The 2012 report integrates two novelties. It is based on a shorter questionnaire (just 13 questions instead of the 25 of previous surveys), and uses new software (Stata) that allows for greater in-depth analysis and better visualization of results.

Representativity

With an average response rate of 26.4%, the level of participation in the 2012 survey was slightly higher than in 2010 (22.1%), delivering largely sufficient and sound statistical data. All AIIC regions, member categories and age groups were well represented.

Market Situation

Work trends

The effects of the financial crisis are still visible with the amount of work reported showing a steady decline from 2008 to the time of the present survey.

Almost half of freelancers (41%) reported less or much less work in 2012. This represents a huge increase from the 24% in 2010. In comparison, workload was largely stable for most staff respondents (62%), and even went up for almost 25% of them (perhaps in compensation for less frequent use of freelance interpreters?).
There were **great differences across geographic regions**. Workload remained stable or increased outside of Europe, especially in the Americas and Asia-Pacific. In Europe only the Scandinavian countries enjoyed a predominantly stable amount of work. The areas with the greatest downturn in 2012 were Western and Central Europe and the Arab countries.

**Age seems to be a major factor** in the amount of work one receives. A decrease can be seen from 35 years onwards!

**Average number of days worked**

The average number of worked days in 2012 was 88 (2010: 89). However, only about 15% of all respondents worked close to this average (70 – 90 days). 30% worked more (90 - 200 days), 25% less (50 - 70 days), and close to 30% worked much less (< 50 days).
In regard to AIIC regions, the Arab Countries, South America, Africa, Central Europe, North America and the Middle East recorded better than average levels. Populous regions in Western and Northern Europe stayed well beneath the average. Only two regions showed a marked increase in mean working days as compared to 2010: South America (104 vs. 86) and the Arab Countries (106 vs. 83).
The number of **working days of staff interpreters** remained high (144 days on average) depending on the workload and budgetary policies of the institutions they work for.

The world average of 88 days of work for freelance interpreters in 2012 was the lowest recorded in the last 15 years. Europe was the region most affected by this downturn and the only one to show a continuous reduction over the whole period. Since 2008, however, every region has seen a steady decline.

**Average number of days by market sectors**

With almost half of all days worked, the **Private market sector (PMS)** remains the major source of work for freelance interpreters regardless of domicile. The **Agreement Sector (AS)** provides 1 of every 3 days, while the **Special Terms Sector (STS - ministerial departments, various administrations and non-agreement international organizations)** a mere 11%.

In North America, Asia-Pacific, the Middle East, and Central and South America from 65% to 93% of all work was in the private sector. Elsewhere, those numbers fall below 50%, with Western Europe at 43%, Central Europe 38%, the Arab Countries 32% and Africa 23%.
As for individual country markets, in some the PMS provides more work than the other two sectors combined: Germany (70%), France (53%), Italy (69%) and Spain (55%). Only in countries with large intergovernmental organizations (Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland) or where interpreters are mainly recruited by European institutions (CECO, Nordic Countries) does the AS surpass the PMS in work generation. In the remaining countries, the two provide roughly an equal amount of work. The STS shows its greatest strength in Africa (54%), the Arab Countries (42%), the Netherlands (34%) and the USA (28%).

The conclusion is obvious: almost ¾ of all respondents had to work in 2 or 3 market segments to procure a sufficient amount of work.

On a historical basis (2006 - 2012), it seems that the PMS has recovered slightly from the decline it showed after the 2008 financial crisis, reopening the gap previous seen between it and the AS.

Other features of professional practice

Interpretation modes

85.2% of days reported by freelancers (thus 75 on average) were in simultaneous mode (2010: 84.6%). Pure consecutive represented only 6 days/interpreter or 6.9% (2010: 6.6%). That figure, however, goes up to 7 days or 8% of all working days if liaison interpreting is considered as consecutive. Chuchotage (2 days/2.3%) and interpreting with a bidule (3 days/3.4%) bring the share of simultaneous mode up to almost 90%. For staff respondents, 96% of all days were in simultaneous mode (2010: 92%).

Niche markets
Radio and television (yellow bar) and courtroom settings (blue bar) are the most reported non-conference settings. Thirty percent of respondents reported working for TV/radio, and 10% declared having worked in a courtroom setting. Community and telephone interpreting remain marginal markets with almost no presence in Africa and the Arab Countries.

Remote Interpreting (“New Technologies”)

Among the categories covered, live or on-demand webcasting (a new category in the survey) was the most frequently cited. It seems to be a significant market segment in all three European areas (Western, Northern and Central Europe), as well as in the Arab Countries, Mexico & Central America, and South America. As for the other two categories, it would seem that conference settings with remote speakers (seen or heard through video or satellite transmission) are more widely encountered than settings with remote audiences. Among respondents, conference interpreters in Western Europe reported the most exposure to these settings with 1 in 3 reporting having worked at least one day with a remote speaker, 1 in 4 in webcasting and 1 in 5 with a remote audience.
Remuneration of interpreting services

Private Market Sector

Simultaneous rates ranged from 341€ in Mexico & Central America to over 1,000€ in Switzerland. However, this 1 to 3 ratio is not strictly related to continent or international region - low levels can be found in all geographic areas, as can be seen with Greece and Eastern Europe (CECO) in Europe.
An almost identical picture is to be found with consecutive rates, which can vary up to fourfold between the lowest and highest rates reported.
Chuchotage as a variant of simultaneous seems to be practiced in all AIIC regions although only 18% of respondents report working in this mode. Rates are usually close to consecutive rates in major countries but traditionally lower in other areas. In some regions they are even lower than for simultaneous (Mexico & Central America, South America, Greece, Turkey, Portugal and Arab Countries). Africa, however, is an exception with the second highest rates reported, which surpassing both simultaneous and consecutive rates on that continent.

