How is your business organised?

In 1984 a NAS-AIIC working party was set up to study "groups of conference interpreters" - i.e. the different ways in which individual freelance interpreters had joined forces with the intention of organising their markets more effectively and to counteract growing "grey market" competitors. The working party carried out a survey among the AIIC membership and presented the results at the Berlin Assembly that year. A report was subsequently published in the September 1984 issue of the AIIC Bulletin.

Sixteen years later, the newly-rechristened Private Market Sector believes it is time to revisit the issue. Many of the parameters within which we operate as freelance conference interpreters have changed dramatically. Some markets have developed almost beyond recognition. AIIC rules have also undergone profound changes. Non-AIIC competition has flourished and in many instances the joining of forces is no longer an option but a necessity. We think that better knowledge of colleagues' experiences would be of help to all of us.

With this in view, we would ask you to respond to the attached questionnaire. The information thus obtained will form the basis of a report to be presented at the Jan. 2001 Private Market Sector meeting in Amsterdam (to which you are all, of course, cordially invited). Together with the results of the survey our intention is to propose a number of guidelines and best practices for future use, particularly for colleagues thinking of setting up some form of group. Two or three specific groups can be looked at in more detail as case studies. It will also be interesting to see which of the conclusions arrived at in 1984 are still valid.

This study of the activities of groups of conference interpreters is the first part of a broader project on the business and commercial practices of conference interpreters active in the private market. At a later stage we will be looking at the role of consultant interpreters and how they carry out their activities. We believe that a more thorough understanding and an extensive discussion of the ways in which we operate within our markets will provide us with more tools with which to ensure that AIIC conference interpreters are as successful in the private market as they are in the Agreement Sectors. The project - and indeed the whole Private Market Sector and its activities - will feature as the main theme of the October issue of Communicate!, the AIIC webzine. The whole study will be valid only if we have the support and cooperation of as many members worldwide as possible, so once again we ask you to respond to the enclosed questionnaire. We look forward to sharing the results of our work with you.

Download the questionnaire:
- MS Word (45k)
- PDF (15k)
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Recommended citation format: