

# Standards for Europe take shape

## Next issue

In our October issue,

**Special Report** finds out about the latest changes in the market regarding quality standards for schools.

**Market Report** takes a look at the trends in the Maltese market last year and **Direction** reports on high school year placements.

**Feedback** finds out what students in Germany think about their study abroad experience and **City Focus** visits New York. **Status** provides market data from Italy and **Destination** takes a tour of British Columbia.

A draft set of required standards for 'tour operators and providers of language teaching and related accommodation and other services' has been agreed upon by all members of the Comité Européen de Normalisation (CEN) working group, ahead of schedule. The agreed standards are now undergoing a 'CEN Enquiry' period, during which time all national members of the CEN are entitled to make comments about the proposals.

The current standards have been discussed and agreed to by industry representatives from a range of European countries, including the UK, Switzerland, Sweden, Spain, Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy and Malta. Ana Maria Iglesias, of Spanish agency association, Aseproce, is secretary of the Spanish Committee. She told *Language Travel Magazine* that another meeting of the working



The European Working Group at the most recent meeting in Malta

PHOTOGRAPH: ASEPROCE

group is scheduled for May 2004 in Prague, when any amendments may be made to the regulations and then the final draft will be voted on and 'hopefully approved and published'.

The outcome to the long discussion process, which began in June 2001 (see *Language Travel Magazine*, October 2001, page 12) will be the establishment of guidelines covering all aspects of a language travel stay throughout

all the CEN member countries. Once the European standards are finalised, national standard regulation bodies in each country will be expected to develop systems to certify organisations willing to follow the standards.

The provisional regulations cover aspects of a language travel stay such as information provision, tuition, accommodation, consumer satisfaction and liability insurance. □

## Industry issues - agents speak out

January February March April May June July August September October November December

*Q Do you believe that a fam trip to a school can give you a realistic impression of the standard of quality that your clients can expect?*



'Yes, I do, if one is an experienced agent with good 'antennae'. There is nothing like really knowing

the product one sells, not only on paper but in real life. On paper, all schools look nice. We never [offer] schools that we have not visited, with the only exception being when a school is specifically requested by a student. We do not think it is fair to the student otherwise.

Students who come to agents are entitled to expect that the agent thoroughly knows the product, otherwise the student might as well buy the course via the Internet. We get a fair amount of invitations [for fam trips]. We have had good experiences in all countries.'

**Lucy Quaggiotto, Globorama, Venezuela**

'I believe that a fam trip to a school gives me a realistic impression of the standard of quality that my



clients will expect. When I see the school and the surroundings, I can give better advice to my clients. I

[also] recommend schools that I have not visited because I feel it is the demand of my clients. I try to visit schools as much as I can.'

**Marie-Claude Saliba, Educom Overseas, Lebanon**

'Since I started in this field, 25 years ago, I have been much more interested in visiting schools or participating in fam trips than finding representations through international workshops. In my opinion, this is the best way to know about a school in all aspects, [when] you have the opportunity to see the place, talk with staff involved in all areas of services, [see] the type of resources the teachers manage, visit host families or other types of accommodation, etc. Also, the visit gives us the opportunity to get to know the school

surroundings. All this is very important when advising students, families, companies and their executives since you can be more precise in the details and compare one place with another one. In the past, there were at least two or three fam trips to schools organised per year but after September 11, 2001, and all the economical crises, these have been organised very occasionally.'

**Marianelly Núñez, Travel & Learn, Chile**



'I believe it is very important for agents to visit as many schools as possible. We only

recommend schools we have visited, or in some cases, met the staff at a workshop. If a student comes to us and wants to go to a school we know nothing about, we agree to help them with the registration but do not recommend

the school. When visiting schools, we look for unique [features], and this helps us in meeting the individual needs of our clients. We usually arrange our visits privately, and have never been on an organised fam trip. Schools are usually very cooperative when we ask to visit.'

**Alayne Madore, MI Studies Abroad, Japan**



'Unlike simply viewing pictures in brochures or CD-Roms, when you have a chance to actually observe the real place, it is totally different. When you make a visit, you have a feel of the city and its surroundings, you know how to travel to the school and how far it is from the city centre. Thus you are able to provide information to the clients with greater confidence.'

**Sulaksana Kanchana, Professional InterEducation Co., Thailand**

## New association, Nosa, in New Zealand wants fair play

A group of Korean language travel agencies based in New Zealand has set up an agency association dedicated to 'providing better quality of services through combined strength' and 'inducing fair competition'.

The New Zealand Overseas Study Association (Nosa) was established in May this year, by key agents in New Zealand, according to President of Nosa, Howard Kim of IAE EduNet Auckland. The agencies all represent branch offices of Korean agencies or independent incoming agencies in New Zealand serving the Korean market.

'There are 17 members at present, but we are going to increase the number and include Chinese/Japanese agents in the future,' related Kim, who esti-

imated that there were 40 Korea-linked agencies currently operating in the country.

Nosa hopes to create a competitive cooperative international student market in New Zealand and has taken the unusual step of contacting language schools in New Zealand, urging them not to work with agencies that lower their prices and redistribute their commission payments to students. 'We believe price should be one for all,' said Kim.

He added that schools would similarly be rebuked by the association if they were found to be offering students discounts directly. 'Nosa wishes to maintain a healthy market, where healthy competition exists... without dirty backdoor deals or any tricks,' stated Kim. □

## Gwea grows well

THE GLOBAL Work Experience Association (Gwea), a sub-group of the Federation of International Youth Travel Operators (Fiyto) that was founded in October last year, continues to see a rise in applications for membership, reflecting the strong interest worldwide in student work experience placements.

Meritxell Morera at the Gwea Secretariat told *Language Travel Magazine* that, on top of the current 94-strong membership, there were a further 40 applications waiting to be voted into the association during Gwea's annual general meeting in October. Paul Christianson, President of Gwea, added that a goal of the association was to increase membership by 60 by the end of the year.

In its first year of existence, Gwea has launched a website, [www.gwea.org](http://www.gwea.org), which features a member directory online and links to visa information for countries worldwide. The association also cooperated with conference and workshop organiser, Icef, by endorsing the Work & Travel Exchange, an event held in London.

According to Christianson, another key achievement of this year has been establishing Gwea's Code of Conduct specifically for work experience organisations, which has taken some time to finalise. 'We now need to look at what we can do to encourage enforcement of this,' he noted.

The Code of Conduct was one of the reasons cited by many members for their interest in joining the association, commented Christianson. 'Reputable organisations want a code of conduct,' he said, adding, 'The main reason [for interest in the association] is the trading opportunities [that Gwea offers] with other quality organisations. And thirdly, because Gwea stands for quality and credibility in the industry.'

The next annual general meeting of Gwea is to be held during the WYSTC event in Thailand in October. □

## On the move



Shanti Charles is the new Course Director for the Foundation Course at Frances King

School of English in London, UK. Due to start in September this year, Ms Charles - previously Assistant Director of Studies at the school - is organising a programme for business studies undergraduates, building on the success of the school's academic English courses. 'I look forward to ensuring that our foundation programme is one of the best in the field,' she said.



Kelly Franklin, Director of the Intensive English Programme at Maryville College,

Tennessee, in the USA, has become the new President of the American Association of Intensive English Programs (AAIEP). Mr Franklin said he feels AAIEP must constantly expand its role as a prime advocate for student flows into the USA, in spite of recent restrictive government policy.



Ward Lee has joined the Australian Centre for Languages (ACL) in Sydney, Australia, as

Manager of Global English Services. Mr Lee has returned to Australia after several years of school management in the UK, France and the USA.



Patrick Ibbertson, Director of Dynaspeak English in Auckland since

1992, has been elected Chairperson of New Zealand's Association of Private Providers of English Language (Appel). Appel lobbies government and collaborates with other groups for sound policy in a vibrant industry. Mr Ibbertson's chief aim is to acquaint local and national government leaders more thoroughly with the needs, nature and value of the industry.



Craig Stusiak, from Hawthorn-Vancouver (Canada Language Centre) in

Vancouver, Canada, is the new President of the Private English Language Schools Association (Pelsa) in Canada. As part of his role as President he will be a Liaison Officer on the Council of Second Language Programs in Canada (CSLPC) Board and he looks forward to working with them on the shared goals of the two associations (see page 4).



## 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?

My name is Carlo Lipparini.

### Where do you work?

The name of my school is 'Istituto Il David'. It is a school of Italian language and culture, located in the centre of Florence in Italy.

### Why and how did you start in the industry?

I had been a teacher of Italian language at the institute for five years when two years ago, I began to run the school. It is certainly a difficult job, but also full of pleasure and gratification because I can organise the school [in the way that] I want.

### Why should agents choose to represent your school?

The reasons are the same as why a student should choose our school: Its central location; the wonderful terrace, where one can admire the beautiful panorama of Florence; the friendly atmosphere of our school; continuous assistance and help solving any problems; a minimum of 10 extra-curricular activities per month; and the quality and variety of our courses.

### How does your school promote itself to agents?

At the beginning, we started by sending a presentation letter and brochure to many agencies all over the world in order to present our school. We also offered the agent the possibility to stay and study for free to show our way of working. We are promoting our school also with adverts in international newspapers and magazines and on the Internet. Our offers to new agencies are always personalised and flexible.

### What percentage of your annual student intake comes through agents?

About 40 per cent.