

efsli Governance Working Group Report

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efsli Governance Working Group report to the Board

I am pleased to report on the work of the efsli Governance Working Group (GWG)

The Group consists of
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I report here on the considerations the GWG has made that I hope gives a clear proposal for what a Motion might contain. I'd like to suggest that the efsli Board use this report as a discussion paper from which to devise their own Motions. Please note that I am on leave until the end of June and therefore may not be able to obtain further thoughts from the GWG before a Motion deadline has arrived.

We were asked to consider two issues on behalf of the Board.

1. The efsli Voting system at AGMs.

The number of votes possible for each country member at our AGM is TWO. This has caused some difficulty for countries that have three National Associations of Sign Language Interpreters (NASLIs)

The Working Group was asked to consider ways in which a fair system of votes might be proposed to the members.

Some fundamental assumptions were agreed by the GWG.

- a) The purpose of a vote is to register your constituent's view on a matter. If you are constituted as a NASLI then you are able to exercise your vote. If you are in disagreement with other NASLIs of your country, you are weaker in a European context. If you have a national representation, or a national agreement between NASLIs then your voice is stronger.
- b) efsli should not treat any single NASLI as being representative of that country's full voice unless it is self-evident. (i.e. unless it is the sole NASLI in that country)
- c) The European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters is a collective of those bodies that represent Sign Language Interpreters throughout Europe. These bodies (NASLIs) do not represent their country, but their country's Sign Language Interpreter membership. Our proposal is that efsli considers the views of member NASLIs. If a country has a mixture of views from interpreter associations that we recognise (i.e. more than one NASLI) then the combined total view is the country's view.

Consideration 1

The GWG considered the benefit of having the votes continue the way efsli currently does. It means that no single country has more power than any other country (each country has the same total number of votes, no matter how many NASLIs they have). But with only TWO votes available to each country, some NASLIs (In a country of three NASLIs) will not have a vote.

It was considered by the GWG that this creates a problem with some NASLIs having no influence in the democratic process. We confirm that this is not acceptable.

Consideration 2

The GWG has discussed the possibility of each NASLI being awarded a vote. This would have the benefit of ignoring country borders and only recognising NASLIs as full members, with one vote each.

This would mean that some countries (having only one NASLI) would have ONE vote, whereas some other countries (with three NASLIs) would have THREE votes.

It was considered by the GWG that this might create a problem with one country having more power than another country, simply because it has more than one NASLI. The rationale for establishing a different NASLI is often due to not having one's constituents' views represented adequately by the other NASLI. For efsli to award additional democratic voice to such dissent is anomalous. The GWG consider this unacceptable.

Consideration 3

The GWG considered a combination of NASLI and Country vote allocation; We felt that allocating SIX votes per country would enable each country to divide their votes between their domestic NASLIs.

This means that for countries with one NASLI, that NASLI can have SIX votes.

For countries with two NASLIs, those NASLIs can have THREE votes each.

For countries with three NASLIs, those NASLIs can have TWO votes each.

It was considered by the GWG that this will enable efsli to hear the views of all NASLI members.

It was considered that this allocation of votes might shift the traditional balance of power from those countries with more than one NASLI, to those countries with a single NASLI. More accurately it might be said that the balance of power will flow towards those countries who are able to achieve domestic unity on voting matters.

The GWG consider that this is a change that efsli should consider.

In some countries the market for services is low. It can therefore be difficult for such countries to establish more than one NASLI where membership fees of a NASLI might be influenced by that NASLI's membership fees to efsli. This GWG proposal mitigates this scenario.

Some NASLI's language combinations are less profitable than others, and therefore such NASLIs may also be facing a similar economic issue, and yet could still be considered to have a democratic right to express their constituent's vote.

This GWG proposal mitigates this scenario.

Some NASLIs' constituents are members who are less able to access the marketplace (such as Deaf interpreters). Such NASLIs should be able to have their vote counted.

This GWG proposal mitigates this scenario.

It was considered by the GWG that this allocation of votes might encourage NASLIs to work together in some countries where common interest on a voting matter can be found.

