Building a Croatian National Termbank: Can a single solution fulfil all our responsibilities?

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Introduction
When one discusses the responsibilities of terminologists and public awareness of their terminological and terminographic work, one must often bring in considerations outside the realm of valid terminology theory and good practice.

Dilemmas arising in work on the Croatian Termbank Struna are an illustrative case. The responsibility of Struna terminologists as well as the Croatian public’s awareness of the importance of terminology work depend very much on wider political and ideological circumstances, specifically the country’s rather long history of linguistic oppression and its lack of continuity in the process of terminology standardization.

What can the lay and professional public expect of us, in the present context where a well articulated language policy – and, consequently, terminology policy and planning – is still to a great extent missing? Instead of a clear policy, we find either ideologically biased criteria not based on professional authority and expertise, or a tendency towards exaggerated tolerance for terminological chaos, either as a result of a prolonged absence of terminological culture or sometimes simply as a reaction to overzealous attempts at codification.

The particular dilemmas we face mainly arise from the principle of giving preference to native-language elements in term creation and standardization. Although in keeping with long-established Croatian normativist practice, preference for native elements can cause disagreements between the domain experts, on the one hand, and the Croatian language experts in charge of authorizing the preferred usage, on the other. Such disagreements most often arise where the terminology of a particular domain has its own traditions, such as the use of “classicisms” (internationalisms derived from Greek and Latin forms). Classicisms are often perceived today – justifiably or not – as loan words taken over from modern languages, nowadays most commonly English.
Dealing with such a situation requires of us not only linguistic sensitiveness but a high degree of socio-cultural awareness. Terminographic expertise alone does not guarantee that the terminologist can successfully display the necessary degree of responsibility towards the disciplines and practitioners that will use the terms. It is not our intention here to analyze the general arguments for native vs. international lexeme preference in terminology, because these are well known to most terminologists and most terminological approaches, but to shed some light on the specific sociolinguistic and historical background of the standard Croatian language which makes such choices relevant and therefore also part of the wider responsibility of terminologists and terminographers.

In sum, the context in which the Croatian language finds itself, twenty years after Croatia’s political independence and on the eve of becoming one of the official EU languages, imposes upon terminological work an enhanced concern for the linguistic tradition(s) of Croatian and its often traumatic history as well as for its future in the conglomerate of European languages. The sociolinguistic circumstances discussed here are in many ways typical of many other less widely used languages, though we will not try to draw explicit parallels.

**Croatian special field terminology**

During the two decades of Croatia’s independence and its struggle for political, linguistic and cultural recognition in the world, language issues have been raised and discussed in various contexts and on various levels – not only by linguists but by politicians and laymen alike. However, terminology for a long time remained out of the focus even of the rather narrow community of linguists. Various more or less coherent endeavours towards articulating a Croatian language policy left questions of terminology planning very much aside. Terminological activities thus took place in a rather isolated and fragmented manner. Even the very important task of creating and harmonizing the terminology required for translating the EU legislation as a prerequisite for Croatia’s accession has not always received adequate public and governmental recognition in terms of necessary coordination and support.

In 2007, as the first step in Croatian terminology planning, the Croatian Standard Language Council initiated the project *Development of Croatian Special Field Terminology* (referred to here by its Croatian acronym *Struna*). The program is financed by the Croatian Science Foundation, and is being carried out at the Institute of Croatian Language and Linguistics, which was chosen to serve as the national coordinating body. The aim of the program is to create the basis for standardizing Croatian terminology across various professional domains through a coordination between domain experts, on the one hand, and terminologists and language experts, on the other. The termbase currently contains eighteen domains and around 40 000 Croatian terms with their equivalents in English and several other languages.
Intended to serve as a tool for implementing national term planning in the process of terminology (re)standardization, Struna faces, on the one hand, a broad range of often conflicting expectations in regard to terminology corpus planning, and, on the other, a rather strong, albeit vastly exaggerated, perception in lay circles of a certain instability of the language’s orthographic and to some extent even morphological norm.

*Struna* is therefore a typical case of a terminology database established at an institutional level with the ambition of becoming recognized and widely accepted at national level.

