THE DIGEST

IN THIS ISSUE

2 Interview
6 Introducing the Science Hub
11 Negotiating tips
13 PRIMS in Lisbon
14 The elected committees
18 AIIC Region: MCAC
20 AIIC Region: France
22 AIIC Region: Greece & Cyprus
24 Event calendar
The AI Revolution is being felt in AIIC these days, with groups and regions focusing their attention on the technology that is transforming the way we live and work. In the run-up to AIIC’s AI Day in Rome on 28th June, we talk to Tomás Pereira Ginet-Jaquemet, one of the day’s organisers, and coordinator of the former Artificial Intelligence Task Force.

Let’s not beat around the bush, Tomás…what are the chances of interpreters being replaced by AI in the near future?

I’m not afraid at the moment we are speaking! The current AI-driven Automatic Speech-to-Text (AST) and Speech-to-Speech (ASS) solutions are great if you are asking for directions on holiday or trying to figure what you are about to eat at the restaurant abroad, they could even be used to remove interpreters from dangerous situations in conflict zones, but they are no match for human interpreters when it comes to complex situations, such as diplomatic exchanges or negotiations where the stakes are high.

So, there’s nothing to be afraid of?

The AI that exists right now for interpretation purposes is called Generative AI. The Large Language Models (LLMs) used in generative AI are trained on data and limited by that data. Although they can perform tasks with the data they have, they cannot replicate, or understand, human behaviour, including our ability to emphasise or use language creatively.

What comes next would be scarier. Artificial General Intelligence (AGI), which is still being explored and researched, would be when programmes could rationalise and replace humans in almost any job. It would, theoretically, be capable of surpassing human intelligence by manifesting cognitive skills and developing thinking skills of its own.

Governments are starting to create guidelines for the ethical use of AI to be sure that it is used and developed safely. For us interpreters, it’s important that we work with developers and law makers to develop responsible tools and a legal framework for their use. A recent UNESCO study found that there is inherent bias in AI, because of the data sets it has been trained on. While such biases exist, the use of AI within the context in which conference interpreters work, must be limited.

How can AI be useful to interpreters then?

AI-powered tools can be really helpful in preparing assignments, making glossaries and automatically translating speeches that arrive at the last second. Mostly they make tasks that were once boring and time-consuming, much, much quicker.
Some tools that colleagues should get familiar with are:

- **InterpretBank** (for glossaries)
- Any automatic translation tool such as **DeepL** (for translations). There are, however, potential privacy issues with such tools, so do be careful to remove names and sensitive information before the automatic translation is performed.

There are also prompting tools to help in the booth with things like figures and chemical formulas, though these require permission from event organisers.

**What can colleagues do to make sure they stay relevant?**

Firstly, be a great interpreter, properly trained as in the old days, then get to know the tools available to help you work faster and better with the following mantra in mind: tech tools aren’t a shortcut to traditional training as a conference interpreter and technology must always be at the service of human beings and not the other way around.

Then, be ready to adapt. You can’t learn a few tools and think you’re done with AI. Keep up with what is happening with new technologies and the legislation around them, attend training courses to learn new tools and events to discover new ways of thinking.

*Tomás Pereira Ginét-Jaquemet at the PRIMS meeting in Bali, January 2024*
That brings us to the event you have planned in Rome in June. What can we expect?
We decided to invite a scholar, a practising interpreter, a philosopher and a representative of the Sign Language Interpreters community to discuss AI from different perspectives.

**The Scholars**

**Bianca Prandi** is a postdoctoral assistant and lecturer in Interpreting Studies at the University of Innsbruck. Her research focuses on interpreting technologies, in particular computer-assisted interpreting, human-machine interaction in interpreting and cognitive aspects of interpreting.

**Prof. Floris Roelofsen** is founding director of SignLab Amsterdam and of the Language Sciences for Social Good research programme, comprising more than 100 researchers across multiple faculties at the University of Amsterdam. SignLab Amsterdam coordinates the development of digital research infrastructure for sign language research in the Netherlands.

**The Practitioner**

I’ll be representing the interpreters in the room. As well as working as a conference interpreter, I teach interpreting and technical translation at Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3, and in recent years I have been training colleagues in AIIC and other associations on the use of new technologies.

