What is a conference interpreter?

Published: April 20, 2004 Last updated: December 2, 2015

A conference interpreter is a professional language and communication expert who, at multilingual meetings, conveys the meaning of a speaker's message orally and in another language to listeners who would not otherwise understand.

The work of a conference interpreter is an oral intellectual exercise which is quite distinct from written translation and requires different training and qualifications.

Conference interpreters work in the heat of debate, thinking as they speak.

Conference interpreters usually work from one or several foreign languages into their mother tongue.

Conference interpreters use different modes of interpretation (simultaneous, consecutive, whispering) depending on the type of meeting and working environment.

Conference interpreters usually work in a team put together for a specific conference by a consultant interpreter who will take into account the language needs and other requirements of the event.

AIIC interpreters have made a commitment to quality and professionalism. They are bound by their code of professional ethics and undertake to observe the strictest professional secrecy.

Recommended citation format: