

Newsletter  
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# WASLI

WORLD ASSOCIATION OF  
SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS



Committed to the development of the profession of sign language interpreting worldwide

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### WASLI News:

WASLI is proud to announce the selection of speakers for the 2015 WASLI conference. Watch the exciting video announcement [here](#).

The conference will be held in Istanbul, Turkey from July 22-25, 2015 so save those dates and start planning now. Our theme will be "Human Rights: Where do Interpreters Fit in?"



Subscribe to our Youtube channel [here](#) or check the website for updates.

An important announcement from our WASLI President:

Dear National Associations of Sign Language Interpreters:

We are writing to you to seek your help in appointing a European regional representative for WASLI. Our national members are free to nominate persons to this position, and the nominations will remain open until December 15, 2012.

The person selected will represent the views of European interpreters within discussions at WASLI board meetings, share information from WASLI to the region, share experiences with other regions on matters of interest, and will support the overall aims and objectives of WASLI. WASLI and WFD have recently established the Terms of Reference for a task group that will be formed to look at how to screen qualified International Sign Interpreters for United Nations events. A regional representative from Europe would be very useful as IS interpreters work so frequently in Europe. We are also planning the WASLI 2015 conference in Turkey, and again, a regional representative would be helpful to us in planning that conference. Nominations can be forwarded in English or IS to [president@wasli.org](mailto:president@wasli.org)

Thanks so much, Debra Russell, WASLI President



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[www.wasli.org](http://www.wasli.org)

### Adjustments to WASLI's regions

According to WASLI's Governing Documents, WASLI has the following Regions in which Regional Representatives have been appointed: Africa, Asia, Australasia & Oceania, Balkans, Europe, North America, Latin America, and Transcaucasia & Central Asia.

The Transcaucasia and Central Asia WASLI region includes the following countries, which are former Soviet republics: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and the Ukraine.

At a meeting of the Eastern Europe and Middle Asia Regional Secretariat of the WFD (EEMARS WFD), held in October 2011, EEMARS WFD members announced two proposals for consideration by the WASLI Board:

1. Moldova proposed to move themselves from the Europe WASLI Region to the Region which is closer to them 'spiritually and geographically' with the Ukraine and Belarus (Moldova is also a former Soviet republic, sharing territorial borders with the Ukraine on the north, south and east).
2. Russia proposed that 'Transcaucasia and Central Asia' WASLI Region be renamed as 'Eastern Europe and Middle Asia', as some countries and territories (Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, the European part of Russia) are geographically located in Eastern Europe.

According to the WASLI Governing Documents (2006), namely, CHAPTER 7 THE EXECUTIVE BOARD Article 2 REGIONS "WASLI will be divided into Regions to be determined and modified by the Board with the approval of the membership." In essence, the ratification must come through WASLI General Meeting process, which will not happen for another 3 years. However, the Executive Board can take proposals to WASLI national members and ask them to do an electronic vote in the years WASLI members are not meeting.

### WASLI EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS' OPINION

EEMARS WFD members' proposals submitted to the WASLI Executive Board members. All WASLI Board members were in favour of the EEMARS WFD recommendations, and expressed the following:

1. They are in favour of renaming 'Transcaucasia and Central Asia' as 'Eastern Europe and Middle Asia'.
2. They are in favour of Moldova being transferred from the Europe WASLI Region to the renamed 'Eastern Europe & Middle Asia' Region.

These points will be voted on by national members in 2013.

Igor Bondarenko  
WASLI Transcaucasia and Central Asia Representative



Igor Bondarenko

Right: Map of the current countries in the region with the proposed Moldova highlighted



## Korean Sign Language courses held in Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in 2011

Since Mrs. Liz Gibson (former WASLI President) visited the DPRK in July 2010, the Korean Federation for the Protection of the Disabled (KFPD) and TOGETHER-Hamhung have concentrated on the development of the profession of Korean Sign Language Interpreters in DPRK. This has resulted in several developments: training of Korean Sign Language (KSL) interpreters; establishing a national service

centre of KSL interpreting, followed by provincial centres; and the foundation of the National Association of the Sign Language Interpreters (NASLI) in DPRK. KSL interpreting is being developed very closely and in parallel with the general work of the Deaf community, particularly the foundation of the National Association of the Deaf of the DPRK and the advancement of deaf education all over the country.

