THE DIGEST

IN THIS ISSUE

2 Interview
5 - Meet the Vega Network
6 - Vega Events
8 - Austria
11 - Canada
12 - South America
14 - Spain
16 - Switzerland
18 - UK & Ireland
19 - Events Calendar
Hello Leo! People are often quite confused about the meaning of ‘Vega’, where does the name come from?

Before I joined AIIC, there was another group called YAIN (Young AIIC Interpreters network) that did a similar job to Vega. The members of this group decided to rename the group ‘VEGA’ after the brightest star in the constellation Lyra. The idea was that the young interpreters we meet are rising stars in the profession that have the potential to one day be high calibre interpreters and the brightest stars. But the name was often assumed to be an acronym, so 2 years ago we started writing it as ‘Vega’.

What is Vega’s role in AIIC?

Vega is responsible for organising outreach events with interpreting students and young interpreters. A lot of people think we are recruiting for AIIC, that’s not really what we do, particularly now that CACL and many regions have their own outreach efforts. I often think of Vega like the careers department of a university that talks to students about the careers they could follow. We aim to tell aspiring interpreters about the realities of the profession and encourage them to become high-quality interpreters who will be an asset to the entire profession.

How do you decide which students to speak to?

This depends on the region really. In regions like Belgium where, given the large institutional market, the demand for interpreters is high and there’s a clear career path for interpreting graduates, it’s easy to find the audience. In other regions, like Asia Pacific, it’s more complex and we take a more targeted approach. We tend to work with interpreting programmes that are in the AIIC Schools Directory, but how we get there can vary.

Many AIIC members work as trainers in some capacity, and they will often invite Vega to talk to their students. Other times, schools approach us directly, having heard about Vega from colleagues or the website.
Is there a standard presentation that you give?

We do have a standard presentation but sometimes it is adapted to suit the audience in terms of format and content. Our approach is very market specific, but we always try to be friendly and open to answering questions.

We want to give students an understanding of what it is like to work as a conference interpreter in their region, so we will often invite other local AIIC members to join us and give different perspectives. For example, at the last meeting I organised in Guangzhou, China, I was joined by CACL member Hong Jiang, who spoke about the application process to become a pre-candidate, and Grace Song, a young member of AIIC who was able to tell the students what they could expect at the beginning of their careers.

The school might have particular topics they want us to cover, which are agreed beforehand. We might be asked to speak about best practices or working conditions, but our aim is always to give a clear impression of our profession using our own experiences.

Not every region has a Vega member, why is that?

We would like each of AIIC’s 23 regions to have at least one member, but currently there are only 12 of us, each covering a region. But as I said before, we want to give new interpreters an understanding of the profession in their local market so would like to see sub-regions with their own Vega member. Like in Asia Pacific where I am the only member right now, though realistically, I can only organise events in China. It would be great if members in other markets in this vast region were interested in getting involved with outreach.

Can a region have an outreach event without a Vega member?

Wherever there are interpreting institutions, we should be ready to do outreach events. If the regional bureau wants to organise an outreach event and can’t find a local volunteer, we are still willing to help. A Vega member from a neighbouring region might be able to help organise an event or one of us can join remotely, but we always think that a local member who understands the market and what new interpreters will have to deal with is the best solution.
**What does being a Vega member involve?**

Each member commits to organising at least 1 event a year, that could be at a university, with other interpreter associations or online. An in-person event typically lasts 1-2 hours, depending on the number of speakers.

When members first express an interest in joining Vega, we encourage them to start small with a targeted audience. They might decide to organise an event together with a local interpreting school or another AIIC body. We will support them, either behind-the-scenes, or by taking a more active role as co-hosts and providing a model for what to do in the future.

We also have a lot of resources developed over the years that Vega members can adapt, including guidelines for events, presentation templates and we organise a training session on how to use these resources.

If anyone is interested in speaking to young interpreters and sharing their experiences, they can contact me or their regional bureau to speak about becoming a member of Vega. Usually, you should have been a member of AIIC for at least 3 years before joining Vega, but when we find passionate volunteers who are new to AIIC, we consider what they have to offer students in their region and the network votes on whether to make an exception. Most importantly, we look for members who are enthusiastic about guiding young interpreters and engaging with students.

