



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR INTERPRETATION

Interpretation Services Management and Professional Support
Talent Development

Brussels,
SCIC.B.1/MB/miq

NOTE FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT BOARD

Subject: Language priorities for the allocation of SCIC support to interpreter-training partner universities for the academic year 2026-2027

SCIC has identified succession planning as one of the Service's six core priorities. In this context, it organises and manages support actions to ensure that enough qualified conference interpreters are available to satisfy the current and future needs of the Service.

SCIC also offers actions to support universities in enlargement countries to train future conference interpreters for enlargement languages, which is crucial for meeting the EU's linguistic needs. Interpreter recruitment begins approximately 18 months before accession, but a sufficient number of freelancers needs to be available well ahead.

Unit B1, in close cooperation with Directorate A, is responsible for financial and pedagogical support activities, based on a budget managed with the support of the financial unit C2, for students and universities with whom SCIC cooperates. The main goals of this cooperation are:

- to satisfy SCIC's strategic recruitment needs for highly qualified conference interpreters with the most suitable language profile;
- to help bridge the gap between university and professional life;
- to build capacity, and to establish and maintain a community of interpreters in member states, candidate and third countries, in line with SCIC's strategy;
- to contribute to setting standards in conference interpreter training.

For academic year 2026-27, Directorate A and Unit SCIC.B.1, in cooperation with SCIC.B.2, have established language priorities. These are part of SCIC's overall multi-annual strategy until 2027 upon which all succession activities are based. Bearing in mind the significant uncertainties and volatility of demand, the strategy draws on the numbers, availability and stand-by rate of permanent staff, the staff/ACI ratio and current and foreseeable gaps in the freelance market.

For these reasons, Directorates A and B have taken into consideration the following:

- the evolution of language priorities over the previous academic years and interpreter training needs;

- the needs of the Programming Unit based on the satisfaction of demand and the availability of freelance interpreters;
- current retirement forecasts and the optimal staffing level for each language unit. These calculations are made based on statistical information extracted from SCICview and Sysper and help inform decisions on succession planning.

These priorities are not an indication of the relative importance of these languages for the Service. They are intended to guide SCIC's decisions when granting resource-intensive support to universities. This in turn should ensure that university graduates sitting ACI accreditation tests and competitions meet SCIC recruitment needs.

As a rule, particular efforts will be made for priorities 1 and 2. Support to priority 3 languages will be more limited in scope. Nevertheless, priority 3 and 4 languages will receive the necessary assistance if they are taught as an A language at only one university, where reduced support from SCIC could increase the risk of the programme closing down.

Some cooperation actions may be awarded to priority 4 and 5 languages. In exceptional cases, deficit language combinations within priority 4 and 5 useful for the service can benefit from some instruments of support.

We therefore propose to set the **language priorities for interpreting training purposes** for the upcoming academic year 2026-2027 as follows:

1. Bulgarian, Danish, Maltese.
2. English, German, Irish.
3. Croatian, Czech, French, Greek, Italian, Lithuanian, Portuguese, Spanish + Albanian, Montenegrin, Ukrainian¹.
4. Dutch, Estonian, Finnish, Hungarian, Latvian, Polish, Romanian, Slovak, Slovene, Swedish.
5. Bosnian, Macedonian, Serbian, Turkish.

Category 1 - Critical needs in terms of recruitment and satisfaction of demand. Actions should be taken urgently to ensure continuity in the provision of interpretation in line with our clients' expectations and SLA's obligations supporting the existing and/or establishing an interpretation course.

Category 2 - Urgent short- and medium-term needs have been identified but the situation is not critical, as SCIC has some leeway in the immediate future. Short-term actions will be put in place to support existing and/or establish an interpretation course.

Category 3 - The situation is not critical, with enough interpreters to ensure business continuity. Medium-term actions such as capacity building may be required to support existing and/or establish an interpretation course either because the demographics in these booths may lead to a shortage in the near future or in order to expand the pool of ACI interpreters.

(¹) For enlargement languages, ad hoc measures may be taken in line with the progress of accession negotiations.

Category 4 - Broad availability of ACI interpreters and no immediate need to recruit officials or to expand the ACI population or no course and no tangible possibility of establishing a new interpretation course in the coming year. Ad hoc forms of cooperation can ensure that needs are satisfied over the long term.

Category 5 - No interpretation needs or the current pool of ACI interpreters is sufficient. SCIC intervenes in a limited way. Actions deployed for category 5 can include capacity building where, for example in some candidate countries, interpreter training is in an embryonic stage or is non-existent.

The language priorities described above should guide SCIC when providing financial or pedagogical support to its partner universities, i.e.:

- **Grants awarded** to master/postgraduate courses in conference interpretation and other related projects.
- **Pedagogical assistance, virtual classes and other targeted e-learning activities**, including targeted virtual coaching days allocated to universities, including days of **participation in admission and final exams**.
- **Bursaries** awarded to fee-paying students.

In addition, language priorities will be used as guidelines for other activities, such as:

- Targeted, language-specific activities such as **support to freelance interpreter accreditation programmes** or any other as needs arise during the year.
- **Study visits**.

Further actions or novel solutions, in the interest of the service, can be established at a later stage. The practical modalities will take into consideration SCIC's objectives in greening and digitalisation.

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