Report of the
IPRS meeting in Prague (Czech Republic)

September 29th – October 1st, 2012

by Marlene Rijkse

and Peter Grondel

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Word of welcome

by Ms Rian Schwarz

On behalf of the Steering Committee of IPRS, the Intersteno Parliamentary and other professional Reporters' Section, Ms Rian Schwarz welcomes everybody. She is very glad to see members from all over the world. She states that during past IPRS meetings everybody just sat down and listened. Sometimes there would be a little discussion. The Steering Committee is going to change that. The participants will have to work. Everybody is supposed to discuss about some topics. In the upcoming two IPRS meetings there will be four workshops about different topics.

To what extent does synchronizing a transcript with audio/video affect the editing of verbatim transcripts by reporters?

workshop lead by Ms Marlene Rijkse

Introduction

My name is Marlene Rijkse. For many years I have worked at the Dutch Parliament as an official reporter. Since a couple of years I have been working as team coordinator. I am also the immediate manager of a team of staff members of the Parliamentary Reporting Office. One of my duties in the past was the assessment of speaker's corrections. On the issue of speaker's corrections I will come back later. In the past few months a working group of the Parliamentary Reporting Office, in which I participated, held our editing rules against the light. The common thread of the amended rules is that reporters have ever less room to make changes to the contribution of the speaker. I will further explain this development hereafter.

Shorthand notes

Before sound recording was introduced, reporters made their transcripts on the basis of their shorthand notes. In those days it was not possible to determine whether the transcript offered a faithful account of the spoken text. That is why the stenographer had a powerful instrument at his disposition. Once, a Dutch official parliamentary reporter even managed to become the Netherlands' prime minister!

Check against sound recordings

The introduction of sound recordings has made it possible to check whether a reporter has adequately transcribed the spoken text. An official reporter of the Parliamentary Reporting Office has the duty to transcribe spoken text into a readable record. To this end a range of editing rules have been drawn up, laid down in our Style Guide. This is a useful aid, but certainly does not offer a solution to all the problems the reporter will encounter in actual practice. In many cases the choice whether or not to make changes to the speaker's words "depends on the situation". Our reporters are highly educated people. They are capable of transcribing vague spoken texts into clear and coherent reports. In the past it was common practice for a reporter to make the report "nicer and friendlier" than was justified by the actual spoken text. Sometimes a speaker "slipped", for instance because he was very angry. The reporter then toned down the outburst, making sure that "courtesy" in Parliament was maintained, at least on paper.

In the Dutch Parliament, speakers have the right of correction. In case of a dispute about a correction suggested by the speaker, the Parliamentary Reporting Office falls back on the sound recording in order to determine whether a correction will be adopted or not. Through this right of correction the speaker agrees to the transcription of his words in the report. It is my experience that both MPs and members of the Cabinet generally highly appreciate it that reporters turn their sometimes fumbling speech into a readable report. Resigning MPs often compliment us on that.

Reporters stick more closely to the words of the speaker

The appearance of populist parties in the Dutch Parliament around 2002 marked a change in the role of the parliamentary reporters. In the past, reporters used to be complimented on their work. In recent times, however, populist MPs did not always want a more courteous report. They deliberately used swearing as an instrument, and wanted that to be expressed in the report. Some years ago a minister was called "stark raving mad" during a debate. Sometimes the Parliamentary Reporting Office was sent contributions accompanied by a note saying: we want this to be included in the report literally. Since then we refer new MPs to our editing rules, which are mainly aimed at transcribing spoken text into a readable report.

The debate itself has become harder over the past few years. Last year for instance, our Prime Minister and the leader of the Party for Freedom got angry at each other in the course of a debate. One yelled: don't make a fool of yourself, man! And the other shouted back: don't you make a fool of yourself! It goes without saying that in such a case, it is no option to include anything else in the report but what has actually been said.

(Ms Rijkse shows a discussion in the Dutch parliament between the MP and Mr Wilders of the Party for Freedom.)

Another factor that has recently influenced the report is the social media. During a debate MPs twitter to their hearts' content. Sometimes a statement is published earlier via twitter than via the draft official report, which is published on the Internet several hours after delivery of the speech.

Moreover, important debates, such as the annual general debate on the Budget Memorandum, is broadcast live on television in the Netherlands. People can also watch debates afterwards, on the Internet site of the House. That is why our reporters must be able to justify any changes they make to the words of a speaker: an alteration is either based on an editing rule, or it is a clarification or correction of a clear mistake. When a speakers stumbles over his words, the reporter is capable of mitigating this stumbling in the report in one situation, whereas he will not do so in another situation, for instance because another MP interrupts him with the words: "Sir, you are terribly stumbling over your words, presumably because you are telling sheer nonsense".

Subtitling

My presentation so far has been about the edited report. Currently, a subtitling pilot project is carried out in the Dutch Parliament. Subtitling is primarily done for the benefit

of the deaf and hard of hearing, but can be followed by everyone. We have already learned from the pilot project that subtitling requires different skills compared to making a verbatim report. A subtitle editor will primarily follow the speaker and has to work within limited space. That is why some clauses will have to be left out sometimes, although these can be very important, especially in politics.

Subtitling versus the verbatim report

I am convinced that subtitling can never substitute the verbatim report. We hope that we will once publish sound, image, subtitling and the edited report together on our website, enabling the user to see at a glance who is speaking, to hear what is said and to read what the debate is about. Every deviation from the report will then be visible and must therefore be justifiable.

Throughout this presentation about the reporting practice at the Dutch Parliament I have given an answer to the question that will be discussed in the workshops, namely: "to what extent does synchronizing a transcript with audio/video affect the editing of verbatim transcripts by reporters?"

Workshops

In the workshops everyone will be given the floor in order to briefly answer this question from his or her own working practice.

Subquestions are:

- Does subtitling replace an edited verbatim transcript?
- What is the added value of a readable report?
- Is it possible to draw up general rules for editing?
- Is it possible to define the difference between "viewers/listeners" and "readers"?

The following feedback was given by the different groups

Group 1 (Marlene Rijkse)

Participants: Korea (2), Finland, Poland (1), Germany (1).

In all these countries subtitling is not an issue. Sometimes sign language is used.

Does subtitling replace an edited verbatim transcript?

All the participants said: no.

What is the added value of a readable report?

You can always read exactly what has been said and decided.

Is it possible to draw up general rules for editing?

In Poland, Korea, and Finland there are some rules.

