative. The Council of Representatives decides on all issues of common concern such as admission to the Consortium, regular financial contributions, quality control, revision of the curriculum, and joint grant applications. The Council of Representatives meets at least once a year. As a rule, the meetings of the Council of Representatives are chaired by the representative of the co-ordinating institution(s). Each member institution is to cover the travel expenses incurred.

3.2 Co-ordinating Institution(s) and Secretariat

The administrative and financial affairs of the Consortium (inquiries for information, internal and external dissemination of information, etc.) will be conducted by the Co-ordinating Institution(s), chosen for a period of three years, from among the member institutions by the Council of Representatives.

4. Membership and membership requirements

4.1 Membership 4.1.1 Founding members The Consortium is established by those members of the project partnership signing this Agreement.

4.1.2 Full members 4.1.2.1 Conditions of membership Full Member institutions must

• offer the EMCI at least every third year
• observe all the criteria set out in the core curriculum and
• meet their financial contribution towards the Consortium

4.1.2.2 Admission of new members Institutions whose training programmes meet the basic requirements set out in the core curriculum (Annex 1) may apply for admission to the Consortium.
The Consortium may grant applicants 'observer status' (see 4.1.3 below) for a period up to one year to enable them to bring their programmes fully into line with the core curriculum. If at the end of the said period an institution has not achieved complete compliance with the core curriculum, observer status will be revoked. Unsuccessful applicants may subsequently reapply.

4.1.3 Observers To apply for observer status, an institution must have a substantial postgraduate programme in conference interpreting (but not necessarily a full MA in interpreting) and organize aptitude tests and final examinations. The Consortium may grant observer status by a simple majority of members present and voting on the application file. An EMCI representative will attend admission and final examinations and report to the next, regularly scheduled meeting of the Consortium. Observer institutions have to report every year to the regularly scheduled meeting of the Consortium on their training activities and must request applicant membership at the latest two years after having been granted Observer status.

4.1.4 Applicant members Applicant members are observers who have fulfilled all conditions set out in the core curriculum. They have one year to demonstrate full compliance with the core curriculum, failing this their applicant membership will be revoked. The consortium will vote on this application by a 2/3 majority of members present and voting. If at the end of said period an institution has not achieved complete compliance with the core curriculum, its applicant membership will be revoked. Unsuccessful applicants may reapply once.

4.1.5 Associate members Associate members are members who cannot comply with all conditions set out in 4.1.2 They cannot offer the core curriculum at least every third year, but participate otherwise fully in the work of the Consortium and pay the membership fee.

4.1.6 Voting rights Associate and full members (one per country) have the right to vote. Observers and applicant members do not have the right to participate in the decisions of the Consortium.

4.1.7 Withdrawal Member institutions can withdraw from the Consortium on the 30th of September of any one year provided they have notified the Co-ordinating Institution(s) of their intention in writing six months in advance.

4.2 Membership fee Member institutions are required to pay an annual membership fee, as defined in Annex 2, towards the administrative co-ordination of the Consortium. This amount is agreed annually by the Council of Representatives. The co-ordinating institution will be responsible for preparing an annual budget and an annual financial report.

Signed on this day of 30th May 2001
Brussels, Belgium

Amended on October 14, 2006 (14 member institutions present and voting; result of vote: 14 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstentions)

Page modified Aug 8th, 2007
Appendix 3

EMCI Consortium Constitution

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Article 1: Name, Seat, Duration, and Language of the EMCI Consortium

1.1 The Consortium constitutes a network of institutions of higher education, hereinafter called “Consortium”. The name of the Consortium is European Masters in Conference Interpreting, in abbreviation “EMCI”. The full name and its abbreviation may be used together or separately in identifying the Consortium.

1.2 The seat of the Consortium is in the European Union. The seat of the Consortium may be transferred to any other location in the European Union by decision of the Governing Board.

1.3 The Consortium is created for an indefinite period of time and may be dissolved at any time by the General Assembly of Members acting in accordance with this Constitution.

1.4 The vehicular language of the Consortium is English.

Article 2: Aims and Objectives of the Consortium

2.1 The Consortium shall advise and assist Members in:

(i) Implementing a European Masters in Conference Interpreting program as a university-level post-graduate course;

(ii) Fostering the exchange of information and experience and the dissemination of best practice in interpreter training;

3 Retrieved from http://www.emcinterpreting.org/?q=printpdf/16
(iii) Engaging in continuing education for the purpose of upgrading interpreting skills and pedagogical skills for interpreter trainers;

(iv) Providing for well-structured training for teaching staff;

(v) Engaging in research relevant to interpreter training and issues that relate to the exercise of the conference interpreter profession, and

(vi) Leveraging new technologies in interpreter training with a view to sharing pedagogical resources across the Consortium’s membership, and integrating new technologies in the exercise of the profession.

