

THE COMMUNITY INTERPRETER AND TRANSLATOR AND/OR INTERCULTURAL MEDIATOR PROFILE IN PARTNER COUNTRIES

SLOVENIA

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COMMUNITY INTERPRETER

THE PROFILE

At the moment, Slovenia has:

- a) conference interpreters (for the following language combinations: Slovene-English-French/German/Italian/Spanish);
- b) court interpreters (sworn interpreters trained by the Ministry of Law; the candidates need to demonstrate the knowledge of the Slovene legal system and are requested to translate a legal text into Slovene – no interpreting skills are required or tested);
- c) interpreters on the list of the Ministry of the Interior who are used in the interviews with asylum seekers. The prerequisites for the interpreters involved in asylum procedures are defined in Article 6 of the Slovene Asylum Law (Zakon o mednarodni zaščiti, 2016): a language certificate, an official statement that the interpreter does not collaborate with the authorities of the country whose language they interpret, and an extract from the judicial record. Their interpreting skills are not tested.

The term “community interpreter” (i.e. skupnostni tolmač) is a term that is known only to few working in the field of Translation and Interpreting Studies in Slovenia, despite the fact that there several works have been published on this topic in Slovenia, among them also two monographs:

Gojanc, Vojko (ed). 2013. *Slovensko tolmačeslovje*. Ljubljana: Znanstvena založba FF. (a collection of articles including some articles on community interpreting);

Morel, Alenka in Vojko Gorjanc. 2016. *Skupnostno tolmačenje: slovenščina v medkulturni komunikaciji*. Ljubljana: Znanstvena založba FF. (a monograph largely based on a PhD by Alenka Morel on community interpreting in Slovenia).

Currently, there is no profile for community interpreter defined in Slovenia. However, a proposal has been prepared for a national occupational standard and sent to the Slovene national regulator at the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (CPI) where it is currently under review.

In this proposal, the expected level of education is minimum high-school, while a high level of language knowledge for working languages (at least level B2 as defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) and a fair knowledge of the culture of working languages is expected. Community interpreters should also be fully familiar with the international standards of the profession and the ability to perform interpreting services, i.e. convey the information from one language to the other as accurately and as completely as possible. They should master techniques used in consecutive interpreting and manifest highly-developed listening skills, memory skills, note-taking skills and delivery. They should also be able to perform *chuchotage*. Previous experience working in the field or specific training is also expected, and the candidates are required to pass a specific test verifying their ability to perform the tasks of a community interpreter.

EMPLOYMENT

The majority of conference interpreters are free-lance and charge from €50-90 per hour; €450-500 per day, €250-300 per half a day. Some work at the EU institutions or for the government.

Court interpreters are employed as needed on a free-lance basis; for the majority, court interpreting is an additional employment to some other employment they have. A typical fee for a court interpreter is €70 per hour. The courts cover the expenses.

The interpreters on the list of the Ministry of the Interior are employed as needed on a free-lance basis; for the majority court, interpreting is an additional employment to some other employment they have. The Ministry of the Interior covers their expenses.

If interpreters are used in healthcare, the patients carry the costs. In some cases, the local community employs interpreters or cultural mediators (especially for the Albanian language) for these services; they are paid from the public funds allocated to local communities.

PRACTICE

Interpreters convey the message from the source language to the target language as accurately as possible, observing the professional codes, including confidentiality. No other tasks are envisaged for this profile of a professional.

TRAINING

Conference interpreters are trained at the MA level for 2 years at two universities in Slovenia: Ljubljana and Maribor.

In addition, a few years ago the Department of Translation Studies at the University of Ljubljana introduced an elective course Introduction to Community Interpreting (30 contact hours) as part of the MA programme in Interpreting.

Court interpreters have to enrol in a course for court interpreters that consists of lectures on the Slovene legal system. Following the Directive 2010/64/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2010 on the right to interpretation and translation in criminal proceedings, court interpreters have to provide evidence of continuous education if they wish to renew their license: they have to submit relevant documents to the Ministry of Law proving that they have participated in at least 5 different workshops over the last 5 years – the quality of the workshops is not taken into consideration.

