

This news letter is published under the responsibility of the Board of the International Federation for Information Processing - Intersteno - and sent to all e-mail addresses of persons participating in the work of the members of Intersteno known to the Board. Contributions to the newsletter can be sent using the form on the web site www.intersteno.org. Publication will take place at the discretion of the Board.

◆BOARD MEETING IN SPRIMONT◆

The newly elected members of the Board of Intersteno, with the exception of Mr. Jaroslav Zaviacic, held their first Board meeting of 2008 in Sprimont, Belgium, from Friday January 25 till Sunday January 27. Mr. Mark Golden took a flight from the USA especially to attend this Board meeting, which was very much appreciated by the Board.



Ms. Georgette Sante, the new Jury president, received the Board members in her home and was a very generous hostess, helped by her husband Joseph. The Board owes them many thanks. Ms. Sante had arranged a nice little hotel in the neighbourhood that is normally closed in the winter season but was especially opened for the members of the Board and some members of Intersteno Belgium who took part in the dinner on Saturday. Ms. Sante had also arranged a dinner on Friday. Both dinners took place in pleasant surroundings and were hosted by Intersteno Belgium.

The discussions of the Board members were very constructive. Many important decisions were taken. First of all, the experiences of the Congress in Prague were evaluated. In order to have a successful Congress in Beijing similar to that held in Prague, it was decided that the Board will give utmost support to the Chinese organisation to avoid any organisational shortcomings in Beijing. This involves, among other things, the need to complete the planning at an early stage, the work of the Jury, the registration of participants and the programmes for the lectures. In addition, the question of which languages will be provided in simultaneous translation is an important topic to be dealt with. These and other points were discussed during a video conference between the Board members and Mr. Liao Qing of the Chinese organising committee. It became clear that many more subjects regarding the organisation have to be discussed. It was decided that a delegation of the Board will travel to China in May of this year for further talks with the Chinese organising committee and make clear to it what are the needs of Intersteno.

Regarding the international competitions, it was decided that national groups have to send proposals in good time so that the Jury has enough time to discuss them and so that the Board can formulate advice for a final decision. Some proposals have already been discussed.

The Board reached agreement about its advice to the Jury on a proposal concerning the Correspondence and Minute Taking competition. The suggestion was put forward of a competition in Speech Capturing with a two-voice dictation (questions and answers, as it is done in the USA). The decision was that if there is enough interest for such a competition a trial competition would be organised in the first instance. The same decision was made in respect of the proposal of the Turkish group for a competition in Text production without the use of abbreviations. In this case it was decided that a trial competition should be organised so that it could be proven whether it was technically possible to prevent fraud in such a competition and to ensure that the technical implications were not too complicated.

Our president had prepared a draft text for a leaflet. The aim of such a leaflet is to introduce Intersteno to people who do not yet know our Federation, to find a common agreed way of presenting Intersteno to teachers, professionals, authorities, research centres etc. It will be used for the first time during the third edition of the LangTech Conference to be held in Rome from 28-29 February 2008. LangTech is an international language and speech technology conference. Mr. Fausto Ramondelli, Mr. Mark Golden and Mr. Thierry Spriet will give lectures during a session specifically devoted to reporting. There was a discussion about the draft text of the leaflet. The aim was to make clearer the point that Intersteno is a world-wide non-profit organisation, uniting the community of those using a full range of speed writing methods quickly to produce high quality texts.

Much attention was paid to the drafting of a new regulation for IPRS. The opinion of the Board was that, now it has been proven that IPRS has been revitalised and plays an important role in the structure of Intersteno, time has come to ask the participants to pay a subscription fee. It was decided that as from 2009 the fee will be €75 a year for parliamentary reporting services and reporting firms and €25 a year for individual reporters. The Board can decide to subsidise the activities of IPRS. It was further agreed that professional court reporters and freelance reporters can take part in IPRS. The Board reached an agreement about the text of a new regulation. The Board also agreed with the suggestion of Mr. Van Beurden to organise, in cooperation with the Dutch national group, a special IPRS meeting in The Hague in August 2008.

