



## ASSIGNMENT FOR THE SITUATIONAL COMPETENCY BASED INTERVIEW (SCBI)

**OPEN COMPETITIONS**

**EPSO/AD/365-370/19**

**ADMINISTRATORS (AD 5/AD 7)**

**SPECIALISING IN LEGAL RESEARCH**

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**This assignment describes the working situation to which the Situational Competency Based Interview will refer in some parts. The problems have not been fully elaborated, the information is partial, additional research is allowed, and candidates will be allowed to ask questions during the interview.**

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**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

**The content of this document is fictitious. While it has been derived from actual events, key details have been changed. The resulting descriptions do not reflect genuine events, nor do they represent the actual views of the Member States, Institutions or their representatives.**

**Candidates are therefore advised to rely mainly on the information presented in the exercise, even if additional information from other sources can be used when responding to questions.**

You are an administrator and you have been asked to replace a colleague, Alex Ternal, and deal with the following situation.

The document describes several situations in a given workplace. In this booklet, you will find background information on specific issues. You will also find information regarding the staff, the workplace, and other relevant matters.

Alex Ternal had been appointed to take part in an informal preparatory meeting of an *ad hoc* working group at the European Trademark Office (ETO). Among its other duties, the ETO is the European Union agency responsible for managing intellectual property and trademark rights. The documentation you need is included in this booklet. It contains some background information on the forthcoming accession of three new Member States and the associated preparatory measures that must be taken.

It is important that you accept the simulated situation as it is presented to you. You may rearrange the documents in any order you wish, add remarks or make notes as necessary, add other documents, and keep it available during the SCBI.

This SCBI is designed to assess the following competencies: Analysis & Problem Solving, Learning & Development, Prioritising & Organising, Resilience, Working with Others, and Leadership. No previous knowledge is required to deal with the assignments.

**The working group has been asked to discuss what measures the ETO should take in preparation for the accession of three new Member States. The purpose is to provide the Accession Project Leader with:**

- **recommendations on measures for tackling the major problems that need to be dealt with in the run-up to accession;**
- **a schedule for the different parts of the Information Technology (IT) project.**

**Please note:**

**Today is Wednesday, 13 November 201X.  
Last year was 201X-1, next year will be 201X+1.**

## ABBREVIATIONS USED

AP Team	Accession Project Team
CB Unit	Core Business Unit
DG Comm	Directorate-General for Communication
ETO	European Trademark Office
EU	European Union
HR Unit	Human Resources Unit
IA Unit	Internal Affairs Unit
IP	Intellectual Property
IT	Information Technology
MS	Member State
PR Unit	Public Relations Unit
QM Unit	Quality Management Unit
TM	Trademark

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

There have been seven enlargements of the European Union (EU) since the European Community was established in 1957, the last such occasion being five years ago, when Almain acceded to the EU. A Treaty of Accession has now been signed with three new Member States (MS): Salacia, Vollazo, and Burbani. The protection granted by EU Trademarks<sup>1</sup> registered by the European Trademark Office (ETO)<sup>2</sup> will be automatically extended to the territory of these new MS when the Accession Treaty comes into force.

From that moment on, trademark (TM) users can choose to register their TMs either via their national offices or via the ETO. Because EU enlargement on a scale such as this requires major preparations, the ETO has decided to launch a project to handle and implement all the internal preparations necessary for the forthcoming accession.

Four main issues must be addressed:

Firstly, the ETO will have to deal with the problem of linking the databases of the new Member States' national offices to the common EU platform. This process will require a lot of time and attention because the information technology (IT) systems of the new MS are somewhat archaic in comparison with the common system. The different options for handling the various parts of this IT project will have to be looked at and evaluated carefully.

Secondly, the national offices and national authorities in the new MS need to be kept thoroughly informed about all aspects of the upcoming accession and its implications and consequences at all levels (new legislation, new possibilities, new competencies, etc.).