2.2 Members of the Consortium shall adhere to EMCI Quality Assurance Standards and to the EMCI Core Curriculum as established in accordance with the Consortium’s Constitution.

2.3 The Consortium may participate in the activities of other organizations dedicated directly or indirectly to the work of creating programs for training conference interpreters and interpreter trainers.

2.4 The Consortium may contribute to the design and implementation of research projects in the field of interpreter training or interpreting practice.

2.5 The Consortium may carry out any and all activities that directly or indirectly support its principal aims and objectives.

Article 3: Funding

3. 1 The activities of the Consortium are financed by:

(i) Membership fees established annually by the General Assembly and which may be in money or in kind. Membership fees shall be non-reimbursable.

(ii) Other contributions of the Members, in money or in kind. No Member shall be obliged to make contributions other than their membership fees.

(iii) Any other contributions, from public or private sources, provided to any or all of the members, to support the activities of the Consortium.

3.2 During the entire lifetime of the Consortium, any profit shall be allocated to the continuation of the Consortium's activities.

Article 4: Governance

The Consortium is governed by the General Assembly and the Governing Board. The General Assembly elects the Consortium’s officers: the President of the Consortium and the Vice-President of the Consortium; it endorses the selection of the Treasurer and the Secretary General.

4.1 General Assembly

4.1.1 Composition. The General Assembly is the ultimate decision-making body of the Consortium. It is composed of all Members of the Consortium.

4.1.2 Functions. The General Assembly shall have exclusive, non-transferable and inalienable jurisdiction to:

(i) Adopt the report of the Consortium’s activities as presented by the Governing Board;
(ii) Approve the annual accounts of the Consortium and discharge the Members of the Governing Board;

(iii) Approve the annual budget presented to it by the Governing Board. In doing so, the General Assembly shall also approve the conclusion of any agreement with third parties, including grant agreements, needed to finance the activities of the Consortium. Such votes of the General Assembly shall be unanimous;

(iv) Fix the amount of membership fees;

(v) Elect members of the Governing Board;

(vi) Elect the President and Vice-President of the Consortium;

(vii) Endorse the selection of the Secretary General and the Treasurer;

(viii) Approve the appointment of an auditor;

(ix) Elect the members of the Standing Committees;

(x) Approve the designation of new Members;

(xi) Vote the exclusion of a Member or its suspension;

(xii) Amend the Constitution;

(xiii) Approve amendments to the EMCI Quality Assurance Standards.

(xiv) Decide the dissolution of the Consortium;

(xv) Decide all matters which are not reserved to other governing bodies;

4.1.3 Procedure

(i) The General Assembly of Members shall meet at least once a year within a period of six months following the end of a fiscal year. The General Assembly is chaired by the President of the Consortium.

(ii) The General Assembly may exceptionally, upon notice of thirty days by electronic mail or registered letter, be convened at any other time at the request of the President or the Vice-President or upon the written request of at least fifty percent of the membership of the Consortium.

(iii) Notices of a General Assembly together with an agenda shall be communicated by the President to the Members not less than thirty days prior to the date of the General Assembly.

4.1.4 Voting

(i) Members shall designate one or more delegates to attend and vote at General Assemblies. Each Member shall be entitled to one vote at General Assemblies.

(ii) Unless otherwise stipulated in this Constitution, resolutions of the General Assembly shall be adopted by a majority vote of all the Members. No resolution may be adopted at any meeting of the General Assembly unless at least one half of the membership of the Consortium is present or represented. If a quorum is not achieved at a meeting that has been convened in accordance with this Constitution, a new meeting may be convened in accordance with Art. 4.1.3. (iii) and Art. 4.1.4. (i) and the draft resolutions set forth in the notice of meeting may be passed by a majority of the Members present or represented and voting.
(iii) Voting at General Assemblies shall be by show of hands. Voting by telephone or electronic means may be allowed if requested by three-quarters of the Membership. A motion to vote by secret ballot may be requested by a majority of Members present or represented. Decisions under Article 5 of the Constitution shall be taken by secret ballot. In case of a tie the President has the casting vote.

4.2 The Governing Board

4.2.1 Composition

(i) The Governing Board shall have no fewer than five members including the President and the Vice-President of the Consortium elected by the General Assembly. Members of the Governing Board each represent different Member institutions. Until such time as the Consortium has reached a membership level exceeding 15 Members, the Governing Board may function with three Members.

(ii) In electing members of the Governing Board, the General Assembly shall make a reasonable effort to ensure that the Board reflects a balanced representation in terms of widely and less-widely used languages covered by EMCI Members. One and the same Member institution shall not occupy more than one seat on the Governing Board.

