

Transitional Agreement

between

the International Association of Conference Interpreters

and

the European Space Agency

regarding the conditions

for distal and virtual Remote Simultaneous Interpretation

(RSI) at ESA



The International Association of Conference Interpreters, an association registered under French law, having its registered office at 46 Avenue Blanc, 1202 Genève, Switzerland (“AIIC”),

and

The European Space Agency, an international intergovernmental organisation established by the Convention which was opened for signature in Paris, France, on 30 May 1975 and entered into force on 30 October 1980 (“ESA”),

(hereinafter referred to as the “Parties”)

HAVING REGARD to the Agreement Governing the Employment Conditions of Conference Interpreters paid by the day between AIIC and ESA, the Council of Europe and NATO (hereinafter referred to as “the Co-ordinated Organisations”) signed on 19 March 2014 (the “Agreement”), and in particular to its article 12.1 which provides that if it is decided to make use of remote interpretation, new conditions (duration of sessions, number of interpreters, etc.) shall be drawn up jointly with AIIC;

HAVING REGARD to the Supplementary Agreement between AIIC and ESA signed on 25 March 2014 (“the Supplementary Agreement”);

CONSIDERING that AIIC and ESA, together with the Council of Europe and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, are currently negotiating a renewal of the above Agreements;

CONSIDERING that the entry into force of the renewed Agreement and Supplementary Agreement is foreseen to enter into force as of 1 January 2021;

RECALLING that due to the relocation of the ESA headquarters to a new address following unplanned asbestos removal required at its premises at 8-10 rue Mario Nikis in Paris, AIIC and ESA have agreed, through an exchange of letters dated 21 May and 11 September 2019, on specific conditions for proximal RSI to be practised at ESA Headquarters, i.e. with the booths located in a separate room, close to the one in which the meeting is taking place;

CONSIDERING that due to the Covid-19 outbreak and national sanitary measures leading to restrictions on travel and people gathering, ESA has to make use of either:

- (i) distal RSI, i.e. with the booths located in a different venue to the one in which the meeting is taking place; or
- (ii) virtual RSI, i.e. with the booths connected remotely to a virtual meeting room, including where part of the main speakers and participants are physically present in the same room as the interpreters;

HAVE AGREED as follows:

I. Purpose and scope of application

1. The purpose of this Transitional Agreement is to define the working conditions related to distal and virtual Remote Simultaneous Interpretation (RSI).

The working conditions for proximal RSI for meetings taking place at HQ Bertrand remain governed by the exchange of letters dated 21 May and 11 September 2019, on specific conditions for proximal RSI to be practised at ESA Headquarters.

2. This Transitional Agreement shall apply to all ESA meetings where distal and virtual RSI are provided until the entry into force of the new Agreement and the new Supplementary Agreement on 1 January 2021.

II. Physical presence of interpreters versus RSI

ESA recognises that the physical presence of interpreters, in the same room as the participants, with a direct view of the meeting room, in accordance with applicable ISO standards, shall remain the rule, as it is the best way to ensure high-quality interpreting and good working conditions, and that the cognitive load for interpreters is increased where such conditions are not met.

III. General Provisions

1. Interpreters shall be informed that RSI shall be required at the time of recruitment, or as soon as the ESA interpreting service has been informed of and approved this mode of interpreting.
2. In order to allow for the coordination of the team of interpreters, all interpreters assigned to the same meeting shall work in booths located in the same room.
3. An interpreter required to work in remote shall not be assigned to another meeting in the traditional mode as defined in section II above on the same day.
4. In addition to the team of interpreters, there shall be a person with the primary responsibility of ensuring coordination between the interpreters working remotely and the meeting organisers.
5. The interpreter is responsible for following instructions and procedures for RSI as made available by ESA.
6. For the purpose of RSI, the booths are installed in such a way as to replicate the interpreters' normal working environment. ESA undertakes to make necessary technical arrangements in order to protect the hearing of the interpreters working remotely.

IV. Definition of working day

1. In the case of distal or virtual RSI, the working day shall not exceed:
 - a) two sessions of a maximum duration of 2h30, with a break of a minimum of 1h30 between the two sessions;
 - b) one session of a maximum duration of 3h30.
2. In case the duration fixed in paragraph 1(a) above is exceeded, but remains within the limit of two sessions of 3h30 per day, with a break of a minimum of 1h30 between the two sessions, the team of interpreters will be reinforced by one additional interpreter per booth.

V. Daily remuneration

An interpreter required to work in distal or virtual RSI shall be remunerated in accordance with the daily rate defined in section 1 of the Supplementary Agreement and will receive an additional daily allowance equivalent to 25% of the basic rate defined in article 3.2.a of the Agreement.

VI – Videoconference

For the purpose of interpretation, the rules set out in section IV and V above shall apply to videoconferences when part of the main speakers are connected remotely to the physical meeting room.

VII. Entry into force and duration

This Transitional Agreement shall enter into force upon signature by both Parties, with effect over the period from 1 September 2020 until 31 December 2020.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the Parties have caused their duly authorised representatives to sign two originals of this Transitional Agreement, in the English language.

Done at Geneva

Done at ESA Headquarters, Paris

On 30 September 2020

On 30 September 2020

For the International Association of
Conference Interpreters

For the European Space Agency



Uroš Peterc
President



Elena Grifoni-Winters
Head of the Director General's Cabinet