Thirdly, preparing for the enlargement also means that the approximately 20 000 common terms in the ETO's database that already exist in the 24 official languages of the EU will need to be translated into the three new official languages.

Finally, accession will have a considerable influence on domestic markets in the three new MS, with a significant impact on their private sectors. These external stakeholders need to be informed about all relevant topics and issues relating to their countries' entry into the EU Trademarks system.

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<sup>1</sup> An EU Trademark confers exclusive rights in all EU MS. The proprietor is entitled to prohibit all third parties from using in the course of trade the same or similar signs on goods and/or services that are identical with or related to those protected by the TM.

<sup>2</sup> The European Trademark Office (ETO) is the European Union agency responsible for managing intellectual property and trademark rights.



## Mail Message

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From: Dwight McNulty, Accession Project Leader, ETO  
To: Alex Ternal  
Date: 13/11/201X  
Subject: Welcome

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Dear Alex,

You have been appointed to a working group tasked with discussing the arrangements that the ETO needs to make in preparation for the accession of three new MS: Vollazo, Salacia, and Burbani.

The accession preparation project will start at the beginning of next year. The working group has been asked to formulate recommendations on the preparatory measures required for:

- linking the databases of the three national trademark offices to the common EU platform;
- communicating essential accession-related information to both internal stakeholders (national offices and their national authorities) and external stakeholders (private-sector players in the new MS);
- translating common terms into the three new official EU languages.

Please collect all the relevant information you can find on these matters.

While forming your own opinion, please pay close attention to the opinions of the departments that will be involved in the accession preparation project and take their views into account when formulating your recommendations.

The working group is also expected to draw up a schedule for the different parts of the IT project, as they cannot all be handled at the same time.

The departments taking part in the enlargement project are:

- Human Resources Unit (HR Unit)
- Public Relations Unit (PR Unit)
- Quality Management Unit (QM Unit)
- Internal Affairs Unit (IA Unit)
- Technology Unit
- Core Business Unit (CB Unit)

I suggest you contact the above-mentioned parties at a time that is convenient for them. One-to-one video calls before the meeting might help in finding common ground or room for negotiation at this stage.

Best regards,

**Dwight McNulty**

Accession Project Team (AP Team)

Published: 25/10/201X

# The Daily Print

## The changing dynamics of EU relations

Studies on the relationship between the European Union and its Member States have always approached the topic from a top-down perspective. They have looked at how the EU has affected the MS and changed their domestic institutions, policies, and political processes. The common opinion up to now has been that further integration of MS at EU level tends to promote their domestic, economic, and political interests. However, this view has become more and more controversial over time.

According to Joseph Katz from the Institute for European Policy Research, *"As European countries enter a double-dip recession, scepticism towards cooperation between national and EU bodies has grown. For example, EU interference in MS financial regulations has got national authorities thinking about ways to wrest back powers from Europe. The dynamics have changed: dominance at EU level is now something to be feared, and with domestic competencies being transferred to the European level, boundaries have become increasingly blurred."* Following these developments, experts have noted a perceptible increase in tension between the EU and its Member States.



*"The bilateral relationship with national authorities is under stress,"* Joseph Katz continues. *"The role MS play at the European level will have to change; a bottom-up paradigm is important if we want to promote the idea of the MS and their governments being the principal agents driving European integration."* Finding ways to engage and communicate more effectively with the national authorities has never been more important for the EU.

J.H.



## Mail Message

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From: Penny Delacour, Personal Assistant to the President, ETO  
To: Dwight McNulty, Accession Project Leader, ETO  
Cc: Dirk Vanderwoodsen, Head of the Information Technology Department, ETO  
Date: 08/11/201X  
Subject: Some practical matters

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Dear Dwight,

Dirk called this morning: the meeting with D-tracks (the external company hired by the Burbanian National Trademark Office to digitise part of its database before the Burbanian part of the IT project starts) went smoothly. All that is left now is for the ETO to decide when D-tracks should start the digitisation process and to communicate this to the Burbanian Office.