(iii) Members of the Governing Board shall be physical persons, affiliated as trainers with Members of the Consortium, who are elected for a term terminating on the date of the third General Assembly following their election. Members of the Governing Board are eligible for re-election; if elected, their term of office may not exceed two consecutive terms.

(iv) Their mandate comes automatically to an end after three years or when the ember of the Governing Board is no longer affiliated with a Member of the Consortium. Their mandate may also be revoked at any time by the General Assembly.

(v) Vacancies on the Governing Board may be filled by the Board itself by a majority vote. A co-opted member of the Governing Board shall serve until the next meeting of the General Assembly.

4.2.2 Functions. The Governing Board ensures that the aims and objectives of the Consortium are fulfilled, in application of General Assembly decisions and in compliance with the Constitution of the Consortium. The Governing Board has notably the following functions which are non-transferable and inalienable:

(i) To propose to the General Assembly a tri-annual work program, detailed annual work programs, as well as the annual budget;

(ii) To consider applications for membership and to submit them to the General Assembly;

(iii) To decide any corrective measures regarding the good management of the Consortium and to inform the General Assembly of such decisions;

(iv) To verify, and agree upon, the annual accounts and the activities report, before their transmission to the General Assembly;

(v) To ensure that the accounts and records are kept in good order and that the resources are put to proper use;

(vi) To propose amendments to the EMCI Quality Assurance Standards;

(vii) To promote the activities of the Consortium.

4.2.3 Procedure

(i) The Governing Board shall be convened by the President at least twice a year. Notices of meeting shall be communicated to Board members by electronic mail, or by registered
letter at least thirty days prior to the date of the Board meeting. Meetings of the Governing Board may be held by telephone, by video-conference or in any other manner that the Governing Board deems appropriate.

(ii) Unless otherwise provided for in the Constitution, resolutions of the Board require a simple majority. Members of the Governing Board shall serve for the benefit of the Consortium. Should a Member of the Governing Board be required to deliberate or vote on a matter in which there would be a clear conflict of interest, said Member shall so inform the Governing Board.

(iii) The President of the Consortium shall preside at Governing Board meetings; in his/her absence the meeting will be chaired by the Vice-President or by the most senior member of the Board in terms of age.

(iv) Proxy voting shall be permitted on condition that no Governing Board member may hold more than one proxy.

(v) Minutes of Governing Board meetings shall be approved by the Governing Board members having participated in such meeting and shall be held in a register available for inspection by the Consortium’s Members.

4.3 The officers of the Consortium

4.3.1 The officers of the Consortium are: the President of the Consortium; the Vice-President of the Consortium; the Secretary General; the Treasurer. The President and the Vice-President of the Consortium shall be elected by the General Assembly for a period of three years, renewable. They must be affiliated with a Consortium Member institution.

4.3.2 The Secretary General

(i) The Secretary General is nominated by the President of the Consortium and endorsed by the General Assembly, for a term of three years. In an effort to maintain efficiency in carrying out the activities of the Consortium, the Secretary General should come from the same Member institution as the President of the Consortium.

(ii) Unless otherwise decided by the General Assembly or by the Governing Board, the Secretary General organizes and manages the activities of the Consortium, ensuring their coherence and their coordination in accordance with the decisions of the General Assembly and the Governing Board, and in compliance with this Constitution.

(iii) The Secretary General conducts the administrative and financial affairs of the Consortium (inquiries for information, internal and external dissemination of information, etc).

(iv) The Secretary General manages the resources allocated to the Consortium, in accordance with the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Governing Board, and keeps the Consortium accounts.

(v) The Secretary General prepares the annual budget, the annual accounts and the activity report and submits those documents to the Governing Board.

(vi) The Secretary General ensures the promotion of the Consortium, in collaboration with the Governing Board and in accordance with General Assembly resolutions.

4.3.3 The Treasurer

4.3.3.1 Functions. The Chair of the Finance Committee shall act as the Treasurer of the Consortium. The Treasurer is responsible for communications of the Finance committee whose functions are defined in Art. 7.5.2 below.
Article 5: Membership – Designation of New Members – Withdrawal

5.1 Except as provided in Article 5.5 below, there will be only one class of membership. The Founders of this Consortium are deemed to be Members.

5.2 To qualify for membership, an applicant will need to:

(i) Be a university-level entity accredited as such by its national jurisdiction and submit appropriate supporting documents;

(ii) Run a university-level post-graduate course for the training of conference interpreters;

(iii) Meet all quality assurance standards as set forth in the EMCI Quality Assurance Standards;

(iv) Formally agree to comply with the Constitution of this Consortium, the EMCI Core Curriculum and the EMCI Quality Assurance Standards;

(v) Meet such other requirements as may be set forth by the General Assembly or the Governing Board.