**Agreement Sector (AS)**

The range of AS rates across regions is from 400€ to 600€ and depends greatly on the sector respondents primarily work for. Rates are highest in Europe, thanks to the possible combinations of employers (e.g. EU+UN, EU+Nordic/Baltic Sea Council, EU+Coordonnées). Countries with only one institutional employer are usually at the lower end of the scale, especially when said employer is the UN or a government department (South America, Canada, Greece, Austria, Italy, USA). If work is solely for the EU, rates are generally mid-range (500-570).

![2012 Consecutive Rates in AIIC Regions](image-url)
**Gap between market segments**

The gap between AS and PMS rates tends to widen according to the size and robustness of the PMS. In countries with no significant PMS, rates obtained on the AS are higher than the overall mean private market rate, e.g. in Eastern Europe (CECO), South America, Africa and Turkey. In a second group of regions, PMS and AS rates tend to be about the same, e.g. in Spain, Italy, UK & Ireland. In all other regions, PMS is a sound income provider although large differences do exist.

It should be pointed out that income from many AS bodies (e.g. UN and EU) is considered *tax exempt* while income generated on the private market is not.

**Annual gross income from interpreting services**

For the first time in an AIIC survey an attempt was made to estimate annual gross income from interpretation activities.
Respondents from Switzerland show the highest incomes thanks to an almost perfect balance between PMS and AS income. Germany is usually second in the rate graphs but falls to sixth position on the income list, with 57,000€ per respondent. Conversely, respondents from the USA indicated lower simultaneous and much lower consecutive rates, but overall annual income is higher (68,000€) thanks to an above average number of days worked due to strong private market and special terms sectors. Belgium has the third highest income (62,000€) due to the presence of the EU institutions, just above the Netherlands (61,000€) and Brazil (60,000€).

Slightly above or in line with the average annual income of 46,500€ are five other regions that differ as to their interpreter population and market structure: The Arab countries with only 107 interpreters (3.5% of overall AIIC members) and a Private Market Sector accounting for ¾ of revenues show average annual income of 56,000€, higher than France (52,000€) with 416 members (14.5% of all AIIC members) and a market structure where PMS accounts for only 2/3 of individual income. Asia-Pacific, with 122 interpreters and one of the highest PMS rates, reports annual income (53,000€) only slightly above the average. Africa, Canada and the Nordic Countries are all very close to the average figure, although the purchasing power related to it differs. All other Regions fall below the average income figure.

**Other gainful employment**

About half of all respondents declared that they did not need or want to work other than as a conference interpreter. Among the roughly 40% who declared having other gainful employment in 2012, this activity can account for up to 60% of their total work. Furthermore, there seems to be a strong correlation between additional work and cost of living. Up to 62% of all respondents in Brazil, 45% in Germany and 55% in Switzerland had an extra job usually accounting for up to 30% of their overall remunerative
activity, even though the overall gross income from interpreting services was high in these AIIC regions. Almost the same pattern can be found in Asia-Pacific (56%), Austria (44%), France (52%), Brazil and the Nordic Countries (where 70% of respondents reported other work representing as much as 30% of their remunerative activity).

In regions with low annual gross income from interpreting services it is natural to find the highest percentages of additional gainful employment. Only in Belgium (28%), Canada (27%), and UK & Ireland (23%) can the majority of respondents make a living exclusively from interpreting.

**Other income related aspects**

**General billing practice:** Whereas in all parts of the world the pay-by-day principle is predominant, it is intact with mixed markets only in Western Europe. Everywhere else, respondents tend to adapt to special market requirements. In Africa, the Arab Countries, and North and South America, 20% of all billing units differ from pay-by-day; in other world regions this proportion can go as high as up 43% (Northern Europe). In 7 of 10 world regions, three different kinds of billing are common (see graph).

In regard to **copyright fees**, 50% of respondents never charge their customers, whereas the other 50% charges either a set amount or a certain percentage of the interpreting fee.

**Use of Active Language Pairs**

Two-thirds (66.6%) of respondents (2009: 64.3%) worked actively into at least 2 languages, mainly between A and B. This percentage drops sharply for Luxembourg and Austria (less than 16.6% of all respondents) and is highest for Turkey and Brazil. In AIIC Regions with strong private market or special terms sectors, such as Brazil, Spain, Asia-Pacific, CECO, the Netherlands and Portugal, between 66% and nearly 100% of respondents indicated that they work actively either regularly or a lot with their A and B language pairs.

**Overall Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction levels remained high in 2012 for freelance and staff interpreters alike, with nearly **80%** of respondents reporting **high or very high satisfaction**. Respondents in Western Europe were certainly satisfied with their profession (74% highly or very highly satisfied), but more than 25% think that it could still improve.
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