The GWG propose that this will be a useful change therefore, in the spirit of cooperation and compromise.

Related Motion for the Board to Consider

There is a dispute as to which countries are recognised within the European boundary. efsli will need to define the list of countries it recognises.

a) 51 countries as listed in www.countries-ofthe-world.com/countries-of-europe.html

b) 44 countries as listed in www.worldometers.info/geography/how-many-countries-in-europe

A consequence of this will be that efsli recognises the Scottish NASLI as holding a proportion of the United Kingdom's 6 votes. Scotland is not listed as a country in either list a) or b). It might be necessary to list "SASLI" as "UK-SASLI" henceforth. This would be in line with "Belgium - Flanders", though not for language combination reasons.

Consideration 4

The GWG wondered why we need to recognise countries at all.

We are a membership organisation of member organisations, not of countries.

Allocating each NASLI one vote will ensure we hear the views of our member organisations equitably.

The published definition of a NASLI makes reference to a country-base, or a base of similar language use across countries. Votes from 'countries' are therefore, perhaps, unnecessary.

Conclusion:

We recognise that a more fundamental decision is required before a choice is made about Consideration 3 or Consideration 4.

efsli may need to review its own basis for full membership of efsli.

It should be noted that the European Union of the Deaf state in their statutes that Full Membership is limited to one (1) national organisation of the deaf in each country. Clearly efsli is different in this respect - efsli recognises multiple National Associations in each country, indeed multiple NASLIs that span countries.

If the board were to decide that a country is a member of efsli, then Consideration 3 should form the basis of a Motion.

If the board were to decide that countries no longer need to be recognised as relevant to our democratic voting process, then Consideration 4 should form the basis of the AGM motion.

2. efsli Membership Fee Structure

The GWG were asked to review the way in which efsli calculates the appropriate fee to levy on members from different countries, with differing membership numbers.

Currently efsli uses a GDP ranking and determines a fee dependent on this combined with size of NASLI.

There has been some member feedback that this system does not recognise the income potential of some nations' interpreters compared to the wage assumptions inherent in the GDP system.

Consideration 1

The GWG considered a process that incorporates the income reported by NASLIs in Sign Language Interpreting in Europe, 2016 edition, Maya De Wit.

The board expressed some concern about the robustness of this research and therefore we did not pursue this option further.

Consideration 2

We considered the Cost Of Living Index.

If the countries of our current members were split into three levels - HIGH/MEDIUM/LOW

HIGH CoL

Switzerland, Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Ireland, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Finland, Austria, Sweden, Italy, Germany, United Kingdom.

MEDIUM CoL

Greece, Spain, Slovenia, Estonia, Portugal, Croatia, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic

LOW CoL

Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Kosovo.

The formula we considered incorporated this three-tier ranking and allocated a fee for NASLIs of size 0-25 as 3 X Individual Fee,
size 26-100 as 4.5 X Individual Fee,
size 101> as 5.25 X Individual Fee.

Figures look like this:

Country	individual membership	NASLI 0 – 25	NASLI 26 – 100	NASLI 101>
Albania	7.23	21.70	32.55	37.98
Austria	43.07	129.22	193.83	226.14
Belarus	6.62	19.87	29.81	34.78
Belgium	43.78	131.35	197.02	229.86
Bosnia And Herzegovina	7.14	21.43	32.15	37.51

