



WASLI Newsletter

WASLI is committed to the advancement of sign language interpreting world wide

NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this particular newsletter takes us to a region of Southeast Europe known as the Balkans.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balkans>

The WASLI President was invited to participate in a forum where Deaf representatives and sign language interpreters were in attendance. Following is a report from that forum which shows just how much has been happening and thoughts on how was WASLI is able to support interpreters from this region.

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Zane Hema (Editor)

WASLI AT DEAF BALKANS FORUM

WASLI visit to the Balkan Deaf Forum (11 – 15th December 2006)



The Balkan Deaf Forum was organised by the Project Officers of the Finnish Association of the Deaf project (Colin Allen & Susan Emerson) with support from the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I was invited to attend to represent WASLI, make a formal presentation, and to participate in the discussion and meetings, which took place throughout the week, in order that those attending could take the opportunity to ask questions and engage in further discussion on the topic of sign language interpreting.

The situation regarding interpreting in the countries of the Balkans is as follows:

Bosnia Herzegovina

In 2005 a group of 15 CODAs with signing skills were trained by the Deaf Association in a 4-week course of 1.5 hours each week; an informal working group has been established by these interpreters. The Code of Ethics used in Slovenia is used as a model for this group. 2 interpreters work full time in local Deaf associations, but most work voluntarily. Those who work on an ad hoc basis for the court, or interpret on TV are paid by these agencies. In Republica Srpska, there are said to be 37 interpreters, trained using the Serbian model – but only 7 of these have the highest level (simultaneous interpreting) certificate

Macedonia

There are said to be 30 interpreters, of whom 10 are said by the Deaf Association to be of a standard they feel happy with; they can earn 16 Euro per day (\$20.70 US). There is no formal training.

Serbia/Montenegro

32 people hold the Certificate of Professional Simultaneous Sign Language Interpreting; the training currently consists of a 7 days seminar (5 days teaching sign language and 2 days assessment), which has been offered by the Deaf Association since 1997. A few local Deaf Associations employ a Secretary/interpreter full time; most of the interpreters work voluntarily, but there are 4 who work on a rota system interpreting TV News. 2 of the interpreters are travelling to Kosovo once a month to participate in the training programme there, and are keen to establish their own interpreter association. They plan to try and attend the WASLI conference in Spain, if they can find sponsorship, even if it means travelling by bus!

Turkey

There are 60 interpreters in Turkey, all of whom are CODAs. There is no formal interpreter training, but the Deaf Association offers a 'certificate of authority' which enable people to work in hospitals, courts and government offices. The Turkish government has agreed to make funding available to employ a sign language interpreter in all of the 81 local government districts of Turkey, but this will not be implemented until a proper assessment procedure is established. Funding is also established to set up a training course, and the Deaf Association is looking at how this might be implemented – and would wish advice. Most interpreters work on a voluntary basis.

Support from WASLI?

All of the above countries would welcome support from WASLI as follows:

Advice on training programmes

Advice on assessment procedures

Advice on developing an appropriate Code of Ethics

Support to enable people to lobby for payment of interpreters

Support to establish effective interpreter associations

Advice on working conditions

Training for Deaf people and other service users on how to work with interpreters

ADVANCED INTERPRETER TRAINING PROGRAMME – KOSOVO

In Kosovo currently, there is no paid employment for sign language interpreters apart from that available to those who interpret the TV News, work with the three or four Deaf students attending University, or occasionally for the Kosovar project & Deaf clubs. Most interpreters work voluntarily and may have other paid employment

However, the Finnish Association of the Deaf, with support from the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has been supporting an Interpreter Training Programme in Kosovo. This is a 2 year programme, with Susan Emerson of Australia & Selman Hoti of Kosovo the current interpreter trainers. The programme is modular, taking place over one weekend a month for 7 months.

The first cohort consisted of 11 people (8 CODAs, 1 with Deaf husband, 1 with Deaf in-laws & 1 teacher) joined by 2 interpreters from Serbia, whilst the second has 10 (3 CODAs, & 7 who are relatives of or who grew up with Deaf people) Previous guest trainers have been:

Ava Hawkins of Canada
 Jemina Napier of Australia
 Rob Skinner & Danny Stubbs of the UK
 Catherine White of Ireland.

I was invited to join the first cohort at the end of their second year training programme, to give training sessions on:

Professionalism
 Ethical Conduct
 Interpreting at Conferences
 International Sign

WASLI – its aims & objectives and how it might link with KASLI (the proposed Kosovar Association of Sign language Interpreters) and to participate in the final award of certificates of attendance.



In addition I visited the TV studio where the daily interpreted news bulletin was filmed; met with the Interpreters working group to discuss forming a professional association; visited the School for Deaf Children in Prizren; gave a presentation on WASLI to the Deaf members of the Organisational Training Project; met with Kosovar Project Deaf staff & those working on the Dictionary Project; met with a Human Rights lawyer from the office of the Ombudsman to discuss the need for interpreting services

There is need for further support from WASLI on:
 Advice on establishing an accreditation process
 Advice on establishing an interpreter association
 Support to set up an interpreter-booking agency
 Clarity on whether KASLI/Kosovo will be considered eligible for WASLI national membership
 Consideration of the establishment of a Balkan Region as part of the WASLI structure

Those participating in the Balkan Deaf Forum

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mr. Nebojsa Vavra – President, Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing "SLUH" in Herzegovina - Neretva Canton, Mostar
 Mrs Dubravka Ostojic, President, General Assembly, Association of Deaf and Hard of Hearing of Republika Srpska
 Mr. Lazar Vujcic, Member, Association of Deaf and Hard of Hearing of Brcko District

Macedonia

Mr Nikola Oggenov, President of the Board
 Mr Dragoljub Manevski, President of the International Affairs Commission

Serbia and Montenegro

Mr Dragan Markovic, Board Member
Ms Suzana Matovic, Board Member

Serbia

Mr Milosav Jovanovic, President
Ms Milena Vujic, Board Member

Youth Section in Serbia

Mr Dusan Nikolijæ, President
Mr Mihailo Gordiæ, Board Member

Montenegro

Mr Muamer Karalic, President
Mr Nikola Pavicevic, Board Member

Turkish National Federation of Deaf Association

Mr Ercüment Tanriverdi, President
Mr Sinan Yildirim, Board Member

In attendance:

Observers from the Albanian National Association of the Deaf
Observers from the Kosovar Deaf Community
International Sign interpreters: Cindy Cave; Susan Emerson & Janne Lundberg
Serbian Sign Language interpreters: Vera Jovanovic & Desa Zizic
Turkish Sign Language interpreters: Ismail Tukenmez & Hasan Dikyuva
Kosovar Sign Language interpreter: Versa Selmani

Report by Liz Scott Gibson (WASLI President)

NEWS CLIPS

(USA) A NEED FOR TRANSLATION

The centre sued Morrison County for failing to provide an interpreter for a Deaf man in jail and in court
<http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2006/11/01/deaftranslator/?rsssource=1>

(SCOTLAND) – SASLI APPOINTS A NEW POLICY ADVISOR

Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters (SASLI)
Marion Fletcher, former Head of Strategy and Development at Donaldson's College has been appointed as the new Policy Advisor for SASLI.
www.sasli.org.uk

(NEW ZEALAND) TUNING IN TO HEATHER'S LANGUAGE HANDIWORK

You could say Heather Thompson was born to be an interpreter
<http://www.bayofplentytimes.co.nz/localnews/storydisplay.cfm?storyid=3701974&thesection=localnews&thesubsection=&thesecondsubsection=>

(USA) DRIVING SCHOOLS MUST HIRE INTERPRETERS

Five driving schools in central Minnesota must provide and pay for sign language interpreters for Deaf students
http://www.grandforks.com/mld/grandforks/news/local/15238477.htm?source=rss&channel=grandforks_local

(ISRAEL) DEAF ISRAEL SUE CHANNEL 2 NEWS

The Deaf community is suing Channel 2's Israeli News Company for NIS 750 million, for allegedly violating their legal obligation to provide closed captions (subtitles) and translation into sign language in their broadcasts
<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/812109.html>

(IRELAND) DEAF DESERVING A BETTER SERVICES

Imagine having to visit the doctor or the dentist and not being able to communicate your symptoms without the presence of an interpreter
<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/letters/article2144616.ece>

NEXT EDITION: More news and information from WASLI

The next edition brings you news of the latest Interpreter Association to be launched together with a report from WASLI's visit to Singapore and a focus on the interpreting situation in Poland.

If you would like to submit news of interest for sign language interpreters around the world then please send them to the editor at secretary@wasli.org

The WASLI Executive Board

secretary@wasli.org

WASLI BOARD

Officers: Liz Scott Gibson (President); Philemon Akach (Vice President); Zane Hema (Secretary)

Regional Representatives: Emiko Ichikawa (Asia); Jemina Napier (Australasia & Oceania); Marco Nardi (Europe); Deb Russell (North America); Anna Komarova (Transcaucasia & Central Asia); South America – to be advised; Africa – to be advised

Co-optees: Bill Moody (US); Arun Rao (India); Francois Deysel (South Africa); Daniel Burch (US); Nigel Cleaver (England); Ito Tadashi (Japan); Carol Lee Aquiline (Former WASLI Working Group); Knud Sondergaard (WFD)