With regard to resources, Dirk has received confirmation that another project, concerning internal resource planning, is to be launched at the ETO in eight months' time. He has calculated that to handle this project, he will need seven IT analysts from the Supervision Team – i.e. the majority of the team – including at least one Senior Analyst to provide training and supervision.

Aside from that, we now have the results of our poll on the best ways to communicate information on accession. The three suggestions that received the most votes are as follows:

- organise an Accession Day Event: a one-day event for internal stakeholders (national offices and authorities), with two seminars and a cocktail reception;
- launch an Accession Awareness Campaign (a media campaign using channels such as websites, mass emails and leaflets to get information on accession across);
- communicate accession-related information during the ETO's annual Trademark Users Event (a joint event for MS national offices and national authorities organised yearly by the ETO in order to inform interested parties about new legislation and share experiences).

Best regards,

**Penny Delacour**





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## Introduction to the Accession Preparation Project

<b>Date:</b>	04/11/201X
<b>Attending departments:</b>	HR Unit, PR Unit, QM Unit, IA Unit, Technology Unit, CB Unit, Information Technology Department
<b>Topics:</b>	Introductory meeting

### Topics

#### IT Operations

Objective: 1 November 201X+2, the date of actual accession, is the deadline for completion of these preparations.

Three possible solutions have been put forward for the problem of linking the databases of the three national trademark offices to the common EU platform:

- Send some of the ETO's Supervision Team to implement the different project parts in the national offices: the Information Technology Department has estimated that five team members (half the Supervision Team) will be needed to handle this.
- Engage an external service provider.
- Deploy the IT team from an ongoing Directorate-General for Communication (DG Comm) project (which is ending in six weeks): this team is not part of any specific department and can be involved in various projects. This is therefore a feasible option, provided that the necessary background training is given.

A decision needs to be made on which solution to implement.

Tasks:

- It generally takes six months to carry out all the IT work necessary to get a national office ready for accession, but bringing a very old IT system up to EU standards could easily take up to two months longer than that.
- The different parts of the IT project cannot all be handled at the same time because of budget and resource constraints, so a precise schedule has to be drawn up. In addition, it would be wise to factor in some extra time at the end of the IT project in case of unexpected problems.

#### Translations

- The ETO is still under contract for the next two years to work with Apollo Translations, a private translation company.
- Work on translating the common terms has already begun, as this will be a very lengthy process.

#### Private Sector

- Clients of the national offices (i.e. the representatives of trademark owners, who apply on behalf of companies for trademarks) need to be kept informed on all topics pertaining to their countries' accession.
- A decision needs to be taken as to the extent of the ETO's involvement in this.



**FORUM FOR FORWARD-THINKING PROFESSIONALS**

**Subject: Teaching methods**

Posted by Mathilde\_T on 05/08/201X, 14:50

Hi everyone,

I was wondering if you guys had any tips on the best teaching methods to use in a business environment. I was thinking along the lines of training sessions...

Any ideas?

Posted by Timár Miksa on 05/08/201X, 15:08

It really depends on what your goal is. I would not necessarily opt to go with training sessions: while they can often be useful for practical purposes (e.g. learning to work with a new computer program), their content also tends to be forgotten quickly.

Posted by Klaudia01 on 05/08/201X, 15:42

I recently attended a seminar on employment legislation, where we had the opportunity to take notes, ask questions, and discuss certain subjects, all of which were really helpful in making the new information stick.

Posted by Dorotea N. on 05/08/201X, 16:03

At our company, we use a lot of quick guides for teaching purposes. These usually take the form of a concise manual with relevant information on a specific topic: "how to" guidelines, explanatory lists of terminology, etc.

I carry mine with me and refer back to them whenever necessary. I find it really handy to have something where I can look things up whenever I need to.