Example of a rule in the Netherlands and Germany: when a speaker often uses the word "chairman", the reporter only includes it twice in the report: at the start of a speech and after an interruption, when the speaker continues his speech. In Poland, Korea and Finland they do not leave the word out. In these countries there are less rules.

However, Korea, Finland, Poland, Germany and Holland all have a style guide.

Is it possible to define the difference between "viewers/listeners" and "readers"?

The answer to this question is more ore less the same as the answer to the second question. There is a difference: viewers/listeners just view a debate and readers want to know what has been decided.

Group 2 (Robert Brown)

Group 2 has primarily looked at the second question. We rephrased the question to: what is the added or additional value of a readable report? We wrestled with the question "what is a readable report"? Does that mean that it reflects a good use of language, so that makes it readable? That it doesn't have the false starts, the background noise, the interjections that are intrusive as supposed to illuminating? So, a readable report has those features: good language use – elimination of the extraneous and intrusive – it can be printed, published, not only on paper – a set of pages that can be carried away – but also electronically. Then it can be archived as a document. Then we have very good characteristics of a readable report. With the excellent bonus feature in our computer age it we can be searched for the way the words are used, the appearance of what we call "trigger words", such as "accident", "guilty", those kinds of things. So we felt that there is tremendous additional value to invest in the generation of a readable report.

So that is our basic answer to the additional value of a readable report beyond the video file capture of the presentation/discussion proceedings themselves.

Then we got to the difficult part. If we accept the fact that it is a valuable investment to create a readable report after the real time capture, then we have to worry about the potential for not delivering on the exact rendition of what really happened. That is just a dilemma that someone who is going to create the readable report has to face. We talked about: that is an editing function where we are actually altering the contours of the message that has been captured. We think that that is a good thing, because readability is important for a reader, as opposed to just presenting something that is viewable and listenable with all the coughs, byplay, background noises, which obscures the meaning and perhaps the intend of the speaker and the focus of the session. We felt that there is tremendous additional value in investment, in creating a readable report that can be archived as a legitimate document, in the expert use of the prevailing language. Also it can be electronically searched, so that someone who is trying to determine what the flow of information was in the event can go through it and find those trigger words, the phrases that carry the message.

The third question, is it possible to draw up general rules for editing? Perhaps next year it would be possible to have general rules. We all agreed that some guidelines as a starting point are advisable.

Group 3 (Gea Duister)

Group 3 is a mix of speech and text reporters and parliamentary reporters, so we were more talking about the differences between our jobs.

Question 1: Subtitling is so different from making an edited verbatim transcript that the group talked a while about that. We said: it's an irrelevant question, because they are impossible to compare. We are not interested in subtitling and we are depending on our readers' purposes, so either readers of subtitles or readers of a verbatim report.

With question 2, we ended up in a discussion about what is a readable report. Is this a verbatim report? Is it a report where all the mistakes are left out? For a deaf person a very short summary may be enough. That could be readable for him. For others readable may mean that all the mistakes are left in.

We did not have enough time to talk about the third and fourth question.

Group 4 (Fausto Ramondelli)

We found that the questions were very stimulating. We had a very interesting debate.

We tried to answer the questions but the discussion went a little bit astray. We agreed that subtitling cannot replace a verbatim transcript. We believe that they are different products related to different audiences. We agreed with the former speaker that subtitling is related to a different audience than a verbatim report. We have also other kinds of products devoted to different people, for example people at universities, researchers, citizens, young people, or old people. They all access parliamentary information in different ways.

Question 3: Is it possible to draw up general rules for editing?

We agreed that many attempt to do this, but few succeeded. We tried to understand why. It is probably because the editing and the way of publishing the information of parliamentary reports depends on many things. For example, I have listed some "depends on the context", the kind of report we are dealing with, parliamentary reports of the national parliament or reports of local assemblies. Maybe it depends on the country, the culture, the different habits, and also from time to time: today you can no longer work with the attitude of 30, 40 years ago. And it also depends on the device that the person who accesses the parliamentary information uses. But the most interesting discussion was amongst those who think that the written report is and will remain the normal way of accessing the information of parliamentary sittings. Other people asked themselves whether in the future this will change, because audio and video will be replacing progressively the way in which people access information.

We would like to suggest IPRS to focus its attention to this problem, maybe through an enquiry, but preferably with a seminar on the question how the publishing of parliamentary work has changed over time. Because, if we find out that in the future, maybe five, ten years from now, the normal way to access information will be mainly via video and audio rather than via written text, we have to ask ourselves if the categories in this question are still actual. Because probably the transcription will be only the tool for accessing the infor-

mation, because it will be useful for synchronizing video and audio, but it will not be any longer the object of consultation. The same is true nowadays when we compare how the older and younger generations use the web.

Ms Schwarz, head of the Dutch Parliamentary Reporting Office, knows exactly what Mr Ramondelli is talking about, when he talks about report as a source for searching and using metadata. That is the topic of the discussion: what is the report for? It is not only used for reading, but also for metadata, for searching and combining text with video and so on. That's a new development, which is very interesting for a seminar or whatever. She agrees on that point with Mr Ramondelli.

Is it a reporter's job to prevent a speaker from looking ridiculous?

workshop lead by Mr D'Arcy McPherson (by Skype)

Mr McPherson (Managing Editor of Debates for the Senate of Canada) unfortunately was not able to come to Prague, but expresses he looks forward to share views.

Introduction to the workshop by Mr McPherson

The workshop will examine reporting and editing styles in the legislative and legal environments and the role that the verbatim reporter plays.

- What constitutes verbatim text?
- Does polishing text detract or enhance the speaker's message?
- Is it the role of the reporter or editor to alter what was heard by the listeners at the first instance?
- How do different jurisdictions address malapropisms, misspeaks, or misinformation?

I know that we all come to this discussion from different places, not only geographically but also philosophically. As for me, I began my career training as a machine shorthand reporter in the legal environment. I was taught to write everything that was spoken. We were to write every word and every speaker in the same way, without questioning, to ensure the integrity of the record. My job was certainly not to edit, embellish or modify – no matter how ridiculous a lawyer or witness might sound.

Twenty-three years ago I was introduced to legislative reporting and my entire approach to reporting and editing changed. Within Canada the Senate of Canada is an interesting body. There are those who would argue that it is a chamber which was born of the 19th century and there are elements of our procedures which have changed little since that time. Up until recently, our reporting and editing styles could fall into that category as well.