**The Philosopher**

**Éric Sadin** is one of the leading thinkers on digital technologies, their features, their economic dynamics and impacts on society, politics and civilisation. To date, he has written nine academic books on these key issues of our time. He is invited to give lectures around the world and his essays have been translated into several languages.
The panel will be moderated by Dr. Anja Rütten, an AIIC colleague with extensive experience in analysing AI tools and training interpreters to use them. She is one of the members of AIIC’s AI workstream, and will be running the training session on using AI tools in the morning.

We’re still looking for some human interpreters for the afternoon. If we find them, we will also do demonstrations with some of the more advanced simultaneous translation solutions, like Google’s Gemini, PaLM2 and Claude2. Any colleagues with English and French who would be willing to do a turn in the booth, please let me know.

Many thanks to Tomás Pereira Giné-Jaquemet for this month’s interview. There’s still time to register to join Tomás and AIIC’s other guests at FAO in Rome until 17th June. The panel event on 28th June is free, and open to all interpreters.
The Science Hub

Artificial Intelligence
Distance Interpreting
Health
Research
Technology
The Artificial Intelligence workstream’s mandate is to map the emerging landscape of AI in interpreting, keep members informed of developments, produce guidance for interpreters and conference organisers on the use of AI in conference settings, identify opportunities for AIIC’s involvement in the AI debate and ensure its representation, and liaise with developers of AI-assisted interpreting solutions with a view to providing input.

The workstream members are keen to take a positive approach to these tasks. We seek to understand and, where possible, proactively shape advances in the use of AI in interpreting. Our work will include assessing both risks and opportunities related to AI, identifying key cases where its use is appropriate and adds value, and flagging those situations where it is not. We aim to enhance AIIC’s role as an active stakeholder in industry-wide dialogue and action, and will prepare and disseminate best practice guidance for all stakeholders, interpreters and clients alike.

Clockwise from top left: Lale Danai (France), Anja Rütten (Germany), Michelle Hof (Spain), Magdalena Lindner-Juhnke (Germany), Irina Paramonova (USA)
Distance Interpreting

The group’s main tasks are to follow the latest DI developments, update official AIIC DI documentation and guidelines to promote optimum working conditions, keep membership informed and participate in relevant events.

Members:
Andrew Constable (Netherlands)
Luc Gendreau (Canada)
Ana Pleite (Spain)
Bettina Ludewig Quaine (France)

Technology

AIIC’s Technical Workstream aims to provide information, assistance, guidance and support and make recommendations in the technical field for AIIC members and its bodies, to propose, undertake and implement relevant innovative technology-related studies, projects and activities. The technical workstream will also work with the ISO group to provide input and stewardship to the development of relevant ISO standards in interpreting, and actively participate in international technology forums/communities representing AIIC’s collective voice in forming the pathways for interpreting related technology development.

There is currently a call out for members who are interested in joining the technology workstream. If you’d like to get involved, contact the Secretariat: aiic_hq@aiic.org.
The Science Hub Health Workstream is tasked with providing information, assistance, and support on health; as well as making recommendations to AIIC’s membership and organisation.

Our immediate objective is to define and describe key factors influencing (both positively and negatively) the health of conference interpreters, including ergonomics, musculoskeletal/respiratory/sensory health, nutrition, and the interpreter’s environment.

Other initial outputs will focus on educating and informing interpreters as well as non-interpreters through various channels and media types.

We envisage research collaboration with other Workstreams at a later stage on health-related projects, applying both indirect and direct assessment methods.

While we are all seasoned conference interpreters, a number of us are, or used to be, medical or allied health practitioners in both clinical research and clinical practice.

Clockwise from left: Peter László-Herbert (non-region), Ana Laura Arias de Sergovia (South America), Liang Joo Leow (Asia Pacific), Gabriella Verdi (Italy), Natalia Taddei (Brazil)
The research workstream serves in an advisory capacity for research within AIIC. This workstream is dedicated to enhancing the relevance of research to AIIC and reciprocally, increasing the significance of AIIC in the realm of research.

