

Felca welcomes new members

Next issue

In our December issue, **Special Report** looks back over the year 2002 and reports on trends across countries and sectors. **Direction** finds out what students think of the service provided to them by agents and **Agency Survey** looks at business trends in Thailand. **Feedback** finds out what students in Ireland think about their experience. **City Focus** visits Paris while **Destination** reports from Spain. **Status** provides another global comparison of market statistics.

The Federation of Education and Language Consultant Associations (Felca), which joins together agency associations from around the world, has widened its reach by welcoming two new association members. A third national agency association from Hungary was also considering membership at the time of going to press.

At the annual general meeting of Felca, which took place preceding the Alphe workshop in the UK, Belta from Brazil and Baelc from Belgium elected to join the association. The Belgian association, which is waiting for regulatory approval from the government, was accepted into the association on condition that the "formal procedures go ahead", said Felca's President, Masaru Yamada of Jaos in Japan.

During the meeting, Paolo Barilari, representing Italca in Italy, was also elected Vice Presi-



PHOTOGRAPH: HOTHOUSE MEDIA

President of Felca, Masaru Yamada (centre) with Felca delegates

dent of Felca, and Peter Kopitz, Felca's General Secretary who is employed by the federation, was formally introduced. Kopitz works from Felca's Thailand office and is also responsible for developing the Felca website.

Felca has big plans for its website, with one of its main aims

being to streamline communication between Felca members and their school association counterparts. The site will also provide information about various educator associations for agency members. An online news page will also be developed for agents and schools to post news updates.

Agent questionnaire



Name of Agent: Kirsten Lillelund
 Position: Managing Director
 Age: 60
 Name of Company: Intersprog
 Location: Copenhagen/Hørsholm, Denmark
 No. of full-time staff: seven

Would you like to participate in our Agent questionnaire? If so, please send us your responses to these questions, accompanied by your photograph. Please contact us if you have any further questions.

1. When and how did you become a language travel agent?

In 1984, I was asked by the Manager of the British Tourist Authority to represent a consortium of British language schools for executives. It developed through the years into language courses for all ages and all countries. Later on, we took up colleges and universities in the UK and other countries.

2. When and why did you decide to branch out into study tours to Nepal, India and Venezuela?

I am an adventurous person myself and have to create new things all the time. Young Danes are on top of trends for travelling and we could sense that they wanted more than language courses. A new state-supported education in Denmark with the possibility of creating one's own education within all sorts of areas also pushed these ideas, especially with adventure and voluntary work in social fields.

3. How did you set these programmes up?

We started six years ago with a

Dane living in Venezuela but later changed partner. We are continuously developing the programme and it has become a huge success. We are now selling internationally. Then I met people from Nepal, India and South Africa and we built up various programmes all with the same core aim: learn the language (if relevant), get to know the culture and nature and do voluntary work of all sorts.

4. What types of language learning programmes are most popular among your clientele?

England is still our primary country followed by Spain. Our clientele ranges from children in the summer, adults, students aged 50+ and company executives.

5. How do you find new partners to work with?

We always have our eyes open and have attended workshops and conferences [every] year.

6. What future plans do you have for your agency?

Our company has reached the right structure now, offering courses

for everybody, all ages, language programmes, study and adventure programmes [and] voluntary work.

7. How do you market your agency to potential clients?

We attend fairs, advertise, [organise] information meetings and we will of course intensify our focus on the Internet. After so many years, we are also well known in Denmark.

8. How do you think the agency industry will develop in the next 10 years?

Any business has to develop and I think the industry has to look for other products, following the trends of the market. Young Europeans will certainly want to travel more and learn more and I suppose it counts for other countries as well. We will all use the Internet much more so schools and agencies will [use] new booking systems. Agencies will have to be creative themselves with new package products. We can work together and maybe buy interesting products from each other, in cooperation with the suppliers. Languages will be the core activity.

“Through the news page, agents will be able to post details of [complaints from clients] so that all Felca members and associate school associations can learn by example of how to prevent a similar situation from happening,” added Yamada.

Other plans for the association include guidelines for quality standards. Yamada said, “[We need] to shape our ethical conduct and practice along an international standard, rather than remain divided nationally.” A similar European-wide quality standard is being developed by the Comité Européen de Normalisation (see *Language Travel Magazine*, October 2001, page 12).

Yamada added that Felca would be keen to help see a global Code of Service for schools. “Matching Felca’s [guidelines] with schools’ accreditation [standards] will streamline our industries worldwide.” □

BC riles agent in Morocco

A Moroccan agent has hit out at the local British Council (BC) office in his country, claiming that the office continues to see agents in the country as competition, instead of working with them.