**Historical context**

Croatian since its beginnings has been in contact with other languages. Given the political fragmentation of Croatian territory, different parts of Croatia were influenced by different other languages. Latin, and through Latin also Greek, have always been important. Thus the oldest documents are written in Latin, though they contain Croatian names. Unusually for Europe, Latin was maintained as the language of administration, education, culture, and scholarship in regions under Hungarian rule until 1847. The use of Latin was supported by Croatian politicians in order to oppose the idea presented in the Hungarian Parliament in 1790 that official records be written in Hungarian. It was generally felt that the Croatian language was in lesser danger from a dead language than a living one. The Croatians and the Hungarians shared their rulers from 1102 to 1918, but, interestingly, borrowed fewer words from each other than one might have expected. The strong and long-lasting influence of Italian on the east coast of the Adriatic is reflected today in many regional dialects. From 1850 to 1860, the “absolutism” policy of Interior Minister Bach in Austria led to German being introduced in areas ruled from Vienna, but even then work on cultivating Croatian did not cease. Most loanwords from German referred to items of industrial civilization. After the fall of Bach’s absolutism, Croatian was introduced as an official language at lower governmental levels, and after the Croatian-Hungarian Agreement of 1868 it was brought in as the official language throughout Croatian territory. In the Croatian and Slavonian Military Frontier bordering on Bosnia (i.e. on the Turkish Empire), the language of command continued to be German until 1881. The influence of Turkish (and of the Arabic and Persian languages via Turkish) spread mostly by way of the Turkish army and administration, and quite a number of general language lexemes found their way into the standard language. Many French loan words borrowed in more recent history are today considered Europeanisms. Russianisms in the Croatian language belong to the sphere of cultural borrowing and Sovietisms.

Since Croatian had not previously been used as an official language, Croatian

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1 Croats and Hungarians were in a personal union from 1102 till 1527 when they became part of the Habsburg Monarchy, and from 1867 to 1918 Croatia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.
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terminology – particularly legal, political, and economic terminology – had not had the chance to develop, and so the need for Croatian terminology for a number of domains arose. The major figure in the creation of Croatian scientific terminology at the time was a Slovak-born linguist Bogoslav Šulek (1816-1895). His guiding principle was that “the dictionary should avoid extremes, especially excessive purism and unnecessary classicism” (Gostl 1995: 91-82). Šulek followed this advice with great expertise, relying on the terminological maxim of “preference for native language (except in domains or languages where other traditions exist)”. He drew on the older layers of the Croatian language and on Croatian dialects (the Croatian standard has a three-dialectal basis, see section 4). If he still could not find a suitable term, Šulek would turn to internationalisms (particularly Latin and Greek), and then to calquing (from German, Italian, or French) or adapting a foreign term if the calque was unsatisfactory. In many cases, however, he created his own terms often following word-formation principles of related Slavic languages (Slovak, Slovene and Czech). Many of his neologisms still prevail in Croatian. The label of purism that has often been applied to Šulek since then is therefore not justified but has nevertheless been used to indiscriminately stigmatize Croatian language practice as a whole.

Antun Parčić (1832-1902) in Coastal Croatia played a rule similar to that of Šulek in Continental Croatia.

Croatian in the 20th century

Croatia passed through five political structures and five larger communities in the 20th century, beginning with Austria-Hungary up through the First World War. Political circumstances in the next, Yugoslav period favored convergence of the Croatian and Serbian languages, which in turn led to a prolonged period of terminology neglect within Croatia. In particular, after the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1921, later known as Yugoslavia, a nonexistent language called Serbo-Croatian-Slovene was pronounced the official language. A period of rigid centralization followed. The new constitution excluded Croatian and Slovenian terms. News reports were sent out from Belgrade to the rest of the Kingdom, and thus contained many terms unknown to most non-Serbian speakers.

Language policy briefly changed when the totalitarian Independent State of Croatia was established (1941-1945). Its strict top-down policy devoted inordinate attention to language, thus confirming the symbolic importance that language has. The extremely purist approach to language of the time, often lacking in professional expertise, was primarily geared towards the reduction of loanwords and their replacement by neologisms or existing Croatian words that had been suppressed in the previous period.