5.3 Applications for membership are initially submitted to the Governing Board for its consideration. If the Governing Board so agrees, applications shall thereupon be submitted for approval to the General Assembly. A decision to approve an application for membership shall require a three-quarters majority of the Consortium’s full membership. Should an application for membership not obtain the required majority, the applicant may file a new request for membership in the second calendar year following the date of a negative decision rendered by the General Assembly.

5.4 A Member may resign from the Consortium upon giving notice of not less than three months by registered mail addressed to the President or Vice-President of the Consortium.

5.5 The General Assembly of Members may create an observer membership class. The Quality Assurance and the Projects Committee may invite subject-matter experts to assist these committees in carrying out their work programme. Such experts and Observer members shall not have the right to vote (cf. Art. 7.3.)

Article 6: Suspension and Exclusion of a Member

6.1 A Member may, on proposal of the Governing Board, be excluded from membership by a decision of the General Assembly if it is determined that:

6.1.1 The Member no longer satisfies the EMCI Quality Assurance Standards and/or the principles set forth in this Constitution;

6.1.2 The Member has failed to comply with its obligations as provided in this Constitution including, but not limited to, failure to pay the annual membership fee;

6.2 A decision to exclude a Member shall require the affirmative vote of three quarters of the full membership of the Consortium not including the Member that is the subject of the exclusion.

6.3 The General Assembly is sovereign in determining whether in certain cases the reasons for exclusion as contained in 6.1. may justify a suspension for a period of 12 months, during which time the Member that is the subject of the exclusion will have to provide proof that the causes of the suspension have been rectified. Such a decision shall require the affirmative vote of three quarters of the full membership of the Consortium not including the Member that is the subject of the suspension.

Article 7: Standing and Ad hoc Committees

7.1 The following Standing Committees shall be created:

- Quality Assurance and Membership Committee
- Finance Committee
7.2 The Governing Board may establish such other standing and Ad hoc Committees as may be necessary or useful in order to implement the Consortium’s annual work programme and/or to ensure the proper functioning of the Consortium.

7.3 Standing Committee members shall be elected by the General Assembly; nominations for committee membership shall be submitted to the Governing Board who shall forward a list of nominees to the General Assembly for endorsement. Committee membership may be open to persons who are not associated with Members of the Consortium and who have specialized skills or knowledge that would be useful to the work of the Committee. Such members shall not have the right to vote (cf. Art. 5.5).

7.4 Members of Ad hoc Committees shall be proposed by the Governing Board and approved by the General Assembly.

7.5 Standing and Ad hoc Committees shall determine their own procedures that will be subject to the approval of the Governing Board, prior to adoption by the General Assembly. Chairs of Standing Committees shall be members of the Governing Board.

7.5.1 Quality Assurance and Membership Committee

(i) No fewer than three persons shall serve on the Quality Assurance and Membership Committee (QAMC). Other nominees may be chosen from among the Members of the Consortium. Additional nominees may be chosen from third parties including, but not limited to, officials of international institutions. They act in a consultative capacity (cf. Art. 7.3.).

(ii) The QAMC may propose amendments to the EMCI Quality Assurance Standards. Amendments to the Quality Assurance Standards and related documents shall be submitted for approval to the Governing Board and adopted by the General Assembly.

(iii) The QAMC shall review periodically the quality assurance procedures (EMCI Quality Assurance Standards) and shall monitor compliance with those procedures by Members of the Consortium as well as entities applying for or subject to EMCI recognition. The assessment procedures will include a process for handling compliance issues.

(iv) Should a Member be found to be non-compliant with respect to quality assurance by the QAMC, the latter will formulate recommendations to the Governing Board (cf. Art. 6.1. to 6.3).

(v) The QAMC will prepare an annual report to be submitted to the President of the Governing Board at least 30 days prior to the General Assembly of Members. This report will be submitted to the Members as part of the documentation accompanying the notice of meeting of the General Assembly.

(vi) (a) The QAMC shall evaluate applications for membership to the Consortium and for program recognition. In doing so, it may enter into discussions with applicants wishing to join the Consortium or wishing to have their degree in conference interpreting formally recognized by the Consortium. (b) The QAMC shall communicate its findings with respect to applications for membership and/or program recognition to the Chair of the Governing Board.

(vii) The QAMC will be consulted on issues regarding alleged violations by Members of the Statutes and other rules of the Consortium.

(viii) Confidentiality of QAMC deliberations shall be maintained in accordance with rules adopted by the QAMC.
7.5.2 Finance Committee

(i) No fewer than three members shall serve on the Finance Committee. Members shall be chosen with particular attention to their qualifications in financial matters and may include a minority of persons who are not affiliated or associated with Members of the Consortium (cf. Art. 7.3.).

(ii) The Chair of the Finance Committee shall act as the Treasurer of the Consortium (cf. Art 4.4.3 above). The Finance Committee shall have access at all times to the accounts of the Consortium and supporting documents.

(iii) The Finance Committee shall review the annual budget and financial results. It will also examine and comment upon the annual report of the auditor(s). The latter shall be chosen from among the Consortium membership but may not represent the same Member institution as the President of the Consortium, the Secretary General or the members of the Finance Committee.

(iv) Each year, the Finance Committee will prepare a report to be submitted to the General Assembly at least 30 days prior to the General Assembly meeting.

7.5.3 Projects Committee

(i) No fewer than three members shall serve on the Projects Committee whose mandate is to further the aims and objectives of the Consortium as identified in Article 2 of this Constitution.

(ii) The Projects Committee contributes actively to the development of new projects to be undertaken by the Consortium and in the drafting of related grant applications.

(iii) The Projects Committee may set up task forces for specific projects.

Article 8: Budget

8.1 The Governing Board shall, at least 30 days prior to the General Assembly of Members, submit to the membership a proposed budget. The budget shall include:

(i) An annual work program

(ii) A summary of sources of revenue needed for the implementation of the work programme, including annual membership fees, grants offunds from international institutions and other third parties, and fees for services provided by the Consortium to its Members and other parties.

(iii) An estimate of costs and disbursements to be incurred by the Consortium.

8.2 Approval of the budget requires the unanimous vote of the Consortium’s full membership.

Article 9: Accounting and Auditing

The Consortium shall maintain its accounts on a financial year basis commencing on October 1st and terminating on September 30th of the following year in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards. The Consortium’s annual statements and accounts are subject to an audit; the General Assembly of Members shall appoint a qualified auditor from among its Members.

Article 10: Representation and Agreements with Third Parties

10.1 The President of the Consortium is the Consortium’s designated spokesperson.

10.2 The Consortium may also be represented by its Vice-President or the Secretary General, or by any other person designated by the Governing Board with respect to external communications.
10.3 No contract may be concluded on behalf of the Consortium, or mention the Consortium, without the prior and express approval of the General Assembly.

Article 11: Liability

11.1 Members are equally, jointly and severally liable for obligations to third parties contracted jointly or through representatives, under this Consortium and in its name. Members are liable to each other for any loss or damage caused through the Consortium’s fault or negligence.

Article 12: Amendments to the Constitution and Dissolution

12.1 Proposals to amend this Constitution or to dissolve the Consortium shall require an affirmative vote of three quarters of the Consortium’s full membership.

12.2 In the event of dissolution, the balance of the Consortium’s assets, after the payment of all liabilities, shall be returned to the Membership or to any other organization having a goal that is compatible with the objectives of the Consortium.

Article 13: Dispute Resolution

The Governing Board shall designate an ombuds whose role will be to mediate disputes between Members of the Consortium and between Members and the Consortium itself. The qualifications and terms of engagement of the ombuds shall be determined by the Governing Board and follow Standards of Practice laid down by the International Ombudsman Association (IOA).

September 28, 2012
Appendix 4

Quality Assurance Standards

1. DEFINITION OF EMCI

The European Masters in Conference Interpreting is a Masters-type university programme which was launched as a pilot project by the European Commission's Joint Interpreting and Conference Service (JICS), DGXXII and the European Parliament in 1997. At the invitation of these organisations, and in consultation with them, a working group comprising eight university-level institutions drew up a core curriculum. The partner institutions (members) pursue a common policy on student recruitment and assessment and are committed to quality maintenance and regular reviews of the programme to adapt to changing needs and new developments. They agree to common standards in selection, curriculum and assessment. They are committed to maintaining quality and they conduct regular reviews of the programmes to adapt to changing needs and new developments. They also conduct regular quality assessment to ensure compliance with these criteria and principles. The EMCI Governing Board is the executive body of the EMCI Consortium. It brings together representatives of all Members and takes decisions concerning the running and structures of the Consortium. The Quality Assurance and Membership Committee is the Standing Committee of the EMCI Governing Board mandated to prepare quality assessment procedures and to monitor compliance with these procedures.

2. QUALITY ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

2.1. SELF-EVALUATION: COMPLIANCE QUESTIONNAIRE

Each year EMCI Members conduct a self-evaluation based on the quality criteria and course characteristics set out in the EMCI core curriculum and other documents. This takes the form of a compliance questionnaire, drawn up in consultation with Members. All EMCI Member institutions fill out the compliance questionnaire at the end of each academic year and send it to the President of the Consortium. In case of queries about the replies the Institution concerned will be contacted in order to clarify the relevant points. If there are any remaining questions, the matter may be brought to the attention of the EMCI Governing Board.

