



Lifelong
Learning
Programme



EVIVA - Evaluating the Education of Interpreters and their Clients through Virtual Learning Activities

Research Seminar

Evaluating the Use of Virtual Learning Environments in the Education of Interpreters and their Clients

Brussels

Friday 28 November 2014

9.00am-5.30pm



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Venue

Welsh Higher Education Brussels
Wales House
11 Rond-Point Schuman
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www.virtual-interpreting.net



The EVIVA project builds on the Lifelong Learning Programme projects BACKBONE (Pedagogic Corpora for Content & Language Integrated Learning) and IVY (Interpreting in Virtual Reality) and has been conducted with financial support from the European Commission. The seminar and its related materials reflect the views only of the participants, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of their content. This seminar has been organised with support from Welsh Higher Education Brussels.

Programme

08:30-09:00	Registration and Coffee
09:00-09:10	Welcome
09:10-10:00	Update from the European Institutions Ekaterini Dara-Lepoura, European Parliament: <i>Virtual Classes and the Pre-selection Tool at the EP: Developments and future initiatives</i> Fernando Leitão, European Commission: <i>Speech Repository 2.0</i>
10:00-10:30	Jesús de Manuel Jerez, University of Granada: <i>The use of real-life speeches and communicative events in conference interpreter training: How, when and why</i>
10:30-10:45	Video message from Barbara Moser-Mercer, University of Geneva
10:45-11:15	Coffee
11:15-11:45	Tugba Tokel, METU Ankara: <i>3D Virtual Worlds: Use cases, research trends and future directions</i>
11:45-12:00	Sabine Braun: <i>Evaluating virtual environments in the context of interpreter education: Rationale, aims and evaluation methods of the EVIVA project</i>
12:15-12:45	Robert Gittins and Sabine Braun: <i>The virtual learning environments evaluated in EVIVA</i>
12:45-13:00	Sabine Braun: <i>EVIVA evaluation methods</i>
13:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00-16:00	Insights from the EVIVA project
14:00-14:15	Jonathan Roberts and Panagiotis Ritsos: <i>The user experience</i>
14:15-14:40	Kurt Kohn, Petra Hoffstaedter and Sabine Braun: <i>Flipping interpreting practice: Issues of individualisation and preparation</i>
14:40-15:00	Elena Davitti and Sara Dicerto: <i>Interacting with the technology, interacting with others</i>
15:00-15:20	Maria Tymczyńska and Marta Kajzer-Wietrzny: <i>A focus on professional awareness in role plays</i>
15:20-15:40	Konstantinos Kritsis: <i>More than words: A look at student interpreters' non-verbal behaviour in EVIVA</i>
15:40-16:00	Discussion
16:00-16:30	Coffee
16:30-16:50	Sabine Braun: <i>Where do we go from here: Conclusions, future challenges and future opportunities</i>
16:50-17:30	Panel discussion

Introduction

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have been employed in interpreter education and training to make teaching resources accessible, to overcome problems of trainer availability and to enable training across geographical distances. ICTs are also particularly useful in enabling interpreting students and those who require interpreting services to train together in virtual “mock conferences”, “moot courts” and similar settings. ICT-based solutions for education and training open up new opportunities for situated learning, for example through simulation where access to real-life settings is difficult or impossible for learners. As a further advantage, the use of ICTs in education and training helps learners acquire digital competence and prepares them for 21st-century working environments and practices.

Research into the use of ICTs to create Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) in different educational settings shows positive results but also raises questions about the affordances of different technologies and the impact of system design on the learning process. In the context of interpreter-mediated communication, questions that need to be investigated further are how and what interpreting students and users of interpreting services learn in VLEs; how different VLEs can support different types of learning activities; how VLEs are able to simulate real-life conditions to bridge the worlds of work and education; and how VLEs simulating interpreter-mediated communication can work for learners from diverse backgrounds.

Moreover, ICT-based educational solutions present novel opportunities for analysing learning processes and evaluating the effectiveness of VLEs. In the field of interpreter education, these opportunities remain to date largely unexplored. However, analysing and evaluating different VLEs through the lens of a process as complex as interpreting promises to yield rich insights for the design of future VLEs.

This seminar, organised by the EU Lifelong Learning Project EVIVA – ‘Evaluating the Education of Interpreters and their Clients through Virtual Learning Activities’, addresses the educational opportunities that VLEs such as 3D virtual worlds, video-based and videoconference-based environments provide for future interpreters and their clients. It seeks to discuss the affordances of different types of VLE, explore appropriate evaluation methods and formulate design recommendations for VLEs in the context of educating and training interpreters and their clients.

The seminar aims to provide a forum for discussion and to encourage dialogue between the designers and users of VLEs in the context of interpreter education. The programme includes experts in all fields that are relevant to this seminar: interpreting, interpreter training, client education, developing and evaluating ICT-based educational solutions, and exploiting 3D virtual reality and other emerging technologies for educational purposes.

Abstracts

Ekaterini Dara-Lepoura

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Virtual Classes and the Pre-selection Tool at the EP: Developments and future initiatives

Virtual Classes

At the European Parliament we are dedicated to using virtual learning environments as a way to help train prospective interpreters throughout Europe and beyond. The aim of the Virtual Classes project is to share the expertise of Parliament interpreters with interpreting students via videoconference. Classes are held between DG INTE and universities, and in these classes students receive assessment by means of interpreting exercises. Parliament interpreters prepare speeches for the students to interpret, and subsequently assess their performance. In addition, with the aid of Virtual Classes, students can be trained to work from languages which universities may not be able to provide. Due to the popularity of the project, we have recently added five new universities to our list of partners: Comenius University Bratislava, Bath University, the University of Latvia, Beirut University and the University of Maryland. This brings the total number of partner universities to 25 for the academic year 2014-2015. We have also had our first Virtual Class with the Council of Europe, which is a member of the HINTS network. The first part of this presentation will explain the concept of the Virtual Classes project and outline its major achievements to date.

Pre-selection Tool

The European Parliament's accreditation tests for freelance interpreters require heavy investment in terms of human resources, particularly in the context of low pass rates. Therefore, the Parliament will implement a computer-based pre-selection test to handle the large numbers of candidates and to ensure that only the best candidates are invited to the full accreditation test, which is carried out on-site. The pre-selection test will be conducted online via a web application and mobile app. The candidate will be asked to perform a simultaneous interpretation of one pre-recorded speech. Candidates who pass the online selection will have their language tested again during the on-site accreditation test to exclude any manipulation or misuse by the candidate during the pre-selection test. The evaluators will be able to assess the candidates individually, at any time and from any device with internet connection. This second part of the presentation will provide initial insights into the rationale for, and the procedure of, the online pre-selection.

Ekaterini Dara-Lepoura became Head of the e-Learning Unit (DG INTE European Parliament) in 2014. Her work experience with the European Union started in 1994, when she was a freelance interpreter for the European Parliament and the European Commission, and several EU-based roles over the years have led to her current position. In 2011-2012 she was responsible for the Speech Repository and Virtual Classes project in her capacity of Head of e-Learning sector (DG SCIC).

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Speech Repository 2.0

The Speech Repository is an e-learning tool developed by DG Interpretation which provides tailor-made training material for conference interpreting students and trainers. It contains a collection of recorded speeches organised by language, level, interpreting mode, subject and keywords. The repository includes real speeches (extracts of conferences and other public events) and pedagogical speeches recorded by experienced trainers in all the languages of all EU member states, accession countries, as well as Arabic, Russian and Chinese. An updated version of this tool, the Speech Repository 2.0, has been online since 8/10/2014. This new version is more user-friendly and more interactive, and new speeches have been added. It consists of two parts: the Speech Repository gives full public access to more than two thousand speeches; My Speech Repository grants registered users access to all speeches and additional functionalities linked to conference interpreter training.