At the end of World War II, the victorious partisan movement cited four languages (Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, and Macedonian) as separate and equal languages. However the authorities still sought to merge the
languages, particularly in terminology, so that many existing Croatian terms were replaced by internationalisms. A symptom of the attempt to bring the language closer to Serbian and create a joint terminology is the Novi Sad Agreement (1954) which claimed that Serbian, Croatian, and Montenegrin were one language: “Work will proceed on the establishment of a common (Croatian and Serbian) terminology for all spheres of economic, scholarly, and cultural life”. A reaction to the Novi Sad Agreement came in 1967 in the form of the Declaration on the Name and Position of the Croatian Literary Language, signed by many Croatian cultural and scholarly organizations. The Declaration (1997: 25) stressed that the expression “Serbo-Croatian or Croato-Serbian language” was imprecise because it could lead to the two names being considered as synonymous, making it possible to impose Serbian as a single language for Šrbs and Croatians. It also emphasized the “inalienable right of every people to name its language with its own name, no matter whether the latter philological phenomenon in the form of separate language variants or even in its entirety belongs to some other people as well”. A further Croatian reaction to this “agreement” came in 1971 as the “Croatian spring”, which ended in the arrest of many prominent Croatian intellectuals and a period of prolonged political (including linguistic) repression. The language became “Croatian OR Serbian” which had never existed as a linguistic fact.

A constitutional amendment of 1972, which became a part of the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Croatia within Yugoslavia, stated that the language is Croatian or Serbian, and that each people has the right to use the language that it wishes for official communications.

In 1991 and 1992 Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia became independent countries.

It comes as no surprise that the years following Croatian independence laid the foundation for a language strategy which encouraged conscious attempts at eradicating the effects of the enforced unitarism and can therefore be perceived as planning for difference (mainly from the Serbian language) rather than convergence. This is a process typical of young nation states “feeling obliged to underline their cultural as well as their political distinctiveness” (Wright 2004: 49).

In any multilingual state two extremes have co-existed: language unitarism and language separatism. Mamić (2006: 61) finds that former Yugoslavia was marked by the language unitarism of a multilingual state having highly similar languages (another example is the former Czechoslovakia). In such a situation one language is dominant and efforts are made to impose it at the expense of other languages which are not recognized or are recognized only on paper. The Slovenians and the Macedonians found it easier to win recognition for the separateness of their languages, while Croatian still encounters attempts to question its independence.
Katičić [1986: 92] concludes that “in southeastern Europe, typically yet paradoxically, an unusual phenomenon occurs: ‘new languages’ have a rich history”. One cannot say that the dissolution of Yugoslavia led to an artificial splitting of Serbo-Croatian, since the latter never had existed as a fact of language; rather, it denoted the attempt to create a single language by eliminating differences at the expense of another language. After Croatia became independent in 1991, the new Constitution provided that the official language is Croatian written in Latin script. Peti [2009: 73] explains that Croatian in newly independent Croatia, with its changed social and political circumstances, embarked on a process of restandardization which did not aim at improvement of communication but took place on the symbolic level. Katičić [1999: 301] distinguishes between official terminology, technical and scientific terminology, and vocabulary referring to abstract concepts. Official terminology is changed with changes in government, while technical and scientific terminology is more well-defined and more obligatory than the intellectual vocabulary, though it is not strictly prescribed as official terminology is. In speaking about a standard language, one should distinguish these three sets of terms. Accordingly, restandardization concerns official terminology, whereas the technical and scientific have a continuum of their own. Hence restandardization was necessary particularly in military, legal, and economic terms, which is to say that unnecessary foreignisms needed to be eliminated and connections needed to be reestablished with the Croatian terminological tradition from before unitarism. This most of all concerned military and legal terms since these had been the most exposed to Serbian influence.

