



Brussels, February 2024  
SCIC.01/JHS



## Summary of the Interpreting Europe Conference 2023 Virtual event (BERL, Hallstein room, 30 November and 1 December 2023)

### ***"ATTRACTING TALENT FOR AN UPSKILLED PROFESSION"***

#### **Day 1 – Thursday 30 November 2023 (PM)**

##### **WELCOME**

**Katarina Skacaniova** and **Daniel Pashley**, masters of ceremony of the event, welcome all participants on site, those connected via Interactio, as well as those following the conference via webstreaming or social media.

##### **OPENING ADDRESS BY COMMISSIONER JOHANNES HAHN**

In his recorded speech, the Commissioner explains that he is pleased to see the world of interpretation gathered at this conference to talk about the future of the profession, the need to embrace new technologies and artificial intelligence developments, and how to attract young people to this constantly evolving profession. He stresses that this conference is an excellent opportunity to discuss the skills needed for linguists in the digital era and to identify how qualified professionals can harness the full potential of new technologies. It is extremely challenging to find young talents with the right skills, especially for linguistic professions. Tribute should be paid to universities, which play a crucial role in training future interpreters, for their valuable contributions. We are delighted to see young people involved in discussions and proposing solutions. The Commissioner congratulates the three winners of the Young Interpreters Award (YIA) 2023, and thanks all students who participated for their enthusiasm and ideas and wishes them all the best for their future career.

## SCENE SETTING

### Statement by Genoveva Ruiz Calavera, Director-General DG Interpretation

Genoveva Ruiz Calavera welcomes everybody to the 27<sup>th</sup> edition of the conference. She explains that this virtual format of the conference has to be seen as a demonstration of our commitment to the green agenda, but also as a demonstration of our know-how in organising remote events while ensuring good sound quality in multilingual communication. The name of the conference has been changed with the aim of reaching the widest possible audience, of reaching the young generation and of bringing Europe closer to citizens. Nonetheless, our partner universities are and will continue to be the key player in this conference, as they train future interpreters. The speeches sent by students for the YIA show their enthusiasm for the profession but at the same time anxiety about the future. The wider use of different platforms, insecurity about artificial intelligence, new ways of working, remote interpretation, etc all contribute to growing insecurities. However, we should see them as opportunities instead of as threats. Acquiring new skills is at the heart of the Commission's policy and of the European Year of Skills declared for 2023.

## CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OTHER EU INTERPRETATION SERVICES

### Agnieszka Walter-Drop, Director General DG LINC

Agnieszka Walter-Drop states that interpreters are at the heart of European democracy, facilitating and enabling the complex legislative process, making Europe comprehensible for citizens, and contributing to a better life. It is in our common interest to assess new realities, the new communication environment and invest in new technological skills to bring interpreters and future colleagues to the required level, while keeping their wellbeing as a priority. Universities play a key role, and the European Parliament is supporting them by offering different kinds of pedagogical and financial assistance. She underlines the important role of political authorities and meeting participants in facilitating the work of our interpreters in this new environment.

### Marie Muttilainen, Director of Interpretation, Court of Justice of the EU

The Court of Justice is also witnessing a shortage of interpreters and a lack of interpreting training programmes in some countries, which is why close cooperation with universities is vital. The Court of Justice provides support to universities in different countries through several actions and programmes. There is a need to work hand in hand to find skilled interpreters for the future, so that citizens have access to the justice system and hearings in their native language. The European Institutions have to work deliberately and effectively to attract the young generation and to offer an attractive place of employment and interesting opportunities for young people.

## YOUNG INTERPRETERS AWARD CEREMONY

### Genoveva Ruiz Calavera, Director-General DG Interpretation

One of the most inspiring moments of the conference is the "Young Interpreters Award" ceremony. DG Interpretation wanted once more to involve students in the reflection process and to hear their opinions about the future of the profession as well as current and upcoming challenges. Students in their final year of masters in conference interpreting were invited to participate and send their contribution on this year's subject "Attracting talent for an upskilled profession". Genoveva Ruiz Calavera announces the names of the winners and hands out diplomas to: **Ophélie Derancy**, first prize winner from ISIT Paris, **Marcelina Wisniewska**, second prize winner from the University of Warsaw and **Isa Devos**, third prize winner from the University of Ghent.