**Why did you become a Vega member?**

For a couple of reasons. Firstly, I was very influenced by my colleague Hong Jiang, who was my trainer. She has held many positions in AIIC and instilled in me the idea of giving back to the Association. I also received tremendous support from Claudia Cereghino, the former Vega global coordinator, and other senior Vega colleagues such as Bahar Çotur and Katty Kauffman, who offered me invaluable advice and guidance both when I became a Vega member and later when I took up the role of Vega coordinator.

Secondly, I wanted to see a larger AIIC community in China. 30-40 years ago, the Chinese interpreters who had worked at the UN became the first generation of AIIC members in the region. They understood the importance of AIIC and its values. But future generations, who have only worked on the private market, have been less connected with AIIC. AIIC members in China today account for less than a tenth of the interpreter population, making it harder for new members to join. But AIIC must remain relevant and maintain its influence in all markets, so I try to understand how we can change the perception of the Association and help qualified interpreters apply for membership.
If you’d like Vega to speak to your students, or would be interested in organising an outreach event for non-AIIc colleagues, get in touch with your local representative.

No Vega member in your region? If you are passionate about AIIc and interpreting, could you be the next Vega member? Contact Leo to learn more.

**Row 1 (left-right)**
- Sarah Cuminetti - Turin (ITA)
- Mariana Ledesma Arocena - Montreal, QC (CAN)
- Kristina Lange - Berlin (DEU)
- Nellie Apostolopoulou - Athens (GRC)

**Row 2**
- Camila Oeyen-Sorondo - Buenos Aires (ARG)
- Richard Laver - Rio de Janeiro (BRA)
- Beatrice Blackett Espinosa - London (GBR)
- Giuditta Formichi - Brussels (BEL)

**Row 3**
- Leo Hailong Liu - Hong Kong (HKG)
- Diana Tomioka Saito - Lima (PER)
- Tatiana Kaplun - Strasbourg (FRA)
- Katty Kauffman - Washington, DC (USA)
Latitudes: The first Joint Vega Event for the Americas

Earlier this year, Mariana Ledesma, Vega rep for Canada, and Camila Oeyen, Vega rep for South America, came up with the idea of joining forces to organise a cycle of virtual events for the Americas on behalf of the Vega Network. Latitudes, as the series came to be called, aims to showcase talented professionals from the Americas and to share the specificities of this vast continent. Working together meant that a lot more could be achieved, especially in terms of audience: although it is mainly aimed at colleagues in the Americas, the series is open to AIIC members, candidates and pre-candidates, seasoned interpreters who are not members of AIIC, MCI students, and young professional conference interpreters from throughout the world.

The first event in this series, entitled “Introduction + Health and Wellbeing”, took place on Zoom on Saturday May 25th. The number of attendees fluctuated, but it was always around 100. The organisers received 320 registrations, the highest number in Vega’s history, which led to the event being held in the Zoom webinar format. In order to reflect the diversity of languages in the Americas, Mariana and Camila organised a team of 20 volunteers who provided simultaneous interpretation into Spanish, English, French and Portuguese.

The event kicked off with an informative presentation on best professional practices, delivered by Vega rep for the United States, Katty Kauffman. Katty talked about AIIC and the Vega Network. She also focused on best practices, professional ethics and quality in interpretation.

In the second talk, our colleagues from CACL, Francesca Lo Truglio and Anna Vianna, explained to the audience how to join AIIC. In a very detailed presentation, they covered essential topics such as candidates, pre-candidates, sponsors, waivers, types of membership and professional domicile.

Next, speech therapist and singer Mijal Guinguis made an interesting presentation on the importance of taking care of our voices. She shared many tips and exercises and attendees asked her a lot of questions.

The last presentation, by Gabriela Bocanete, explored the benefits of nutrition for cognitive longevity from a holistic health perspective. After a theoretical presentation, Gabriela guided us through a yoga nidra session.

