Center for Sprogteknologi: Thriving in Denmark

Having cut the umbilical cord three years ago of a decade's worth of more or less steady Eurotra funding, the Copenhagen Center for Sprogteknologi (CST) has mobilized into one of the most active of the ex-Eurotra sites. Success may be measured in many ways of course, but by pulling in a steady array of projects and related activities, CST director Bente Maegaard certainly keeps an impressive number of computational linguists off the street. The Centre currently numbers twenty five people, including support staff. Although physically located on the campus of the University of Copenhagen, the CST is strictly speaking, an independent institution under the Danish Ministry for Research and Technology.

In varying degrees, the CST has a hand in the LRE projects DELIS (lexical semantics), MECKA (knowledge bases for NLP), EAGLES (standards and evaluation), and RELATOR (acquisition of resources), as well as in several Danish-funded research projects. In the commercial sector, the CST provided consulting services to Canon Europa during the development of its documentation translation system. More recently, the CST was awarded a joint contract in the EC VALUE II program to develop a German-Danish version of the Winger '92 PC-based MT system together with Winger and the German research institute IAI (Saarbrücken, Germany).

Sustaining itself on an healthy mixture of government-sponsored research and industry-fueled development, the CST suggests an intriguing alternative to the familiar American model of venture capital-driven start-ups, one perhaps more attenuated to the ways and mores of socialist Europe.