**Are Croatian and Serbian one language?**

Croatian and Serbian developed independently. Numerous differences separate them. The first is the alphabet. Croatians have written in Latin script since the 9th century (written documents in Latin language and script with Croatian names) or since the 14th century when Croatian-language documents appear in Latin script. The oldest texts in Croatian are written in the Glagolitic alphabet; in the Middle Ages, besides Glagolitic, the Cyrillic and Latin scripts were also used. The choice of Latin script resulted from the orientation of Croats toward the Roman Catholic Church. On the other hand, Serbs use Cyrillic and are oriented toward the Eastern Orthodox Church. The idea that the two have a single language grew out of the claim that Croatian and Serbian were standardized as a unitary language by Vuk Stefanović Karadžić [1787-1864], but in fact Croatian began to be standardized much earlier. Its standardization rested on a long and continuous literary tradition. The oldest Croatian writing was in the Church Slavonic language, into which elements of the three Croatian dialects began to penetrate at an early date. Thus one of the Serbian-Croatian differences is that the superstructure of standard Serbian is based on one folk dialect, while that of Croatian rests on a rich literary tradition in three dialects: Stokavski, Čakavski and Kajkavski (Brozović 1976: 14). In regard to Serbian, from the 12th to the 18th centuries
Serbian Slavonic was in use, then beginning with the first half of the 18th century the Russian redaction of Church Slavonic, alongside Slaveno-Serbski which was a mixture of the folk language and Russian Church Slavonic. Finally Vuk Stefanović Karadžić brought Serbian closer to Croatian, using some Croatian reference books.

An important question for linguistics is when two idioms can be considered as different languages. Radoslav Katičić (1986: 55), one of the most eminent Croatian linguists of the older generation, speaks of a model of composite language identity which encompasses genetic identity (languages arising historically from the same source), typological identity (referring to the grammatical systems), and axiological (concerning value judgements) which refers to whether the speaker feels the language to be his own or foreign. The latter has often been ignored because it seemed not sufficiently scientific, yet it is exceptionally important. Similar to Katičić, Matasović (2001: 15-18) cites the criterion of mutual intelligibility, the structural criterion, the criterion of speakers’ own identification, the genetic criterion and that of standardization. If we use the standardization criterion, Croatian and Serbian must be regarded as different languages because they have neither shared language reference materials nor common history. (The first grammar of Croatian was printed in 1604 in the Latin language; the first Serbian grammar in 1814.)

Often cited as a key criterion for categorizing Croatian and Serbian as one language is their mutual intelligibility. Two idioms would be considered different languages if their speakers cannot understand each other, but the same language if speakers do understand each other. The problem with this criterion is that it is applied selectively; it could make Norwegian and Swedish, Russian and Ukrainian, Slovak and Czech etc. into single languages, but this is not claimed in practice.

Croatian and Serbian differ in their attitude to purism. Serbian is more open to the influence of foreign languages and to receiving loanwords (see Klajn 2008), while Croatian has a long rejectionist tradition.

We should also mention the views of Snježana Kordić, who is known to Slavists worldwide, and who differs from the views of Croatian linguists. She regards the language(s) of Croats, Serbs, Bosniacs, and Montenegrins as one polycentric language which should be called Serbo-Croatian. An argument for the name ‘Serbo-Croatian’ rather than ‘Croato-Serbian’ is that Serbs are larger in number. She also feels that a nation has no necessary connection with a language, and that peoples do not have the right to name their languages as they wish, since this is unscientific and susceptible to nationalistic and religious considerations. We can agree that nations have no necessary connections with languages, but different nations find different symbols to be important in creating their respective identities. Some nations are large and politically and economically powerful, so that their language is not vital for creating their identity, while for other nations, including the Croats, it is.
Neo-Štokavian is the basis for the standard languages of the Croatians, Serbs, Montenegrins, and Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but it is only the dialect basis, while the superstructure of Croatian, as was mentioned above, is tridialectal and has been developing since the 15th century. “The commonalty of dialect basis is a fact, but using nothing but the resources of that basis we would only be able to speak about farm work (at the level of pre-feudal agriculture), the main weather phenomena, and fundamental physiological processes.” (Brozović 1971)

Present-day younger linguists, sociolinguistically oriented and critical of purism, do not call into question the identity of Croatian as an independent language. Thus Mate Kapović (2010: 144) concludes “It is difficult to grasp, unless we are to explain it by simple habit and inertia, why some foreign linguists are so disturbed by the use of separate names Croatian and Serbian, when the same thing is done in so many other cases and when nobody seems to be particularly disturbed that we practically never or very rarely speak of Dano-Norwegian or Indonesian-Malaysian.”