The first Day of Latitudes was a great success, and the second session in the series will be held on June 22.
AIIC Vega Network Peru Hosts Best Practices in Conference Interpreting

On May 23, 2024, AIIC’s Vega Network Peru organised an engaging outreach event titled “Best Practices in Conference Interpreting: Dialogue with Martin Barrère” at the Universidad de Ciencias Aplicadas, Campus San Isidro. The event, attended by 45 participants including students, professors, and professional interpreters, provided a platform for an informal dialogue between Martin Barrère, AIIC Vice President, and Diana Tomioka, Vega Network Peru representative.

The event covered a wide range of topics critical to the interpreting profession, such as volunteering, market entry strategies, working with colleagues, best practices, and the importance of professional associations like AIIC. The interactive format allowed attendees to actively participate in the discussion and gain valuable insights from the experienced speakers.

Feedback from the attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing their appreciation for the relevance and usefulness of the topics addressed. Participants also voiced their desire for more similar events in the future, highlighting the need for ongoing professional development opportunities in the interpreting community.

The successful organisation of the event was made possible through the support and dedication of several individuals and organisations. Diana Tomioka, Vega rep for Peru, extended her heartfelt gratitude to Martin Barrère for his guidance and commitment, Universidad de Ciencias Aplicadas for providing the venue, Luisa Portocarrero (AIIC member and professor at Universidad de Ciencias Aplicadas) for coordinating the logistics, and Hedwig Spitzer (AIIC SAM President) for her presence and engagement.

The AIIC’s Vega Network Peru outreach event served as a valuable platform for fostering dialogue, sharing knowledge, and promoting best practices within the interpreting community. The success of this event underscores the importance of collaboration and continuous learning in the field of conference interpreting.
On 1 June, around 25 interpreters attended a one-day training course organised by AIIC Austria on using AI- and non-AI based tools for interpreting assignments.

At the outset of the in-person course in Vienna, trainer and AIIC AI workstream member Anja Rütten addressed general aspects such as AI and reliability, confidentiality and data protection, professional ethics and the difference between AI and non-AI-based tools. Following this general introduction, she provided an extensive overview of tools that can be used to prepare for interpreting assignments, such as tools for automatic and manual term extraction, automatic glossary translation, automatic document annotation, cloud-based team glossary creation, live transcription tools and others.

The AIIC Austria Regional Bureau would like to thank Anja for an inspiring and highly informative training event and all participants for their enthusiasm and active participation.
Dolmetschvorbereitung mit und ohne KI
Fortbildungsveranstaltung von AIIC Österreich mit Dr. Anja Rütten

Datum: 1. Juni 2024
Dauer: 9:00 bis 15:00 Uhr
Ort: Austrian Standards, Heinestraße 38, 1020 Wien (AT)
Organisation: AIIC Österreich

Teilnahmegebühr:
AIIC-Mitglieder, Kandidat*innen und Präkandidat*innen: kostenlos
Mitgliedern des Verbandes der Österreich. Translationsplattform*: 90 €
Sonstige: 120 €
Kontakt: ursula@riesinger.com

(* Universität Wien, ÖSDV, ÖGVD, ÖGÜ, Übersetzer*innen, Übersetzer)
AIC Austria at the Austrian Day of Languages in Vienna (11 June 2024)

A few days after the successful training course on AI and non-AI based tools that the Austrian region had organised in Vienna, AIIC Austria had the pleasure to participate actively in the second edition of the “Tag der Sprachen” (Day of Languages) fair, an event organised by the Austrian Economic Chamber that brought together various stakeholders of the Austrian language industry.

The event on 11th June had the main purpose of presenting the language services industry to prospective clients and partners as well as to newcomers to the profession, and of providing a platform for networking and exchange to translators and interpreters. The programme also included a range of presentations on various topics.

Alongside other national interpreting and translation associations, **AIIC Austria was represented with an exhibition booth**. Regional Secretary Denise Tschager gave a presentation on **AIIC as a beacon of quality and professionalism and its role in shaping new developments** such as distance interpreting and AI (title: “AIIC: Changing with the times - promoting quality and shaping innovation”).

To ensure accessibility, speech-to-text interpretation and interpretation in Austrian sign language were offered for all presentations.

The event was an excellent occasion to showcase the high-quality services provided by AIIC interpreters based in Austria.