Clare Donovan: PhD (France) in Translation Studies from ESIT. Trainer in conference interpreting and director of interpreting at ESIT. Head interpreter at OECD for 8 years. Now teaching at ISIT, at Lomé University in Togo and with AFiA in Africa. Research interests include retourt interpreting, ethical issues, the impact of technical change, including RSI, on the interpreting profession.

Samuel Chew (Asia Pacific) dedicates his professional life to teaching and researching sign language linguistics at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the National University of Malaysia. Every summer, he spends several months studying classical Arabic and Hebrew in the Middle East. He works as a conference interpreter in Malay, Chinese, English, Malaysian Sign Language, and International Sign.

Christopher Stone, (UK & Ireland) based at the University of Wolverhampton, researches and teaches sign language interpreting and translation with a focus on in-vision media interpreting, and deaf interpreters. As a conference interpreter, he works in English, British Sign Language, American Sign Language and International Sign in European institutions, the UN and at academic conferences.

Celine Garbutt MCIL CL AIIC ITI (Academic) (UK & Ireland) is a conference interpreter and translator. She is currently researching language education and translation at the University of Exeter, UK, funded by the ESRC South-West Doctoral Training Programme. For this project, she would like to hear from people involved or interested in language teaching with and for translation and interpretation.

Andrew Cheung (Asia Pacific) is presently affiliated with the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, where he conducts research and teaches in the field of interpreting. He holds a position on the editorial board of several journals and has contributed numerous articles on interpreting and translation.
PRIMS: NEGOTIATING TIPS

AIICh’s Private Market Sector is heading to sunny Lisbon in July for the second of their biannual meetings. Each meeting focuses on a different topic and this time they’ll be looking at how to negotiate with clients.

As a preview of what to expect, members of the PRIMS Standing Committee and the Consultant Interpreters group have put together some of their top negotiating tips for you to differentiate yourself and build long-lasting relationships with clients.

Create value

Instead of just presenting yourself as a service provider, focus on highlighting the unique value you bring to the table. This could include not just language proficiency, but also cultural understanding, subject matter expertise, and the ability to ensure smooth communication in high-stakes situations. Emphasise how your services can enhance the overall quality and effectiveness of the event.

Flexibility

Recognize that each client and assignment may have different requirements and preferences. Be prepared to adapt your approach and services to meet their specific needs. This could involve accommodating different time zones or providing additional support such as pre-event preparation or post-event follow-up.

Ask open-ended questions

Encourage the other party to share more information by asking questions that require more than a yes or no answer. This can reveal underlying interests and create opportunities for mutually beneficial solutions.

Know your BATNA

Your Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement (BATNA) is your fallback option if negotiations fail. Knowing your BATNA gives you the power to walk away if the terms aren’t favorable.

Build long-term relationships

Prioritize building and nurturing relationships with clients and other stakeholders in the industry. This involves not just delivering exceptional interpreting services but also demonstrating reliability, professionalism, and a commitment to client satisfaction. Take the time to understand your clients’ goals and preferences, and strive to exceed their expectations in every interaction. Additionally, networking with other professionals in related fields, such as event planners, language service providers, and industry associations, can help you expand your client base and access new opportunities.
If the deal doesn’t meet your minimum requirements or compromises your key interests, be prepared to leave the negotiation. This can often lead to better offers.

Define your goals clearly

Be as specific as possible about your goals. Vague goals can lead to unsatisfactory outcomes. Prioritize your goals so you know which ones are most important and where you can be flexible.

And some upcoming negotiation trends to keep in mind:

1. **Collaborative negotiation**
   The emphasis is on creating value for all parties involved. By fostering open communication and shared problem-solving, collaborative negotiators seek to identify and capitalize on opportunities for mutual gain.

2. **Diversity and inclusion**
   With an increasingly interconnected global economy, diversity and inclusion are becoming more important considerations in negotiation processes. Embracing diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences fosters innovation, creativity, and a deeper understanding of complex issues, ultimately leading to more effective and inclusive negotiation outcomes.