A placement scheme model continues to operate in Morocco, and Fernand Marciano of International Language Centre, said, “The BC has inflicted huge losses on our affairs since this unfair placement scheme was launched in 1995.”

He noted that similar placement schemes in other countries have been met with strong resistance from local agents. In Spain, for example, agents threatened to stop sending Spanish students to the UK (see *Language Travel Magazine*, March 1999, page 12). “As a consequence, the BC stopped this scheme,” he said.

At the British Council, Manager of ELT Promotion Services, Richard Law, responded that placement schemes operated dependent on market conditions. “In Morocco, the BC sends mainly groups to the UK,” he explained. “There simply aren’t enough individual students to justify referring them to local agents.”

Law said that the BC continued to develop its services for agents and train its overseas staff accordingly, including in Morocco. “We are keen to develop our relations with reputable agents,” he said, “and we plan to adopt consultancy schemes in more countries. Our agent infrastructure is not sufficiently large or mature in all countries yet.”

Currently, four BC consultancy schemes and 30 placement schemes are in operation. □

On the move



Terry Toney (top) has been appointed Director of Educational Enterprises at the British Council, replacing Rod Pryde, who is now Assistant Director-General at the Council. Mr



Toney was previously Director of the British Council in Japan. He joined the British Council in 1983 with a position in English Language Services. Since then, he has worked in Colombia, Austria and Brazil, and in Korea as Director. Barbara Wickham (below) is currently Acting Director ELT, replacing Tony O’Brien. Ms Wickham was previously Director of the British Council in Nepal.



Jonathan Hancock has moved within the Skola group in the UK to the position of Adult

ELT Development at English in London, previously known as Marble Arch Intensive English. Mr Hancock will now be particularly involved with marketing this new adult school in London. The principal aims of the role are to attract a broad range of nationalities, increase awareness of Skola’s family courses and promote niche language products.



Katy Rumney has been appointed new Course Director for Regent Language

Homestay in the UK. She has been promoted from within Regent Language Holidays to head up the department, following Louise Mehrabian’s decision to move into the primary education sector. Ms Rumney’s responsibilities will include the development of new products and services, as well as working closely with agents. “I’m looking forward to forging strong relationships with agents – we pride ourselves on a personal, friendly service,” she said.



Charles Harrison, Chief Executive of the English Language Centre in Hove, UK, is the new

Chairperson of Arels. He takes over from Richard Day of English in Chester, who continues as Vice Chairperson. Mr Harrison said, “In my role, I look forward to continuing to develop our relationship with Felca and agents throughout the world.” Mike Wills, from the Salisbury School of English, is the new incoming Vice Chairperson.



Face to face

Each month, we profile the people from language schools who deal directly with agents, in order to give you the chance to get to know some of the people you work with.

Who are you?

Konstantin Filkov, Director.

Where do you work?

EducaCentre, St Petersburg, Russia.

Why and how did you start in the industry?

I have been in language training for the past 20 years. Right after the break-up of the Soviet Union, I decided to open a private western-standard school.

Why should agents choose to represent your school?

We are the only school in St Petersburg that has its own three-storey building in the city centre. We take care of all the supporting services for our students like housing, visa issues, travel arrangements, and more.

What do you believe are the challenges facing your school in the future?

A big challenge is the growing interest in Russia and increasing number of people wishing to study the Russian language as a result. For us, it is very important that we keep the highest standard of teaching for every student.

What percentage of your annual student intake comes through agents?

Although [most] students find us via the Internet, we still receive between 30 and 40 per cent of students via agents in Europe and North America.

How does your school work with agents and the Internet?

The Internet is our primary marketing tool in attracting both new students and new agents. We are constantly updating our website to make it both informative and easy to use. Special features include an online costs calculator and instant reply function. Our website is advertised in all major search engines.

ETA in Spain has little impact on market

THE campaign of terrorism directed at Spanish holiday areas, including popular language travel destinations in the south, by Spanish separatist group, ETA, has had little impact on students.

Derlene Calpacci, of Didacta Viagens e Turismo in Brazil, summed up the opinion of many agents when she reported, “Nothing about the ETA bombs influenced client choice.” And at language school Malaga Si! in Spain, Pamela Caicedo commented, “The ETA activities are very sporadic and have little effect on daily life. We have received no cancellations [because of this].”

ETA set off a number of car bombs in Spanish resorts during the summer in its campaign for a separate Basque nation. There were few casualties, as police were informed about the bombs in advance. Martin Martschnig, of Carpe Diem Sprachreisen in Austria, commented, “We do not want to talk [to clients] about politics. We want to get students there to see how the people live.” □