*Top: AB member Ursula Riezinger at AIIC Austria’s exhibition stand*

*Above: Presentation about AIIC’s role in changing times by Denise Tschager, with STT interpreting.*
On May 24 in Ottawa, for the first time since before the pandemic, the Canada Region held an in-person social event: namely, a cocktail to welcome new members since 2020 and commend their sponsors. The venue was the Alt Hotel, just steps from Parliament Hill, and the turnout was exceptional, with some 50 members attending.

The evening’s programme included individual introductions of new members, who were presented with AIIC-themed goodies, as well as a thrilling game of skill-testing questions about AIIC. Guests were divided into groups, each vying to respond to questions such as: How many regions does AIIC have? How many members worldwide? In which year was it founded?

A special shout-out to Team Toronto, an intrepid gang of four new members who drove the 500 kilometres to Ottawa, stayed for the three-hour event, and then turned around and drove straight back, arriving home at 2am and logging a total of 1000 kilometres in the space of 13 hours. Now that’s true dedication to AIIC!

Thanks to the volunteer organisers and the Regional Bureau, especially AB member Lauren Michaels, who thought up the event. And congrats to all new Canada Region members!
The South America region was a silver sponsor at the CITEI, III Congreso Internacional de Traducción e Interpretación, Un mundo, muchas voces: el traductor e intérprete en la era digital, held on 24-25 May in Lima by the Colegio de Traductores del Perú.

There was interpretation into English, Spanish and Peruvian Sign Language for the plenary sessions provided by some of our members and a pre-candidate, among other local interpreters.

With the help of our Vice-President Martin Barrère and AIIC USA Chair Tony Rosado, SAM Chair, Hedwig Spitzer welcomed many interpreters interested in the association to AIIC’s stand, along with some translators who wanted to know more about our profession.

We also participated in a panel on interpreting, with two other panelists from Europe, and Martin Barrère gave a presentation on “the duty of confidentiality through the years”, and Tony Rosado gave a talk about the “differences between conference and public service interpreting”. The event was a success and a good opportunity to showcase the association to the more than 600 international, regional and local participants.

On the sidelines of the congress, Diana Tomioka Sato, representative of VEGA in Peru, organised an outreach session at the Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas - UPC. Students of the translation and interpreting programmes at the university engaged in a lively conversation with our Vice-President. The topic was “good practices in interpreting”. Some 50 students participated in the event.

Later the same day, we enjoyed some delicious Peruvian food at a gathering with local members, pre-candidates and interested colleagues.

AIIC members will, of course, be heading to Peru in January for the Assembly. The Local Organising Committee have put together a lot of information to help members plan their trip and they have offered to arrange online meetings with any regions or sectors that have questions about visiting Peru. To arrange a meeting, representatives should contact Hedwig Spitzer.
AIIC Spain (ESPaiic) held its traditional Meet & Greet for pre-candidates, candidates and members in Madrid in May.

Although the annual assembly is always a good occasion for the Region to gather outside of the professional booth setting, there is so much business to get through that it is hard for the newest recruits to meet members properly, ask all those burning questions and compare notes with other pre-candidates. The setting was informal – a private space in a restaurant with food and drink on the agenda – and the turnout excellent.

The Bureau (see photo) paired up pre-candidates with members, or veterans with newer members, for an icebreaker quick quiz sent to their mobiles on interesting facts and figures about AIIC and Spain Region. Do you know how many cities in Spain AIIC has members in? Or how many members have active Basque or Finnish or passive Maltese in their combination? Regional Representative Aurélie Pinzon ran through the latest activities in the region and introduced the brand-new communications team – two of the newest and youngest members in the Region – who have helped launch and feed the new LinkedIn account. Upcoming AIIC activities such as PRIMS and future ESPaiic projects were explained before the mingling began.

On hand to field questions about language combinations, signatures, days and other requirements to become a full member was Spain member Francesca Lo Truglio, who is also member of CACL. There was input from the pre-candidates too. They were asked to give a short answer on a post-it to the question: what are your expectations when joining ESPaiic and AIIC and what can ESPaiic do to help you? Solidarity, learning, collegiality and beating AI were just some of the encouraging answers (see photos). Spain is delighted to have so many keen pre-candidates – 24 this year – and this type of event gives them a chance to find their place in the region and become more visible.
Solidaridad campañesarwo, información sobre el mercado (espadi), estrategia, fuerza negociadora.

Ayudar a que la profesión sobreviva al auge de la IA.
SWITZERLAND

If you’re planning to visit Switzerland in September, join AIIC Switzerland on the 14th for the opportunity to meet colleagues, network and learn about “The impact of AI on Conference Interpreting”. We have an exciting line-up of speakers for our on-site, in-person conference, who will be talking about how AI is shaping the present and what the future might hold.

08.30 - 09.00  ☕ Welcome Coffee
09.00 - 10.30  Panel 1: AI 101
  09.00 - 09.15  Preface: The AI Debate in Interpreting
  09.15 - 09.45  AI demystified: A short introduction for interpreters
  09.45 - 10.15  The AI interpreting tool kit
  10.15 - 10.45  Q&A
Speakers: Prof. Edy Portmann & Dr. Anja Rütten
Moderator: Laura Keller

10.45 - 11.00  ☕ Coffee Break
11.00 - 12.30  Panel 2: Linguistic Horizons
  11.00 - 11.40  Bridging Languages with AI
  11.40 - 12.20  Navigating AI and Human Collaboration
  12.20 - 12.30  Q&A
Speakers: Mr. Mario Grunitz & Ms. Tammara Leites
Moderator: Dr. Anja Rütten

12.30 - 14.00  ☭ Lunch
14.00 - 15.30  Panel 3: Navigating Confidentiality and IP
  14.00 - 14.30  Safeguarding the Profession: IP matters
  14.30 - 15.00  Confidentiality & AI language tools: Best Practices
  15.00 - 15.30  Q&A
Speakers: Prof. Yaniv Benhamou,
Moderator: Ms. Julia Boehm

15.30 - 16.00  ☕ Coffee Break
16.00 - 17.30  Panel 4: Future Terps
  16.00 - 16.30  Perceptions of AI and the role of expertise
  16.30 - 17.00  The Augmented Interpreter
  17.00 - 17.30  Discussion
Speakers: Mateo Reyes-Chiappe & Anne-Catherine Gieshoff
Moderator: Laura Keller
Speakers and Moderators

Edy Portmann is Swiss Post Professor of Informatics at the Human-IST Institute of the University of Fribourg and a member of the board of the Swiss Informatics Society. After an apprenticeship as an electrician, he studied information systems, business as well as economics and, later, got a doctorate in computer science. Among others, he has worked for Swisscom, PwC, and EY. In addition, he has also been a researcher at the universities of Singapore, Berkeley, and Bern. His transdisciplinary research focuses on cognitive computing and its application to the network industry. Speaker Panel 1, Moderator Panel 2

Dr. Anja Rütten is a freelance conference interpreter for German (A), Spanish (B), English (C), and French (C) based in Düsseldorf, Germany. She has a PhD in ‘information and knowledge management in conference interpreting’ and has specialized in this area since the mid-1990s. Dr. Anja Rütten is a full member of AIIC, works on the private market and is an accredited freelance interpreter with the EU institutions and the European Patent Office. She has vast experience as a university lecturer and is a member of the AIIC ScienceHub AI-Group. Her blog (mainly in English): www.dolmetscher-wissen-alles.de

Speaker Panel 1, Moderator Panel 1 & 4

Laura Keller has worked as a freelance conference interpreter on the Geneva private and institutional markets for 10+ years. She has the four national languages of Switzerland plus English in her combination and is accredited to the European Institutions. Laura has a background in interpreter training, experience in language policy consulting, holds a PhD in interpreting studies and is currently pursuing an MA in ethics, specializing in questions relating to ethical considerations in the context of the digital transformation. Moderator Panel 1 & 4

Mario Grunilz, AI Strategy Lead and Co-founder of WoAroBrain, leverages over 20 years of experience in the tech sector to drive business transformation in the age of AI. A recognized thought leader and board advisor, he fosters meaningful change through technology and shapes the future of AI. Speaker Panel 2

Tammaraa Leites is a creative developer, interaction designer and artist from Geneva, Switzerland. Passionate about technology and society’s relationship with it, her work reflects upon what it means to be a connected human everyday. She holds a Master of Arts degree in Media Design from HEAD – Geneva and is a guest speaker at several institutions. She leads the research in human-computer interaction at Transmi Studio and collaborates with fellow artists, researchers and designers. Be it interactive platforms, installations, performing arts or film, her work has been recognised with awards, praised by numerous press outlets, and shown at venues and festivals across different continents. Speaker Panel 2