The explanation for the greater jurisdiction for the reporter/editor in the legislative environment is that we are preparing a document which must stand for historical, traditional and often academic review. Members or Senators in debate are often under a great deal of stress, there are often extraneous comments being shouted out, and it is our role to tidy things up so that the message is clearly conveyed. To reflect in the written word how the speaker might have wished or ought to have correctly said it in the first place. This is not a sworn testimony, this is political discourse.

It is important to stress that, for us, it is important that personal flavour, especially of a regional distinction, is accurately reported. This does require of the editor an expansive knowledge of idiomatic and non-standard language usage and to understand that what may seem a perfectly ridiculous construct in the west of a region is perfectly acceptable in

the east. We will try to place ourselves in the mind of the speaker and understand their motivations.

Though we continue to apply the kindly sponge of sympathetic oblivion by dabbing away at the verbal blemishes, the improper grammar, the mixed metaphors, the inaccurate references, the false starts and the contractions – we are more and more restrained in our efforts, at least in the Senate. The increased use of technology, particularly in a metadata environment, means that the text cannot be as dynamic or changeable as it once was. We have also noticed that in polarized and politicized times, the written word is often compared to the audio and scrutinized for any possible sign of political weakness or advantage.

Another interesting aspect of legislative reporting – at least in some legislatures – is the ability for the member to review his or her speech and request revisions after the fact. This is not something that is allowed everywhere and it may shock some textual purists, but it is a service that is often very much appreciated and can take the guess work out of trying to determine the intention of the speaker. The final decision, at least at the Senate of Canada, rests with the managing editor. Not all changes are accepted and it can often be difficult to explain to the person who was speaking why their words were not acceptable or their changes inappropriate. Here we try to be more diplomatic and avoid references to words like "ridiculous".

At this point I would like to open up the discussion in the groups to better understand the policies of your jurisdiction and the reasons for them. I want you to think about the following questions:

- What constitutes verbatim text?
- Does polishing text detract or enhance the speaker's message?
- Is it the role of the reporter or editor to alter what was heard by the listeners at the first instance?
- How do different jurisdictions address malapropisms, misspeak or misinformation?

Feedback given to the questions

Group 2 (Karen Yates)

(The group is comprised of representatives from France, Germany, Holland, Korea, and the US.)

What constitutes verbatim text?

We had a very lively discussion throughout this session. We concluded that practises on these topics vary widely. Some of our countries have verbatim standards that are different from others. For instance: verbatim in Korea and the US means you do not change any words. That would be in de US in the judicial system and in Korea both in the judicial system and in parliament. But in our parliament, the Congress, some changes would be al-

lowed. But in places like Germany and France they would be permitted to make small edited changes and they would still consider this to be a verbatim text.

In the Netherlands sometimes they add not only the spoken words, but there would be some instances where they would add gestures or someone who is bumping on the table. So they would put in parentheses information that would be more then just the words spoken. That is fascinating.

Does policing text detract or enhance the speaker's message?

Again we found that there are differences among the countries. Small edits would be permitted in places like the parliament and it would make the final product even better. In other instances, like in legal settings, where someone, for instance, in a criminal proceeding is giving their statement, their testimony it would detract from it. It would make it a worse product if we permitted any changes. That would not enhance the value of that.

Is it the role of the reporter or editor to alter what was heard by the listeners at the first instance?

It really depends on the purpose of the text that we are creating. If the purpose is, for instance, in parliament where it is going to be a historical document as D'Arcy described, than it would be our role to fix things up. In other instances we said: you just have to do your job and write what you hear, and it is not your role to try to think and fix things.

How do different jurisdictions address malapropisms, misspeak or misinformation?

How do we deal with words being used improperly or someone making a mistake and saying 4 million dollars when they really meant to say 400 dollars. Here again it various from place to place. Many places they say you have to check back with the speaker first before you are permitted as the reporter or editor to make that change. In some places you would check maybe with your supervisor to see if that kind of change is permitted.

Thank you again for giving us a chance to do this. It is fun to learn these things about the way other people do things.

Group 1 (Robert Brown)

(Robert Brown mentions that he is not a reporter. He is interested in the capturing process for professional reporters.)

What constitutes verbatim text?

I converge recording when it is perceived in the arena. It is very important for the judicial process. It gets very, very complicated in the legislative process.

One of the things that we have now is the availability of the digital audio/video recording which is inherently verbatim. From that starting point we can say: does polishing detract or does it enhance the record produced from the verbatim electronic strain? The answer is: yes, it does.

Striving towards accuracy and clarity forces the reporter to become an editor, as we support the creation of the record of a legislative process. It is just a fact of the task of creating

an accurate, clear depiction of what went on. It was not clear whether that role of polishing extends to altering the content, because in the reporter's mind that leads to clarity and accuracy. It is just a dilemma. In terms of the sensitivity to the variety of usages of the words spoken and heard in the arena it is just another dilemma. The idea is to connect the speaker's message to the audience. We said: There is more than one audience out there. That is another dilemma. From my perspective, if we are trying to deliver clarity and accuracy, we would have to focus on the language used at the forum. It is up to those who have different word usage patterns to interpret the standard language of the forum.

I believe the goal is: a timely, accurate, and clear depiction of what was said. In terms of the regionalized language the perception was to adhere to the language used at the forum. Those who are in different regions are required to interpret for their own local audience. So again, we are trying to get the message of the speaker to the "standard" audience, as if they were at the proceedings themselves.

Group 3 (Anna Jankowska-Wróbel)

(The group is comprised of representatives of Finland, Germany, Poland, and Korea.)

The group focused on the main question: Is it a reporter's job to prevent a speaker from looking ridiculous? The group came to the conclusion that it has more questions than answers. There are many factors which have to be considered and that influence our job. If we can identify a mistake as a simple lapsus, we accept a correction. However, there is still the issue of interpretation. What is the lapsus and what is, for example, a throat mistake? That is another question. What is the definition of sounding ridiculous? In Poland there is a special television program. It shows the most ridiculous, the most silly speeches of the day. That is why reporters keep the most crazy and ridiculous speeches just as they were spoken, because they are sure that in the evening it will be showed on television. We have to consider that.

However, if a speaker is just searching for words or is making some spelling errors, we identify this as lapsus and we correct his words.

Somebody from Germany was telling about making corrections in the court. She talked about mistakes that lawyers make by mixing sentences. They mix sentences because they are sure they are experts in an area. However, they are not. So they accept corrections and they make the sentences gramatically correct.

