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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of the report is to provide the basic information about the planned or already arranged workshops in every META-NORD country. The descriptions about workshops include basic information, agenda, as well as the achieved results and the scope of the event.

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Abbreviations

Table 1 Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Term/definition
LT	Language technologies
TILDE	TILDE SIA (Latvia)
UCPH	Københavns Universitet (Denmark)
UT	Tartu Ülikool (Estonia)
UIB	Universitetet i Bergen Organisasjonsedd (Norway)
UHEL	Helsingin Yliopisto (Finland)
HI	Haskoli Islands (Iceland)
LKI	Lietuviu Kalbos Institutas (Lithuania)
UGOT	Göteborgs Universitet (Sweden)
LWP	Language Whitepaper
R&D	Research and Development
CLARIN	Common Language Resources and Technology Infrastructure
EFNIL	European Federation of National Institutions for Language

1. Background

META-NORD description of work includes organization of national workshops in each of the project countries. These workshops have an important role in raising awareness about the META-NET, involving language resource creators in contribution to the META-SHARE, reaching industry as a target audience for usage of language resources and governments for insuring national funding for language resource creation and distribution.

Initial plan was to have all the workshops concluded by the M18 of the project, i.e., July 2012. Although META-NORD is very successful in fulfilling its objectives, taking into account the overall progress of META-NET common activities, it was decided to postpone all but one national workshops. Publication of Language White Papers in Summer 2012 (instead of originally expected Summer 2011) and delays in implementation of major functionality in the META-SHARE platform (e.g. synchronization of nodes) make it more efficient to have national workshops in Autumn 2012. By this time META-SHARE have to reach a maturity of production level system and White Papers have to be published by Springer. The exception is Icelandic workshop which was organized in a form of national LT conference in April. Icelandic White Paper was the first finalized whitepaper and got a very strong interest at the conference from both the specialists and general audience.

This deliverable provides description of the workshops already held (Iceland) or planned in autumn. Initial scope and audience of the workshops is extended to reach stakeholders and general audience that are not yet aware about the importance of language technologies and to show a spectrum of opportunities and challenges for national languages in a broad national context.

2. List of the National workshops

Table 2 List of National workshops

Institution	Title	Date
TILDE	International Conference on Language, Technology and the Future of Europe	September 21, 2012
UCPH	Meta-Nord/Meta-Net Sprogteknologisk workshop	October 31, 2012
UT	Conference of National Programme of Estonian Language Technology	October 2-3, 2012
UIB	META-NORD workshop	October 15-16, 2012
UHEL	META-NORD and FIN-CLARIN workshop	October, 2012
HI	<i>Máltækni fyrir alla</i> “Language Technology for Everyone”	April 27, 2012
LKI	META-NORD workshop	October, 2012
UGOT	Swedish national workshop	November 23, 2012

3. National Workshop Reports

3.1. TILDE

3.1.1. Introduction

Tilde is organizing the META-NET event on language technologies under the title “Language, Technology and the Future of Europe”.

It is planned for September 21, 2012 in Riga, at one of the best conference facilities in Latvia – conference centre of the Freeport of Riga.

3.1.2. Agenda

Agenda will be composed of general presentations covering challenges and issues, presentations on the main activities addressing these challenges and showcases of practical achievements.

The importance of the topics discussed will be highlighted by the participation of high profile speakers. Prime Minister of Latvia Mr. Valdis Dombrovskis has preliminarily agreed to give a keynote at the conference. We are inviting Mr. Rytis Martikonis, Acting Director-General at the Directorate-General for Translation to present at the conference.

Two special events are planned as part of the conference agenda – opening of the Latvian Whitepaper published by Springer and official launch of the LetsMT! portal created in ICT-PSP Programme under coordination of Latvian company Tilde.