Mail Message

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From: Dwight McNulty, Accession Project Leader, ETO  
To: <ALL\_Accession Working Group>  
Date: 13/11/201X  
Subject: FYI

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Dear all,

Here are some additional facts you should take into consideration during your working group meeting:

The Vollazan Office outsources the management of its IT system to an external service provider; this contract expires in 12 months, so it is possible that a new service provider will be chosen then. Experience has shown, however, that changing the service provider often causes difficulties and delays for IT projects.

Part of the Burbanian Office's database is still paper-based and has to be digitised by one of its external partners, D-tracks, before the ETO can start that part of the IT project. This process will take nine months; keep in mind, however, that the Burbanian IT system is a particularly old one.

Also, with a view to beginning its own preparations for the project, the Salacian National Office requested (and has since received) information from the ETO about our common platform.

Unfortunately, the translations we have received from Apollo Translations so far have been of very poor quality. The reason for this is that the new translators hired to translate into the three new languages are not familiar with the technical subject matter of trademarks/intellectual property (TM/IP). In the past, we have tried to solve this problem by calling on ETO project members who speak the languages in question to revise translations from time to time. A short-term solution to this problem must be found, but we also need to think about finding a longer-term answer.

Kind regards,

**Dwight McNulty**



## Extract from the Final Project Report on Almaini Accession

Weekly Project Meeting 2.3 – 19/05/201X-5

### 1. Introduction

On 01/05/201X-5, Almain became the 25th MS of the EU.

In April 201X-7, the Management Committee commenced preparations for the accession of the new MS.

The project's inaugural meeting took place on 05/01/201X-6, as did the related project briefing.

The project team successfully completed the tasks for this project by the date of Almain's accession to the EU. Completion of the project was marked by a Welcome Event held on 02/05/201X-5 in Midga.

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### 4. Results of Review Meeting – 10/05/201X-5

4.1 Results of the feedback survey on the Welcome Event:

- Participants rated the dissemination of information and the seminars positively.
- The willingness of national offices to attend international EU gatherings was also examined; the results showed a generally high degree of willingness.
- The ETO website saw a considerable increase in visitor numbers in the wake of this event.

4.2 ETO Information Seminar in Almain:

While there were fewer participants from the private sector than expected, feedback from those who attended was nevertheless positive.

4.3 Translations of common terms into Almaini:

The quality of the translations produced by Apollo Translations was poor: a lot of staff time was needed for revision, even though the project members involved were actually expected to perform other tasks.

4.4 Results of the negotiations:

The increase in the administrative capacity of the national office that was agreed during the negotiations speeded up the implementation of requirements and proved to be of added value.

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Expected vs actual benefits of IT outsourcing

Benefit Category	Expected (%)	Actual (%)
Customer service & communication	~85	~75
Improved quality of delivery	~75	~65
Service Provider expertise and up-to-date know-how	~65	~55

28/08/201X

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Knowledge recall using 3 teaching methods

After 3 weeks

Method	Recall (%)
Presentation	61%
Seminar	85%
Workshop	72%

After 3 months

Method	Recall (%)
Presentation	11%
Seminar	56%
Workshop	38%

Presentation: explaining  
 Seminar: showing, explaining and discussing  
 Workshop: experiencing

25/08/201X



**Mail Message**

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From: Vladimir Iossos, AP Team, ETO  
To: Alex Ternal, AP Team, ETO  
Cc:  
Date: 1/04/200X  
Subject: Communication issues

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Dear Alex,

I am sure you noticed that cooperation among some of our colleagues is not at its most effective for the moment. I think that there are communication issues or misunderstandings, and this is beginning to have an impact on the overall performance of our team. I know it is not necessarily your task to sort it out, but I am willing to help if you think we can do something to improve the situation.

Best regards,

**Vladimir**



**Mail Message**

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From: Eva Riant, AP Team, ETO  
To: Alex Ternal, AP Team, ETO  
Cc:  
Date: 3/04/200X  
Subject: Request for help

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Dear Alex,

I am really sorry to bother you with such a topic, but I am beginning to have a significant problem working with Gert, who is becoming more and more difficult to reach as the start of the Accession Project approaches, and with whom I have more and more problems in communicating. Today he finally replied to a request I had sent two weeks ago, after two reminders. I do not know how to handle him and I would be glad if you could help sort this out.

