

Abstract

In 2016 DG LINC (then DG INTE) of the European Parliament decided to embark on a pilot project to explore and test the feasibility of putting in place specific mechanisms that could be used to enable interpreters to acquire and/or deepen specialised knowledge and expertise in Parliament's five policy areas and for that knowledge to be then put to use in targeted assignments to meetings matching a given profile.

The presentation describes the situation before the launch of the Knowledge Profiles (KP) training programme, its design and the roll-out (now in its third edition), the target audience and the results achieved so far.

Methods and Materials

This is how the KP training course is designed and implemented:

- learning path for each policy stream is designed (currently ECON and LAW, to be expanded further onto the remaining 3 policy streams);
- progression levels (beginner, intermediate and advanced) are clearly identified and learning content is adapted accordingly;
- blended thematic training is offered (classroom teaching, visits, summer universities, MOOCs, eLearning modules, individual work);
- participants following a given policy stream are assigned to matching committee meetings (assignment matching);
- there is a tutor supervising participants' progress.



Introduction

The Knowledge Profiles programme was conceived with a view to further improve the quality of interpretation and thus service to Members and other stakeholders in the law-making process.

The decision to launch this project was motivated by growing complexity and difficulty of Parliamentary meetings, a trend that had been observed for a number of years leading up to and following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty.

Results

The following gains were achieved in the course of the implementation of the KP programme:

- emergence of in-house experts (in-house degree);
- creation of an autonomous learning community;
- sense of in-booth security;
- consistent / increased quality;
- continuity of assignments;
- increased job satisfaction / motivation;
- multiplier effect (crib sheets, terminology, SharePoint, other resources).

The following have been identified as possible risks or difficulties:

- box – in – a – box;
- long –term fatigue;
- length of the course.

Discussion

It is said that specialist creatures will survive only if conditions are perfect for them while generalists are able to thrive in almost any environment. Therefore, a dilemma arises as to whether to offer highly specialised and focused training to EP interpreters, who are generalists by nature, or not.

Perhaps one should create two parallel profiles, i.e. one of a generalist and one of a specialist? Or a hybrid one?

Another question is that of how to maintain the knowledge acquired.

Conclusions

At DG LINC, based on experience gathered during three rounds of KP training offered so far, we have concluded that the best approach that suits our particular needs is to adopt a hybrid approach and to aim at producing specialised generalists.