Thanks to the publishing of the Sign Language Dictionary (2005) and the recognition of Korean Sign Language in law (The Protection Of The Person With Disability, adopted June 18, 2003), the DPRK Government and relevant institutions have paid sincere attention to Korean Sign Language. They appreciate and respect the international cooperation of the KFPD with WASLI which began in 2010. In 2011 the first four courses teaching Korean Sign Language outside the eight Deaf Schools of the country have been held.

KFPD made sure that in all four courses Deaf people were present in order to support the learners in their ambition to learn the communication skills to be able to converse with Deaf people in KSL in the future. NAUWU is our abbreviation for the principle of NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US. This NAUWU component made the courses very lively and encouraging especially to the hearing learners.



The purposes of the four training courses were as follows:

- To enable the staff of disability organisations and of governmental organisations to understand the system and application of Korean Sign Language and to acquire an elementary level of active KSL communication with deaf persons;
- To teach KSL to family members, neighbours and friends of deaf people in order to ease everyday communication, make it more enjoyable and encourage participation;
- To start laying the foundation to study the regional variants of KSL and to develop a unified national Korean Sign Language while keeping the current regional variants alive.

WASLI sent a congratulatory letter to KFPD about these courses and expressed the intention to continue to work together.

A closing ceremony of the first two KSL courses was held on 30th March 2011. A Certificate of Participation was given to all learners by the Ambassador of the Embassy of United Kingdom of Great Britain to the DPRK (from which KFPD gratefully received financial support to run the courses). The Ambassador extended his best wishes for the successful implementation of the project and encouraged us all to continue and sustain the KSL projects. His speech was directly interpreted from English into KSL by a KSL interpreter from KFPD.

KFPD expressed deep thanks to the UK Embassy, to the DPRK and to TOGETHER-Hamhung, who supported the course in technical and financial ways. KFPD also expressed its firm determination to strengthen collaboration with the international organisations WFD and WASLI, and with national deaf associations around the world.



## In our Hands Lies the Power to Share

By Nemz Huele Abiday

Philippine National Association of Sign Language Interpreters

The dream of every Filipino sign language interpreter to be unified as one institution and be recognised all over the world was achieved when The Philippine National Association of Sign Language Interpreters (PNASLI) was founded and established on May 21, 2011. This great endeavour is a collaborative effort among all Filipino sign language interpreters in the country, spearheaded by Mr Alfredo D. Celada Jr., CEO of the Philippine Association of Interpreters for Deaf Empowerment (PAIDE).

Mr. Celada together with May Andrada, Michael Potian, Natividad Natividad, Remberto Esposa,

Jr. and Rossana Villanueva initiated the process of establishing PNASLI. Convention meetings were held and the election of officers/board members made Mr. Celada the first PNASLI President.



PNASLI is a unifying national association of sign language interpreters and Deaf relay interpreters with members from all over the Philippines. PNASLI aims to increase the professionalisation of sign language interpreting in the country and ensure that there is full access to information and services for Deaf people through quality interpreting. It's vision-mission is to uphold the highest standards of the sign language interpreting profession in the Philippines in the best interests of sign language interpreters and Deaf consumers.

Interpreters will adhere to the highest standards, observing the PNASLI COE (Code Of Ethics) which are: Professionalism, Non-Discrimination, Accuracy, Sincerity, Loyalty, Impartiality, Confidentiality, Order, Discretion and Education (continuing education).



On May 19, 2012, during its second year, PNASLI held another general assembly meeting and election of officers with the theme “Level Up! Taking professionalisation of Sign Language interpreters in the Philippines to the next level”. It was attended by sign language interpreters, Deaf/hearing members and representatives. A new set of officers was elected, with Mr. Celada returning as PNASLI President on his 2<sup>nd</sup> term. The new set of officers are the following: Marie Therese Bustos, Natividad Natividad, John Xander Baliza, Jun Jun Sevilla, Liza Presnillo, Reiner Blas, Yvette Bernardo, Rey Alfred Lee (Hearing and Deaf Board Members) Raphael Domingo, Mackie Calbay, Myra Medrana, (Deaf Advisory Council Members), Rossana Villanueva, Jennel Cheng, Emner Palma, Demelyn Chato, and Hilton John Edrial (Cluster Coordinators). Mr. Celada says, “One must have a keen interest to learn sign language, having in mind the goal to serve the deaf with much patience, dedication, commitment and open mindedness”.