The chairman of the Scientific Committee, Prof. Dr. Boris Neubauer, informed the Board of his ideas for the work of this important committee. The committee has to play a more significant role in Intersteno by making contact with universities where research is done in our domains of activity. It is also important to pay more attention to learning and, if possible, to develop programmes for e-learning. Furthermore, there is an proposal to make a review of reference books for machine stenography and to try to compile a list of abbreviations in graphic shorthand that have a common basis and can be used for keyboarding.

The Scientific Committee will also take care of a special issue of our e-news letter to be released in the next few months.

The preliminary programme for the Council meeting in Poland was discussed. The meeting will take place in Tichy, a town near Krakau. The proposal of the Polish group was to have the meeting from 26 - 29 September 2008, but as these dates are not convenient for a number of national groups the meeting will take place from 19 - 21 September. Furthermore a number of changes in the preliminary programme will be proposed.

Other points of discussion were the procedure for admitting individual members, the already announced Internet competition, the budget for the coming years, Intersteno e-news (which will be released every two months) the website of Intersteno and the congress of 2011. On this last topic, an investigation among the national groups indicates that on that year the Congress could be again held in Europe. This opinion is also shared by the USA representative.

Cees van Beurden and Danny Devriendt

◆ **IPRS MEETING IN DEN HAGUE from 20th to 23rd August 2008** ◆



A very interesting programme has been arranged by the Coordinator of Intersteno Parliamentary and Professional section, Mr. Cees van Beurden, for this meeting in The Hague.

Invitations have already been sent to all persons who are regularly receiving the IPRS newsletter, but everyone interested in professional reporting can attend.

Intersteno (the International Federation), Interinfo (the Dutch national Group) and the Second Chamber (the House of Representatives) are subsidising the social programme in order to reduce the participation fee.

In the programme there will be a visit to the Senate, followed by a visit to the Knights Hall and a guided tour in the Second Chamber. A whole afternoon will be available for discussions. To begin there will be a presentation by a Dutch firm that delivers reporting services to a large number of municipalities and provinces in a special way. They produce reports on their website consisting of sound, image and text. The visitors to this website can see the speaker, hear what he/she is saying and read the report (mostly a summary report). This firm is working with 150 reporters, is using very modern ICT technology and maintains a high standard for its core business, the production of written reports. Moreover, Mr, Fabrizio Verruso from Sicily will give a short lecture about the production of summary reports. Such reports are becoming more and more important in parliamentary reporting.

Everyone interested in joining this meeting, must contact Mr. Cees van Beurden (info@vebreporting.nl) for any additional information. Confirmations must be entered **by 15th March 2008.**

◆ **CONGRESS IN BEIJING 2009** ◆

For a memorable holiday in 2009 come to China – one of the world's most rapidly changing countries that still retains its legendary charm.

The city and country that hosts the Olympic Games looks forward to greeting visitors to the Intersteno Congress in 2009 who will enjoy a warm welcome in this dynamic, fast-changing, country.