Detailed agenda of the conference is in preparation. The following are some of the major agenda items:

- Keynote presentation by Mr. Valdis Dombrovskis, Prime Minister of Latvia (preliminary confirmation)
- Keynote presentation by Mr. Rytis Martikonis, Acting Director-General at the Directorate-General for Translation (invited)
- *Language Technology for Europe: Chances, Needs and Plans*
Prof. Hans Uszkoreit, Saarland University, Head of Language Technology Lab and Scientific Director of the German Research Center for Artificial Intelligence (DFKI) / META-NET Coordinator
- *META-SHARE: Open European Language Resource Infrastructure*
- *European Commission Programmes in Language Technologies for 2014-2020*
Representative from European Commission
- *Key findings of the META-NET Latvian Whitepaper*
- Opening of the Springer book *The Latvian Language in the Digital Age*
- Official launch of the LetsMT! portal
- *Language Shore initiative to drive advancement of technologies for smaller languages*
Representative from government institution or from Tilde
- Showcase presentations of Latvian industry achievements in language technologies

3.1.3. Supporting organizations

The conference will be financed by META-NET (represented by META-NORD project) and Tilde company.

Microsoft Corporation has also expressed their interest to support the conference. We provided proposal for Microsoft to become a co-sponsor of the conference and to have an opportunity to present Microsoft Research activities in language technology area. This proposal was discussed during a telco with Microsoft Redmond Public Sector group and at a face to face meeting with Microsoft Research representatives at Microsoft WPC conference in Toronto. Microsoft is still reviewing these proposals and no concrete commitments has been received so far.

We are inviting Ministry of Culture to become a co-organizer of the conference.

3.1.4. Attendees

Target audience of the conference are:

- Representatives from the government institutions – Ministry of Science and Education, Ministry of Culture, State Language Commission, Culture Information Systems Agency, State Language Centre and others;
- Funding agencies - Latvian Council of Science, Latvian Language Agency, Investments and Innovation Agency;
- Research community – University of Latvia, Riga Technical University, Daugavpils University, Ventspils University College, Rezekne University College, Liepaja University, Latvian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Latvian Language, Institute of Informatics and Mathematics and others;
- Industry players – Latvia Information and Communication Technology Association (LIKTA), Latvian IT Cluster, Latvian IT Competence Centre, Latvian IT Demo Centre, leading IT companies;
- Data centers – National Library of Latvia, State Archive, publishing houses;
- Opinion leaders – bloggers, columnists, politicians;
- Mass media – portals, newspapers, TV stations, radio stations.

3.1.5. Main Suggestions and Conclusions

We expect that the conference will raise awareness about the importance of language technologies in general and for Latvian language in particular. It will drive an interest from multiple institutions involved in the creation of language resources to contribute to the META-SHARE. It will initiate a discussion about a dedicated language technology programme in Latvia and about necessity to facilitate participation in the future programmes by European Commission.

3.1.6. Workshop documentation

See information about the conference for the invitation letter in the Appendix 1.

3.2. UCPH

3.2.1. Introduction

The title of the Danish workshop will be: “Meta-Nord/Meta-Net Sprogteknologisk workshop” and it will be held October 31, 2012 at The University of Copenhagen.

The primary aims of the workshop are:

- to present the Danish white paper on LT to a broader public in Denmark as well as to present META-SHARE to Danish industry and research community.

- to exchange experience regarding the status and size of LT in Denmark.
- to establish a Danish network on LT and thereby facilitate better collaboration and synergy between development and research in the LT area.

Potential attendants are expected to be developers and decision makers in companies that work with or intend to work with LT, researchers in the field, selected politicians, as well as representatives from funding agencies.

Co-organizers of the workshop are: Copenhagen Business School, The Danish Society for Language and Literature, The Danish Language Council, Ankiro ApS, Prolog Development Center, and Mikro Værktstedet.