The Croatian Standard language today

A very widely accepted definition of ‘standard language’ is the one by Dalibor Brozović (1970: 28) [drawing on the Prague school tradition], which states that this is “an autonomous language, always codified and functionally polyvalent, born in the moment in which a nation, aware of its peculiar identity, started using it as its national linguistic expression within an international community”. A standard language has what is called ‘elastic stability’ in time and space.

Since every self-respecting people seeks to have a developed language (Haugen 1966: 927), the purpose of language planning is a minimum of variation in form (codification) and a maximum of variation in functions (elaboration). It is natural to want to reduce internal differences and increase differences with the outside. An important part of corpus planning is thus a controlled development of terminology.

The process of standardization is an open process. Ferguson (1991: 221), for example, claims that there are three dimensions relevant for measuring language development: graphization, standardization, and modernization which explicitly implies the development of terminology and word formation patterns. Similarly, Haugen (1987: 61) stresses that “elaboration is in some ways just a continued implementation of a norm to meet the functions of a modern world. A modern language of high culture needs a terminology for all the intellectual and humanistic disciplines, including the sciences, and not to forget the cultural underworld that runs from low to popular”. In other words, the process of selection and codification should be followed by an intense and targeted terminology development because a “language without a developed terminology loses its standardhood”. (R. Katičić, Minutes of the Standard Croatian language Council, March 22, 2007).
Tendencies towards purism

Croatian is often perceived as a purist language, a characteristic it shares with many European languages, not only those in constant struggle for survival. Its inclination towards purism goes back to its early history, and the very short historic overview we provide in this article is intended to explain such a development rather than defend it.

Contemporary linguists, however, differ in their interpretation of purism, depending mainly on the theoretical and to a certain extent ideological views they represent. So, for example, Turk and Opašić (2008: 80) state that “purification aims to preserve the standard language, as a ‘symbol of national identity’ from foreign influence. To purism in this sense, exclusivity and intolerance are usually ascribed, and so purism is commonly spoken of as a negative phenomenon. However, instances of purism should not be judged a priori; instead, each should be evaluated on the basis of its own characteristics, taking into consideration the sociocultural context and sociolinguistic situation in which it appears ...”. They go on to explain that a long tradition of purism in the Croatian language is rooted basically in its unfavorable history in relation to other languages and the fact that Croatian largely modeled itself on other purist languages – German, Hungarian and Czech. In following these models, “it was itself purist, in particularly towards German and Hungarian, in an effort to mitigate their influence.” (Turk, Opašić 2008: 82). The authors argue that “Croatian linguistic purism is consonant with similar activities taking place in other European languages, addressing the same issues according to the same criteria, and that it has been a constant feature of the language, varying only in the degree of intensity. Croatian, as a traditionally purist language, has not accepted foreign language models passively, but has adapted loanwords according to its rules, at the same time activating its expressive potential by creating calques as substitutes for foreign language models.” (2008: 73)

One radical opposing view comes from Anita Peti (2011: 343) who, discussing the current language situation, tends to see the prevailing language policy as ‘planning for difference’: “There are three main institutions in Croatia today that are actively engaged in language management activities on the national level: The Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, The Croatian Standard Language Council, and the Institute for the Croatian Language and Linguistics. Their efforts are focused on establishing the status of Croatian as a separate language in its own right, as historically and culturally distinct from Serbian and other related language varieties, and on corpus planning to further differentiate Croatian from these neighboring varieties. ... These

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2 The Croatian Standard Language Council was abolished in 2012 and its function superseded by the Institute of Croatian Language and Linguistics. This decision stirred a lot of heated discussion, and in our view rightfully so, since such an authoritative but also widely representative body of language experts can have a very influential and welcome role in the processes of language planning, as well as terminology planning in particular.
three institutions share a number of features with prototypical examples of language academies and are functionally equivalent to such institutions, although they do not bear this name.”

**Purism and terminology**
Terminology work is by its nature, especially in the circumstances relevant for our case, always to a great extent prescriptive. It, on the other hand, does not take place in isolation and should reflect not only tradition but also current trends in the linguistic development of a particular language community. It furthermore, apart from the array of responsibilities we have touched upon, harbors a responsibility toward the professional community of particular domains that may not necessarily go hand in hand with the generally accepted normative approach.