PEER ASSESSMENT

The purpose of the peer assessment is:

- For members of the EMCI Consortium, to verify compliance of the conference interpreter training programme with the Institution's commitments set out in the core curriculum and the Constitution of the EMCI Consortium. To this end, the members have agreed on a set of core criteria which must be the object of full compliance by Member and Applicant Institutions, as well as recommended good practice (see below). The assessment is intended to identify weaknesses or failings in terms of compliance with the core criteria and the recommended good practice, and to suggest remedies in the form of recommendations. In the event of non-compliance, a set of recommendations shall be drafted by the two assessors appointed, in consultation with the Institution concerned. A follow-up assessment shall be organised between six months and one year after the initial review to verify that the recommendations have been implemented (eighteen months after the initial review in the case of Institutions offering a programme only every two years). If it is found that the Institution has not implemented the recommendations, the assessors shall present a report to this effect to the Governing Board of the EMCI which will refer it to the appropriate EMCI Standing Committee, the Quality Assurance and Membership Committee. The

4 Retrieved from http://www.emcinterpreting.org/?q=node/73
latter shall propose, in the light of the report and after discussing the reasons for non-compliance with the Institution concerned, appropriate measures to be taken. These will then be communicated to the Institution concerned by the Consortium’s Governing Board/the President. In the event of any core criteria or recommended good practices (see below) not being met, the Board shall propose to the General Assembly of the Consortium suspension of membership. Suspension may be temporary and may be reviewed after a period of not less than six months from the date of suspension and, if requested, not more than twelve months from such date. Such decisions shall be taken by the General Assembly by a two-thirds majority in secret ballot.

For Applicant Institutions, to verify compliance of the conference interpreter training programme with the EMCI Core curriculum and other principles, with a view to granting membership/recognition of the post-graduate program in conference interpreting. Non-member Institutions may apply for full membership to the EMCI or request recognition of their degree program. In both cases they must meet all the core criteria set out below. Members undertake to play an active role in the EMCI, to participate in the meetings of the General Assembly and the Governing Board, if elected to it, and in the various Standing and Ad hoc Committees of the Governing Board.

In the event of non-compliance, a set of recommendations shall be drafted by the assessors, in consultation with the Institution concerned. A follow-up assessment shall be organised between six months and one year after the initial review to verify if the recommendations have been implemented (eighteen months after the initial review in the case of Institutions offering a course every two years). The assessors shall make a full report to the Governing Board of the EMCI of all procedures conducted with the applicant Institutions. This report will be referred to the EMCI Quality Assurance and Membership Committee which shall determine if membership/recognition is granted or not or if, in the case of a first visit, if a follow-up visit is appropriate. Such proposals shall be forwarded to the Governing Board for approval and submitted for final decision to the General Assembly which adopts/rejects such proposals by a two-thirds majority in secret ballot.

Assessors

- Institutions may not be reviewed by one of their own trainers or by any person having close ties with the Institution (former student, member of the Board, lecturer from the same University etc).
- Two assessors shall be appointed to examine each conference interpreter training programme.
- The assessors shall themselves be accredited practising conference interpreters and trainers in one of the EMCI Institutions.
- The assessors shall be nominated by the individual member Institutions. The nominations shall be approved by the EMCI Quality Assurance and Membership Committee. If any assessor cannot continue in this function, the originating Institution shall nominate a substitute. The nominations may be approved by written procedure (email consultation).
- Care shall be taken to ensure that assessors come from a number of different Institutions, representative of the geographic and language composition of the EMCI Consortium.
- No Institution may nominate more than two assessors for any given period.
- The assessors shall be provided with clear guidelines and should, if possible, receive a one-day training course to enable them to carry out their duties.
- The assessors’ travel and subsistence costs shall be covered by the Consortium, according to the same rules as applicable for teacher mobility. They shall not receive any other indemnity, whether from the EMCI or from the examined Institution. However, the Institution that nominated him/her may compensate them for their time if it so chooses.

Frequency of assessment
Institutions wishing to become members of the EMCI Consortium shall undergo an assessment within one year of submitting their application. They shall receive the EMCI decision within 18 months of submitting the application.

Member Institutions shall undergo an assessment on a rota basis. Frequency will depend on the number of members, but will initially be every three years. All Institutions shall be reviewed in keeping with the rota established. For those Institutions not running a course, the appointed assessors will try to establish clearly the reasons for the programme not being run and the likelihood of the course resuming. They will draft a brief report of their findings for discussion in the EMCI Quality Assurance and Membership Committee of the Governing Board. Should the assessors establish that the Institution has not run an EMCI programme for two years or more and that the reasons given are not compelling, they may recommend that the Institution's membership be suspended or repealed. The decision shall be taken by the General Assembly of the EMCI, upon recommendation by the Governing Board, after hearing the views of the Institution concerned.