We also mentioned the dilemma of who has the authority to accept the final corrections. Is it the employee responsible for preparing the verbatim report? Is it the marshal? Is it the member of parliament? It happens that members of parliament authenticate the speech. Who has the authority to make the final decision?

Other factors were mentioned, like the origin of the speaker. For example, if something is correct in the south of the country, it does not have to be in the capital. Something that is acceptable in the province, does not have to be acceptable in the plenary hall.

The representative from Finland raised the following point. Are we the cleverest, the smartest? Are we really the ones who should interpret whether the speaker made a mis-

take? Are we sure that he really did? Maybe what sounds ridiculous is really what the speaker wanted to say. So that is a new question. Are we the judges?

Conclusion

Mr McPherson thanks the participants for the presentations and their participation.

He thinks we would all agree that in a comparison of legal and legislative reporting one can clearly see a variation in the degree of verbatim that can be applied, as well as the difference between reporters and editors, and the role that each plays. In judicial or quasi-judicial reporting a person's life of livelihood may depend on ensuring that every word is reflected in the record.

In many legislatures there is a more generous application of verbatim to produce a polished and historical record. Mr McPherson says Karen mentioned the matter in which reporters are able to input gestures or signs in the Netherlands. He would love to be able to do that. It would make interesting reading. When we edit Members or Senators, there is an understanding that what we are doing is for their benefit and for the benefit of others, hopefully making them look less ridiculous, and making the public more clearly understand the debates.

Is one manner of reporting better than the other? Is it our job to eliminate ridiculousness? For some of us it is, for others it is contrary to the principles of an impartial record. Mr McPherson finds the discussion on how to apply these different perspectives and how the rules are applied in different regions interesting.

There does seem to be a shift toward a stricter verbatim product for political, technological and financial expediency.However, he suspects that the discussion of the acceptable level of verbatim transcription and its ramifications will be a discussion for the IPRS and other organizations for years to come.

Ms Horlings hopes that Mr McPherson will be able to join the meetings next year in Ghent.

The program of the second day will change because of the absence of Mr Fabrizio Verruso. An altered agenda will be distributed.

(End of day one)

In what way can hiring of external freelance reporting agencies/freelance reporters be a solution for parliamentary reporting offices to better cope with work peaks?

workshop lead by Ms Patti Calabro

Introduction by Ms Patti Calabro

The program of the day is changed. There will be a specific format with 12 minute segments. I do not wish to hurt anyone's feelings, but we will have a time clock. When the stopwatch announces, whether you are midsentence or complete, it will be time to leave the stage. That applies to me as well, so I will be the first to go perhaps. There is a schedule of who will present first. If the first twelve minutes comes close to an end, the next speaker must be prepared with whatever item they plan to show or discuss and come to the side of the stage to keep this moving along.

Remarks of Fabrizio Verruso (presented by Ms Patti Calabro)

Traditionally parliaments, as other businesses, are staffed with competent and well trained individuals. Shorthand writers, steno typists and re-speakers are recruited for delivering the transcripts of parliamentary speeches.

In Fabrizio's environment the reporting department works with the general-secretariat, the accounting and personal departments. To refresh your memories: Fabrizio is from Palermo, Sicily.

Evaluation of applicants starts with determining language skill, commitment to the purpose of the department and compatibility with future co-workers. Finally an assessment of shorthand skill, if applicable. Nowadays at least two reasons support hiring extra or freelance reporters. It is less expensive to utilize freelancers for plenary sessions. Training costs are minimal or non-existent because the vender supplies trained staff.

Fabrizio will participate in the future. At that time he will have an opportunity to address this subject again with the participants, break out and than have your ideas presented to the group.

Recently Fabrizio conducted a brief survey on practises in this matter. For our Finish and German colleagues: you may wish to comment on this information when you all break into your sessions later on.

In the Finnish Parliament the reporting activities are carried out by permanent staff consisting of full-time and part-time employees. Occasionally some external reporters or typists are hired on an hourly basis, mostly to fill in for permanent staff in case of holidays, sick leave and so on. Basically when there is a work peak everyone works longer days and the hours are compensated later. Since full-time reporters work every day in any case, they are compensated with overtime salary or extra holiday for the hours that exceed the normal weekly office hours.

At the German Bundestag external freelance reporters are normally recruited for the verbatim reporting of meetings of the committees of inquiry. These meetings are recorded stenographically in full and take place in parallel to plenary sittings, during which all of the parliamentary shorthand reporters are deployed to draw up the minutes of plenary proceedings. There, since the shorthand writers service does not have enough employees to cope with its peak work loads in sitting weeks, it is necessary to call on the services of external personal, both reporters and assistants. They are contracted to work alongside the divisions in house staff. Like in Germany, in some parliaments the internal staff takes care of the training of freelancers who have scientific qualifications and excellent skills in shorthand. But they may have no parliamentary reporting experience. In this case cooperation will be realized not only after the reporting activity, but before the work is carried out by the training of those who will be involved in this task.

Fabrizio would ask you to consider and talk in groups about the following questions:

- Is there in your parliament any experience of freelance reporting in the past or now?
- Which is in your opinion the main reason for which your administration decided for an external cooperation in reporting? Only costs, or the difficulties to recruit new reporters?
- What are the controversial aspects with the external agencies or freelance reporters? And what are the benefits from this cooperation?
- What about the average delivery time of transcriptions?
- From 1 to 10, can you judge, together with your colleagues, the "value" of this experience?

Essentially, Fabrizio's asks: what is the benefit to having extra staff not on the pay role, come in to fill in at times of need?

The German participant gives the following information about freelance reporting in the German parliament

External freelance reporting in the Shorthand Writers' Service of the German Bundestag

As prescribed by the Rules of Procedure, the core duty of the Shorthand Writers' Service of the German Bundestag is to draw up a stenographic record of every plenary sitting.

This record is made available to the Members of the German Bundestag, the members of the German Federal Government, the Members of the Bundesrat and the general public –

in particular the media – as a printed publication. Since 1996, it has also been available in electronic form on the lnternet/Bundestag Intranet.

The Bundestag has established 22 permanent committees, which meet for approximately two to four hours each sitting week (approx. 22 sitting weeks per year). In addition to this, there is a range of other bodies such as study commissions, commissions on constitutional matters and committees of inquiry. Two committees of inquiry have been established so far in the current electoral term: the Committee of lnquiry into the Gorleben Nuclear Waste Disposal Site and the Kunduz Committee of lnquiry.