But we don't stop here. The journey of living this advocacy continues. With dedication, commitment and great value for service, we will continue to flourish. Together, as an association, with a common vision-mission and profession, all Filipino sign language interpreters will always have a great place in this country and the world. We can do great things. In our hands lies the power to share.



## European Student Sign Language Interpreters (ESOSLI) conference 2012

**By Abigail Hiester,  
English- British Sign Language Trainee Interpreter**



On 17<sup>th</sup> May the first ever ESOSLI conference was held in Zwickau, Germany. The two-day conference opened with 160 Deaf and hearing student sign language interpreters attending from 10 European countries with over 100 homemade cakes to keep us going!

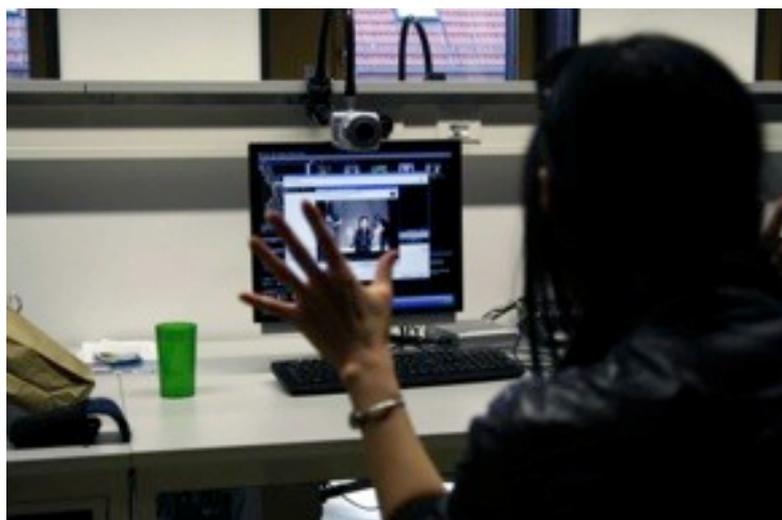
Friday morning kicked off with a welcome from the ESOSLI team, a keynote presentation by Robert Lee and Peter Llewellyn-Jones on ‘Deconstructing and Reconstructing Role’ and a short speech by Lourdes Calle, a member of European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters (EFSLI). The programme was jam-packed with a good range of topics. The sessions I attended included: ‘Introducing German Sign Language’, ‘International Sign Language’, ‘Deaf Interpreters’, and ‘Interpreting Theatre Performances’. (Other sessions included; ‘Ethical decisions in Interpreting’, ‘Interpreters as Employees and Co-workers’, ‘Crossing Borders Linguistic strategies’). The programme was complimented with tours of the campus and city, a signing choir performance pantomime (panto) and then a party on the final evening. Having all been absorbed by our various degree courses, being immersed in this intense international experience on a linguistic, cultural and professional level was inspiring.

On the Saturday, students were asked to create presentations about interpreting in their countries. Most spoke about their university courses with common themes focusing on sharing differences in funding, qualification pathways and the recognition of national sign languages. There was a lot to be learnt from each other regarding best practice for interpreter training such as the benefits of internship opportunities, exchange programmes and specialised modules. As the single representative of the UK, I gave a presentation on the interpreters' protests against the new court interpreter framework in the UK. For everyone present, it brought home the impact the recession is having in the UK and the international knock-on effects. Though there wasn't much time to discuss issues raised in the different presentations, it was great to have an atmosphere of solidarity and there was plenty of free time to continue discussions. In general, the presentations demonstrated the range of standards of training programmes, accreditation levels and attitudes to interpreter training and disparity in career prospects and mentoring opportunities.