• **Procedures**

Assessment will be organised in two stages. During the first stage one or both assessors will visit the examined Institution during the academic year for at least one day. They will attend classes, have access to the staff and the students. During the second stage, one or both assessors will attend at least one day of the final exams. The assessment should ideally be combined with teacher mobility.

The assessors shall draw up a report of both stages on the basis of their observations, indicating clearly which criteria are fully met, which only partly and which are not in compliance. The reports will be communicated to the examined Institution immediately (after each visit), thus giving it time to react and implement changes. Any points of disagreement or any doubts shall be discussed before validating the report. The validated report will be forwarded to the EMCI Quality Assurance and Membership Committee by the assessors, which will discuss the findings. The EMCI Quality Assurance and Membership Committee chair, the Assessors and the examined Institution shall sign the final version of the report, with the latter indicating measures planned to address any non-compliant criteria. If may also indicate any points of disagreement with the assessors. The Institution shall have one year to ensure compliance of its conference interpreter training programme.

3. **ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

• The criteria are established on the basis of the core curriculum and other principles adopted by the EMCI, and with reference to the norms drawn up by AIIC for training Institutions. They shall be agreed by consensus in the EMCI Quality Assurance and Membership Committee and submitted to the Governing Board for referral to the General Assembly, where adoption will require a two-thirds majority voting by secret ballot.

• The criteria are classified into categories; those that must be met under all circumstances (core criteria – all must be met), and those that are strongly recommended (recommended good practice – at least four must be met).

• They are established with a view to guaranteeing best possible compliance in the interest of quality conference interpreter training.

1. **Core Criteria (compliance with the core curriculum)**

• The course must be at post-graduate level. All candidates should have at least a BA degree or equivalent.

• The course shall last between one and two academic years and between 60 and 120 ECTS (or equivalent) must be awarded.

• The EMCI course should be offered at least every 2 years for members and at least every three years for programs that are recognized by the EMCI. The course may be offered every three years for members and recognized programs if the country's national language is not widely used and demand does not justify greater frequency.
The course must be run and designed by practising conference interpreters whose language combinations are AIIC or IO accredited or accredited by a national Conference Interpreters Association with principles similar to those of AIIC. Such trainers should teach at least 80% of the interpreting classes and there should be at least one such trainer in each language combination. Other academic staff may work in tandem with these IO accredited or AIIC interpreters to provide input or comments for a specific native language.

Students must receive at least 400 hours of training, 70% of which at least must be devoted to practical interpreter training (consecutive interpretation, simultaneous interpretation, simultaneous with text, sight translation, etc.).

Self-training must be organised. This should represent at least 400 hours during the course.

The course must cover consecutive, sight translation, simultaneous and simultaneous with text.

Applicants must pass an aptitude test before being admitted. Some form of interim testing should be organized. This may be for guidance purposes only or be eliminatory.

The course should include tuition in theory of interpreting, conference procedure, ethics, public speaking, knowledge about international and regional Institutions, basic background knowledge in economics and law. This content may be taught by practising conference interpreters or by specialists who have a good understanding of the needs of interpreting students. It may be taught in the form of discrete modules or be integrated into interpreting classes.

The Diploma/Certificate awarded must state the graduate's language combination, and clearly indicating active and passive languages.

The final diploma/certificate in Conference Interpretation should only be awarded if the candidate's competence in both consecutive and simultaneous interpreting in all working language combinations has been assessed and judged consistent with requirements for entry into the profession. In other words, the quality of the candidate's interpreting should be such that s/he can be recruited immediately to work alongside accredited conference interpreters in meetings in regional and international Organisations and on the private market. It is understood that beginners are not normally assigned to the most technical or demanding meetings.

Final examination juries must be composed of trainers from the academic programme, other EMCI Institutions and external assessors who are also accredited and practicing conference interpreters. The latter's assessment of each examinee's performance shall count towards the exam grade awarded. There must be at least one assessor with the target language as his/her A language. Representatives from international organisations and other bodies that recruit interpreters are invited to attend final exams as observers if they are not already present as external assessors.

The curriculum and other information about the course shall be posted on-line.