For reasons of capacity, the stenographic recording of committees and other bodies of the German Bundestag is concentrated on interviews of witnesses by committees of inquiry and hearings of experts on urgent or high-profile legislative projects. Here too, verbatim minutes are drawn up.

In addition to this, meetings of committees and other bodies are recorded stenographically only in very special, exceptional cases. lt is one of the duties of the committee secretariats to minute these meetings, work that is carried out by the committee secretary themselves or another senior official in the secretariat.

Since the meetings of the committees of inquiry have to be recorded stenographically in full and take place in parallel to plenary sittings, during which all the parliamentary short-hand writers are deployed drawing up the minutes of plenary proceedings, the Shorthand Writers' Service employs external freelance reporters. According to the delivery of the minutes in a correct form they have to be flexible. Usually they attend the committee meetings on Thursday and send their parts of the minutes till Monday, 8.00 a.m. On Monday their work is revised by internal staff: by revisers and very experienced reporters.

The technical system used for distributing a report

presentation by Mr Petr Peňáz (Teiresiás, Head of the support centre for students with special needs) of the Masaryk University

At the university there are approximately one hundred deaf users who rely on our services. What we do is not the usual speech-to-text-reporting. What we do, is similar to parliamentary situation, because we offer the report to many people. It is not always easy to have the report on the main screen. We have to be as flexible as possible in distributing the report to many persons being present in one room. That is why we developed a certain technology. Christoph Damm, representant of our technical team, will present this technology.

Christoph Damm summarizes the system as follows. There are different use cases of speech-to-text reporting. At the university this is primarily targeted to the deaf and hearing-impaired students. The user misses a lot of side information. For a student it is important to not just follow what a speaker says, but also to where he is pointing to. Speech-to-text reporters face the same problem. Our approach was to connect to the speaker. In today's ages everyone has a smart phone. You can use that as a screen, and change the settings to your need. A speech-to-text reporter makes a real-time transcript of a speech, which is then broadcasted in the network. The user can connect to this broadcast. So the system has two components: a sender and a receiver. The sender is connected to the speech-to-text reporter. The receiver can follow the reporting in real-time with, for instance, his smart phone or iPad, according to his preferences. It is also possible to view real-time text reporting in more than one language, like Czech and English. We also use a polygraph.

Veyboard

presentation by Ms Marianne van Gool (interpreter for the deaf)

Let me first introduce myself. I am Marianne van Gool and I own an office that provides secretarial services, speech-to-text interpretation, and Veyboard training. I use the Veyboard in all aspects of my work and helped to develop both the Dutch and English version of the training method 'Getting started with Veyboard'. In this presentation I will explain to you the basic principles of the Veyboard.

The Veyboard consists of a butterfly shaped group of keys, on which a number of letters and symbols are printed. At the bottom left and right are two larger keys with the print 'H Capital' and 'No Space'. On the right is a keypad with function keys. In this presentation I concentrate on the butterfly keys.
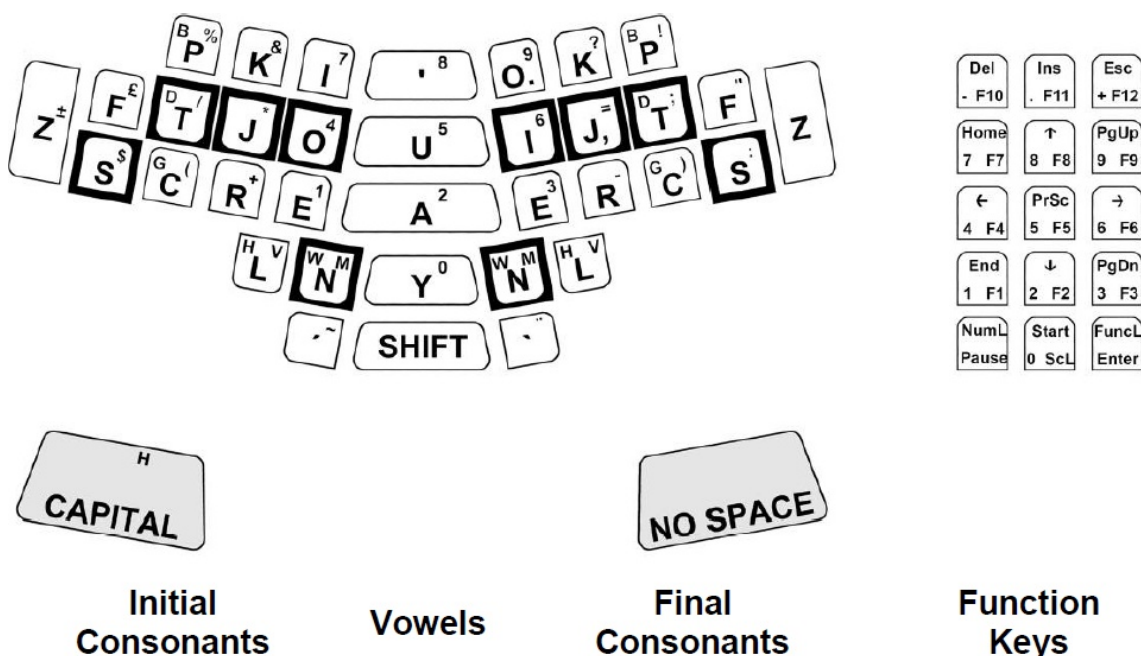
The main Veyboard principle is that you type in syllables, not character by character. The first thing you do is splitting up a word in syllables. A word like 'breakfast', which consists of two syllables, is typed in two strokes: 'break' and 'fast'. For each stroke, you press all the letters of one syllable at the same time. Since you need less keystrokes to type a word, you can type much faster than on a classical keyboard.

To make typing in syllables possible, the Veyboard has three fields: a field on the left for initial consonants, a field in the middle for vowels and a field on the right for final consonants. This means that you will find the same letters more than once on a Veyboard.

As an example consider the word 'pit', which consists of an initial consonant 'p', a vowel 'i' and a final consonant 't'. To type this word, I press the P-key on the left, the I-key in the

middle and the T-key on the right, all at the same time. The Veyboard software then produces the word 'tip' on the screen, since it builds syllables in the same way as the English language is read; from left to right. So when I want to type the word 'tip' – which has the same letters, but in a different sequence – then I press the T-key on the left, the I-key in the middle and the P-key on the right, again all at the same time.

