



**HELLENIC ASSOCIATION OF CONFERENCE INTERPRETERS**

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**CODE OF CONDUCT**

**OF THE HELLENIC ASSOCIATION OF CONFERENCE INTERPRETERS**

1. This Code of Conduct (hereinafter the Code) sets out rules concerning the integrity, professionalism and confidentiality which all categories of members of the Hellenic Association of Conference Interpreters (SYDISE) are obliged to demonstrate when working as conference interpreters.
2. Members must display solidarity to their colleagues. They must protect their own privacy and that of colleagues. Complying with the Code is, for example, a sign of solidarity towards colleagues. Where an interpreter finds that another interpreter is acting in an unprofessional manner, it is recommended that he/she point this out to the colleague, and -if necessary- inform the SYDISE's competent body about that unprofessional attitude. In addition, members must avoid making any statement or engaging in any act which prejudices the interests of the Association or its members.
3. Interpreters are obliged to prepare carefully and in good time for work prior to the conference. Preparation means familiarising oneself with the subject matter and vocabulary relevant to that subject matter in the working languages. When the task is assigned, interpreters are obliged to learn what the subject matter is, the precise location and time of the meeting, the client or their representative and the method of communication with them should further information be required. Obtaining adequate information about the conference is a vital condition for providing successful, quality services.
4. Interpreters must not accept an assignment if they cannot adequately prepare for it.
5. Interpreters are obliged to turn up at the work venue in time attired appropriately.

- 6.** Members of the Association should not accept work they are not adequately qualified to perform. Accepting work means the member making a moral commitment to work with the requisite degree of professionalism. In addition, each member of the Association who engages other conference interpreters -whether they are members of the Association or not- shall undertake the same commitment. Members of the Association must not take on more than one professional obligation (confirmed day of work) at the same time. If a second *option* for the same period is offered, interpreters are obliged to inform the client about this matter and that the assignment can only be accepted as a second option. In all events, interpreters are bound by options in the order in which they are received. Where a 2nd or 3rd option is confirmed before the 1st, interpreters are obliged to contact with client who had offered the 1st option, to confirm it or obtain a release.
- 7.** Members of the Association must not accept work or working conditions that could undermine the dignity of the profession. They should avoid any actions that could undermine the reputation of the profession.
- 8.** Members may, for professional purposes, publicise the fact that they are conference interpreters and members of the Association, either acting as individuals or members of a team.
- 9.** Interpreters must constantly improve their professional skills. In addition to having good knowledge of the language and good interpreting skills, they must also have knowledge of interpreting techniques as well as a broad general knowledge. Members of the Association are encouraged to participate in the seminars and CPD events the Association organises and/or in similar events.
- 10.** Interpreters must only interpret between languages they have registered for with the Association or are accredited by the EU or other international organisation for. Consequently, to add new language combinations, members must inform the Association when they acquire new language proficiency qualifications.
- 11.** Members of the Association are obliged to take into account and warrant, both to themselves and other conference interpreters whom they may engage -whether they are members of the Association or not- that the working conditions specified in the Annex hereto will be observed.
- 12.** Interpreters should comply with any rules and etiquette pertinent to a specific interpreting mission.
- 13.** Conference interpreters involved in bilateral negotiations or community interpreting or court interpreting or conference interpreting or in any other context must remain neutral, must not discuss, give advice or express views or reactions to any person involved, thereby going beyond

their duties as an interpreter.

**14.** Members of the Association are bound to observe strict confidentiality in relation to all persons and information disclosed to them in the practice of their profession at any meeting that is not open to the public. Members are prohibited from deriving any personal gain from confidential information they may have acquired when performing their duties as interpreters.

**15.** Interpreters must attempt -even beforehand if possible- to ensure that the conditions needed for effective interpreting are provided (such as sitting in a location where they can see the speaker and the slides, from which they can hear clearly; that there must be adequate breaks during work, etc.).

Interpreters must not interrupt and/or intervene unless:

- a.** They wish to request clarifications.
- b.** They are obliged to provide clarifications about something which in their view one of the parties involved did not understand.
- c.** They are obliged to inform the parties involved about reference to a cultural detail they themselves did not understand or
- d.** They are obliged to point out a situation or factor which could impair the interpreting process (such as inadequate space for the interpreter, inadequate visibility or line of sight or poor sound, insufficient breaks, etc.).

**16.** Interpreters must set the fee levied for their professional services in a professional, equitable manner. Members of the Association must:

- a.** not engage in unfair competition.
- b.** respect the legal and regulatory provisions applicable to payments, credit, contracts, sales, and their tax and social security obligations.
- c.** behave well from a civic, social, professional and business viewpoint towards other members of the Association and to legal and natural persons, and in particular to clients and client employees.
- d.** pay within the agreed timeframe the fees of colleagues they may have engaged at their own responsibility, provided those colleagues have issued service invoices to the interpreter who is acting as employer, and irrespective of whether or not that interpreter has been paid by his/her own client.

### **17. Social media**

All SYDISE members should demonstrate appropriate diligence in using social media so as not to violate the principle of confidentiality that governs the profession of conference interpreters and to ensure that the dignity of the profession is preserved at all times.

### **18. Procedure for amending the Code**

Proposals on amendments to the Code of Conduct and the Annex to it shall be submitted by the Board to the General Meeting and approved by a 2/3 majority of the members present.

## ANNEX

### CODE OF PRACTICE - CONFERENCE INTERPRETER WORKING CONDITIONS

- 1.** As a rule, a team of interpreters consists of at least two interpreters for each language and booth. In exceptional cases, provided that the principles of quality and health are fully taken into account, a single interpreter may work on his/her own for one (1) hour max. per day, in the case of simultaneous interpreting or chuchotage, or three (3) hours a day in the case of successive interpreting. Two interpreters can work up to eight (8) hours max. a day. Working time should include at least two coffee breaks of 15 minutes each, and a lunch break of at least one (1) hour. Beyond eight (8) hours, three (3) interpreters per language combination are needed. See Article 13 below for the line-up of the team of interpreters per type of conference interpreting.
- 2.** Interpreters must only work with professional colleagues.
- 3.** The assignment start time means the start time given in the schedule/programme even if the start of the conference is delayed for reasons not due to the interpreter's fault. When the working time is up, the leader of the interpreters' team should inform the person presiding over the event of this matter and 15 minutes later the interpreters must stop work.
- 4.** Any overtime is payable by the organiser. Interpreters reserve the right to refuse to do overtime if they consider that, due to exhaustion, they are not able to function properly.
- 5.** Where the installation and operation of the simultaneous interpreting system is not the responsibility of the interpreters following a special agreement made with the organiser, the latter is obliged to provide the said system which must be in accordance with cutting-edge international standards. Interpreters bear no liability for the performance of the equipment or for technical support, and reserve the right to refuse to work if the system offered is outdated, incomplete or does not operate properly, and if the space is considered unfit for working in (if there is no line of sight to the panel of speakers, it is narrow, dark, smells, etc.) but that does not release the organiser from the financial and other obligations that have been agreed.
- 6.** Interpreting must be provided solely from and into the languages that have been agreed. Films or videos screened during the event will not be translated unless the sound reaches the interpreter's console in the booth and, prior to the date of the conference, the interpreters were sent the videos and/or a transcription thereof. Quotations from authors, extracts from books, poems or verses of songs will not be translated unless the interpreters have been provided in advance with the original

along with a valid translation. Moreover, interpreters do not translate on guided tours which are not included in the interpreters' working hours. Interpreters do not translate on tourist activities and/or private conversations during breaks or rest periods in the interpreters' working hours.

**7.** It is strictly prohibited to make recordings of the interpretation. Interpreting is an oral translation to be heard there and then and is the interpreter's intellectual property. Where the organiser wishes to have such a recording, prior permission from the leader of the interpreters' team (if applicable) must be requested, who is obliged to obtain the oral consent of all interpreters working at the specific conference. In the event of web streaming or broadcasting, written consent from the interpreters must be obtained since the interpreter's voice constitutes personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), in addition to the other applicable intellectual property rights which the interpreter has.

**8.** The cost of meals, coffee, etc. for interpreters during their hours of work at the event are to be paid by the organiser alone.