Fernando Leitão is Head of the e-Learning sector (Virtual Classes and the Speech Repository) at the Multilingualism and Interpreters Training Support unit (DG Interpretation, European Commission). He trained as a conference interpreter through an intensive traineeship organised by the European Commission and subsequently joined DG Interpretation, working for 26 years as a conference interpreter and trainer. In the framework of internal training in the European institutions he designed and conducted several seminars for professional interpreters and trainers on various subjects, such as "Interpreters' selection", "Training Assistance", "Speechmaking" and "2nd active language training".

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The use of real-life speeches and communicative events in conference interpreter training: How, when and why

Traditionally, real-life video speeches have been considered suitable only for the final stages of conference interpreting training. A survey conducted by the Steering Committee of the Speech Repository of the European Commission in 2010 seems to have reached the same conclusion. Tailor-made, pedagogically adapted speeches are perceived to be more suitable for the early stages of conference interpreter training as they make it possible to control several sources of interpreting problems that cannot be easily removed in real-life speeches and that may lead to frustration and discouragement of the students. This presentation will argue that by having a sufficient number of transcribed real-life speeches and communicative events, realism may be compatible with the necessary pedagogical progression in the selection and grading of materials. It will be argued that, following this approach, real-life video recordings can be used from the very first stages of training, making it possible to expose trainees throughout their training to a great variety of accents, modes of presentation, speech rates and types of communicative interaction, and to words, terms and phrases that are actually used in real-life situations. The proposed approach is based on the collection of materials that has been recorded and digitised at the University of Granada as part of the Marius project since the end of the 1990s. The materials are taken from three different main sources: local conferences and seminars, EU institutional events, and social forums. Using a functionalist approach to interpreter training, the proposed approach draws especially on the concept of the communicative event as a hypertext, as defined by Pöchhacker (1995), and as a basis for developing interpreting exercises. In addition to outlining this approach, the presentation will also discuss the use of (new) technologies for the recording, editing, classification, selection and grading of training material for future conference interpreters.

Jesús de Manuel Jerez has been a Lecturer in Interpreting (French-Spanish) at the University of Granada since 1996. Formerly interpreter (French-Portuguese-Spanish) for the Schengen Convention Translation and Interpreting Service (1992-94) and Spanish Assistant at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh. He graduated from the University of Granada (1986-91) in Translation and Interpreting. He obtained a PhD from the same university in 2006 with the thesis entitled 'La incorporación de la realidad profesional a la formación de intérpretes mediante las nuevas tecnologías y la investigación-acción'.

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3D Virtual Worlds: Use cases, research trends and future directions

The rapid development of innovative technologies has changed the face of communication, collaboration and learning. Three-dimensional (3D) virtual worlds are one such technology, offering many new opportunities. Educators worldwide are trying to benefit from the affordances of these 3D technologies by investing large amounts of time and financial resources in research and development. Immersive three dimensionality of the environment, representation through avatars, and interactivity are the important characteristics of 3D virtual worlds. The literature provides evidence of the potential of virtual worlds to create effective learning environments where collaborative learning is possible through immersive activities. This presentation will outline different use cases and examples of virtual worlds in the literature, factors affecting the acceptance and adoption of virtual worlds as learning spaces, and important issues for the design of those environments to increase presence and satisfaction of students. It will conclude by providing a roadmap to researchers and educators who want to use virtual worlds for educational purposes.

Tugba Tokel received B.A. and M.S. degrees in Computer Education and Instructional Technology from the Middle East Technical University. She completed her doctoral studies in Educational Technology Program at the Texas A&M University. Currently, she is working as an assistant professor and assistant department chair at the Computer Education and Instructional Technology Department at METU and is the principal coordinator of the Virtual Worlds Research Group at the same department. She is also a founder and general manager of Metaverse Software. Her research interests include 3D virtual worlds, serious games, simulations, online learning, problem solving, scaffolding and metacognition.

EVIVA presentations

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Evaluating virtual environments in the context of interpreter education: Rationale, aims and evaluation methods of the EVIVA project

Research into the use of virtual learning environments (VLEs) in interpreter education shows positive results, and uses of VLEs to educate potential clients of interpreting services is emerging. However, these uses have not to date been evaluated systematically. The EVIVA project therefore set out to explore and evaluate the affordances of different types of VLE in the context of interpreter-mediated communication, especially in relation to business and community settings.