Bulgaria	7.43	22.30	33.45	39.03
Croatia	19.67	59.02	88.52	103.28
Czech Republic	18.05	54.14	81.22	94.75
Denmark	48.83	146.48	219.73	256.35
Estonia	20.40	61.21	91.82	107.12
Finland	43.69	131.08	196.61	229.38
France	44.91	134.73	202.10	235.78
Germany	40.57	121.72	182.57	213.00
Greece	22.66	67.99	101.99	118.99
Hungary	16.81	50.44	75.65	88.26
Iceland	61.12	183.35	275.02	320.86
Ireland	45.21	135.63	203.45	237.35
Italy	41.55	124.65	186.98	218.14
Kosovo (Disputed Territory)	5.24	15.71	23.56	27.49
Latvia	19.69	59.08	88.61	103.38
Lithuania	18.36	55.09	82.64	96.41
Luxembourg	51.65	154.96	232.44	271.18
Macedonia	6.32	18.95	28.42	33.16
Malta	25.33	75.98	113.98	132.97
Moldova	6.45	19.36	29.03	33.87
Montenegro	7.92	23.77	35.65	41.59
Netherlands	44.90	134.69	202.04	235.71
Norway	60.59	181.78	272.67	318.12
Poland	7.83	23.48	35.22	41.09
Portugal	20.16	60.47	90.70	105.82
Romania	7.29	21.87	32.81	38.27
Russia	7.10	21.31	31.97	37.30
Serbia	7.08	21.23	31.85	37.16
Slovakia	17.99	53.98	80.96	94.46
Slovenia	21.00	63.01	94.52	110.27
Spain	21.88	65.64	98.46	114.87
Sweden	42.93	128.79	193.19	225.38
Switzerland	72.70	218.09	327.13	381.65
Ukraine	5.59	16.76	25.15	29.34
United Kingdom	39.17	117.50	176.26	205.63

A Second consideration was to not allocated a three tier system rank, but to use the actual Cost Of Living Index value as part of the formula. The figures then look like this:

Country	individual member	NASLI 0 – 25	NASLI 26 – 100	NASLI 101>
Albania	18	54	81	95
Austria	36	108	162	188
Belarus	17	50	75	87
Belgium	36	109	164	192
Bosnia And Herzegovina	18	54	80	94
Bulgaria	19	56	84	98
Croatia	25	74	111	129
Czech Republic	23	68	102	118
Denmark	41	122	183	214
Estonia	26	77	115	134
Finland	36	109	164	191
France	37	112	168	196
Germany	34	101	152	178
Greece	28	85	127	149
Hungary	21	63	95	110
Iceland	51	153	229	267
Ireland	38	113	170	198
Italy	35	104	156	182
Kosovo (Disputed Territory)	13	39	59	69
Latvia	25	74	111	129
Lithuania	23	69	103	121
Luxembourg	43	129	194	226
Macedonia	16	47	71	83
Malta	32	95	142	166
Moldova	16	48	73	85
Montenegro	20	59	89	104
Netherlands	37	112	168	196
Norway	50	151	227	265
Poland	20	59	88	103
Portugal	25	76	113	132

Romania	18	55	82	96
Russia	18	53	80	93
Serbia	18	53	80	93
Slovakia	22	67	101	118
Slovenia	26	79	118	138
Spain	27	82	123	144
Sweden	36	107	161	188
Switzerland	61	182	273	318
Ukraine	14	42	63	73
United Kingdom	33	98	147	171

Neither of these formulas includes any element of wages or hourly earnings.

Consideration 3

If we were to include reference to hourly income potential for interpreters from particular countries then some data set is needed that gives this information. efsli does not currently collect this data and therefore the GWG would recommend that it begins to do so, should the figures from Consideration 2 not satisfy the original member feedback. Data should be gathered of the monthly income of employed and self-employed interpreters, whether hourly rate is payable inclusive of travel and preparation time, and also whether NASLIs' income is solely dependent upon individual interpreter member fee subscription.

Conclusion

If efsli is to rely on global published figures freely available for such a purpose then it is unlikely to result in a completely satisfactory fee structure.

A more fine-tuned measure would incorporate consideration of actual earning average per NASLI. The formula would then be able to reflect the comparative disposable income of each NASLI's membership within its own domestic context.

Unfortunately we do not have such a data set available to us and therefore efsli would need to consider ways in which such information could be obtained - perhaps on new NASLI application, or a regular (suggest 4-yearly) survey of NASLI members.

The GWG would suggest that a Motion to the AGM might offer the proposed figures in Consideration 2 above, and, if rejected by the members, that further work on collating NASLI-specific figures as outlined in Consideration 3 be authorised instead.

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