No other training is provided in Slovenia.

CERTIFICATION

The only certification in place in Slovenia is for court interpreters which is in the hands of the Ministry of Law. Knowledge of the Slovene legal system is tested, and the candidates have to provide a written translation of a legal text.

INTERCULTURAL MEDIATOR

THE PROFILE

The term “intercultural mediator” (tj. medkulturni mediator) is a term that is becoming increasingly used in Slovenia especially a) in the field of integration of different categories of migrants/refugees and ethnic minorities and b) in the field of healthcare. In the last decade, many intercultural mediators were employed by different NGOs (Slovenska filantropija, Društvo Odnos) as interpreters and cultural brokers who facilitate the migrants’/refugees’ access to different community and/or public services. Over the last few years, intercultural mediators have been employed by community health centres in response to an increased need to overcome language and culture barriers faced by migrants/refugees and ethnic minorities, especially Albanian communities in Slovenia. The process of the implementation of intercultural mediator and its positive effects on addressing linguistic obstacles faced by the Albanian-speaking community in accessing the Slovene healthcare system were analysed in several scientific articles:

Lipovec Čebren Uršula, Pistotnik Sara, Jazbinšek Simona, Farkaš-Lainščak Jerneja 2017. Evaluation of the implementation of intercultural mediation in preventive healthcare programmes in Slovenia, *Public health panorama* 3(1): 114-119.

Škraban, Juš, Oprešnik, Denis, Pistotnik, Sara, Lipovec Čebren, Uršula. 2019. Health diplomacy in the process of implementation of intercultural mediation at the primary level in preventive healthcare: Slovene case study. Santino Severoni; Michaela Told; Monika Kosinska; Ilona Kickbusch, Mihaly Kökény (ed). World Health Organisation. Regional Office for Europe. (in print)

The practice in Slovenia shows that intercultural mediator is used as an umbrella term that covers activities such as interpreting, facilitation of access to different community/public services and cultural brokering and advocacy. In addition to interpreting in different contexts (administrative units, schools, hospitals, healthcare centres etc.), intercultural mediator works as a facilitator helping migrants/refugees when the lack of cultural awareness and understanding of the system becomes the main impediment for the migrant population to access and benefit from basic quality social services, quality education, primary healthcare, fair trial and political participation in the host country. Intercultural mediators inform migrants/refugees of their entitlements, the way the institutions work and how they should be accessed. Intercultural mediators play an important role in empowering migrants/refugees and ethnic minorities, by informing them and encouraging them to voice their needs and concerns.

Currently, there is no officially recognized profile for intercultural mediator in Slovenia. However, the process of preparation of a national occupational standard for intercultural mediator began in 2018 at the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (CPI).

In the current phase of the preparation of the national occupational standard, the provisioned level of education for intercultural mediators is minimum high school; they should be fluent in the working languages and should have an in-depth understanding of the socio-cultural and economic characteristics (including linguistic, religious and political aspects of a culture) of one or more areas and countries from which migrants/refugees come to Slovenia. Moreover, they should be capable of recognizing cultural, social and other patterns of behaviour and be able to successfully communicate in situations where cultural, linguistic, social and other misunderstandings might arise. They should also be familiar with the basic professional terminology in the fields of education, employment, healthcare, administrative procedures and social security, and be able to efficiently help migrants/refugees to communicate in community/public institutions. Previous experience in working in the field or specific training is also expected, and the candidates should pass a specific test verifying their ability to perform the tasks of intercultural mediator.

EMPLOYMENT

The majority of intercultural mediators are employed full-time by different NGOs (Slovenska filantropija, Društvo Odnos etc.) or part-time (as additional employment) by community healthcare centres in Slovenia. Their fee varies from €40 to €70 per hour.