One of the cornerstones of EVIVA has been the contention that the vocational nature of interpreting necessitates a sound professional and pedagogical approach to education and training in which cognitive and social constructivist principles of learning and especially the concept of situated learning play a crucial role. VLEs arguably create new opportunities for situated learning. However, very little is known about how interpreting students learn in any type of VLE and how this can be evaluated. Furthermore, interpreters' clients are a group of learners that has received extremely little attention to date, and little is known about the contribution that VLEs could make to their learning experience. These were the points of departure of the EVIVA project, which has focused on investigating how different VLEs and learning activities in those VLEs can be used to support learning in the interpreting context.

This presentation aims to introduce and contextualise the EVIVA project, and to set the scene for the subsequent presentations, which will introduce the different types of VLE that were evaluated in the project and present individual findings of the evaluation. The presentation will begin by outlining the rationale and the specific aims of the EVIVA project. The second part will introduce the evaluation methods that were devised to achieve the project's aims.

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The virtual learning environments evaluated in EVIVA

The EVIVA project has focused on three types of VLE that have the potential to create opportunities for situated learning—3D virtual worlds, videoconference tools and video corpora. This presentation will introduce the VLEs that were selected to represent the three types and explain how they were used for individual practice with prepared content and collaborative practice in live role play. First, we will show how the online video corpus environment available from the Lifelong Learning Project BACKBONE was used and adapted to support individual practice with prepared content, and will justify the choice of Google Hangout as the main videoconferencing tool for collaborative work in EVIVA. The second part of the presentation will focus on the 3D virtual environment used in EVIVA. This is a bespoke environment developed in the predecessor project IVY (Interpreting in Virtual Reality), using the virtual world Second Life as a platform. The IVY environment enables students to work with prepared content and to interact in real time. We will briefly outline the stages of development beginning with the creation of a ‘virtual island’ with virtual interpreting locations and robots, different working modes, a heads-up display, an audio player, and an administration panel to add content and manage users. We will show how, based on the outcomes of the IVY project and new developments in Second Life, the environment was further adapted with regard to graphical quality (photo-realism), navigation and animation to improve user acceptance and experience. One of the examples we will discuss is how the project experimented with different robot and avatar stages to simulate facial movements and gestures. Finally, it will be shown how Second Life, which has proved an invaluable and cost-effective platform to research, prototype and develop to operational level the 3D space, but which has presented its own challenges and constraints, has prompted the exploration of alternative platforms to address the challenges of elements such as photo-realism, scalable environments and animation fluidity towards lip synchronisation, co-speech facial expressions, and the prospect of a level of artificial intelligence.

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The user experience

This presentation will open the series of presentations reporting the findings of the EVIVA project. It will focus on the analysis of the User Experience Questionnaire (UEQ, <http://www.ueq-online.org/>), which is a tried and tested questionnaire for interactive products such as VLEs. The UEQ enables researchers to conduct an assessment of the users' experience of the product in question and has been designed to elicit users' impressions, feelings and attitudes towards the product, after using it. The EVIVA project drew on the UEQ to evaluate the usability of the selected VLEs in the education of interpreters and potential clients. The presentation will report the results from users spread over the four evaluation sites involved in the project and will assess their experience of working with prepared content in the online video corpus environment BACKBONE and the 3D world IVY as well as their experience of collaborative work in live role plays using both the IVY 3D environment and the videoconferencing tool Google Hangout.