If I am doing something wrong, I am happy to try to do better. However, I do not feel comfortable working in such a tense situation.

Thank you very much for your help and support,

**Eva**



**Mail Message**

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From: Jeanne Issère, PR unit, ETO  
To: Alex Ternal, AP Team, ETO  
Cc:  
Date: 3/04/200X  
Subject: Open dialogue

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Dear Alex,

The Forum for Forward Thinking Professionals seems to attract some attention, and it would be good if you could keep the dialogue open on this matter. Please take the time to contact the contributors and to listen to and understand their concerns/expectations/requests.

Thank you,

**Jeanne**





## Mail Message

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From: Enrico Perto, AP Team, ETO  
To: Alex Ternal, AP Team, ETO  
Cc:  
Date: 1/04/200X  
Subject: Briefing

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Dear Alex,

Our new Head of Sector, Martina Jensen, would like to be given a short briefing on the possible options for the organisation of the Accession Day event. She will call you. It would be nice if you could explain in a nutshell what it is about, what the challenges are, the possibilities available, and what the next steps will be.

Thanks in advance for your help,

**Enrico**



## Mail Message

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From: Gert Avey, AP Team, ETO  
To: Alex Ternal, AP Team, ETO  
Cc:  
Date: 1/04/200X  
Subject: Who does what?

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Dear Alex,

As I understand it, I am supposed to deal with the technical side of the Accession Project, and Eva is supposed to manage content with the stakeholders. But, over the past few weeks, Eva has kept on sending me messages asking for my contribution on matters that are not supposed to have any technical implications. At first I replied politely that those questions were not my concern, but with time I simply stopped replying to Eva's messages (but that does not seem to work either).

Can you please talk to Eva and explain to her where my role starts, and where it ends? We need to fix this ASAP if we want to keep on track for the upcoming events.

Thanks,

**Gert**

**FEEDBACK RECEIVED FROM VARIOUS PARTIES****THE OPINION OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES UNIT (HR UNIT)**

The HR Unit supports the idea of sending an ETO team to the national offices to carry out all the necessary IT work: this would not only be the most cost-effective solution, it would also offer a great opportunity for the ETO and the national offices to strengthen ties and learn from one another. Using a service provider or another IT team could cause communication difficulties and delays, as it would mean involving a third party alongside the ETO and the national office. However, it might not be a bad idea to use the IT team from the DG Comm project for the upcoming Resource Planning project at the ETO. As regards priorities, the HR Unit's advice would be to leave the MS whose national office has the most up-to-date database and knowledge until last.

Organising an Accession Day Event would foster cooperation between the ETO and the national offices, as the social aspect of such events greatly facilitates networking. The HR Unit believes that no expense should be spared and that a separate Accession Day Event should be held in each new MS, as this would allow the event programme to be tailored to the specific situation of each country. It would also make networking easier, as all attendees would be speaking the same language. The HR Unit is against a printed communication campaign because, in contrast with events, such campaigns are far less personal and leave no room for dialogue, questions, or comments.

Regarding the translation problem, some people have argued that the most cost-effective solution would be to have Apollo Translations provide its translators with training on TM/IP-related subject matter. However, if training is to be organised, there will also have to be frequent follow-up sessions at which additional questions can be asked and problems discussed, to ensure that translators continue to use the terminology correctly and consistently. As this option would require a lot of time and an additional payment to Apollo Translations, the HR Unit cannot accept it. There would, however, be a lot of value in providing translators from Apollo Translations with explanatory quick guides on TM/IP subject matter, as this could offer a solution to the recurring resource problems resulting from the need to carry out internal revisions. However, drafting these quick guides will require a certain amount of time.