How is the practicing terminographer to find the answer to all these challenges? Generally speaking, as well as from our experience, the wisdom is in the compromise. How, then, does one make compromises without compromising professional criteria and consistency?

In this quest we seek to rely on the expertise of eminent Croatian linguists who might differ in their approaches but provide a wider frame within which it is possible to find plausible solutions.

Katičić repeatedly stresses the importance of “our Croatian lexical heritage along with our European heritage” referring to the need for a more relaxed attitude towards internationalisms (especially those of classical origin) above all in scientific terminology as opposed to some other terminological domains (e. g. military and administrative language) which should more justifiably be cleansed of unnecessary foreign words. The process of terminology purification should thus primarily be in the function of continuing the severely interrupted Croatian terminological development. Katičić insists (1986: 70) on his own definition of purism, which as one of its extremes also includes excessive use of loanwords. According to him, such a form of purism makes it impossible to construct a terminological system; there is no deeper analysis of the object intended, no differentiation of words, particularly of abstract denominations, since the approach itself is primitive and one-dimensional.

In spite of the fact that the evidence for the above interpretation may not seem conclusive, Katičić (1999: 304) has to be given the credit for allowing that the parallel systems of native and international terminologies or lexical pairs can in certain domains be highly justified and the “standard norm cannot flee from either kind of name, neither from Europeanisms nor from words of Slavic origin; they can be used in parallel or else a choice should be made without obstinate consistency.”

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3 In particular disciplines, indeed, parallel terminological systems coexist, for example in medicine and law where we find two active terminological layers – Latin and Croatian.
Pranjković (2010: 66) in connection with scientific terminology considers that co-existence of international and Croatian terms is the best, since internationalisms are very often most suitable due to their lack of ambiguity, their neutrality and precision.

Internationalisms should however be used with caution. Silić (2006: 60) argues that their word-formational structure needs to be transparent, simple, economical, and that their general meaning should not be burdened with additional meanings. He emphasizes that internationalisms in science are not problematic because science is international in content. They enable successful communication among scientists. But we should not forget that scientists are responsible for developing their national language, hence for creating terms in Croatian.

Samardžija (2002: 81) cites three possible approaches to internationalisms in terminology. The first is to accept neo-internationalisms (mainly Anglicisms) without resistance or criteria. The second requires replacing all neo-internationalisms with Croatian lexemes. The third and surely most rational is to accept what is necessary and reject what is unnecessary.

Of course, it is for the terminologist and terminographer to decide what is necessary and what is not.

Pranjković (2010: 39) therefore holds that one of the key questions in standardizing is which foreign words are unnecessary and which are needed. He concludes that those for which we have good Croatian replacements are unnecessary, but some loans are unnecessary in one of their meanings and irreplaceable in another. Before we seek to replace a loan with a Croatian lexeme, Pranjković (2010: 41) calls for taking the semantic differentiation of the words and their functional-stylistic register into account. "We should, finally, say that new coinages or obsolete words that have long been disused are generally not good replacements. Such words can at best be proposed as replacements, but certainly should not be normatively prescribed or administratively imposed."

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The sixth Terminology Summit was organized in Oslo in October 2012 by The Language Council of Norway (Språkrådet) in cooperation with The European Association for Terminology (EAFT). English and French were conference languages. The event also included an international workshop on national termbanks, Termintra. This second edition of Terminologen contains the talks given at the Summit, posters presented, a summary of the workshop and the talks of the three winners of The International Terminology awards given at the Summit.

Le VIe Sommet de Terminologie a été organisé à Oslo, en octobre 2012, par le Conseil norvégien de la langue (Språkrådet) en collaboration avec l’Association européenne de terminologie (AET). L’anglais et le français en étaient les langues officielles. Cet événement incluait également un atelier international consacré aux banques nationales de terminologie, Termintra. Ce deuxième numéro de Terminologen comprend le texte des interventions et des posters présentés durant le Sommet, un résumé de l’atelier ainsi que les exposés des trois gagnants des Prix de Terminologie.