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Flipping interpreting practice: Issues of individualisation and preparation

One of the concepts that the EVIVA approach has embraced is the ‘flipped classroom’ approach: some tasks and activities that are deemed to be crucial for successful interpreting learning yet difficult to support by traditional (face-to-face) teaching are outsourced to virtual learning environments, making learning more situated, personalised and collaborative. In EVIVA this involves individualised interpreting practice with prepared content—video-recorded narrative interviews in the online BACKBONE corpus environment and bilingual audio dialogues in the IVY 3D virtual environment—as well as collaborative practice in live role plays in the IVY 3D environment and via videoconference. Through virtual learning, students are given the opportunity to activate and practise their interpreting knowledge and skills, notice gaps in their interpreting competence, explore different solutions, become aware of targets and challenges for further learning, and reflect on the nature of interpreting and interpreter education. This presentation will focus on a case study analysis of examples of virtual learning with prepared content in the BACKBONE video corpus environment and the IVY 3D virtual environment. Following a brief clarification of the advantages and challenges of ‘flipped learning’, data from the students’ preparation activities and interpreting practice, user experience questionnaires, and reflective sessions with a tutor will be used to explore the diversity of learning paths and the conditions that lead to success or failure. Based on these insights, it will be possible to specify requirements and objectives for learner preparation and coaching.

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Interacting with the technology, interacting with others

The various VLEs developed during the EVIVA project have specific features which allow students to achieve different types and levels of interaction, both with other speakers and with the technology itself. From the more structured prepared content for interpreting practice in the BACKBONE and IVY environments to the more 'realistic' role plays in the IVY settings and Google Hangout, the EVIVA pedagogical material opens up the possibility for students to train their coordination skills progressively, thus becoming gradually more aware of the multifaceted reality of interpreting practice while improving their oral translation skills. This presentation investigates the role of the VLEs and their technological features in the development of specific interpreting skills related to the interactional management of the interpreter-mediated encounter, which are normally difficult to train in the traditional classroom environment. Examples from the dataset are presented to illustrate how specific interactional challenges are handled, showing actual student reactions to increasingly complex VLEs and the coping strategies students use when working in them. The presentation will highlight the influence of the different VLEs on interpreting performance and triangulate findings from empirical observation with student feedback provided during reflective sessions. The analysis shows that the different scenarios offered by the VLEs can be used to encourage trainees to be increasingly in charge of the interpreting session, thus making them aware of potential issues that can arise from contextual factors external to the linguistic delivery and heightening their understanding of interpreting as an activity requiring enhanced multitasking skills.

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A focus on professional awareness in role plays

Based on data from the Polish EVIVA site, this presentation examines the opportunities for the development of professional awareness in role plays enacted by interpreting students in the two VLEs which enable live interaction. The development of professional awareness is understood here as learning and practising professional interpreter behaviours, such as asking for clarification, informing interlocutors about communication problems, managing the start and end of the interaction, maintaining a professional image, and managing the equipment in remote settings. We analyse students' consecutive interpreting performance across role plays carried out in the IVY 3D environment and the videoconferencing environment Google Hangout. The discussion will focus on the opportunities for practising professional behaviours and will be illustrated by examples from students' interpreting performance related to interaction management, image management and equipment management. The analysis will also take into account students' comments about their role-playing experience made in reflective sessions with their tutors. The presentation concludes by presenting several recommendations with regard to training professional behaviours in remote settings.

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More than words: A look at student interpreters' non-verbal behaviour in EVIVA

More often than not, the non-verbal components of our interaction with/in digital environments are far more revealing about our experience than our verbalised comments. Or, at least, equally telling. The students' work on the different activities carried out within the EVIVA project is filled with such subtle, unintentional signals: vocally produced noises, body posture and gestures, facial expressions, and eye movement unveil different aspects of their interaction with the VLEs and their communication through them. Using a selection of clips from the video recordings of the data corpus from the University of Cyprus, obtained during both the familiarisation and evaluation stages of the project, it is the aim of this presentation to offer some preliminary observations on what these non-verbal cues tell us about a) the way(s) in which each of the educational tools used supports the interpreting students' practice (or otherwise) and b) the level and nature of the students' engagement with the tasks assigned. The presentation is designed to provide some initial reflections on the notion of 'presence' in relation to the VLEs used in EVIVA.