2. **Recommended good practice**

- Teachers of interpretation shall have received teacher training.
- Language combinations offered shall reflect market practice and demand.
- Courses shall offer access to speech banks and video conferencing equipment. Ideally, courses should aim to provide students with opportunities to participate in video-conferences.
- Booths shall be in keeping with professional standards, i.e. should meet ISO standards for fixed or mobile booths as closely as possible.
- Courses shall regularly expose students to new technologies in the work environment and include technology-mediated work scenarios such as remote interpreting, video-conferenced meetings, as well as other scenarios that expose students to the various challenges of technology-enabled meetings.
- Students shall be encouraged to fill out a course evaluation questionnaire and, if they so wish, should have an opportunity to discuss it with course coordinators.
- Applicants are encouraged to spend time living or working abroad in a country of their B/C language(s).
- The institution shall inform candidates and students of employment opportunities.
## Annex 5

### Sample of a Virtual Master Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date and time</th>
<th>Title and chair</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 23, 2012 (11:00-13:00)</td>
<td>Assisted Reproductive Techniques: Scientific Progress and Ethical Choices Chair: Barbara Moser-Mercer, ETI</td>
<td>Lisbon, Ljubljana, Geneva – DG-INTE, DG-SCIC Hosted by DG-SCIC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Mode of interpretation: SI or CI</th>
<th>Level of progression of the student: beginner, intermediate, advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11:00-11:05</td>
<td>All participants</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td>Each school presents itself briefly and introduces the speakers and interpreters. DG-INT and DG-SCIC present themselves</td>
<td>//</td>
<td>//</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:06-11:12</td>
<td>EN speaker Geneva Barbara Moser-Mercer (6 minutes)</td>
<td>TITLE: The ethics of assisted reproduction Keywords: the right to have a child entitlement moral status of the human foetus Simultaneous into ES in Geneva Inma Ruiz (ES FR EN – ACC) Simultaneous into IT in Geneva Pavel Saveliev (IT FR EN – ACC)</td>
<td>Simultaneous into FR in Lisbon: Caroline</td>
<td>SI Intermediate</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:13- 11:19</td>
<td></td>
<td>Consecutive into FR in Lisbon: Caroline</td>
<td>CI</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Session Description</td>
<td>Assessment Level</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:20-11:26</td>
<td>Consecutive into SL in Ljubljana: Dana Čandek</td>
<td>CI</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11:53-11:59</td>
<td>Consecutive into SL in Ljubljana: Nuša Bizjak</td>
<td>CI</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 - 12:06</td>
<td>Consecutive in PT in Lisbon: Miguel Godinho (PT EN FR CS EL - ABCCC)</td>
<td>CI</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Session</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Assessors: DG-INTE: Carlos Alonso de Prada (FR à ES)</td>
<td>Assessors: DG-SCIC: Maria Lengenfelder (FR à DE) Alja Sotlar (FR à SL) Fernando Leitao (FR à PT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:07-12:25</td>
<td>DG-SCIC and DG INT</td>
<td>Feedback on four performances (Suggested Feedback guidelines attached)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:26-12:32</td>
<td>DE Speaker Lisbon</td>
<td>Title: Retortenbabies</td>
<td>Simultaneous into EN in Geneva: Alastair Purves (EN DE FR – ACC)</td>
<td>SI</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6 minutes)</td>
<td>Patrick Silva</td>
<td>Title: Retortenbabies</td>
<td>Keywords: Retortenbaby, Ragenzglas, In-vitro-Fertilisation, PID (Präimplantationsdiagnostik), iPS (induzierte pluripotente Stammzellen), embryonale Stammzellen</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Consecutive into PT in Lisbon: Maria João Silva (PT DE EN – ACC)</td>
<td></td>
<td>CI</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:40-12:46</td>
<td>DG-INT and DG-SCIC</td>
<td>Feedback on three performances (Suggested Feedback guidelines attached)</td>
<td>Assessors: DG-INTE : Daniel Pashley (DE à EN) Joseph Leroy FR, DA DE EN IT NL</td>
<td>DGSCIC:</td>
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<td>12:47-13:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Locations</td>
<td>Speakers/Teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>13:01-13:05</td>
<td>ETI</td>
<td>Fernando Leitao (DE à PT) Alja Sotlar (DE à SL)</td>
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<tr>
<td>13:01-13:05</td>
<td>LISBON</td>
<td>Patrik Silva, Delphine Servoz-Gavin</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LJUBLJANA</td>
<td>Alja Sotlar</td>
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<td></td>
<td>DG-SCIC</td>
<td>Claude Durand, Katerina Dare-Lepoure, Ana Arrubes-Abeledo, Sara Maiberte</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ECI</td>
<td>Mehdi Hanafi</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DG-INTE</td>
<td>Daniel Pashley, Joseph Leroy, Carlos Alonso De Pena</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**ETI**
- Teachers/speaker: Barbara Moser-Mercer, Manuela Motta

**LISBON**
- Teachers/speaker: Patrik Silva, Delphine Servoz-Gavin
- Students: Caroline Ibruce-Naive (FR EN PT – ABC), Miguel Godinho (PT EN FR EL CS – ABCC), Maria Jolico Silva (ACC)

**LJUBLJANA**
- Teachers/speaker: Alja Sotlar
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