

Dear conference organiser,

Rumours about interpreters and their skills abound. One says their talent lies in their ability to adapt to unknown situations of all kinds, and to convert any speech imaginable from one language into another off-the-cuff.

Way off the mark!

Imagine you were a journalist and were given a last-minute assignment: an article on a bakers' guild convention for a trade journal. Would you know what type of machinery a baker uses and exactly how every part works? Would you be able to give a talk on the advantages of one wheat variety over another? And would you be in a position to list the most important types of dough with all their ingredients? Certainly not. You'd rather have time to prepare, to familiarise yourself with the subject of the convention as well as with general baking terminology, to seek advice from experts, to do some research etc., before you would think you knew enough to grasp what is said at a meeting of experts.

That is exactly how we as interpreters feel.

Interpreters rely on first hand information which should be as comprehensive and detailed as possible. We should receive it as early as possible to aid our preparation. You can help us do a high-quality job by providing:

- subject-related catalogues/ brochures
- lists of speakers' names and biographical details
- copies or drafts of the speeches
- related web links
- documents from former events, possibly with translated copies
- glossaries (e. g. with company-specific terminology)
- recommendations of specialist literature

The quality of the interpretation depends essentially on the preparatory work. Optimal preparation can only be achieved through close co-operation with the organiser.

Please note: interpreters are bound to secrecy. All information will be treated as confidential.

While the event is taking place

In order to prevent interruption during the conference proceedings, please ask speakers to observe the following points:

- speak slowly and distinctly
- if commenting from the audience or asking a question, state the language first
- use a microphone when speaking at all times
- ensure that the podium is visible from the interpreting booths
- make sure that only one person speaks at a time

Recordings

What is being said while interpreting is the intellectual property of each interpreter. The copyright can only be purchased in particular cases and with the prior informed consent of every interpreter of the team for an appropriate price. However, it is not advisable to use the interpretation as a basis for a written translation, because these two text types are two very different products. Arranging for an independent translation will certainly be less effort than revising a transcript of an interpretation.

Which form of interpretation suits your purpose?

When *consecutive interpretation* is used, the interpreter hears a speech in full or in part before interpreting it. In this case, no special technical equipment is needed apart from the required conditions (good acoustics, a good view of the speaker, and so on). Please note that the meeting time will be doubled, as the interpretation of each speech will take about as long as the speech.

Consecutive interpreting is suitable for short speeches, a small number of listeners and a maximum of two target languages.

When *simultaneous interpretation* is used, the translation into the target language takes place at the same time as the source-language speech. In this case, special booths and technical equipment are required. This equipment has to be provided and paid for by the organiser as a separate cost item. Simultaneous interpreting is suitable for larger groups with an unlimited number of source and target languages.

Please note that you will need two interpreters at a time for each language combination, because each interpreter needs adequate breaks.



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Working with Interpreters

Information for
Conference
Organisers



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