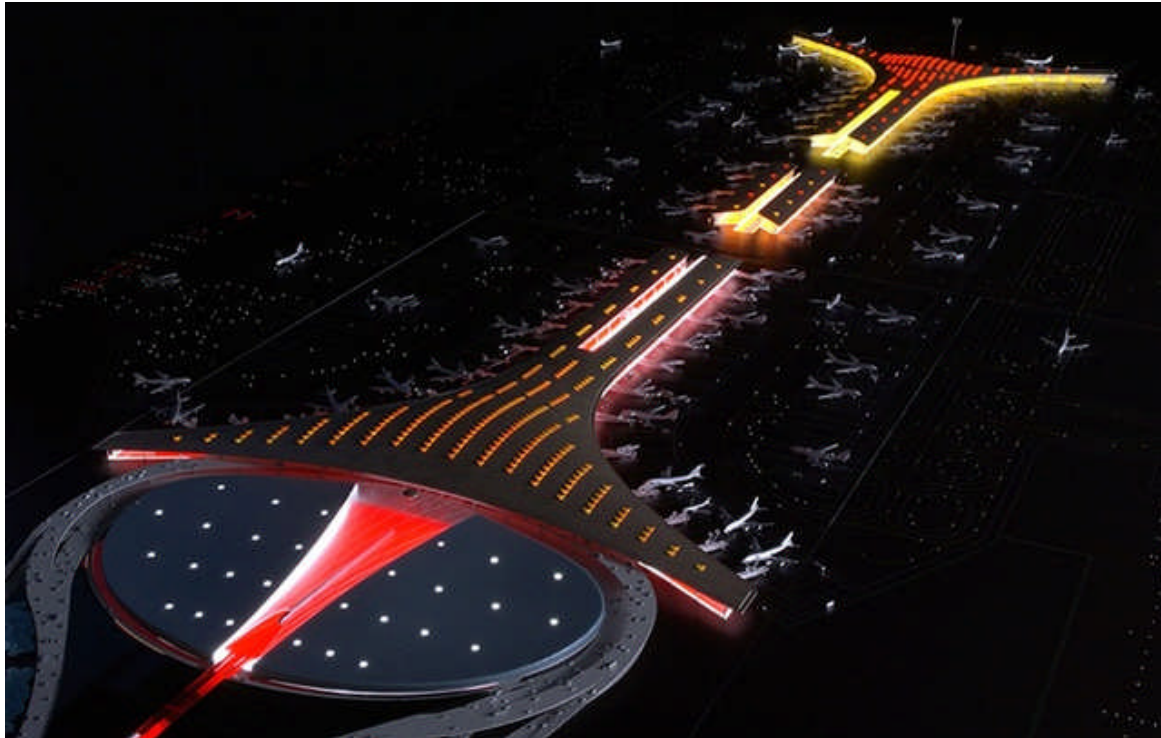
China will give you an unforgettable experience. You will arrive in our warm summer and experience the warmth of the welcome of our people. The ancient and modern sights of China will live in your memory for ever.

If you can only visit one country in your lifetime, make it China. It is worth it. After seeing the wonders of our country many foreigners say: "I wish I had been born in China."

On behalf of the organising committee of the Intersteno Congress 2009 we say:

"Welcome to China; welcome to Beijing – it's worth it."

The Chinese group of Intersteno



August 2009 is the month chosen for this event. A total of 600 Chinese participants are eager to meet colleagues from other countries and continents.

In many countries August is the month of holidays! Plan your holidays in China for an exciting event you will never forget. The new airport has full capacity for everyone!

◆ **KEYBOARDING INTERNET CONTEST** ◆



Enrolment from 24th March till 19th April.

Competition from 21st March till 10th May.

Minimum speed 200 characters per minute, 1 % of faults allowed. For competitors over 21 years, max 0,5 % of faults allowed.

Please read carefully the rules at www.intersteno.org (English - French and German)

◆ **COUNCIL MEETING IN TYCHY (Poland) 19-21 September 2008** ◆

Interinfo Poland will host the meeting of the Council members in Tychy.

Tychy is a rather new town, even if it has ancient origins, and is well know for a brewery which is producing the largest quantity of beer of Poland, as well as a car manufacturing (FIAT)



Tychy has good connection to the airport of Katowiche.

The meeting will begin on Friday afternoon and end on Sunday evening. It is possible to stay one day longer for tourism purposes.

Council members will shortly receive information about the cost and the agenda. Besides Council members, Individual Members of Intersteno can also attend and take part in the discussion, even if they are not entitled to vote on the decisions.

◆ THE ITALIAN WAY OF COURT REPORTING - part 1 ◆

Notice: This is a digest of the experience of Court Reporting in Italy. Consequently many aspects are not fully dealt with. All those interested in obtaining additional information are kindly requested to contact me and I will get them in touch with those who can provide a full answer.



Short history.

Without going back to the experiences of reporting in the ancient Roman Courts (which are widely indicated in the shorthand history books), one can mention that it was in 1930 that the use of shorthand was foreseen by the Italian legal code for the first time. This code is also shortly mentioned as Rocco code, from the name of Mr. Alfredo Rocco who was at that time, Minister of Justice.

The rule of this code stipulated that the Chancellor (the clerk assisting the Judge) could use shorthand in writing down his notes during the hearings. At that time Judges took decisions mainly on the basis of the papers prepared by the defence lawyers and the Public prosecutor. Hearing of testimony took place only if additional investigations were needed concerning the truth of the original deposition.