3.2.2. Agenda

9:30 – 9:40 *Velkommen* (welcome) v. Bolette S. Pedersen, Center for Sprogteknologi, Københavns Universitet, dansk coordinator for METANORD/NET

9:40 – 10:30 *Det danske sprog i den digitale tidsalder: Sprogteknologiens status i Danmark med udgangspunkt i hvidbogen om dansk sprogteknologi* (presentation of the language white papers and the LT situation in Denmark) v. Sabine Kirchmeier-Andersen, Dansk Sprognævn (The Danish Language Council), Bolette S. Pedersen, Jürgen Wedekind, Center for Sprogteknologi, Københavns Universitet

10:30 – 11:45 *Præsentation af METASHARE – en international platform til udveksling af sprogteknologiske resurser og værktøjer* (presentation of META-SHARE, Lene Offersgaard, Center for Sprogteknologi, Københavns Universitet

10:45 – 11:00 *Kaffe*

11:00 – 11:30 *Sprogteknologi i erhvervslivet: Hvordan en Jeopardy-vindende maskine kan gøre verden til et bedre sted* (LT in industry: How a Jeopardy winning machine can make the world a better place) Kim Escherich, IBM Danmark.

11:30 – 11:50 *Hvad handler tekster om? Eksempler på brugen af automatisk klassifikation og tagging i online nyhedsmedier* (What is the text about? Automatic classification and tagging in online news media) Rune Stilling, RDefined

11:50 – 12:10 *Sprogteknologiske løsninger* (LT solutions) v. Ankiro

12:10 – 12:30: *Status for dansk taleteknologi: talegenkender, talesyntese, mobildiktering, integrerede løsninger, audio mining mv.* (Status on Danish speech technologies) Jens Otto Kjærøum, Prolog Development Center

12:30 – 13:30: *Frokost*

13:30 – 13:50 *Forskningsinfrastruktur af relevans for sprogteknologien i Danmark: CLARIN og DigHumLab* (Research infrastructures of relevance for LT in Denmark: CLARIN and DigHumLab) Bente Maegaard, Centerleder f. Center for Sprogteknologi, Københavns Universitet

13:50 – 14:10 *Det almensproglige korpus i DK-CLARIN samt en ny POS-tagger for dansk*, (The Clarin corpus for LGP and a new Danish POS-tagger) Jørg Asmussen, Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab

14:10 – 14:30 *Nye horisonter i sprogteknologi, bl.a. om sprogteknologi for resursefattige sprog og om god sproglig kvalitet i question-answering* (New horizons in LT: LT for resource poor languages and language quality in question-answering) Anders Johannsen og Anders Søgaard, Center for Sprogteknologi, Københavns Universitet

14:30 – 14:50 *Danish Center for Applied Speech Technology* Peter Juel Henriksen, Copenhagen Business School

14:50 – 15:10 *Dansk terminologi- og vidensbank* (Danish terminology and knowledge bank) Hanne Erdman Thomsen, Copenhagen Business School

15:10 – 16:00 *Kaffe og paneldiskussion: Hvordan vurderer vi fremtiden for dansk sprogteknologi? Hvordan kan et sprogteknologisk netværk støtte sprogteknologien i Danmark?* (Panel discussion: Future perspectives for LT in Denmark, how can a LT network support LT in DK?)

3.2.3. Supporting organizations

The event is supported by the META-NORD project.

3.2.4. Attendees

We expect an audience of approx. 60 people comprising primarily industry and research, cf. Section 3.2.1. Invitations will go to approx. 150 people.

3.2.5. Main Suggestions and Conclusions

Hopefully, the event can constitute the beginning of a more active LT network in Denmark and cause increased awareness on LT among decision makers (such as funding agencies and relevant ministries).

3.2.6. Workshop documentation

See <http://cst.ku.dk> and <http://cst.ku.dk/metanord> for web documentation on the upcoming event.

3.3. UT

3.3.1. Introduction

Conference of National Programme of Estonian Language Technology (NPELT), 2-3 October 2012, Tartu, is a regular event for monitoring the progress of NPELT.