On Sunday, there was a presentation by some of the Deaf interpreters at the conference which was stimulating and many of the participants were impressed by the standard of Deaf interpreter training in Germany. There was a call for more research into the cognitive processes which occur for Deaf interpreters and techniques to support team interpreting between Deaf and hearing interpreters such as co-worker feeding and positioning.

It was fantastic having conversations in English, German spoken language, German sign language and International sign language and a hint of French and ASL, often jumping between all of these in one conversation. It was exciting to learn similarities and differences in our sign languages.

The future of ESOSLI...though there will be no conference in 2013, plans were being put into place to run the event in 2014 if support from other European countries can be found.



Above: Trying out the facilities.

Right: The Dom (Cathedral) St Marien in Zwickau, the small town with a lot of history.



## **A student's perspective on the ever changing field of interpreting in Finland**

**by Marko Kortesoalo, Finland**

There has been training for sign language interpreters (SLI) since 1962 in one form or another in Finland. Since 2001 Diaconia University of Applied Sciences (Diak) (with one campus in Turku where I study), and Humak University of applied sciences (with one campus in Helsinki and one in Kuopio) have taken care of training new SLIs for the field. In 2003 all of the training programmes were upgraded to a higher vocational level, but the contents of the programmes differ. I'm not that aware of the differences between the schools' curricula, but I do know that Diak recently updated their curriculum to meet the challenges that changes in the field of sign language interpreting have caused.

Roughly two years ago *The Social Insurance Institution of Finland* (Kela) took charge of providing interpretation services for the whole of Finland. Earlier the municipalities of each Deaf person had to provide the interpretation from their own budgets, which quite understandably caused a real and regional inequality between Deaf people, especially in a country as sparsely populated as Finland. The main goal of the change was to increase equality between all Deaf people regardless of where they lived. Before the shift there was a new law passed that ensured the right for interpretation services for all disabled people needing interpretation in practically any part of their lives. The amount of interpreting hours stayed unchanged (minimum of 180 hours per year for the Deaf and people with speaking disability, 360 hours per year for the Deaf-blind). This caused one small but significant change to a Deaf person's use of an interpreter. In practice a Deaf person ordering an interpreter can no longer request a particular interpreter but instead would have to settle for the first available interpreter on the bidding list.

How do all these changes in the field of interpreting services affect us SLI students? Since the body in charge of organising the interpretation services is a national institute, all the service providers have to be legitimate companies. This has meant the death of freelance interpreting; now every interpreter has to either be employed or start their own business. Students seeking an internship can no longer rely on having large social circles and knowing several interpreters as one still has to file an official application and compete with other applicants for the placement. The change obviously affects graduating SLIs already. A national institute has to follow certain procedures when choosing the partners in cooperation, in this case firms offering sign language interpretation. Kela did invite firms to bid, and ranked them accordingly. However Kela has the right to hold the next bidding within a certain timeframe if it so chooses. From a graduating SLI's point of view this means that since the firms are not allowed to recruit new employees before the beginning of the new bidding period, some classes of graduating SLIs are in danger of being unemployed until the next bidding period takes place.

Along with the national harmonisation of interpreting services, people with speaking impairments have started to become conscious of their own right for interpretation as well. As I mentioned, Diak updated their curriculum to respond to the current needs and I'm in the first class to follow the new curriculum. After two years of studying together we are divided into two different groups: the first group is going to graduate as sign language interpreters and the other as interpreters for people with speaking disabilities; experts in augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) and teaching signs. The two groups will continue to have some studies in common, but the focus will be on these separate options. So far vocational schools have offered a specialist vocational qualification for AAC interpreters, but now Diak will in a few years' time graduate the first AAC interpreters with a further vocational qualification, which you can only get from a university of applied sciences.



WASLI board members at the efsli conference in Sienna  
R-L Etsuko, Susan, Deb and Selman (on the laptop)

## WANT TO READ MORE?

A deaf teacher of sign language from England spent three weeks as a volunteer in Iran. She also attended Iran's inaugural interpreting conference. Read the full story [here](#).

## SHARE YOUR NEWS WITH THE WORLD!

Please send updates, announcements, articles and photos from your part of the world for the next WASLI newsletter.

Please email them to: [newsletter@wasli.org](mailto:newsletter@wasli.org)

### IMPORTANT

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