Conclusion & panel discussion

Where do we go from here: Conclusions, future challenges and future opportunities

The EVIVA project has sought to evaluate a range of virtual learning environments (VLEs) which use state-of-the-art and future-generation information and communication technologies (ICTs). Using the context of educating and training interpreting students and (potential) clients of interpreting services, i.e. learners from different educational settings and backgrounds, EVIVA has evaluated the selected VLEs with particular emphasis on how they help simulate real-life conditions and support the acquisition of professional skills and knowledge. It is hoped that the outcomes will inform the development and design of future VLEs and will enhance the learning opportunities for learners across different educational sectors. Through its research into, and dissemination of knowledge about, innovative VLEs, the project hopes to have contributed to promoting the potential of ICTs as a catalyst for innovation and creativity in education and training, to modernising interpreter education, and to providing innovative approaches to educating interpreters' clients. The particular appeal of investigating ICTs in the context of interpreter-mediated communication is that virtual collaboration technologies are already being used by a growing number of companies and public services to support communication. By helping interpreting students and their potential clients to gain access to and experience with different ICT-based learning opportunities, to develop digital competence, and to strengthen their ICT skills, the project also hopes to have made a contribution to ensuring that future interpreters and their future clients are well prepared for the use of ICTs in the workplace.

Based on the outcomes of the EVIVA project and the discussion throughout the day, the panel discussion will focus on the potential and the opportunities of the different types of VLEs in the context of interpreter-mediated communication but will also engage with the challenges at hand and with ways of addressing these through future research and development.

Housekeeping & location

Housekeeping

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Fire regulations

Please note all safety regulations, including fire alarm procedures, will be talked through at the start of your visit.

Accommodation

Brussels has a wide range of hotels to choose from as you would expect of Europe's capital city. For a choice, try www.expedia.co.uk.

Alternatively, the following hotels are in close proximity to the WHEB office:

Hotel Silken Berlaymont

Crowne Plaza

Radisson SAS EU Hotel

Hotel Leopold

New-hotel Charlemagne

Holiday Inn Brussels Schuman

Location

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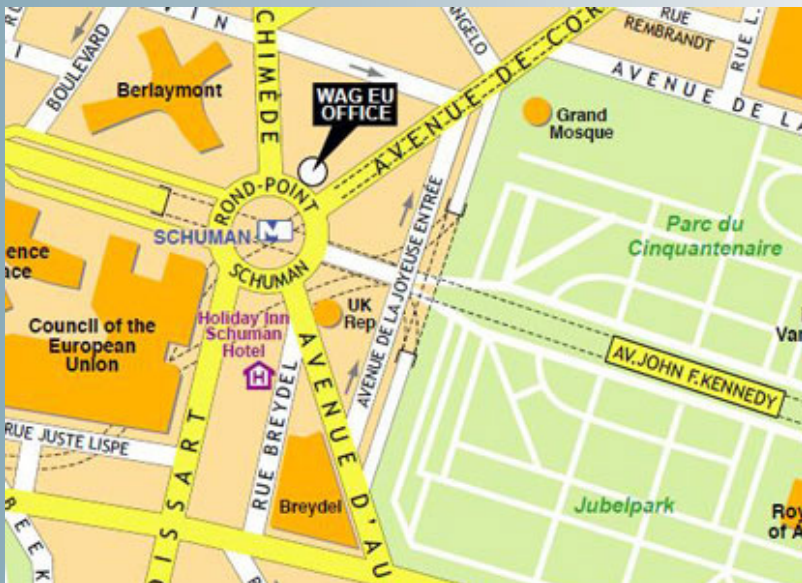
Directions

Metro: Schuman Metro Stop opens directly onto Schuman Roundabout

Taxi: WHEB is a short taxi ride from Central Station and the centre of Brussels

Bus: The airport shuttle bus stops at Schuman roundabout, allowing easy transfer from Brussels Zaventem Airport

Train: A regular Airport Express between Brussels Zaventem Airport and stations in the centre of the city (Nord, Centre, Midi), connecting trains/metro can then be caught to Schuman train/metro stop.



The WHEB office is conveniently located directly opposite the European Commission Headquarters, on Schuman Roundabout. WHEB is part of the Wales House representation, which can easily be reached by all modes of transport.

EVIVA Seminar

28 November 2014

Welsh Higher Education Brussels

Rond-Point Schuman

Brussels

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