In a frame of the conference the Center of Estonian Language Resources (CELR) as important Estonian Research Infrastructure have a half-day business event. The national workshop of META-NORD project is a part of this event, where we plan to introduce META-NORD project and other META initiatives, esp. all-in network of repositories as meta-nodes and issues connected with legal framework of licensing language resources (both in CLARIN and META-NET)

3.3.2. Agenda

The program of the conference include presentations and demos of projects of NPELT.

In a business event University of Tartu, Institute of Cybernetics at TTU and Institute of Estonian Language as the partners of CELR will make presentations and we hope to arrange also a little tutorial with specialists on legal issues to consult data providers.

3.3.3. Supporting organizations

Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, EU Structural Funds (from measure “Modernising of research infrastructure of national priority”), steering committee of the NPELT, META-NORD project.

3.3.4. Attendees

All promoters of NPELT projects, developers and decision makers in companies that work with or intend to work with LT, researchers in the field, decision makers from ministries and Estonian Language Council, as well as representatives from funding agencies. Invitations will go to approx. 200 people.

3.3.5. Workshop documentation

See www.keeletehnoloogia.ee and <http://www.cs.ut.ee/metanord/> for web documentation on the upcoming event.

3.4. UIB

3.4.1. Introduction

A national workshop is planned for October 15 and 16 in Oslo, Norway. It will be targeted at an audience primarily consisting of industries (mostly SMEs) which are developers and providers of language technology and of industries and public bodies which are actual or potential users of language technology; secondary targets are decision making bodies such as government bodies, national and regional agencies, R&D funding organizations, language councils and thematically related projects and initiatives. The aim of the workshop is to raise awareness, to promote matchmaking between stakeholders, and to stimulate cooperation and complementary initiatives in relevant areas.

3.4.2. Agenda

The program will open with presentations of the Norwegian Language White Paper, the META-SHARE repository, and the Norwegian Language Technology Resource Collection (Språkbanken). The program will also include presentations and demos by companies developing or using language technologies. Funding programs for R&D will also be presented. Contacts have been established with LT Innovate and the European Multimedia Forum for potential contributions to the program.

3.4.3. Supporting organizations

In order to reach a maximally large and relevant audience, the event is planned in cooperation with the sectorial stakeholder company Infosector, the National Library of Norway, the Research Council of Norway and the Language Council of Norway.

3.4.4. Attendees

The Norwegian members of META and other identified third party organizations will be a basis for the potential audience. Contacts are also being established with the potentially relevant national stakeholder organizations Dataforeningen, IKT-Norge, and Abelia.

3.5. UHEL

3.5.1. Introduction

The title of the event is META-NORD and FIN-CLARIN workshop. The event will be organized in October 2012 in Helsinki. Our aim is to:

- present the Finnish white paper to society and industry,
- present META-SHARE to industry and research community,

- increase awareness of the situation of Finnish LT in society and especially in decision making bodies,
- enhance cooperation within the LT community (both LT companies and researchers) in Finland.

3.5.2. Agenda

The format and program of the event is currently under development. However it is already clear that we would like to center the workshop on the Finnish LWP.

3.5.3. Supporting organizations

The event is supported by the META-NORD and FIN-CLARIN projects.

3.5.4. Attendees

We will invite to the event politicians, representatives of Finnish companies interested in LT, representatives of funding agencies and researchers, all in all at least 150 persons.

3.5.5. Main Suggestions and Conclusions

We hope that the workshop will bring more cohesion to the LT community in Finland and will convince politicians of the urgent need to act for ensuring the development of Finnish LT.

3.5.6. Workshop documentation

The workshop documentation (the invitation letter and presentations) will be written after the programme of the workshop has been agreed upon.

3.6. HI

3.6.1. Introduction

On April 27, 2012, the LT conference *Máltaekni fyrir alla* ‘Language Technology for Everyone’ (<http://www.malfong.is/Malthing/>) took place in room 101 in Oddi, University of Iceland. The conference was a joint project of META-NORD, The Icelandic Centre for Language Technology and the Icelandic Language Council and offered a variety of talks on LT and language preservation.

One of the primary objectives of META-NORD is to secure users of any language equal access to information and knowledge, regardless of what language they speak. By joining forces with the Icelandic Centre for Language Technology and the Icelandic Language Council it was possible to reach wider audience and send the message further. The inclusion of participants like Katrín Jakobsdóttir, the Minister of Education, Culture and Science, and Sabine Kirchmeier-Andersen, director of the Danish Language Council and the deputy president of EFNIL, gave the conference more weight, and the balanced program provided something for everyone. As the conference attracted much attention from the media, in addition to the excellent attendance from the general public, it is safe to say that it was quite a success.

3.6.2. Agenda

The balanced program of the conference covered a wide area of LT, including language preservation, language policies, databases, speech synthesizers, speech recognizers, spell-checkers, search engines and the META-program. The speakers were also a broad group of

LT representatives: a minister, two chairmen and one vice chairman of language councils, the manager of META-NORD in Iceland, university researcher, chairman of the Icelandic society for the blind, professors, a student and a representative from the industry.

The first part of the program focused on LT in general as well as the importance of LT for language preservation, and the second half introduced several LT resources that are being prepared for the language. The full program is listed here below:

- 13.00 – Conference Opening: Guðrún Kvaran, chairman of the Icelandic Language Council
- 13.05 – Katrín Jakobsdóttir, Minister of Education, Culture and Science
- 13.15 – Íslensk máltækni í evrópsku samhengi - META-NORD og META-NET [Icelandic LT in European Context - META-NORD and META-NET]: Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson, manager of META-NORD in Iceland
- 13.30 – Del eller dø? [Share or die?]: Sabine Kirchmeier-Andersen, director of the Danish Language Council
- 14.05 – Íslenska er málið: Tölvur og íslensk málstefna [Icelandic is the language: Computers and Icelandic Language Policy]: Haraldur Bernharðsson, vice chairman of the Icelandic Language Council
- 14.25 – Gagnasöfn frá sjónarhorni notandans [Databases from the viewpoint of the user]: Kristín M. Jóhannsdóttir, linguist at the University of Iceland
- 14.50 – *Coffee and poster session*
- 15.20 – Talgervlar og tungumál sem fáir tala [Speech synthesizers and Languages Spoken by Few]: Kristinn Halldór Einarsson, chairman of the Icelandic Society for the Blind
- 15.40 – Almennarómur - Söfnun á íslensku talmáli fyrir talgreiningu [Almennarómur – Gatehing Icelandic Spoken Language for Speech Analyzis]: Jón Guðnason, assistant professor, Reykjavík University
- 16.00 – Samhengisháð ritvilluvörn [Context-Dependent Spell-Checker]: Jón Friðrik Daðason, M.A. student in Computer Science, University of Iceland
- 16.20 – "Hér er ég, um ég, frá ég" - Mikilvægi fallbeygingar í leitarvélum [“Here am I, about I, from I” – the Importance of Inflection in Search Engines]: Jón Eðvald Vignisson, technical director of Clara
- 16.40 – Closing Remarks – Hrafn Loftsson, associate professor, Reykjavík University

3.6.3. Supporting organizations

As previously stated, the conference was a joint project of META-NORD, The Icelandic Centre for Language Technology and the Icelandic Language Council. Financial support also came from the MS Iceland Dairies and the Institute of Linguistics at the University of Iceland.

3.6.4. Attendees

Approximately 70 attendees were at the conference – scholars, students, people from the industry, politicians, people from the government and from the funding bodies, as well as the general public. This is somewhat more than usually attends the yearly conference of the Icelandic Centre for Language Technology and can partly be explained by the fact that three different institutes joined forces and partly by the excellent media exposure. The attendees

were extremely pleased with the conference and quite impressed with the number of LT resources available, even though all agreed that more is needed.

3.6.5. Main Suggestions and Conclusions

The importance of language technology is undisputed and within a small language community like Iceland, it is even greater. If our language cannot be used in every aspect of our daily life, including that of communicating with our machines, the language is in danger. We already see the increasing English influence on Icelandic and with the arrival of speaking machines this influence can only get greater. What is needed is a strong LT community with researchers and developers creating and updating the language resources that are necessary to keep up with the fast changing world. This can only happen with increased support from government and society and additional funding. In her address, the Minister of Education, Culture and Science, Katrín Jakobsdóttir mentioned that she would ask for suggestions from the Icelandic Centre for Language Technology and the Icelandic Language Council on what could be done to support Icelandic LT. That is an excellent first step in pointing out what can be done better and how we can get results. The conference served as an important medium for making that happen.

3.6.6. Workshop documentation

All the presentations were recorded and can be listened to at the conference web site: <http://www.malfong.is/Malthing/dagskra.html>. They were all given in Icelandic with the exception of Kirchmeier-Andersen's talk, which was given in Danish.

As previously mentioned, the conference received much media attention, including interviews with META-NORD members on three different radio stations, articles appearing in the two major newspapers, as well as a story in English and German in the widely-read Iceland Review. This is further documented in D5.2.1B.

3.7. LKI

3.7.1. Introduction

The national META-NORD workshop in Vilnius, Lithuania will take place in October, 2012. The workshop is planned to be held in the Parliament of the Lithuanian Republic in cooperation with several ministries of Lithuania. The location was chosen in order to reach the maximum awareness in society, governmental institutions and decision making bodies. The aim of the workshop is:

- to increase awareness of the situation of LT in Lithuania, especially for decision making bodies,
- to discuss importance of LT for the language preservation especially for languages with a small number of speakers such as Lithuanian language,
- to promote the importance of META-NORD project results and to ensure sustainability after the end of EU funding period.

3.7.2. Agenda

Agenda is under development. The plan is to present Lithuanian White Paper and provide a short description of the LT situation in Lithuania. Also we will present META-NORD project and its results and will discuss how META-NET could be connected with the government

funded program “Lithuanian Language in information society for Information Society” for 2013.

3.7.3. Supporting organizations

The workshop is supported by the Parliament of the Lithuanian Republic and the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language.

3.7.4. Attendees

Workshop will take place in the Parliament of the Lithuanian Republic therefore it is expected an attendance of the members of the Parliament. The audience will also include representatives of the Lithuanian Government, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Transport and Communication, Lithuanian universities, Lithuanian research institutes and representatives of Poland, Latvian, Estonian governmental institutions, industry representatives. All in all, it is expected to have about 150 attendees.

Key representatives of community and guests:

Dr. Daiva Vaišniene – The Head of the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language. She will also make a presentation during the workshop on her previous work on the Lithuanian Whitepapers.

Aušra Kumetaitiene – The Head of Information Society Development Division of the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

Andrejs Vasiljevs – representative of Meta-Nord and Meta-Share.

Prof. Valentina Dagienė – The institute of Informatics and Mathematics; representative of research community.

Edmundas Žvirblis – INFOBALT Executive director; representative of business sector.

3.7.5. Main suggestions and Conclusions

The main idea of the workshop is to raise awareness that only close cooperation of governmental bodies, research community and industry could lead to sufficient LT situation in such a small country as Lithuania; and to encourage active participation of national stakeholders in the META-NET activities.

3.8. UGOT

3.8.1. Introduction

The Swedish national workshop is slated to be held in Stockholm on 23rd November, 2012.

3.8.2. Agenda

The details of the format and program of the workshop are under development, as well as who will be invited as presenters and discussion moderators. The program will include background presentations and/or discussion points addressing:

- META-NORD, META-NET, and the Swedish language white paper;
- Swedish language technology resource collections, including the META-SHARE repository;
- Swedish language technology R&D activities and stakeholders;
- national language technology infrastructure needs and initiatives;
- funding programs for language technology R&D.

3.8.3. Supporting organizations

The workshop will be a joint arrangement by UGOT (the Swedish META-NORD partner) and the Swedish Language Council.

3.8.4. Attendees

Invitations will be sent to politicians, funding bodies, Swedish companies involved in development or use of language technology, and relevant research institutions.

3.8.5. Main Suggestions and Conclusions

We see the workshop as an important component in a strategic initiative with the aim of enabling and consolidating the development of language technology and resources for the languages of Sweden.

3.8.6. Workshop documentation

The full workshop documentation will be available after the workshop has been held. The documentation will include:

- the letter of invitation;
- the workshop program;
- the workshop presentations published on the web (slides, text, possibly video recordings).

4. Conclusions

National workshops organized by the project partners are major events to reach the key stakeholders in the META-NORD countries - language researchers and LT developers, governmental bodies and industry companies. These workshops present the findings of the Language White Papers, the META-NET network and the META-SHARE repository, national activities in the language technology field, national and European funding programmes for creation of language tools and resources. The workshops also include presentations by companies developing or using language technologies thus showing a strong link between creation of language resources and development of practical applications.

National workshops will encourage contributions of language resources to META-SHARE by national institutions as well as usage of resources already available on the platform.

Partners are putting efforts to attract mass media to the national workshops for reaching a broader general audience.

TILDE is organizing a national workshop in September. In October there will be 5 national workshops organized in Denmark by UCPH, Estonia by UT, Norway by UIB, Finland by UHEL and Lithuania by LKI. In November UGOT is organizing a national workshop in Sweden together with the Swedish Language Council.

Deliverable D.5.4 will be updated in December 2012 when all the workshops will be held.

Appendix 1: Invitation letter of Latvian National Workshop

International Conference: Language, Technology, and the Future of Europe

September 21, 2012, Freeport of Riga Authority conference hall, Kalpaka blvd. 12

At the conference, leading specialists and politicians of Europe and Latvia will analyse the future of language usage in a united Europe, the influence of technology on language development, and how language technology can help reduce language barriers.

The progress of Europe is endangered not only by economic and financial turbulence. European unity is also hindered by existing language barriers. Communication and collaboration over national borders is made difficult by language barriers. Those affect export of goods and services, as well as the ability of businesses to enter export markets. Of course, native languages are important to each European, and the strength of Europe is hidden within its diversity – multilingualism is one of Europe's most valuable assets.

The competition of languages within global media is especially a threat to smaller languages. The explosive development of the internet has created the need for language technologies to help overcome language barriers. In this technological era, the future belongs to those languages that are adequately supported by technology.

Language technology is one of the fields within which Latvia successfully competes amongst European and global technology developers. Latvia has already proven its ability to develop world-class language technologies. For example, Tilde is successfully developing technological support for the small languages of Europe, thus strengthening the position of small languages in the global information and technology space. These developments are in line with the national initiative *Language Shore (Valodu krasts)*.

The goal of the conference ***Language, Technology, and the Future of Europe*** is to identify the challenges to national languages in this modern world. Progress, development, and implementation goals will be set to help Latvian and other smaller languages maintain and strengthen their position within a multilingual Europe and global world.

At the conference, a book analysing the Latvian language within the context of the European information society will be presented. It has been prepared by the European Commission supported Multilingual Europe Technology Alliance META-NET. The machine translation portal LetsMT! will also be officially released. It has been created through support by the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme, and for the first time realises self-service and open-source collaboration within the development of machine translation.

Keynote speakers at the conference include Valdis Dombrovskis, Prime Minister of Latvia, Rytis Martikonis, Head of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Translation, representatives of the Latvian government, European alliance META-NET leaders, leading Latvian researchers, and language technology enterprises.

Conference topics:

- *Survey: Latvian language in the digital era*
META-NET survey results, publisher Springer book presentation
- *The release of the specialised European machine translation portal LetsMT!*
- *A presentation by Multilingual Europe Technology Alliance META-SHARE*
- *Tilde and the Language Shore initiative (Valodas krasts)*
- *National language development programmes*

Conference is organized by the EU ICT-PSP project META-NORD, Ministry of Culture of Latvia and Tilde Company.