3. **Sustainability and ethical considerations**
   In today’s world, sustainability and ethical considerations are gaining prominence in negotiation discussions. Stakeholders are increasingly concerned about environmental impact, social responsibility, and ethical business practices. Negotiators must consider these factors when crafting agreements, ensuring that they align with principles of sustainability and ethical conduct.
Thank you to all those who pre-registered to #PRIMSinLisbon. This allowed us to book the right venue and have a broad idea of the turnout.

We are pleased to announce that so far 150 AIIC members have pre-registered! Now it's the time to make it official! Please confirm your attendance by filling in this form by Saturday 8th June: https://form.typeform.com/to/yWajfWPT

Please note: even if you have pre-registered you must fill in the final registration form to confirm your attendance and get your spot.
THE ELECTED COMMITTEES

On Saturday 18th May, members from the 4 elected committees and the Basic Texts Group, took part in an informational webinar, to give members a better idea of how AIIC is run between Assemblies and what they might expect if they decide to stand at the next elections. Here are a few of the things we discovered about the elected committees:

There’s a lot of enthusiasm for the work they do and the committees are all considering whether they will make proposals to the Assembly that could help them run better.

The elected committees have all been given clearly defined tasks by the Assembly (‘refer to the basic texts’ was heard more than once throughout the day!), yet they are all keen to go beyond the texts and interact with members/potential members and help make the processes they oversee run smoother.

Everybody struggles with, and is confused by, all the acronyms AIIC has developed over the years, but volunteers learn them eventually.

Although it can make scheduling meetings tough, all committees feel strongly about the importance of global representation. Before joining a committee, many members only know their own market, and find that having colleagues from other regions helps you consider requests from a different perspective.

All committees are ready to train newcomers. Nobody joins a committee knowing the job, but we saw a lot of camaraderie among the committee members and it’s clear that you won’t be left alone to find your feet.
Committee members must have been active members for at least 5 years. While they are serving on CACL, they cannot sponsor or reclassify their languages.

CACL do a lot of outreach events. They work together with AIIC’s regions to inform potential members and pre-candidates about the application process and members about responsible sponsorship.

The committee’s workload varies throughout the year, intensifying around the application deadlines and in-person meetings.

Committee members must have been active members for at least 5 years. While they are serving on CACL, they cannot sponsor or reclassify their languages.

If you really want to understand the Association, follow the money! Budget Committee members can expect to develop a keen understanding of how all of AIIC’s groups, committees and regions work.

The Budget Committee is about more than just the annual budget. They set the dues, advise ExCo and do all sorts of audits throughout the year.

You don’t need to have been regional treasurer or have a background in accounting to join the Budget Committee. The group is supported by the Secretariat and external auditors, but you must be comfortable working with numbers and spreadsheets.

Budget Committee (BC)

Committee on Admissions & Language Classifications (CACL)

The Budget Committee is about more than just the annual budget. They set the dues, advise ExCo and do all sorts of audits throughout the year.

You don’t need to have been regional treasurer or have a background in accounting to join the Budget Committee. The group is supported by the Secretariat and external auditors, but you must be comfortable working with numbers and spreadsheets.

Committee on Admissions & Language Classifications (CACL)

CACL members meeting at AIIC’s Bangkok office in January 2024
**Disciplinary & Disputes Committee (DDC)**

- The Disciplinary and Disputes Committee are encouraging more dispute resolution over the use of disciplinary measures. They are looking for a new name that highlights dispute resolution over disciplinary actions and that makes sense in English and French and will welcome suggestions...

- Many recent complaints have been related to posts on social media, so the DDC is working to raise awareness of responsible posting.

- The committee deals with each file in small sub-committees. Most of their work is done remotely and they don’t often meet in-person.

- DDC members are usually long-standing AIIC members. In fact, in the first round of voting, only former members of another Assembly committee are eligible to stand.

---

**Executive Committee (ExCo)**

- ExCo Vice Presidents spend a couple of hours a day answering messages, attending meetings and working on documents together. The President spends about twice this time on AIIC tasks.

- Life on ExCo can be fast-paced. You can’t predict what will happen and will learn to be ready for anything, from internal disagreements to international pandemics.

- A reforming, hands-on President can spend 4-5 hours a day on AIIC business, 7 days a week.

- Any active member with at least 5 years of seniority can stand for ExCo. The members of the current committee took different routes to get there. Some had served on the AB first, some had been active at a regional level, in a group or represented their institution.

- Everyone agreed that serving on ExCo was far harder than they expected, and at times challenging, but that it has also been extremely rewarding.
Basic Texts Group (BTG)

Although the Basic Texts Group isn’t an elected committee, BTG member, George Drummond, was invited to join the webinar to talk about what the group does. They are looking for new volunteers and this would be a great time to join and learn the ropes before the Assembly....

- Guarding the Basic Texts may sound intimidating, but the detail oriented skills needed to do the job well are instinctive to all great interpreters.

- Their work is most intense around the Assembly. In the months before, they go to Geneva to help prepare the IAB, and they are on stage with them at the Assembly to check the texts and help draft amendments.

- Outside the Assembly, they might be asked to advise ExCo, or to attend meetings as observers. There isn’t a predictable workload and sometimes they don’t hear from anyone for weeks at a time!

If you are interested in joining the BTG, you need to have an A in either English or French, be comfortable with legal texts and be able to travel to the Assembly in January 2025. To apply, or for more information, contact the Executive Secretary.

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE DAY

On 5th May, World Portuguese Language Day was celebrated by AIIC members in Brazil and Africa.

AIIC Brazil, posted a homage to the Portuguese language spoken in their region on their social media channels, entitled ‘As vozes do português brasileiro - uma breve homenagem’. Watch it here.

While AIIC Africa invited Portuguese speakers to learn more about Africa’s contribution to the Portuguese language, with an online presentation and discussion.
In 2023, as part of the AIIC 70th anniversary celebrations, the AIIC Mexico, Central American and Caribbean regions (MCAC) started a series of conversations with some of our long-standing members.

We gained many insights from our speakers and had the chance to spend time together as a region, which isn’t always easy across such a vast geographical area. In fact, some speakers talked about how the professional values and principles of AIIC unite us wherever we are, and the importance of standing firm on these principles.

For the first time, during the presidential debates (Mexico, 2024), simultaneous interpretation from Spanish into Náhuatl, Maya and Tsotsil was provided. Prior to that, indigenous language interpreters participated in a training workshop (political-electoral terminology consensus, a participation scheme, debate on challenges). This is a milestone.

We heard how AIIC membership was once a requirement to work at a UN conference, and how the 1968 Olympics in Mexico led many to enter the profession. Other speakers mentioned how the relationship between speaker and interpreter had changed.

Training was another popular topic. Training is important both to ensure the continuation of the profession and to prepare us to face the challenges of the changing market.

Overall, we learnt a lot! We found that, while many things had changed, our values and commitment to quality remain the same and we are very grateful to everyone who made this series possible.
AIIC members, candidates and pre-candidates are invited to exercise your right to vote, either in-person at the ILO in Geneva or by proxy.

More details and the agenda can be found on the events page in the portal.
April and May were busy months in France.

Open Letter on AI
In late April, AIIC France drafted an open letter to the relevant French ministries on AI-powered interpreting systems, drawing attention to the risks of disinformation and bias of such systems and the potential impacts on international relations and communication more broadly. This was a joint initiative of the French conference interpreter association AFICI and SFT, the French trade union of translators and interpreters.

In the letter, the associations called for AI-powered translation and interpreting systems to be included in Annex 3 of the European AI Act on high-risk AI systems, therefore subject to strict obligations such as high quality of the datasets feeding the system to minimise risks and discriminatory outcomes and appropriate human oversight measures. The letter, in French, can be found here. Taking the initiative to the European level would be the logical next step!

Danica Seleskovitch Prize
This year’s Danica Seleskovitch Prize was awarded to Ivana Cenkova from Charles University in a ceremony at ESIT on April 27. In the laudatio the association’s President, Clare Donovan, highlighted Ivana’s dedication as a teacher, strong advocacy for interpreting and insightful research bridging East and West. Ivana’s acceptance speech gave a captivating account of social and political change in the Czech Republic through the eyes of a conference interpreter and trainer.

The Association was set up in 1991 in honour of the life and work of Danica Seleskovitch, a key figure in the profession and in AIIC, the former director of ESIT and one of the founders of interpreting research with the influential interpretive theory of translation.

