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Ihr Zeichen/Nachricht vom:

IARLJ Database

Dear colleagues,

as I informed you in my email from 21 Dec 2005 I attended the last EURASIL meeting in 2005.

### **Cooperation with UNHCR**

In the lunch break I had a very interesting chat with Oldrich Andrysek, Chief of the Protection Information Section UNHCR, Geneva. UNHCR has more then 3000 decisions at it's disposal. They are collected in the RefWorld database which is only available as CD-ROM. UNHCR hesitates to publish them in the Internet because the decisions are not structured. That means that the metadata are not labeled as such. For that purpose one need a so called XML structure.

Our database generates such a XML structure automatically if a contact person input the data of a new decision. This is of interest for UNHCR. They could insert their decisions step by step in our database and would get a structured stock of decisions. We would derive much benefit also because our database can increase fast. I think it would very desirable if we could establish a cooperation based on this idea.

## EU Funding

I had another interesting talk with Lauri Holmen (EURASIL coordinator) and his predecessor Mennon Verhej concerning the possibility of funding. The European Commission is very interested in the development of a multilingual asylum law database but it will not establish such an institution for itself. It would prefer instead to support of national or private projects like the IARLJ database. Funding is possible under ERF or ARGO. Contact person for all questions of funding is Patrick Lefevre (patrick.lefevre@cec.eu.int).

There are two possibilities of funding. Either the applicant is a national institution of a member state or the commission supports private agencies. I think it would be the best if we could convince the commission of the use to support us directly. If this fail we should encourage one of the small EU member states to apply for support. I could imagine that Slovenia could do this job because I have a very good contact to Dr. Bostjan Zalar, judge at the Administrative Court in Ljubljana who function as database contact person for Slovenia. He could us help to start an initiative. However the best way would be a funding of the IARLJ directly.

## Need for money

The first question is for which reason we need money. My ideas concerning the further development of the database are the following:

- a. Editorial centers on a national level should be established which take on the job to obey the scene of asylum law decision making and of editing the decisions in a professional and independent way. Academic instituts or chairs come in consideration for this task. We should look for a cooperation with such academic institutions in the main delivering countries and give them the task to utilize the decisions and to create appropriate summaries and to select useful keywords. The academic institutions should get a financial payment which makes them able to develop the needed professionalism (They have to buy books, to pay people etc.).
- b. We should have a central professional translation agency which translate all the summaries and new keywords of the participating languages in English. The translation agency should also be able to translate the original summaries in all the other participating languages so that we can publish the summaries not also in English but in all participating languages. For that reason we need money to pay them. This work should be done from one and the same translation agency because otherwise the workflow is too complicated.
- c. The administration of the database is the task of IARLJ and should be done from the secretariat. At present this work is done by me and by Liesbeth van de Meerberg. I am very interested to hand over my part of the administration work to another person so that I can

concentrate myself in conceptional activities. Liesbeth can do it but she has many other duties. At present it is not so much work because the stream of decisions is still weak. If the courts have only to send the decisions and not to prepare summaries and the translation work, the stream can increase dramatically. Therefore Liesbeth has to invest more time and this time must be payed.

For all these reasons we have to calculate the financial need on a realistic basis of the amount of decisions we expect per year. I think it is realistic to reckon with about 200 decisions per year.

d. Besides of that regular work we need some academic support in developing a multilingual glossar of the relevant juridic terms. This could be a research project of a academic department of translation sciences. Another project could be the developement of a semantic net. That is a system of assigning synonymous words to one term. This could be a research project for a academic department of linguistics. Such projects need also financial support.

### **Proposal for further steps**

I propose the following further steps:

1. The council should discuss my ideas above and examine if they are senseful and realistic. If no: forget it! If yes:
2. The council members should make contact with appropriate academic institutions in their own country to find out if such a cooperation due to proposal a. can be realized and which financial support is needed.
3. James should make contact to appropriate translation agencies to find out if it is possible to realize proposal b. and what costs are to expect.
4. I will talk with the heads of the translation sciences and linguistics concerning proposal d.
5. If we know what is possible and how much money we need we should apply for support at the EU commission.

Paul