ImPLI: improving police and legal interpreting

Comparative study of interpreter-mediated interrogation introduced at Paris conference.

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Christiane Driesen is a Vice-President of EULITA (of which AIIC is an associate member) and the coordinator of AIIC’s Legal and Court Interpreting committee. With Sarah Bordes she coordinated the ImPLI project. Christiane agreed to answer a few questions for the AIIC blog.

LL: Christiane, how did the ImPLI project originate and who was involved in it?

CD: The six ImPLI partners are trainers and researchers (four are AIIC members) with interpreters training institutes: ISIT (Paris) as coordinator, Charles University (Prague), Fachhochschule Köln, Heriot-Watt University (Edinburgh), Lessius University College (Antwerp), and Università di Bologna sede di Forli. All have long been convinced that quality of interpreting and professional ethics are essential for a fair trial. It was the European Directive on the right to interpretation and translation in criminal proceedings that triggered the idea of working together to contribute to its implementation.

LL: What was the general goal of the study?

CD: We chose to focus on the very first step in criminal proceedings, i.e. initial contact with police and prosecution, as it has a decisive impact on all following stages. The objective was twofold:

- To provide interpreter training institutes with a better understanding of the interviewing techniques developed by police, customs and prosecution services, and thus enhance their training methods.
- To inform police and prosecution services about interpreting techniques and how, when properly implemented, they can assist them in their work.

LL: One of the main topics was training of interpreters and police officers to ensure effective cooperation. Can you comment on how police forces were brought into the project?

CD: The project was organized around a series of roundtables. Experts from police and prosecution, interpreter trainers, and members of professional associations presented and discussed the specificities of proceedings in each of the six member states. In parallel six films were made involving the cooperation of police and interpreters with the aim to give trainers in both areas (prosecution and police services on the one hand and interpreter trainers on the other) the opportunity to become familiar with each other’s needs, and thus adapt and develop specific curricula. Regular joint training modules were not only recommended but have already been started.

LL: Will there be another phase in the project?
The next phase will be to disseminate the recommendations formulated by ImPLI partners and the films, and to initiate joint training modules. By clicking on these links readers can access the films and final report.

Our Committee is also actively involved in the EULITA TRAFUT project (Training for the future), which aims to contribute to implementation of the directive.

Recommended citation format: