

## **6<sup>th</sup> Conference «Hellenic Language and Terminology»**

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(Ms Ní Ghallchobhair could not deliver this address on the opening session of the Conference,  
because of a delay of her flight to Athens)

Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great privilege for me to address you this evening and to attend your 6th conference, “Hellenic Language and Terminology”, and I would like to sincerely thank ELETO for inviting me. It is somewhat awe-inspiring to visit a language community with such an ancient and prestigious history, the cradle of one of the earliest attested Indo-European languages and the medium for such a highly developed intellectual catchment area. Those of us working in the field of terminology cannot but be conscious of the contribution made by Greek to LSP (or Language for Special Purposes) domains in all contemporary European languages. This is all the more impressive given that we use different alphabets, and it might be expected that our languages and word patterns would differ profoundly in other ways. Happily, this is not the case. Through the medium of Latin, contemporary European languages have inherited a legacy from ancient Greek in the form of linguistic building blocks for scientific and technical language.

As a lover of words – should that be logophile? – I bemoan the fact that Greek and Latin are no longer core subjects in educational systems across Europe. In my country, Greek was reserved for boys for some reason while Latin was available to all, so I’m afraid I did not experience Greek directly as a student. However, in my work over the past 17 years as a terminologist I’ve learned the importance of identifying and becoming familiar with Greek roots and word segments.

The European Association for Terminology, founded in Denmark in 1996, aims to build bridges through enabling cooperation among the terminology communities of European languages and sharing knowledge and experience.

Every language community has its own unique set of circumstances. On the other hand, terminology is a key component common to all languages. Our circumstances and approaches may vary but our aims are identical – coherent effective communication in specialized domains.

To work in this field is to be passionate about language and meaning. When we are thus motivated to achieve high standards of communication in our individual languages, we need to become aware of the need for coherent strategies, for drawing up plans to realise our mission. However, it appears that this kind of work is often carried out in a piecemeal way and, rather like working on a jigsaw puzzle, it is not always easy to see the big picture. Language development, of course, is not scientific – language is more like water, it flows wherever it can. But terminology is a more formal level of language, and tends to be somewhat more orderly. It is our responsibility to identify, maintain and develop the inherent order of specialized language and to leave the results of our labour as a legacy to our language communities. Perhaps this is why we are passionate about words. Thank you again for inviting me, and thank you for your attention.