A conference organised by AIIC’s Belgian Region has convinced young interpreters that the door is open to would-be members keen to develop their skills and career prospects.

Conference organiser Dirk Reunbrouck told Communicate that the event had gone a long way to dispelling the image of AIIC as a closed shop. He said that students who came expecting to find an elitist organisation "met open and friendly colleagues giving them honest and neutral information on how to start as a young interpreter and even encouraging them to keep on going".

**AIIC’s image still needs working on** The downside was that they had that (wrong) impression of AIIC in the first place. Dirk Reunbrouck warned that there was still work to be done on the association’s image. Some schools still had a prejudiced view of AIIC. More of these open-door events were needed to correct this. One key reason for the conference’s success was the decision to provide interpretation in Dutch and French. It showed sensitivity and attention to detail on the part of AIIC, and was much appreciated by the participants.

**When’s the next one?** Maria Stella Vergara, member of the organising team, endorsed Dirk Reunbrouck’s comments. She interviewed several of the participants, and got positive reactions from all of them. In classic conference-style, they gained as much from informal networking as from the programme. The general feeling was that everyone—organisers and participants—profited from the conference. And the message for AIIC? More please…

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