

### European Masters in Conference Interpreting

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At the initiative of the European Commission's Joint Interpreting and Conference Service (JICS), the Interpretation Directorate of the European Parliament and DGXXII, a group of initially seven European universities formed a working group in June 1997 with the aim of developing a university programme at advanced level (Masters-type) in Conference Interpreting. The working group also benefited from the support and active participation of representatives of the JICS, the European Parliament as well as the President of the European Language Council (ELC). The remit for the group was to pool expertise, cooperate in the delivery of the programme and ensure that training would be available for interpreting students with less widely-used languages (particularly for the languages of accession countries).

Over the course of four years a core curriculum was devised for participating universities which would also serve as a blueprint for institutions wishing to launch new courses. New members joined the group whose membership now stands at fifteen. A series of workshops on topics of common interest (teaching consecutive and simultaneous, return interpreting, new technologies and distance teaching) brought together a wide circle of professionals and new(ish) tutors for exchanges of views and expertise.

On 30 May 2001 fifteen Rectors/Vice-Chancellors signed the formal agreement establishing the "European Masters in Conference Interpreting" consortium. The signing ceremony took place at the European Parliament in the presence of the Heads of JICS and the Interpretation Directorate of the European Parliament as well as the President of the ELC.

#### Results of the project:

- Agreement of a core curriculum which has served as a blueprint for institutions wishing to launch new postgraduate courses.
- Setting up of new EMCI courses at partner universities with the support of partners already running EMCI programmes (eg. Budapest, Prague, Warsaw, Mainz, Trieste). In 2001/2002 the following universities offered EMCI Courses: Hoger Instituut voor Vertalers en Tolken (Antwerp), Universidade do Minho (Braga), Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem (Budapest), Handelshøjskolen i København (Copenhagen), Université de Genève (Geneva), Universidad de La Laguna (Tenerife), University of Westminster (London), Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle (Paris), Karlova Univerzita (Prague), Turun yliopisto (Turku) and Uniwersytet Warszawski (Warsaw).
- Setting up of programmes outside the consortium in line with the core curriculum (eg. Ljubljana, Zurich and others).
- Expansion of language provision to include less widely-used languages.
- Emphasis on enhancement of quality through participation in partner's aptitude tests and examinations, as well as feedback on compliance with the core curriculum (through an annual compliance questionnaire).
- Student mobility allowing for a period of two weeks being spent at a partner university.
- Staff mobility for the purposes of participation in examinations/tests, teaching or class observation.
- Exchange of best practice through annual workshops for a wider audience (including technical experts).
- For further information on the programme, partners, links, resources, see the EMCI website: [www.emcinterpreting.net](http://www.emcinterpreting.net)

## Implications for the future

- The work of the consortium will be publicised further to strengthen the “quality” message vis-à-vis students, teaching institutions and employers.  
AIIC has recognised in a recent newsletter that “the training committee is pleased to note that schools and AIIC seem to be in greater agreement than ever on the definition of quality. To a large extent this is due to the creation of the EMCI initiated and jointly funded by the EC and EP.”
- In future the consortium will focus on project work. Two project groups have been launched:
  1. Interpreting into B  
This project will seek to establish common criteria for the training and assessment of B interpreters – return interpreting will be more widely used in future (especially in the European Parliament), in particular for languages of accession countries.
  2. Distance Teaching  
The aim of this project is to agree standards for technology to be used across the network to enable partners to develop and benefit from distance teaching materials. Digitised video recordings are now available as a first step, but there will be lectures and programmes to enable students to use PCs for practice purposes (student-centred learning).
- The EMCI and Higher Education:  
The group is considering the likely consequences of the Bologna Declaration for both undergraduate and postgraduate education in member states and will also have to address the issue of ECTS.
- EMCI “enlargement”:  
In line with the original remit, expansion of the group will focus on accession countries beyond Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland. Expressions of Interest from PECO countries have been received which are likely to lead to observer status in the first instance.

For further information please contact the consortium coordinator:

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