## FIRST PANEL: UNDERSTANDING THE TALENT SHORTAGE

### Introduction by moderator Elisabetta Degiampietro

Head of C1 Conference Services, DG Interpretation

- This panel explores the reasons why it is so difficult to attract new talent, seeking to understand talent shortage in interpretation and to look at the talent crunch from three different perspectives: practitioners, academia and the European Institutions.
- Slido question 1: How attractive has the interpreting profession become over the years? On a scale of 1 to 5, most responses are 3 and 2.
- Slido question 2: Why should young people choose interpreting studies? Most repeated answers: passion, curiosity, challenging, fun and rewarding.
- Introduction of panellists.

### Overcoming our Perception Problem - John O'SHEA,

Chairperson, FIT Europe

Recent surveys, particularly the European language industry survey (conducted every year for the last 10 years), demonstrate the following:

- A decline in the number of student registrations for interpreting and translation programmes,
- Closures of university language translation/interpretation programme. However, new programmes are also being created that combine languages INT/TRANS combined with technology, i.e. University of York.
- A decline in foreign language learning using traditional means. On the other hand, there is a massive rise in language learning via online applications.

The term “talent crunch” needs to be questioned as not enough reliable data is available. Different aspects need to be taken into consideration.

- Economic aspects: interpretation is a cognitively challenging profession which requires large rewards. People expect to be paid sufficiently well to perform this difficult task.
- Perception problems: there is a lack of role models in the professions. A lot of people have no idea what interpretation is.
- Rise in technology: people fear being replaced by machines.

The shortage of new talent in linguistic professions is considered a serious problem. Efforts should be focused on doing something and trying to make some progress, rather than trying to find a complete answer or solution. Broader European campaigns are needed to increase visibility of linguistic professions.

### Upskilling SCIC for the Future - Margo SIJS,

Head of Dutch Interpreting unit, DG Interpretation

All three interpreting services of the European Union are witnessing a shortage in new talents for the interpreting profession. DG SCIC can still count on experienced colleagues, but as they will retire soon, a new generation of interpreters is urgently needed to reply to the growing demand for interpretation. The situation is not the same for all languages, but this seems to be a general trend.

The European Institutions are an attractive employer offering:

- very good working conditions and with a good salary,

- the possibility to be in the front line of current affairs (not only European but also worldwide affairs),
- working trips to different countries which are enriching,
- opportunities for continuous learning (thematic courses and language learning with stays abroad), and
- a modern working environment that keeps up with the latest trends and is ready to face challenges and adapt to new ways of providing services for the future.

Reflecting on the profile of future interpreters is at the centre of this discussion. Certain skills are becoming more important, such as the ability to adapt, to work independently and to master digital tools. Artificial intelligence is becoming more and more present in our daily work and must be integrated to turn it to our advantage. That is why we talk about an upskilled interpreter. This can be achieved through adequate support for a change in mentality of current and future interpreters and through adapting course programmes at universities. Acknowledging the various opportunities the technical development brings can facilitate the transition and change the perception of the profession.

**Becoming and staying a conference interpreter. Perspectives from practitioners - Maya De Wit,**  
Sign language Interpreter consultant, trainer & researcher, AIIC

AIIC is the International Association of conference interpreters which represents and defends the interest of conference interpreters and their professions. The association has nearly 31.000 members and celebrated its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2023.

From practitioners' perspective the main components of:

*attracting new talent are:*

- Quality training on the ground and at universities
- Diversity of the profession and diversity of the representation of society in the profession
- Outreach events to promote the attractiveness of the profession

*retaining interpreters are:*

- Ensuring a space for exchange with stakeholders (universities, institutions) to share common practices on how to manage the profession best and create space to get together and listen to each other
- Enhancing the role of professional organisations
- Ensuring and maintaining proper working conditions
- Offering mentoring scheme

Main messages from stakeholders are:

- Collaboration and communication, what we can contribute as an individual and as an organisation
- Modelling professional practices in training, in recruitment and performance

Interpretation is an exciting profession promoting development and comes with all sorts of new challenges associated with AI and technology, while offering constant learning opportunities and good salaries.

**Curricular Redesign to Attract and Develop Talent - Julie Johnson,**  
Chair, Translation & Interpretation, Middlebury Institute of International Studies

The world is experiencing profound and unrelenting changes. Our society is fundamentally changing, and to a significant degree this change is driven by technology as we see these days with AI. The key to seeing and acting with clarity is to stop looking at our needs and the reality from our perspective but ask questions to understand the reality from other peoples' perspective.

A series of questions have to be asked before redesigning curricula:

- Who is the talent pool?
- What do they want and need?
- Where are the jobs?
- What do employers need?
- What are the skill sets and competences that are needed for those jobs?

Nowadays, only one in five students is a "traditional" student, meaning they live on campus and are enrolled in a university programme for four years. "Non-traditional" students are looking to receive the education they need to get the job they want. Prospective students are very consumer oriented, and look for convenience, service, a quality product and low costs.

A desperate need for interpreters, translators and expert linguists is observed. There are several general competences required for these jobs, such as critical thinking, creativity, continuous learning, problem solving, adaptability, proficiency in technology, media literacy, collaboration and communication. The Middlebury Institute is streamlining its curricula so that these core requirements are fully integrated into its courses. The Middlebury Institute is trying to shift its curricula and fundamental principles behind designing courses so as to be able to continuously adapt and change as the world around us does.

### **Q&A OPEN DISCUSSION**

The main takeaways identified during the Q&A session and worth being underlined, are as follows:

- Outreach activities: It is important to reach schools to explain what exactly interpretation is and what university courses look like, and to show that it is a profession with huge learning opportunities, that is constantly developing and offering access to technology. It is a profession that has always embraced change, and this will also be the case in the future.
- Job expectations: The new generation is not afraid of changes and challenges; people nowadays are rather looking for that and expect it from their job. Thanks to artificial intelligence and technical development, new zones of creativity can be identified. This could contribute to a shift in perception of what this job has to offer.
- Accessibility: Remote interpretation allows broader access to interpretation. Remote simultaneous interpretation platforms, not always seen in a positive light, can help us offer interpretation, access to information, greater diversity of representatives at events for those who for various reason would not be able to afford to attend them.
- Mentoring: On-site training in a practice community is crucial for new interpreters who enter the profession after training. Generally, any kind of assistance is very welcome to ensure a smooth transition because it is not always a straightforward process, even if students have all the required skills, competences and prerequisites.

- Perception: The message that this is a profession with a future has to be passed on to parents, who often have a big influence on their children's choice of field of study/profession.
- Technology: targeted hands-on training to facilitate becoming proficient in dealing with technology is needed to perform the job.
- Structure of the curriculum: Stackable degree programme, meaning a sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time to build on individual qualifications - Monterey Institute
- Diversification: We should go beyond the "standard" profile of interpreters to represent broader society.
- Sign Language Interpretation: There is a reflection process underway on how to make sign language an official language. Formal recognition of SLI is an existing issue.
- We need to look at how technology can be of assistance in providing interpretation instead of fighting against it.

**CLOSURE OF PROCEEDINGS OF DAY 1** by the two masters of ceremony Katarina Skacaniova and Daniel Pashley

## Day 2 – Friday 1 December (full day)

### WELCOME

Welcome back by masters of ceremony Katarina Skacaniova and Daniel Pashley as well as introduction to the programme of the conference's second day.

### SECOND PANEL: ATTRACTING TALENT

#### Introduction by moderator **Monika Schorr**

Deputy Head of German Interpreting Unit, DG Interpretation

- This panel will discuss how to efficiently communicate our profession to possible future interpreters.
- Slido question: Reasons for choosing a linguistic career in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?  
Answers: cultural understanding, making communication possible, human touch, democracy, accessibility, quality, diversity.
- Introduction of panellists.

#### **Balancing Expectations and Realities: A University Perspective – Maren Dingfelder Stone,**

Programme Coordinator for Conference Interpreting at the University of Mainz/Germersheim (JGU)

Based on the working reality of the JGU university's study programmes which are facing diverging expectations of their partners, some conclusions for how to attract talent for an upskilled profession were drawn:

- *Attracting:* We need to engage in the societal debate and communicate the medium-term (economic) prospects for young professionals. By doing so, we would expand our target group (not only young people, but also their parents). Our communication channels should

be diversified (panel discussions, traditional news channels, job fairs, workshops at schools, try-out courses, career days, social media) and should specifically target certain groups.

- *talent*: Changes in students' knowledge and linguistic skills should not be seen in a negative light. Our task is to identify strengths and build on them in our teaching.
- *for an upskilled*: We should collaborate more among partners to render courses more interesting, connect content more to other fields and integrate new skills. By doing so, universities would provide a foundation on which employers could build with specific educational offers (e.g. mentoring or preparatory programmes for the accreditation test).
- *profession*: We should re-evaluate expectations and adjust to new realities (e.g. students' expectations and demands) and be open for new paths.
- In addition, we should reconsider the concept that students choose a profession, but rather choose a life path. We should not only give them the necessary tools for this profession, but above all transferable skills in case realities on the labour market change.

**How to reach a young audience in the member states – Eimear Ni Bhroin,**  
Information & Communication Officer, DGT, European Commission

Challenges faced in Ireland when working as a Language Affairs Officer promoting multilingualism and trying to attract young people to a (linguistic) career in the Institutions:

- The reality of language teaching in Ireland showed that many pupils would drop a language during the course of their school education. Consequently, it is crucial to cooperate with national and international partners, authorities, and institutions to counteract this phenomenon at primary, secondary (especially important) and tertiary level by letting pupils try different linguistic activities for themselves (through workshops, games, competitions, etc.).
- Messages to share with pupils:
  - EU translators collaborate with each other.
  - Interpreting is an exciting profession and takes place where there is action at EU level.
  - Linguists have started in the classroom where those pupils are sitting.
  - We provide mentorship to newcomers.
  - Learning languages is never over.
  - We need to show 'humans behind the curtain'.
- The different EU services are all 'fishing in the same pond' when trying to attract talent. This is why we need to work together to spread the same message and avoid tripping over one another.

**Presentation of actions in the context of the EU inter-institutional Awareness-raising and Outreach Group (AWO) – Javier Herndandez Saseta and Tatjana Zagajski**

**Javier Herndandez Saseta**, Chair of the inter-institutional AWO Group

We need to educate people about the European project, multilingualism, and linguistic careers more because we find it difficult to recruit people, especially interpreters. There seems to be a lack of interest in working for the EU Institutions in general as well as in studying languages and making languages a career. Additionally, people tend to think that, because of artificial intelligence, there is no future in linguistic careers anymore. We need to get the message across that there is indeed a future for these professions and that we still need interpreters.

To reach this goal, we run, among others, the following awareness-raising and outreach activities together with the European Parliament and the Court of Justice:

- Every year we set priority languages to focus our limited resources on these (2023: Croatian, Danish, English, Irish and Portuguese). In this context, we organised inter-institutional awareness-raising campaigns like the one for Croatian to be presented later.
- We organise joint outreach activities in the form of e.g. participation at language fairs and conferences.
- We develop joint projects like the inter-institutional video to promote our profession, shown for the first time at this conference.

**Tatjana Zagajski**, Head of Croatian Interpreting Unit, DG Interpretation

Overview of the inter-institutional awareness-raising campaigns for Croatian (March-August 2023) with the slogan 'More Croatian in the EU':

- Social media postings (short and eye-catching visual postings with information snippets, personal stories, day-in-a-life of an interpreter, contributions by Croatian MEPs, etc), which should achieve broader visibility of our profession. On average, three new postings per week were published over the period of 20 consecutive weeks.
- Interpreters from the three Institutions formed a task force for this project and worked together with DG SCIC.01 Strategy, Policy and Communication.
- Reasons for staging this campaign: Despite Croatia joining the EU in 2013, we are still struggling to attract enough interpreters to cover our needs. Additionally, the University of Zagreb struggled to attract sufficient student to its interpreting courses, so much so that there had not been a course since 2020.
- Reasons for this phenomenon:
  - Lack of interest in language studies.
  - Conference interpreting lacks visibility among young people outside the language industry.
- We reached out to the Croatian government through its representation in Brussels, universities across Croatia for all fields of study, student associations and student clubs to encourage them to follow our social media accounts, share our posts and attend our events (online webinar and physical event in Zagreb on the occasion on the Europe Day with dummy booth for participants).
- The success of the campaign was reflected in the number of views and interactions on social media, of participants at the event and of enrolled students for the university course in Zagreb.