Given the negative publicity that EU–MS relations have been receiving lately, the HR Unit thinks that the ETO would be well-advised to get involved in any efforts to communicate information to private-sector players in the new MS. Initiatives such as additional events or seminars to get these parties more involved would be a step in the right direction. Furthermore, from previous accession rounds the ETO has built up best practices on informing the private sector in the MS about the implications of EU integration – it would be a shame not to use this know-how to assist the national offices.

**THE OPINION OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS UNIT (PR UNIT)**

The PR Unit believes that engaging a service provider to handle the IT project would not guarantee success. A recent APM Study Centre report identified a number of factors underlying why three out of five IT projects are not delivered on time, most notably communication problems and the fact that service providers do not have the same company mentality as in-house teams. An integration project at DG Comm will be ending in a few weeks, which will free up more resources. This is a budget-friendly solution that will not leave the ETO short of resources. However, the team should be given some form of preparatory training to ensure that its members have the necessary knowledge of TM/IP issues and our internal software. Because the Burbanian national office has a very old IT system that will probably end up posing quite a lot of difficulties and hurdles, the PR Unit suggests that the task of linking up the Burbanian database should be handled first.

An EU-level communication event like an Accession Day will draw a lot of media and press attention. In the current climate of euro-scepticism, such cooperation between the EU and its new MS would be a timely and much-needed positive story. However, holding a major event in each acceding MS is not something that the ETO has ever done before, and there is no way of knowing how feasible it is to organise things on a scale such as this. The PR Unit therefore thinks it would be better to stick to the type of joint event that has received such positive feedback in the past, in which participating MS have been able to learn from one another. Opponents of joint events argue that there are always language problems, but all stakeholders from the new MS speak English fluently. Using the annual TM Users Event as an opportunity to communicate accession-related information is not an option. Because this is strictly an ETO event, there would be a risk of national offices feeling that they had no say in the dissemination of information, which is certainly not the objective. Moreover, this would get less media attention than an Accession Day.

The PR Unit suggests that Apollo Translations should provide its translators with TM/IP training to improve the quality of translations. This will help translators better to understand the context of what they are translating, which will reduce mistakes. Organising training sessions would also create an opportunity to gain more insight into the translators' main difficulties, as they would be able to explain their issues directly, something that could not happen if we were merely to provide them with quick guides. Introducing an internal revision phase might be worthwhile in terms of immediate results but would put a strain on resources in the long run. In contrast, little time and few resources would be needed for Apollo Translations to prepare and give the training, which is important given the need to address the problem as quickly as possible.

It will be necessary to communicate with private-sector bodies in the new MS. Experience shows that the private sector always has concerns about the increase in paperwork and bureaucracy that integration into the EU entails. Therefore, it is vital that we take measures to help private businesses prepare properly for accession; doing nothing is not an option. From past accession rounds, the ETO has relevant information on changes in administrative procedures that the national offices in the new MS do not have.

**THE OPINION OF THE QUALITY MANAGEMENT UNIT (QM UNIT)**

The QM Unit is convinced that outsourcing the IT project to a service provider will ensure high quality of service: access to state-of-the-art technology is what sets them apart, so outsourced specialists are very well trained. The specialised skillset of a service provider will be an advantage, since the older an IT system is, the more problems can be expected to occur. All problems will have to be dealt with in time for accession. The QM Unit feels that sending part of the ETO's Supervision Team to the national offices will only shift the problem from one area to another: the complexity of the IT project will require the involvement of a lot of senior analysts, whose expertise will then be unavailable to the ETO for the Resource Planning project. The QM Unit warns that using the team from the DG Comm project that is ending soon will also create issues: they will have to be trained by a senior analyst on TM/IP aspects and on using our software. Depending on the knowledge levels of the people involved, these training modules could take one to two months, making the timing of the IT project too tight.

