

EUROTRA (CONT.)

CALLING ALL EURO-LANG ENGINEERS

At the end of August, the Commission for the European Communities issued its first Call for Proposals for Linguistic Research and Engineering (LRE) within the context of the Third Framework Programme for Community Research and Technology Development 1990-1994.

Aimed at consortia of a minimum of two cross-border partners (natural or legal persons based in the Community are eligible for funding, non-EC contractors are not), the LRE program provides twenty million ECUs (\$23,400,000) to support pre-competitive applied R&TD in three complementary areas within the field of NLP. The goal is to cultivate development of "basic linguistic technology which can be incorporated into a large number of computer applications where natural language is an essential ingredient."

The first key area pinpointed in the Call is the fundamental scientific basis of language technologies, including improvements in the "interlinguality" of linguistic representations of text/discourse, the use of domain-specific knowledge to constrain linguist interpretation of the above, speech-based interfaces, and the use of advanced computational technologies in NLP.

The second area deemed worthy of attention is the fostering of common methods, tools, and resources. This encompasses advanced development environments for language researchers and developers, tools for re-using existing resources, and machine processable grammars, dictionaries, etc. The overall aim is to achieve de facto standards for resource interchange. A final target is pilot and demonstration projects to evaluate progress and demonstrate feasibility in controlled environments. Application domains to be encouraged include MT, document abstracting and indexing, document manipulation in general, man-machine communication, knowledge abstraction from NL texts, and computer-aided (language) instruction.