Now consider a word with more syllables, such as 'letter'. I first type the syllable 'let' in the way I explained above and after that I type the second syllable 'ter'. Note that a space is added between the two syllables. The Veyboard adds an automatic space before and after each syllable. In general this is a good thing, because English texts contain a lot of monosyllabic words. For instance consider the sentence:

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He is not in the mood for going to the pub with his friends
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This sentence contains 14 words, 13 of which consist of a single syllable.

Still we do have words consisting of multiple syllables, so we must be able to suppress this automatic space. This is the purpose of the big 'No Space' key. So to form the word 'letter' without a space we first type the syllable 'let' and after that we type the second syllable 'ter' together with the 'No Space' key. This is not an extra stroke! So on Veyboard, spaces are handled exactly the opposite as on Qwerty; on Qwerty you press a key to get a space, while on Veyboard you press a key to get rid of a space.

Since most letters appear twice on the Veyboard it was not possible to give every letter its own key. This is why some letters are created by a combination of keys. The letters on the Veyboard in small print above on the left side (b, d, g, h and w) are made in combination with the J-key. And you use the R-key to form the letters on the Veyboard in small print above on the right side (v and m). So to type the word 'mud' I must press not 3, but 5 keys, because for the letters 'm' and 'd' there are no separate keys in the Veyboard.
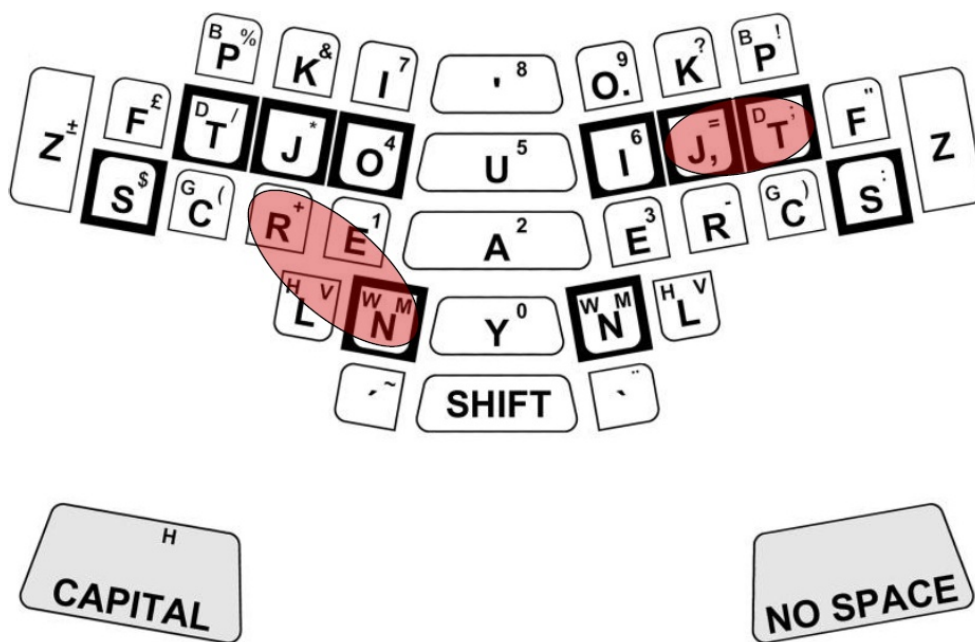
Now you know how to create all individual letters, except the q (which is made by pressing c and f at the same time) and the x (which is made by pressing k and z at the same time).

Finally, let's type a slightly more complex word like 'spent'. I can type this word by pressing the S and P keys on the left, the E-key in the middle and the N and T keys on the right, all at the same time. If I type multiple keys within a single field at the same time, like two initial consonants 's' and 'p' in this example, then the Veyboard will put these letters in the sequence which is most commonly used within the English language. In this case the 's' always precedes the 'p', since 'sp' at the start of a syllable is much more common than 'ps'. The same principle holds for the final consonants. So in our example the 'n' precedes the 't', since 'nt' at the end of a syllable is much more common than 'tn'.

Incidentally it is also possible to type many of the less common letter combinations in one stroke. For example the initial consonant combination 'ps' for the word 'psycho' can be typed in one stroke using the P and Z keys on the left. It is not possible to type the final consonant combination 'tn' in one stroke since this combination does not occur at the end of a syllable in the English language.

This concludes my explanation of the basic principles of Veyboard. If you would like to know more of the Veyboard, please do not hesitate to contact me.

The present situation of Korean stenography

presentation by Mr Seung Chul Lee (Korea Stenography Association)

Before I start, I would like to give you all some small souvenirs.

Now it is my honour to introduce the present situation of Korean stenography on behalf of Kyung Sik Lee, the chief director of the Korea Stenography Association. Maybe you already know him. He says hello to all the IPRS members. I would also like to introduce the Korean delegation. Hak Sun Kim is an editor in the Stenography Department of the National Assembly. Myung Soon Jung is Section chief in the Stenography Department. Finally, Goang Sik Seo, from the Kyongnam Province local assembly, is in charge of the proceedings of the local assembly.

I am freelancer and also an adviser to the Korean Stenography Association. I was a stenographer. Now I have retired from the National Assembly.

Now, let me introduce the present situation of Korean stenography. In Korea, stenography began to be used for keeping records of the National Assembly from the year 1948, three years after World War Ⅱ. The Korea National Assembly, the Constitutional Parliament, has begun in that year, and we stenographers took notes of all proceedings from the opening day till now.

Concerning the shorthand technology, we began with pen shorthand, but from the late 1980s machine shorthand was introduced. At first, there were two kinds of style, regular PC keyboard and chord keyboard style, but now the Computer Aided Steno-machine (CAS) is the main stream of machine shorthand in Korea. CAS is a popular brand name in Korea. Almost all of the stenographers in Korea now use CAS.

From the early 1980s the demand for stenographers became slow. But around the late 1980s, the local autonomy was carried into effect and the demand for stenographers for the local assembly rose quickly. At the same time, the demand for transcription services in the courts and the demand for captioning and subtitling in broadcasting companies increased rapidly. Consequently, the gradual decrease of the demand for stenographers in the early 1980s was reversed, in late 1980s, to rapid increase, with the introduction of CAS, the new shorthand technology!

Stenographers in the National Assembly of Korea record the Plenary Sessions and the meetings of the 18 standing committees. For the Plenary Session, House Steering Committee, and the Special Committee on the Budget and Accounts they make verbatim records. They deliver the records on the next day, early morning. For the other standing committees and special committees, they also make verbatim records, but the delivery of the records takes 2 to 5 days after the closing of the meetings. In the National Assembly records are produced in a remote manner, not in real-time manner.