For further information, visit www.Danica-Seleskovitch.org

Clare Donovan and Ivana Cenkova
Regional Meeting
In early May, the Region met in Strasbourg: this was an opportunity to meet with Strasbourg based colleagues and discuss the upcoming Assembly in Lima inter alia.

On this occasion, Christian Hugonnet, chairman and founder of the Semaine du Son de l’UNESCO, joined us online to explain dynamic range compression, its origins and impacts and presented his work at the European Parliament leading to adjusted settings to improve meeting room sound quality for interpreters. His contribution was greatly appreciated, and we look forward to inviting him again.

Vega Activities
The final online outreach session for the first edition of VEGA activities in France on May 7 was dedicated to AIIC’s Code of Professional Ethics. Tatiana Kaplun, VEGA representative in France invited Christiane Driesen to explain and comment the Code of Professional Ethics.

AIIC France would like to thank all the speakers who participated in the VEGA CDP and Outreach programme this year and congratulate Tatiana for successfully setting up the French mentoring programme and putting together such a compelling series of events!
The Bureau of Greece and Cyprus made a conscious choice to devote more time to connecting with universities that have an interpreting course – either at an undergraduate or master’s level to accompany interpreters from the beginning of their career.

**Outreach event for undergraduate students attending the interpretation specialisation at the Ionian University**

After last year’s online event, AIIC Greece and Cyprus followed through with an in-person presentation and discussion with the students at the Department of Foreign Languages, Translation and Interpreting in Corfu, together with Professor Stefanos Vlachopoulos and lecturer Maria Petrocheilou. Students spoke with Katerina Apostolaki, AB officer for Greece and Cyprus, about the difficult balance that interpreters face in terms of visibility, skills that they believe will be needed and how to best hone them.

The subjects discussed inevitably went to AI and recent developments in that field and resources provided by the PRIMS in Bali were of great help in shedding light on the various facets.
**Vega Outreach event with the Region of Greece and Cyprus**

Vega and AIIC Greece and Cyprus together with SYDISE (Hellenic Association of Conference Interpreters) went to the University of Thessaloniki, to speak to students from its master’s interpreting course.

Vega’s global coordinator Leo Liu, together with Vega’s candidate member, Nellie Apostolopoulou, joined forces with Katerina Apostolaki from the Region of Greece and Cyprus and Aliki Zournatzi of SYDISE, to present Vega, AIIC and SYDISE and to listen to the concerns and aspirations of the students. Anthi Wiedenmeyer, the programme director stressed the importance of having regular contact with the students and a joint event was discussed – with interpreting so that students can have the opportunity to work side by side with professionals.

**AIIC LIC’s participation in EULITA and PEEMPIP’s conference – Training the Modern Legal Translator and Interpreter**

EULITA and PEEMPIP (Panhellenic Association of Professional Translators Graduates of the Ionian University) held this extremely well organised event at the prestigious Acropolis Museum. The views of this imposing monument would have been worth the visit alone, but the hosts had put together a series of thought-provoking panels with a wealth of information for those interpreters and translators interested in working in a legal setting. Katerina Apostolaki represented AIIC’s Legal Interpreting Committee to talk about the online forums the Committee has been holding over the past years and which are of great value for colleagues interested in pursuing this line of work.
EVENT CALENDAR

31 May  Submission deadline for applications to become AIIC members or pre-candidates, and for reclassification requests

1 June  **Preparing for interpreting assignments with AI and other tools**  
        **AIIC Austria workshop, Vienna**

8 June  **Techniques for simultaneous interpreting: Spanish A, English B**  
        **ATPD workshop, Panama**

9 June  **UN World Sectoral**  
        **Geneva**

10 June  **Über den Tellerrand schauen**  
         **AIIC Germany meeting, online**

27 - 30 June  AB and ExCo Meetings  
              **Rome**

28 June  **AI Tools for Interpreters**  
         **ATPD workshop, Rome**

28 June  **AI Day: Panel**  
         **Rome**

28 June  **Garden Party**  
         **Rome**

5-7 July  **PRIMS meeting**  
         **Lisbon**