Moreover the Judge, after listening to the answer of the witness, dictated a short summary of what was said.

According to information gathered from several sources the number of Chancellors who could use shorthand was very low. No more than 15 names were mentioned in the steno reviews, and among them only very few were able to prepare verbatim reports. So the use of shorthand was not spread, even though it could have been useful in speeding up hearings. On the contrary, it created additional work for the Chancellor who had the duty to transcribe his notes in longhand (or with a typewriter, which was not so common at that time in public offices) by the following day.

In 1946, at the end of the world war, a referendum decided that Italy would be ruled by a Republic instead of the Savoy monarchy as before. To this effect a new Constitution was promulgated on 27th December 1947 and came into effect from 1st January 1948.

The principles incorporated in this new Constitution made it evident that many articles of the Rocco code were no longer applicable and that a revision of the Penal code was needed.

From 1948 to 1991

Although everybody agreed about the need for this revision, discussions went on for many years and it was only in 1991 that a new penal code was promulgated, following the work done by a Commission established in 1988 by the Minister of Justice, Giuliano Vassalli.

In a first draft of this code only stenotype was mentioned as a reporting tool but in the final text there was the addition of the words 'o altri mezzi meccanici' = 'or other mechanicals tools'. These words can lead to a lot of interpretations about what can be considered a 'mechanical tool'.

In any case, even though, in the meantime, stenotype was growing in Italy and many training courses were held, it became evident that the full needs (about 1400 courtrooms all over Italy) could not be immediately satisfied. There was a transition period in which the Judges continued to dictate to the Chancellor, and in many cases it was the Chancellor himself taking notes in longhand who prepared a summary report, with all the limits of such a reporting.

The growing interest of newspapers in releasing information on main penal proceedings created the need for a verbatim report. As a result, in a very few cases, press stenographers were given this duty.

The Ministry therefore decided to install in all courtrooms a sound recording rack. In this rack, two recorders were installed. One was a specially adjusted video cassette recorder. Four microphones were connected to this equipment, and to each of them a specific channel of the recorder was dedicated so as to be able to discriminate between the voices of the various speakers, which in some cases could overlap. The four microphones were placed before the Judge, the Witness, the Public Prosecutor and the Defence.

A second recorder was placed on the top of the rack. This recorder used two mini-cassettes, lasting 15 or 30 minutes. When the first cassette was near the end of its tape, the second automatically started recording. Therefore it was possible to share the work of revision (or transcription) among several persons.

The original idea was that the Ministry would hire out the clerks for court reporting, but this was a dream and it soon became evident that outsourcing was the only feasible solution.

Each Court entered into agreements with firms or professionals. This created a disparity of conditions both in the way in which the report was to be presented and also in the prices charged by the various entities.

From 1991 till 2005

A few years later the Ministry suggested the use of a common text for the agreements in which it was foreseen that quality was measured on the percentage of faulty characters. It was decreed that such faults should not be in excess of 1 %.

Prices were in any case subject to dealings with the firms, even if a technical body had to decide whether the price was consistent with the service that each firm was offering.

At the beginning of the new century an investigation by the Ministry showed that the costs for this service were constantly increasing (also due to an increased use of reporting at all levels of courts) and it was decided that the Ministry would have to fix a maximum amount to be paid as well as a maximum number of pages per year.

A tender for a bid was issued, in which the Ministry required that there should be only one entity taking care of all aspects involved in court reporting and related management.

In the bid many parameters for evaluating the activity of this group were set out, and two technologies were mentioned i.e. stenotype and tape transcripts. At the end of 2005 the official data released by the Ministry of Justice indicated that 6.500.000 pages were produced annually, of which 46,07% was produced using stenotype and 53,93% using tape transcription.

Since the original equipment installed in 1991 was becoming obsolete leading to difficulties in sourcing spare parts, it was decided gradually to replace the old equipment with digital recording technology.

(to be continued)

Gian Paolo Trivulzio

Many thanks to Peter Walker for the revisions of these texts

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