**9.** Where a conference is held **away** from the interpreters' base, organisers are obliged to cover the cost of the outward and return journey, the cost of getting to and from the conference venue/their place of residence and any local travel by interpreters if done in the context of their assignment. Note that the means of transport used by interpreters to travel to/return from the assignment is as a matter of priority the fastest one unless the interpreter expresses a clear wish to the contrary. Moreover, where interpreters travel to the venue using their own means of transport at their own choice, the organisers are obliged to cover the cost of fuel and tolls based on an invoice submitted by the interpreters. Organisers are obliged to provide interpreters with accommodation, preferably in the same hotel where the delegates are staying and/or where the conference is taking place, which shall be first class accommodation if available, or similar lower class if not, which is to say they shall provide a single room per interpreter and full board. If due to the time of itineraries or decision by the organisers the interpreters are obliged to arrive at the place of work anything from 24 hours to 3 hours before the start of the conference, the organisers are obliged to cover the cost of accommodation and meals for the interpreters. Where interpreters are obliged to miss out on an entire working day or part thereof due to travel from and/or to the conference venue, the organisers are obliged to pay the relevant compensation for the travel day (*manque à gagner*).

**10.** Away from base means a distance of 25 km from Syntagma Sq. for Athens or the corresponding square from which distances in km are measured in other cities or within the boundaries of the prefecture where the interpreter lives. In that case, payment of the cost of accommodating the

interpreters at the conference venue or alternatively of travelling to and returning from the venue on the same day must be arranged with the organisers. In all other cases, the points made in the previous paragraph apply.

### **11. Special clause on air travel**

When interpreters travel by air in the context of their professional duties, they must travel on scheduled flights. The full cost of travel must be covered by the client, including the cost of the interpreters getting to the airport.

In special cases where there are no scheduled flights or there are no seats on them, if the interpreters agree, they may travel on so-called low-cost carriers. Interpreters shall be specifically entitled to require that the cost of carrying a normal size bag (15 kg) and the cost of a light meal (for flights of up to 2 1/2 hours) or normal meal (in the case of flights over 4 hours) be added to the cost of the ticket.

In addition, where a flight or flights is/are delayed or cancelled by the carrier without notice, that constitutes “force majeure” and does not under any circumstances affect the terms agreed with the client (including the terms relating to fees). In that case, the interpreters and/or client are obliged to seek out the fastest alternative way of getting the interpreters to their destination, if that is possible. All costs associated with the interpreters staying in hotels, additional meals and issuing additional airline tickets shall be paid by the client and under no circumstances by the interpreters, even if the latter cannot reach the destination of their professional assignment in good time.

**12.** In cases of **force majeure** (strikes, stoppages of work, marches or demonstrations that block traffic, cancelled or delayed itineraries, etc.), interpreters bear no liability, but shall make concerted efforts to get to the work venue as soon as possible.

### **13. Teams of interpreters**

Due to the physical and mental fatigue that continuous concentration provokes, certain mandatory restrictions apply to the line-up of teams to ensure the optimal quality of the work provided.

The minimum number of interpreters required to set up a team takes account of those restrictions, and the type of interpreting, the number of languages involved, the facility interpreters comprising the team have in those languages, the nature of the conference, its duration and the workload.

#### **13.1. Successive interpreting**

As stated in Article 1 above, interpreters can work on their own only for up to three (3) hours of work a day. Whole day events (lasting eight (8) hours) require two (2) interpreters. Suitable audio

conditions and note-taking facilities must be ensured for interpreters engaged in successive interpreting.

### 13.2. Chuchotage

The rules applicable to simultaneous interpreting (see below) also apply to chuchotage. Chuchotage is to be provided strictly to up to two (2) listeners.

### 13.3. Simultaneous interpreting

Teams of interpreters must be set up so as to avoid the systematic use of relay languages to the greatest extent possible. As a rule, a team of interpreters consists of at least two (2) interpreters for each language and booth. That is done to ensure satisfactory coverage of all language combinations and the required degree of quality.

See the table showing the number of interpreters required

#### **NO. OF INTERPRETERS REQUIRED FOR SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETING IN BOOTHS\*\***

<b>No. of languages used in the conference hall</b>	<b>No. of booths</b>	<b>No. of interpreters<sup>(1)</sup></b>
<u>Conference with one language combination</u>	<u>1</u>	2*
<u>Conference with two language combinations</u>	2	4*
<u>Conference with three language combinations:</u>	3	6*

And so on and so forth: Each booth operating non-stop must have at least two (2) interpreters.

#### **Notes:**

\* The number of interpreters rises when the working day exceeds eight (8) hours (including breaks and meals) and/or when the conference includes the presentation of a large number of written announcements and/or the topic is technical and/or scientific and requires a significant degree of preparation.



\*\* The working conditions stated apply to the free market. In the case of work for international organisations where there is a larger number of booths and/or interpreters, any more favourable working conditions applicable in that working environment take precedence.