Yaniv Benhamou is Associate Professor in Digital Law, Copyright and Information Law at Faculty of Law, Digital Law Center, University of Geneva as well as a practicing attorney-at-law in a Swiss-based law firm. He works on copyright and privacy, focusing on emerging technologies, the cultural sector and data-as-commons (open source and licensing). He regularly acts as an expert for public institutions (World Intellectual Property Organisation WIPO, International Council of Museums COM, Swiss IP Office) and is a member of the Board of Director of the Digital Law Center of the Art-Law Center and of the CAS Digital Finance Law. Besides his academic activities, he is the founder of "Artists Rights", a free legal consultation provider for Swiss artists, and is a practising musician. Speaker Panel 3

Julia Boehm graduated from Heidelberg University and has over 25 years of interpreting experience mainly in the fields of business, finance, engineering and IP. As a consultant interpreter she has managed larger interpreting projects and teams covering multiple languages. She is an active member of AIIC, ASTTI and the German professional association VKD, and has volunteered in various roles for VKD and AIIC since 2003. Julia is the author of several articles and speaker on topics related to business success as a freelance conference interpreter. Moderator Panel 3

Mateo Reyes has been a staff interpreter at the WTO since 2020 (Spanish A, English A, French C). Before that, he was a freelance interpreter for 15 years in Ottawa, Bogotá, and Boston. He is a member of the AIIC Staff Interpreters’ Committee. Speaker Panel 4

Anne Catherine Gieshoff received her PhD in Interpreting studies from the University of Mainz and is now a researcher at the ZHAW Zurich University of Applied Sciences, where she conducts research relevant to interpreting studies using quantitative and psychophysiological methods. She focuses on cognitive effort and load, visual input, and most recently augmented reality technology, which she investigated as part of an internal fellowship grant. She is currently a co-host of the science podcast ‘Minds between Languages’ with Nistasa Pavlovic (idea and design by Adolfo Garcia) and a member of IATIS, EST and TREC (Translation, Research, Empiricism and Cognition). Speaker Panel 4

Register at aiic.org

Saturday 14th September
Hotel Mövenpick Geneva
In the UK the Region was active this month with outreach activities around the country. After an online talk with London Metropolitan University where we introduced AIIC and the Vega network to MA Interpreting students, the Region travelled to Edinburgh for a Vega event held alongside the ITI conference, meaning our talk reached not only students but also members of ITI who were curious about or even thinking of getting into interpreting.

The Region was then represented at Leeds University for a hybrid talk, where we discussed the evolution of conference interpreting, its historical milestones, current trends and outlook, but also AIIC’s pivotal role in shaping the standards and practices of the industry and the process of applying for AIIC membership.

Thank you to Beatrice, Felipe and Barbara for volunteering and flying the AIIC flag on behalf of the Region!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27 - 30 June</td>
<td>AB, CACL and ExCo Meetings</td>
<td>Annual meetings of AIIC’s governing bodies</td>
<td>Rome</td>
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<td>28 June</td>
<td><strong>AI Tools for Interpreters</strong></td>
<td>ATPD workshop</td>
<td>FAO, Rome</td>
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<td>28 June</td>
<td><strong>AI Day: Panel Discussion</strong></td>
<td>An afternoon panel on AI and interpreting</td>
<td>FAO, Rome</td>
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<td>28 June</td>
<td><strong>Garden Party</strong></td>
<td>A social event in Rome open to all interpreters</td>
<td>Orto Botanico, Rome</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-7 July</td>
<td><strong>PRIMS meeting</strong></td>
<td>3-day meeting of the Private Market Sector on negotiating skills.</td>
<td>Lisbon</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 July</td>
<td>Legal Interpreting Committee Webinar</td>
<td>Community Court of Justice, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)</td>
<td>Online</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 September</td>
<td><strong>The Impact of AI on Conference Interpreting</strong></td>
<td>1-day conference hosted by AIIC Switzerland</td>
<td>Geneva</td>
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