**Social media and how it is used by young people. Challenges and opportunities – Jérôme Naif**,  
Social Media Manager

Which social media planforms are the most used ones among young people in Europe?

- New realities came along with new generations (e.g., from Boomers to Alphas).
- Recent developments in the social media industry – new platforms appeared and gained importance (TikTok, BeReal, Discord etc):
  - Facebook is not used much anymore. Instagram and YouTube are dominantly used by Gen Z. TikTok and Snapchat have high scores as well (TikTok not only amongst the youngest).



- Young people between the age of 16 and 25 use the following platforms most: 1. Instagram, 2. TikTok, 3. Snapchat, 4. YouTube, 5. Facebook.
- Different generations have different expectations of social media platforms (e.g. information about current affairs, entertainment). Additionally, young people use social media for all sorts of purposes more than they use Google. Consequently, the methods used to access information have changed.
- Influencers have become more and more important.
- When addressing Gen Z and Alpha, one must pick the right platforms to reach them effectively and think of the message(s) to put across.
- Videos become more and more important compared to pictures. Short videos are especially relevant. Therefore, one must consider the format of posting.
- AI is causing crucial changes in content as well as paid advertisement. There are AI tools for simultaneous interpretation and voice-/lip-synchronisation (e.g., HeyGen).

### **Q&A and open discussion**

The main takeaways identified during the Q&A session and worth being underlined, are as follows:

- Reasons for the reduction of mobility amongst students seem to be our more and more interconnected and globalised world, a phenomenon accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the availability of financial resources related to the pandemic. The wish for a better work-life-balance, which plays a much bigger role in decision-making processes amongst students, may also be partly connected to the pandemic, but the removal of taboos and the bigger visibility of mental health in our society seem to be causing it to a large extent. Because of the pandemic, the Erasmus+ programme, which for many was an important tool to get with a feel for multilingualism, was put on hold for some time. This programme is nevertheless a crucial tool for awareness-raising and attracting talent to a linguistic career. We need to focus our efforts again more on advertising the following advantages of learning languages: contact with another country and culture and travelling. Additionally, studying (incl. mobility) nowadays is expensive. DG SCIC is aware of it and tries, with its limited resources, to support universities and students (e.g. via grants and bursaries) and is now offering Blue Book traineeships for interpretation for graduates of certain languages. Additionally, more and more students cannot afford or do not want to move to the university cities which offer interpreting courses. There may be a need for more online or hybrid solutions without reducing the quality of the programmes. Ensuring that every student has the same conditions for learning is tricky in this context.
- In awareness-raising campaigns and outreach effort we should not only reach out to students already enrolled in a translation of interpreting programme but go younger and target those who still have to pick a degree and career path. It is important to select the correct social media channel and clear messages which reach the target audience and convince young people that our profession has a future. When doing so, the different realities of the different generations and socio-cultural classes should be considered. International schools in Brussel could also be a possible pool of potential future interpreters as pupils there are usually bilingual.
- Even though TikTok is enormously successful and used a lot amongst the younger audience, users usually use several platforms which is why the Commission's outreach efforts can be focused on other platforms, such as those provided by Meta. In this context, reels are a hot

topic. Authenticity, people reacting, real life is what young people are interested in on social media.

- Universities struggle finding (young) trainers with the needed technical knowledge and skills, especially regarding AI and social media.
- It is important to teach soft skills in interpreting programmes, so that graduates are flexible and could change profession even if the market changes.

**(Virtual) lunch break**

### **THIRD PANEL: FINDING TALENT**

#### **Introduction by moderator Anabela Frade**

Senior Expert, Succession Planning Unit, DG Interpretation

- Introduction of panellists.
- Slido question: If you were to choose a profession today, would you choose to be an interpreter? Why? Or why not?  
Answers: predominantly yes

#### **Why I will not become a conference interpreter – Sofia Siroka,**

Secondary school student and Vice-President of CoSup (Conseil Supérieur des Elèves, European School Ixelles)

- Some secondary-school students who have the potential for becoming a successful interpreter might miss out on a promising path because this career is not presented to them. Possible explanations might be:
  - Lack of visibility and understanding of what interpreting really is.
  - Insufficient promotion and career guidance for linguistic studies amongst secondary-school students.
  - Absence of visible role models in the field of interpretation.
  - Mismatched expectations about the job market with respect to freelance work, AI etc.
  - Stereotypes concerning the academic excellence as well as financial security of degrees in the fields of humanities.
- Possible future interpreters need to be addressed at a lower education level, at the latest in secondary school when they make crucial decisions for their future education.