The QM Unit recognises the fact that a communications event like an Accession Day will allow the EU and MS to establish closer ties. However, it has concerns as to whether an Accession Day is really the right medium for getting the necessary information across. There is a great deal of value in an awareness campaign, since the main goal is to inform internal stakeholders about the trademark legislation and systems. Written publications are more suitable for this purpose, because people read them in detail and they are tangible products where people can look things up. The QM Unit thinks communicating essential information during the annual TM Users Event is far from ideal, as it will then be impossible to adapt all information to the specifics of each individual acceding MS. The needs of the other MS participating in the event also have to be taken into account.

The QM Unit believes that integrating an internal revision phase to validate translations produced by Apollo Translations is a good option: the ETO's internal experts not only know the languages, they also have the required TM/IP technical knowledge. This will lead to immediate positive results. Some people have argued that internal validations will create resource problems in the long term. The QM Unit therefore suggests hiring temporary translators to relieve the pressure on project members: not as much time will have to be invested in them, since they will be close to the experts, whom they can ask for help if required, and will have access to all necessary TM/IP information.

Because the accession preparations will require ETO involvement at many levels, it may be wiser to leave all communication with the private sector in the acceding MS in the hands of the national offices. It could be more fruitful to the relationship if, rather than the ETO being the driving force, the responsibility and a sense of ownership were given to the national offices. However, given the strained relationship between EU bodies and their counterparts at MS level, it would be good if the national offices had a better understanding of procedures at EU level. The ETO should therefore provide these offices with support on this.

**THE OPINION OF THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS UNIT (IA UNIT)**

The IA Unit is convinced that appointing a service provider is the safest choice when it comes to handling the IT project. While this solution does entail higher costs, service providers are more flexible and are used to responding quickly to clients' changing wishes and demands. They will also be contractually obliged to meet all deadlines.

Regarding the scheduling of the different parts of the IT project, the IA Unit believes it would be illogical to start with Salacia. Considering the preparations that this office has already made in advance, it would be better to give it some more time to finish them altogether so that there will be less work to be done during that country's part of the project.

Communicating internal information on accession during the annual TM Users Event is an interesting option, as doing so would be quite cost-effective: no extra resources or budget would be needed. With an awareness campaign, on the other hand, there would be no way of knowing – or even of finding out – whether stakeholders had actually received and read the information we provided to them.

According to the IA Unit, ensuring high-quality translations of the 20 000 common terms in the ETO database is of the utmost importance. However, the usefulness of training sessions to achieve this should be questioned, as studies have shown that they are possibly not the best medium for teaching. Furthermore, the translators who work for Apollo Translations are extremely busy at the moment; there is just no time for them to attend a training course and all the subsequent follow-up sessions. Having internal ETO staff deal with this problem by revising and validating the translations will guarantee first-rate quality; moreover, this is a solution that can be implemented at very short notice.

The IA Unit also sees value in providing translators from Apollo Translations with quick guides on TM/IP subjects, as this would be a very resource-friendly solution. Quick guides can be easily produced, and they will also be a very beneficial tool in the longer term, because little extra work will be needed once they are ready.

In conclusion, the IA Unit does not believe that the ETO should really contribute to communication with the private sector in the new Member States. There is already a general perception of EU dominance, and the national offices might not appreciate the ETO organising events or other initiatives to involve people from the private sector in these new MS: this could give national offices the impression that the ETO wants to interfere and meddle in their business. It could even exacerbate the underlying feeling that the ETO and national offices are competitors in the TM business.

**THE OPINION OF THE TECHNOLOGY UNIT**

Given the importance of the IT project, time will be of the essence. Appointing a service provider, however, will require a tender procedure, which will take a considerable amount of time (nine months) and delay the start of the project. Furthermore, the Vollazan Office already outsources the management of its IT system to a service provider, so appointing a second one to handle the Vollazan part of the IT project would only complicate things. Deploying the IT team that is currently working on the almost-completed DG Comm project would resolve the problem: they already know the ins and outs of working at a governmental institution and can relate to this environment better than any service provider can.

The Technology Unit thinks it is important for the ETO to be able to reach all internal stakeholders who need to receive essential information on topics relevant to their countries' accession. An Accession Day event would not be able to reach a large audience, because attendance would be limited to the capacity of the venue where the event is held. Moreover, many people would be unwilling to make the effort to travel to an event held in another country. An accession awareness campaign on the other hand could reach a far wider range of stakeholders. There are a number of drawbacks to the suggestion of disseminating internal information during the annual TM Users Event: MS are not always equally represented at this event. In fact, some MS have not attended at all in the last couple of years, so it may not be the best medium for informing all parties.

The Technology Unit is aware of the fact that knowledge retention following training is said to be poor, which is why it proposes that Apollo Translations should establish a follow-up programme after initial training in order to resolve ongoing problems with translations. Frequent follow-up sessions will give translators the chance to ask any extra questions they may have on the subject matter. Introducing an internal validation phase at the ETO would guarantee excellent quality but is not a long-term solution: the revisers will eventually be needed to work on other aspects of the Accession Project, while hiring temporary translators to cover this would be a slow and costly process.

International studies have shown that the private sector is not always well informed on the specific implications of EU membership, since these are often not a priority for businesses. The Technology Unit therefore sees value in seeking to involve the private sector more fully as an external stakeholder in the EU framework. However, the competition that is intrinsic to the relationship between the ETO and the national offices needs to be borne in mind. The dominant role that the ETO plays in accession arrangements should be scaled back a little. The Technology Unit therefore thinks it would be best to let the national offices take the lead in communicating and creating a dialogue with the representatives of the private sector in their countries.

**THE OPINION OF THE CORE BUSINESS UNIT (CB UNIT)**

Given the difficulty of the IT project, the CB Unit believes that saving time is important. Sending part of the ETO's Supervision Team to the national offices would be an economical solution: the project could then get off the ground quickly, as not much preparation time would be needed. Unlike the two other suggested solutions, this one involves people who already have core-business knowledge on TM/IP, which will make it easier to spot bottlenecks during the IT project. Service providers are said to have technical expertise, but this should not be overestimated. The idea of using the IT team that will become available once the DG Comm project finishes should also be discarded: providing these people with the necessary core-business knowledge training could take up to two months. This would pose a risk if the IT project fell behind schedule; if training had to be given, no spare time would be left in reserve. However, this team could be deployed temporarily to cover the lack of human resources at the ETO during the internal Resource Planning project.

The CB Unit does not believe in holding an Accession Day in each new MS: multiple events on such a scale cause practical and organisational difficulties and require more resources. Moreover, three separate events will easily generate 50 % extra costs. Setting up and managing a full-scale media communication campaign will also require a lot of resources over a considerable period of time, which will make it at least as costly. Consideration should be given to using the opportunity afforded by the ETO's annual TM Users Event to communicate accession-related information to internal stakeholders: no extra resources will be needed, since the communication department handles this event anyway. Furthermore, all the stakeholders who need to be informed about the implications of accession will be invited. Evaluations of previous joint events have shown that participating offices and MS are always glad to get the chance to meet and exchange thoughts.

Since the ETO has a fixed contract with Apollo Translations and the translation problem will probably occur again with other assignments, it is important to find a long-term solution. Hiring temporary staff to carry out internal verifications will only involve extra costs and is not a sustainable solution for the future. The CB Unit sees a lot of potential in providing quick guides to the translators from Apollo Translations. Some time would be needed to research the content, but once in place, the guides could be easily updated and adapted to the specific needs of any given translation project. Internal revisions are an immediate but temporary solution until the quick guides are ready to be distributed.

Any work needed to get businesses more involved should be left to the national offices of the new MS, as they are much closer than the ETO to their own private sector and therefore in a much better position to provide information and guidance on the consequences of accession. Furthermore, the ETO's past attempts to engage firms have not been very successful: during the run-up to the last accession, attendance at an ETO-organised Information Seminar for the private sector in Almain was rather low.