**14.** Simultaneous interpreting without an interpreting booth using a bidule or suitable tour guide system is a form of simultaneous interpreting that should be avoided due to the innate difficulty of producing the requisite high quality of interpreting and also because it results in considerable brain fatigue and increases the cognitive load for interpreters as a result of the lack of a suitably insulated space in which the interpreters can work, and due to aggravated acoustic conditions. This practice should only be employed in exceptional cases namely:

- Visits to plants, hospitals and similar institutions or remote on-site visits.
- Short visits (lasting up to two (2) hours).
- Events with a limited number of participants (around ten for example).

To enable interpreters to work effectively, suitable dual channel equipment is needed (in other words with two broadcasting channels: One channel from the interpreters to the delegates and one from the speaker's microphone to the interpreters' headsets). It is recommended that such equipment comply with the IEC914 standard or any corresponding subsequent standard.

It is not permitted to use bidules or tour guide systems in venues where an interpreters' booth and translation system for simultaneous interpreting can be installed and for events in conference venues that last more than two (2) hours.

**15.** Remote interpreting is permitted where the necessary technical requirements for it to be done properly, as laid down by internationally recognised associations or unions of conference interpreters<sup>1</sup>, are met. Due to the increased cognitive load interpreters face from this specific type of simultaneous interpreting, the working day for remote interpreting must not exceed four (4) hours a day max. including breaks lasting 20-30 minutes in total. For the interpreters those four (4) hours of work a day are full-time work and not part-time work under any circumstances. The working conditions for simultaneous interpreting also apply to remote interpreting (see Article 1 above of the Code of Conduct) and so interpreters should work in pairs for up to four (4) hours a day, and after

<sup>1</sup>In accordance with the technical and other conditions on remote interpreting laid down, inter alia, in the relevant guidelines from the International Association of Conference Interpreter (AIIC) v.1, 09-01-2019, and in any corresponding subsequent guidelines (see <https://aiic.net/page/8734/aiic-guidelines-for-distance-interpreting-version-1-0/lang/1>)

four (4) hours a third interpreter should be added<sup>2</sup>. It is recommended that remote interpreting be done in a suitably equipped venue (such as a hub) with technical support and not in venues that are not suitably equipped. This is because of the various barriers that could arise (poor sound quality from the speakers, absence of technical support for the interpreters, inadequate internet speeds, internet at interpreter's home cutting out, etc.). The fee for remote interpreting must be higher than that for traditional simultaneous interpreting (booth, translations system),

## **16. Cancellation of work contracts**

### **16.1. Cancellation by the interpreter**

Members of the Association should not withdraw from a work contract unless they can:

- a) notify the organisers in time.
- b) provide valid reasons and suggest a replacement to the lead interpreter in charge of the team line-up or where there is no lead interpreter, directly to the conference organisers, unless they prefer to recruit the replacement themselves.
- c) secure in all events approval from the conference organisers of the change as soon as possible.

### **16.2. Cancellation by the organiser**

The work contract must include a clause which covers, where appropriate, possible cancellation of the assignment by the organisers.

## **17. Unpaid work (voluntary work)**

When members provide their services free of charge at charitable or humanitarian conferences, all terms of the Code of Conduct and these Guidelines on Working Conditions must be complied with.

## **18. Non-Working days**

Contracts must include a clause covering non-working days, and travel days, adjustment days after a long journey and briefing days, as appropriate.

## **19. Travel**

Interpreters' contracts must include a clause covering travel arrangements, where appropriate. Remuneration at 50% of the daily rate shall be payable for travel days involving travel by car away

<sup>2</sup> The length of the working day is in keeping with the Council of Europe recommendation presented at the AIIC - Greece and Cyprus region seminar entitled “**Remote Simultaneous Interpreting - Pushing the Boundaries? An introduction to distance interpreting**”, held Athens on 23 & 24.2.2019.

from the interpreter's base and travel by air before 17:00 hours and/or journeys lasting up to 5 hours whereas in the case of journeys lasting over 5 hours remuneration shall be at the full rate.

## **20. Rest days**

Travel conditions must be such as not to prejudice the health of interpreters or the quality of their work after the trip. After any long journey or after a journey involving a major change in time zones, rest days must be provided and it is recommended that two (2) interpreters be present to cover all eventualities, even in the length of work does not exceed one (1) hour a day. Remuneration at 50% of the daily rate is payable for rest days.