



AIIC Africa Newsletter

April 2020



United we stand despite the odds.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editorial	2
A Global Picture of the COVID-19 Pandemic in AIIC	2
Distance Interpreting	3
AIIC Canada Regional Meeting, 4 April 2020	3
AIIC DI toolkit	3
Remote Simultaneous Interpreting Q&A Session hosted by the UK&I Region, 30 March 2020	4
Acoustic shocks	4
AIIC Africa Banner Project	4
The Dragoman Challenge	5



Photo Credits:

Aiic Africa, Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone, Sylvia Amisi & Tania dos Remedios

Dear colleagues,

As we continue into uncharted territory with the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, we express our solidarity with you. We have all been affected in one way or another - illness, isolation or quarantine due to preventive measures, death or the resulting personal and professional hardships.

We remember our dear departed friend and colleague, Hervé Songre, and pray for the repose of his soul.

In this newsletter, we share updates that we hope will be of interest to you as well as some resources on distance interpreting (DI) during the COVID-19 crisis.

Stay safe, positive and healthy, and let us know if we can be of assistance to you.

Kind regards to all,

The AIIC Africa Bureau



Hervé Songre

A Global Picture of the COVID-19 Pandemic in AIIC

- ❖ Widespread meeting cancellations
- ❖ *Force majeure* invoked due to COVID-19
- ❖ Major disillusionment
- ❖ AIIC bodies explore options in the face of COVID-19, including:
 - ExCo has set up a Covid-19 Task Force and is working closely with all bodies to ensure that AIIC stays ahead of the curve.
 - The Advisory Board (AB) shares regular updates on the status of regions with ExCo.
 - The Staff interpreters Committee (SiC/CdP) held a virtual meeting in mid-March to discuss the new reality members are facing at the workplace due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee sends weekly updates on the crisis situation to AIIC's leadership.
 - TFDI and THC have developed a number of guidelines on distance interpreting. TFDI will conduct surveys on DI being performed by interpreters (hubs and home studios) during the pandemic.
 - The Research Committee continues playing its consultative role and is almost completing the second phase of the research on acoustic shocks.
 - AIIC Central, at the global level, and some AB representatives, at the national level, in collaboration with like-minded organisations, have sent appeals to leaders and institutions to assist freelance interpreters and translators through this crisis.

"Governments are considering or already adopting measures to mitigate the impact of the crisis in a number of sectors, notably tourism and travel, but have so far neglected the independent professionals whose livelihoods directly depend on activity in these sectors.

On behalf of our members, we therefore call on all institutions to make every effort to include independent or freelance interpreters and translators in any and all economic, social, tax and other measures aimed at alleviating the severely negative impact of the situation."

AIIC, FIT & WASLI

«Les interprètes et traducteurs exercent généralement leur activité en freelance, en nom propre, ils ne sont donc pas constitués en société. A l'heure actuelle, ils n'ont donc ni droit au chômage ni droit aux nombreuses mesures de soutien destinées aux PME. Par ailleurs, leur activité n'est pas soumise à une autorisation d'établissement, l'un des critères retenus pour pouvoir bénéficier d'une aide financière directe et non-remboursable. Il en est de même pour les interprètes judiciaires. Ils ont prêté serment pour pouvoir exercer leur activité, mais ne sont pas soumis non plus à une autorisation d'établissement.»

AIIC Luxembourg & ALTI

* Other Regions that have written to national governments include Austria, Italy, France, Switzerland, UK&I and USA.

Distance Interpreting

Several virtual DI events have taken place within AIIC, in which some of our members participated. Below is a summary.

AIIC Canada Regional Meeting, 4 April 2020

The AIIC Canada Meeting took stock of measures AIIC has put in place to address the COVID-19 situation, AIIC lawyers' legal opinion on contract cancellations and force majeure, discuss the basics of RSI platforms ([RSI 101](#)), hearing protection, the [dos and don'ts of distance interpreting](#) and share the experience on negotiations with the Council of Europe regarding remote interpreting.

Uroš Peterc, AIIC President, noted that COVID-19 was the first major global crisis we are facing since World War II. It is therefore imperative to be prepared for changes and surprises. He remained optimistic that the crisis would take the profession to a new level, stressing that it would definitely not be the end of face-to-face interpreting. Uroš noted that institutions are turning to AIIC for advice on distance interpreting. There have been positive reactions to the AIIC guidelines, which will be regularly updated given the fluidity of the situation. He also appreciated the solidarity shown by staff interpreters towards freelancers.

Bettina Ludewig-Quaine, TFDI member and Coordinator of the AIIC-Coordinated Organisations Negotiating Delegation, spoke about the negotiations between the ND and Council of Europe on RSI working and technical conditions for bilingual meetings. A text has been agreed upon. Discussions have been held on increased cognitive load for interpreters, the typology of meetings that require RSI as well as the impact on working hours and rates.

Bettina provided more details during a Q&A session via Zoom on 9 April emphasising the need for members to control recruitment for quality remote interpreting contracts, rather than leaving it to platforms. A summary of the session will be sent to you soon.

AIIC DI toolkit

- ❖ [AIIC Best Practices for Interpreters During the Covid-19 Crisis](#)
- ❖ [AIIC Covid-19 Distance Interpreting Recommendations for Institutions and DI Hubs](#)
- ❖ [Covid-19: Advice on performing interpreting assignments from home in extremis](#)
- ❖ [AIIC Guidelines for Distance Interpreting](#)
- ❖ [AIIC Position on Distance Interpreting](#)

Note: RSI guidelines for the private market sector will soon be published.

Haris Ghinos, Consultant Interpreter and TFDI member, made arguments for interpreters to collaborate and be at the forefront of interpreting technology. The surge in the demand for DI pushes us to think about the 'translationalisation' of the interpreting market where only price matters, while professional domicile and name cease to be of importance. How do we enforce our Code of Ethics and exercise peer control when we remain remotely 'invisible'? Read [Thoughts on DSI](#).



Hortense Mbea, Jean-Michel Arnaud and Roberta Fox



Remote Simultaneous Interpreting Q&A Session hosted by the UK&I Region, 30 March 2020

Andrew Constable, the TFDI Coordinator, briefly presented the forms of distance interpreting as well as the TFDI's recently issued COVID-19 Distance Interpreting Recommendations for Institutions and DI Hubs. He talked about the impact of the additional cognitive load involved on working hours and team strength. The importance of safeguarding interpreters' health and well-being, whether interpretation is provided in situ or remotely was also highlighted. Interpreting from home is considered as a solution being offered *in extremis*.

Refer to the [summary of the session](#) compiled by the UK&I Bureau.

Acoustic shocks



There is a lot of concern about interpreter health and safety. AIIC is currently conducting a research project on acoustic shocks in collaboration with Dr. Philippe Fournier, an audiologist from Université d'Aix-Marseille, the Research Committee, the Technical and Health Committee and the Canadian Region. The project will determine the prevalence of AS among conference interpreters in comparison with other professions. 1,035 members from 81 countries responded to the survey sent in Phase 1 (see [findings-on-aiic-research-project-on-acoustic-shocks](#)).

The initial analysis of the data from the first phase shows interesting results in terms of differences between countries, demographics, the manner in which symptoms are perceived by interpreters, absence of correlation between symptoms and acoustic shock events at work, reporting mechanisms, etc. Phase 2 will deal with the symptomatology for colleagues who have experienced AS.

Attend the global AIIC online event on RSI with the prominent participation of the Private Market Sector (PRIMS) in the next couple of weeks! Stay tuned.

Need tips to improve your online communication and screen presence? Read [checklist for screen presence](#).

AIIC Africa Banner Project

Oscar Tanifum made a [statement](#) on behalf of AIIC World at the high-level launch of the Public Archives and Peace Museum in Freetown, Sierra Leone on 10 December 2019 organised by the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone (RSCSL). AIIC banners on the role of interpreters in transitional justice settings developed by members of our Region in collaboration with other AIIC colleagues and SCSL interpreters are now on display at the Museum.



Oscar Tanifum shares his experience at the SCSL. In the background, one of the AIIC banners.

Excerpt: Letter of Appreciation from Binta Mansaray, the Registrar of the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone

"AIIC's contribution was critical to the success of the event. We hope to implement the feedback received from the participants, as we continue to develop the Public Archives and the Peace Museum. The banners donated by AIIC, highlighting the role of conference interpreters, have been impactful in stimulating the interest of participants and museum visitors in the invaluable role of interpreters in the advancement of the course of justice.

We are pleased to inform you that since its launch, the Peace Museum has been of great benefit to the people of Sierra Leone and many tourists. It has been serving as a memorial site and has been on high demand despite its very humble beginnings. For instance, in January, the Countess of Wessex, Sophie Wessex, visited and toured the Peace Museum. The Countess also used the Peace Museum as a venue for holding some of her meetings



Students on a tour of the Peace Museum

during her visit to Sierra Leone. Students of the International Secondary School recently visited the Peace Museum to learn about the war, its aftermath and transitional justice.

Additionally, plans are underway to collaborate with national and international partners for the Museum to host commemorative activities in the week of March 23, which marks the start of the 11-year armed conflict in Sierra Leone in 1991. We wish to reiterate our gratitude to AIIC for its support, and we look forward to future collaboration as we proceed with further development of the Peace Museum."



Guests at the launch of the refurbished Peace Museum



A minute of silence in memory of the victims of the Sierra Leone civil war.

The Dragoman Challenge

The Africa Region is participating in the [#DragomanChallenge](https://members.aiic.net/page/7219). The goal is to translate an interesting article (<https://members.aiic.net/page/7219>) written by Elvin Abbasbeyli, an Azerbaijani colleague, about dragomans, who were interpreters and translators at the time of the Ottoman Empire, into as many languages as possible. The idea is to generate interest in a not very well-known chapter of the history of the interpreting and translating professions, to connect interpreters and translators from different regions, as well as to give exposure to lesser known languages.

We have sent appeals to colleagues for translation into Amharic, Bambara and Dioula, and will keep you posted. If you are interested in translating the article into other languages, please contact us. The translator's credentials will be featured on the AIIC website.