#### **Conference Interpreting: The promise of a passionate career – Ophélie Derancy,**

Student ISIT Paris and winner of the Young Interpreters Award contest 2023

- The role of human interpreters in the context of AI and new technologies in the field of interpretation is a hot topic for students of conference interpreting.
- Why are students studying conference interpretation with so much commitment if there is this potential danger of being replaced by technology? There is one thing machines will not be able to reproduce for themselves: the pleasure, amusement and joy involved in conference interpreting.
- Therefore, trainers and conference interpreters acting as role models should tell students whenever they can how magnificent this profession is. Young people should hear how exciting and diverse it is, how much you constantly learn and how rewarding it is to enable

multilingual communication. When it comes to promotion and attracting talent, we should celebrate this profession for what it is, without lying to young people about its challenges

### **Why and how I became a SCIC interpreter – Rémi Hoefsloot,**

French Interpreting Unit, DG Interpretation

- Description of educational path towards becoming an interpreter for DG SCIC, including a failed first attempt at the inter-institutional accreditation test.
- Even though the road to becoming a conference interpreter may be rocky and not necessarily predictable, it is worth it. It is crucial not to give up practising constantly, e.g. by joining a practice group.
- Pupils need to be approached at secondary-school level because they make crucial decisions for their career at this stage. They need to know what the interpreting profession looks like and what the European project is.

## **ONLINE DISCUSSION WITH UNIVERSITIES AND STUDENTS (Microsoft Teams)**

### **Introduction by moderator Anabela Frade**

Senior Expert, Succession Planning Unit, DG Interpretation

Designated university trainers and students take part in an online discussion held on Microsoft Teams, while the rest of the audience has a break. There are three discussion groups tackling three different questions:

1. *What challenges are universities facing in attracting new students for interpretation courses? Why do some young people consider interpretation as a profession without a future?*
2. *How should we proceed to attract a new generation of interpreters? In which areas should we concentrate our efforts, and what methods need to be used to reach the right target audience?*
3. *Who are the main recipients of our messages? At what stage should we start communicating our messages?*

The discussions are moderated by SCIC colleagues and the results presented afterwards.

## **PRESENTATION OF DISCUSSION RESULTS**

### **Group 1 – Alannah Fitzgerald Murray,**

Blue Book trainee DG Interpretation.01, European Commission

*What challenges are universities facing in attracting new students for interpretation courses? Why do some young people consider interpretation as a profession without a future?*

What challenges are universities facing in attracting new students for interpretation courses?

- On the one hand there is a decline in numbers of students applying, on the other hand those applying seem to be more motivated. Because of the reduced number of applicants, the size of courses is smaller. Potentially because of the greater use of technology, the language levels of students seem to be lower.
- Career uncertainty after graduation.
- BA and MA in interpretation as well as their entry tests can seem very intimidating to applicants.

- Suggestions on how to tackle these issues: Outreach and communication about languages, not just in regard to a career in this field but as a means to connect to people is considered especially effective and important. Positive and encouraging messages when communicating with possible future students is crucial. Possible helpful projects could be summer programmes in schools, mentoring programmes between interpreting alumni and first-semester students or recently accredited interpreters and interpreting students.

Why do some young people consider interpretation as a profession without a future?

- The raise of AI is discouraging pupils and students. This is why we need to speak about it more and send messages of reassurance.
- The globalisation of English and the use of English as a lingua franca may discourage young people from learning other languages.
- Students learn about interpretation as a profession too late. Outreach efforts should tackle younger people. We need to promote languages, multilingualism and interpreting not only from a professional point of view but also from a personal one.

### **Group 2 – Lucie Molle,**

Blue Book trainee DG Interpretation.01, European Commission

How should we proceed to attract a new generation of interpreters? In which areas should we concentrate our efforts, and what methods need to be used to reach the right target audience?

- Three main target audiences of our efforts have been identified: secondary school students who master more than one language, BA students of various degrees like law and economics, and parents, as they play a role as influencers among young people.
- We need to open up university courses and our booths to pupils and students through e.g., open days, open classes for secondary school students and BA students, demonstrations at simulated or real conferences for BA students to follow.
- TikTok and Instagram seem to be the main channels to reach young people while facebook could be used to reach parents. To reach parents, traditional media (written press, TV, radio) should also be considered. University websites are also crucial and should be designed in an attractive manner. For all outreach efforts, experts should be consulted.

### **Group 3 – Klara Flenker,**

EU accredited freelance interpreter

Who are the main recipients of our messages? At what stage should we start communicating our messages?

- Direct contact:
  - We need to approach secondary school students and convey the message that interpretation is a lot of fun and is not just interesting to those who cannot stand maths or are interested in languages, but rather for a broader group as it involves a lot of technology.
  - We need to target BA students in translation and interpretation degrees as well as other degrees like i.e. engineering. For this purpose, a “taster session” to give it a try could be offered.
  - Erasmus students could be part of the target group as they demonstrate interest in other cultures and languages.

- Teachers in schools and lecturers in universities should be approached. We could inform teachers about the profession so that they can consult pupils interested in languages. We could encourage contacts and collaborations between universities which offer interpreting courses and those which do not.
- Professionals from other areas besides linguistics could be approached. They could be trained, and their skills and experience could be of great value when interpreting.
- You cannot start at a too young age with outreach efforts by targeting children in a playful way or by spreading the message in a more private environment.
- Indirect contact:
  - We should also address the broader public through awareness-raising campaigns.
  - Collaboration with professional associations in the member states could be helpful.
- Messages and timing:
  - We need to dispel the preconception that translation and interpretation are the same thing and make a clearer distinction from translation, especially in regard to machine translation which, in the public opinion, seems to threaten the profession of human translators.
  - We should also dispel misconceptions amongst students as many students of conference interpreting feel they are not good enough and that becoming an interpreter with the European Institutions is unattainable.
  - The message should always be tailored to the specific target group. The timing is also relevant: the further away the target audience is from enrolling to a conference interpreting course, the more general the message should be; the closer people get to picking this career path, the more specific and detailed the information we spread should become.
  - The situation in different countries/language booths should be considered when planning outreach efforts.

### **Q&A and open discussion (third panel and discussion groups)**

The main takeaways identified during the Q&A session and worth being underlined, are as follows:

- We should think about how translation and interpretation are taught in school through translation and interpreting exercises. These do not seem very attractive and might discourage pupils from choosing this career path.
- Outreach to possible future candidates can be seen as a marketing exercise.
- Successful interpreters can act as role models and provide testimonials sharing their experience with failed exams to encourage students.
- We should maybe “rebrand” the inter-institutional accreditation test, which to many graduates seems like an insurmountable challenge.
- When promoting conference interpreting courses, we should focus on all sorts of skills (not only purely interpretation skills) which could also be useful for other professions to attract more applicants.

## **CLOSING REMARKS**

Introduction by master of ceremony Katarina Skacaniova

### **Genoveva Ruiz Calavera, Director General of DG Interpretation**

In closing this 27<sup>th</sup> edition of the conference, the event can be summarised in three points:

1. A tribute to everybody's dedication to promoting the interpreting profession, a profession with a future and career opportunities for new generations.
2. The European Institutions are committed to continuing to set a global example for the interpreting community. Therefore, we are willing to meet the evolving needs of our clients and embrace new technologies. In this context, upskilling is essential to remain relevant and continue providing excellence.
3. As a public service of the European Union, we are committed to ensuring that your voice is heard in all 24 official European Union languages. This provides the European project not only with legitimacy and transparency but also with the inclusiveness it needs to be recognised by our citizens as their project, their Union. This applies to our citizens of today and of the future. And as long as our Union is there to assist and protect our citizens, the need to communicate and find compromises will be there and with it the need for professionals who facilitate understanding within the Union: interpreters and translators.

A big thank you to all colleagues involved in the organisation of this event as well as to our interpreters in the booth and to the sign language interpreters. We are looking forward to next year's edition of the conference.

**CLOSE OF PROCEEDINGS** by the two masters of ceremony Katarina Skacaniova and Daniel Pashley