We have about 1700 stenographers and 3300 students who have learned or are learning machine shorthand in Korea. 1700 stenographers are working in various fields, such as in the National Assembly, the local assembly, the court, and the other public and private insti-

tutions. Especially, about 80 stenographers using CAS are working for the captioning and subtitling service in the broadcasting companies. They produce captions in real-time.

I have read a writing of the President, Fausto Ramondelli, from the E-news 52. "From the President's Desk" was the title. He puts the emphasis on "Automatic speech recognition technology", and "Parliament reporting" as the expecting themes of the 2013 Intersteno Congress in Ghent, Belgium. These two outstanding problems raise the same questions in Korea. The rapidly increasing workloads of stenographers and the budget saving trends lead us to consider another new technology to cope with these increasing parliamentary reporting workload with insufficient budget. So we have deep concern with the speech recognition technology and the other new technologies taking notes more effectively. Today we saw presentations of new technologies. I am very interested in these technologies.

As I mentioned before, there are 1700 stenographers working in Korea. But, it is also true that they neither have so much satisfactory income, nor have much chances to promote themselves in their institutions. These make the young stenographers' working period short, and that is why we can see little young male stenographers in this working field today. But the demand for the stenographers is steady, and more than 3000 students are learning stenography now in Korea. So, we still have hope in this working field.

Now, I am closing my presentation and I would like to address my special thanks to our Czech friends, Board member Ms Rian Schwarz, IPRS Steering Committee Chair Ms Lida Horlings, Ms Marlene Rijkse, and Ms Patti Calabro for allowing me to make a speech in this IPRS meeting.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Ms Patti Calabro thanks Mr Seung Chul Lee for the gifts.

Can Virtual Reporting be a solution for freelance (court) reporters to get more jobs covered?

workshop lead by Ms Patti Calabro

Introduction to the workshop by Ms Calabro

We will use the same format as yesterday, with a brief presentation about a topic and four questions to discuss in the four groups.

As I researched a little about this subject I realized we are talking about several types of reporters: litigation support, parliamentary reporters and reporters who maybe just using a CART (Computer Assisted Real-Time) system or they maybe simply working in large venues reporting or captioning presentations, conventions, religious rallies. So it really does cover a wide spectrum of reporters and the opportunity for virtual reporting.

Now a little about me. My name is Patti Calabro. I am from the United States, from Tucson, Phoenix, Arizona. I do have several certifications within the National Court Reporters Association. I am certified in California. I hold my registered professional reporters designation. I am also a court reporter that is licensed in Arizona. I am a certified reporting instructor and I also have my masters degree in information recourses and library science.

I am practically seven days a week in my office, if I am not out on a job. I work on my Diamante stenograph machine. Unlike the machine shown on the back, I can press down all of the keys at the same time. It's more similar to play on a piano when I write on that machine.

I am also a broadcast captioner and a CART provider. At my home office I also use a system for captioning. Many of my assignments are at night. It is safer and easier to be in my home office. Then I can just drop into bed when I am exhausted after the job.

Possible but not all inclusive are the following types of virtual reporting: telephonic, video-conference, Skype. To give a background for those of you who may not be familiar or conversant with Skype: it is listed as a software application which allows users to make video and voice calls and chat over the Internet. It is free, there are no long distance charges. You need the latest version of Skype, a web cam and a fast Internet connection.

WebEx is another system. It is a Cisco company product. It is on-demand meeting, web conferencing, video conferencing. Yesterday WebEx used for the presentation of D'Arcy McPherson and Lida Horlings. Finally, as to video conferencing, this is a communications technology integrating video and audio to connect users anywhere in the world. Again, you need a web cam, microphone, video screen, sound system and connection to a communication system.

There are two other options: the LiveNote Stream and StreamText. I use stream text frequently when I am virtually reporting at a, say, Fish and Wildlife Service presentation. I am not a participant. However, the information, the audio and video, is provide through StreamText.

I think the most important thing in my research has been the Internet connection. That can make or break any type of communication. And, of course, the faster the better. Good microphones are always important, because you are not going to do very well if the audio is garbled.

So what is the need to get more jobs covered. These are the types of question that we are going to talk about today. When we are finished talking in our groups, we will discuss what we have found and, hopefully, get a shortlist of best practices and the best things to use in certain situations.

I mentioned that we can cover several areas of virtual reporting. As I was thinking about this, one of the obstacles that I can came up with in my mind, since much of my work is litigation support, is that there are some legal restrictions to virtual reporting. For example, in Arizona we are allowed by our courts to do a telephonic deposition. We can swear in a witness who may be in Florida or in another country. But not every state has the same law, so it would be important for me and for my lawyer-client to know that when I give an oath to a witness, that oath will stand up in the jurisdiction where that case is filed. Otherwise, my client would have to hire a reporter wherever the witness is located. Again, the obstacles are Internet quality, telephone quality, and camera quality.

Now we can separate in groups and discuss. I look forward to what you all have to say.

The following feedback was given by the different groups:

Group 1 (Patty Calabro)

(The group is comprised of representatives from Poland, Korea, The Netherlands, and the US.)

In Poland virtual reporting is not really needed, although they do virtual transcription from the Parliament. They upload their audio files to a website. It is controlled there. It can be transcribed remotely by freelancers.

In The Netherlands it is audio only, not machine or pen shorthand. They prefer to be on-site. So it is recorded in-house. It can be transcribed elsewhere but there is no virtual reporting from off-site.

In the US we do some virtual things, because we have many different ways of making the record, different jurisdictions that require a record. This is largely determined by the distance between the places where reporters and makers of the record are located, and where the job has to happen. For instance, if you have a very small town and the lawyers or the

participants in the meeting live some distance away, and it would take a long way to travel, it would make sense to use virtual reporting and recording.

In Korea they have enough reporters to cover the work locally. Virtual reporting is not really used there yet. There are few needs and financial benefits in Korea.

In terms of marketing opportunities. If there is no need and no financial advantage, then these would be small. Although to the end of our discussion we were saying: if the benefit of virtual is that if you do have a lot of people locally capable of performing the service, but maybe even outside of the country there is a need, you could provide that service over the Internet virtually. That would provide financial benefit both to the people who need the service and those who can perform the service.

What are the obstacles? There are some legal obstacles, because of sensitive material, the security of the information, in doing things virtually. Skype will be allowed in some countries and in some situations, but not in others. Having the confidential material transcribed or captured off-site may not be permitted in some jurisdictions. Certainly that is true in the US. In The Netherlands the police investigations and interviews are mostly done in the building on equipment that is owned by the police. It is not permitted to do virtual recording off-site.

We talked about audio quality and Internet quality. These are very limiting factor; if you cannot hear it, you cannot capture it. So in many cases it is better to have someone in the room, capturing the audio, whether that is on digital audio equipment, by pen or by machine shorthand.

In some large countries the distance between where recorders and reporters are available will drive the need for virtual reporting. Disability laws in some countries will increase the opportunities for marketing and may increase the need for people with our skill to provide these services and may increase the demand for virtual services.

Group 2 (Petr Peňáz)

(The group is comprised of representatives from Finland, The Netherlands, Germany, and the Czech Republic.)

For parliamentary or legal purposes there normally is audio or video registration which is transcribed inside the same institution, and no virtual environment is used. We, from the Czech Republic, commented on speech-to-text-reporting in universities and other schools. For us this is the only way to survive.

A lot of difficulties have been described. On the one side we depend on it, on the other side there are a lot practical obstacles. For educational purposes it is not the same as for legal purposes, but basically parliament is by definition based on speeches. Education, hopefully, is not. For educational purposes it is much more about reality, such as pictures and documents, and the result, in order to be readable, usable, should be linked to those pieces of reality. If I have to make such links as a reporter, I need a lot of information within my virtual environment. Quality is really the main issue. How many channels do I have? How much information can I perceive as a reporter? All that sort of information can help a re-

porter to get oriented, and the user as well, by observing the report. Skype, for example, does not have the quality, so this is not used on a regular basis. There are other technical environments which may a much better quality than Skype. Then there are the legal difficulties, regarding the sensitivity of confidential information. It is different from one country to the other.

Concerning the marketing, it has been said that this is very important, but our group consists of small countries. Still, it is important. There are not so many speech-to-text-reporters, after all. Sometimes the user or the client is far away and sometimes the reporter is. In our country we have to use all speech-to-text-reporters in the country to be at the service of our university, independent of where they are. In order to do that, a virtual environment is absolutely necessary. So, yes, we must go that way, but the demands and the requirements are so high that we still perceive a lot of limitations.

Group 3 (Gea Duister)

(The group is comprised of representatives from Korea, Finland, Germany, and Poland.)

In Finland the first part is done on-site, and then the text and the audio are send to the rest of the group to make the text complete. It is also because of a lack of office space that this is done remotely. We were talking about the equipment used. Everybody needs to use their equipment. This is not provided by parliament or an organization. We talked about a server. Will all the information be on a server or in the cloud? In Finland and in Poland everything is on the server. You need a connection with the server. If the server breaks down, you are out of a job. Then you have to wait for a solution.

At this moment we do not see any financial benefits in our countries. We are not paid more when we do the job remotely or less when we do it on-site. Poland uses a remote sign language interpreter. In Germany the sign language interpreter was on-site. In Finland there is sign language during question hours, and the interpreter is in the parliament building.

We talked about quality. You need to have a good telephone and Internet connection. We did not start on the marketing discussion yet, as there simply is not a growing demand.

Patty Calabro thanks everybody for participating in the new format and reminds everyone that any recommendations and questions are welcome.

Presentation of the Report of the IPRS meeting Paris 2011

presentation by Ms Rian Schwarz

The report erroneously states that IPRS has an annual budget of € 1000. IPRS has a budget of € 1500 for two years.

Ms Lida Horlings proposes to change "In Ms Horlings' view, priorities for the steering committee are the following." to "In the view of IPRS and confirmed by the Intersteno Board."

With these changes the report of the IPRS meeting Paris 2011 is approved.

Presentation on IPRS activities

presentation by Ms Rian Schwarz

Ms Schwarz urges everyone to register on Facebook and on the IPRS website, so they do not miss important information.

She introduces the new member of the Steering Committee: Mr Geert Bonte. He could not come to Prague, but he will come to Ghent in 2013.

Plenary discussion about the future of IPRS

discussion lead by Ms Lida Horlings

There have been many activities in the last six months. Does anyone ever read the IPRS website on http://www.iprs-info.org/? I see many people do. We also have a newsletter. In our latest newsletter, from May 2012, we made a distinction between IPRS meetings at Intersteno congresses and meeting inbetween congresses, like this one in Prague. The newsletter said that in the IPRS congress meetings we focus more on presentations, also by external experts et cetera, and that on the inbetween IPRS meetings we focus more on workshops, as we have done this weekend. An important question for the Intersteno congress and the IPRS meetings in Ghent is what you all would prefer. Presentations? Workshops? Please tell us, because a call for papers for the congress will be launched in a few weeks, with the closing date end of January. That also regards the IPRS sessions. If IPRS does not want presentations but just workshops, we have to know this beforehand, because then we do not schedule presentations.

The following suggestions were given:

Marianne van Gool: A combination of demonstrations, workshops, and presentations.

Petr Peňáz: Fewer workshops and fewer questions to discuss about.

Patty Calabro: A demonstration to start a discussion, with more time to prepare the discussion to overcome language obstacles and get more in-depth discussions.

Ms Horlings explains that there is only limited time, as there are also other activities during congresses. Theoretically a whole day could be organized with IPRS activities. But this requires volunteers. Ms Schwarz asks anyone who is willing to help to send her an e-mail.

Ms Horlings says that the functionality of the website will be further developed. She urges everyone to register. There is a database with the contact information, the working environment, and the expertise of members.

Ms Patty Calabro calls upon everyone to "think out of the box" to share information outside the regular sessions, for instance, before the start of the day.

A proposal is made to discuss about the topics of workshops and to download presentations in advance to get more effective workshops. This will be considered for the next time. Programmes are published on the IPRS website and on Facebook. After publication everyone can start a discussion on Facebook, but please in English, so everyone can follow and join in. The English does not have to be perfect, as long as the message gets across.

A suggestion is made to conduct a survey about technological developments in relationship to parliamentary/court reporting. A similar survey was conducted for World E-Parliament. However, IPRS does not have the means to do this.

Closing remarks

by Ms Rian Schwarz

Ms Schwarz thanks everyone for attending and participating in the sessions. She wishes everyone a safe trip and hopes to see all participants again next year in Ghent. The (tentative) programme can be read on http://www.intersteno2013.org/.

(End of day two)