If intercultural mediators are used in hospitals, the patients have to carry the costs. In some cases, the local community employs interpreters or cultural mediators (especially for the Albanian language) for these services and pays them from the public funds allocated to local communities.

PRACTICE

In the current practice, intercultural mediators work as interpreters, therefore conveying the message from the source language to the target language as accurately as possible, observing the professional codes, including confidentiality. Moreover, intercultural mediators work as facilitators that help migrants/refugees access different community and/or public services by informing them of their entitlements, the way the institutions work and how they should be accessed. In addition, intercultural mediators facilitate cultural dialogue both in migrants'/refugees' contact with community/public services and in local communities themselves. In general,

the aim is that through their work intercultural mediators empower migrants/refugees to play an active role in their everyday life.

TRAINING

There is no systematic training for intercultural mediators in Slovenia. However, three types of training courses have been organised so far:

- the International organisation for migration in Slovenia organised a five-day (25-29 July 2016) and three-day (20-22 September 2016) intensive training on intercultural mediation with a focus on assistance provided in healthcare settings, the role and practicalities of intercultural mediation in a healthcare setting, including the importance of psychological support available to intercultural mediators.
- the National institute for public health in Slovenia provides a working group which meets on a regular basis (from December 2018) and consists of all intercultural mediators working in Community healthcare centres in Slovenia. The working group meetings have two parts. In the first part, a professional topic is presented in form of lectures and workshops (i.e. on interpreting skills, cultural aspects of health and illness, ethics of intercultural mediation, medical terminology etc.). In the second part, place and time are given to intercultural mediators to share their skills, knowledge and work experience (in a peer-support format).

CERTIFICATION

There is no certification.

GREECE

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CONFERENCE INTERPRETING

In Greece, Conference Interpreting studies have been offered regularly since 1991/1992 at the Ionian University (diploma), and since 2003/2004 at the Aristotle University (master). Additionally, in the last 4 to 5 years, private schools offering interpreting courses are increasingly present in Athens and Thessaloniki. Research in the field of interpreting studies has been emerging over the last few years, resulting in some most important works such as:

Apostolou, F. (2015). *Translation and interpreting for public services in Greece*. (e-book in Greek)

<http://hdl.handle.net/11419/962>

Ioannidis, A. (2018). *Can you ask them for me? Interpreting in asylum hearings in Greece*. Athens: Diavlos. (in Greek)

Resta, Z. (2017). *Community interpreting in Greece*. Athens: Diavlos. (in Greek)

Furthermore, the first PhDs were completed in 2015 (Conference Interpreting in Greece) and 2016 (Court Interpreting in Greece) at the Aristotle University, and one major international congress about the training of conference interpreters (2016, AUTh) and a symposium about community interpreting (2018, AUTh) have been organized so far.

The majority of professional conference interpreters has studied conference interpreting in Greece or abroad. Some conference interpreters based in Greece are members of the Greece-Cyprus Region of AIIC (which, however, has no official status in the Greek territory, with AIIC's headquarters being located in Paris) and others are members of the Hellenic Association of Conference Interpreters (SYDISE). SYDISE, founded in 2014 with the aim to regulate the profession of conference interpreters, currently has 42 members and continues to grow at a steady pace. Its admission criteria are quite stringent for full members [requiring from interpreters to be registered with the tax and social security authorities and not to perform the profession on an occasional basis, as well as requiring from interpreters to prove a sufficient number of work days as previous work experience exclusively as conference interpreters (and not as community or court interpreters) before joining the Association], which makes it difficult for young interpreters to join. According to the amended Articles of Association of SYDISE (pending final approval by the Court of First Instance in 2019) a new category of members

is added to the existing "full member" category; a great number of young interpreters unable to meet the criteria for full membership will now be able to join as "non-voting members". SYDISE and AIIC Region Greece Cyprus have been working together for the past few years and their collaboration is expected to be of significant benefit for the profession of conference interpreters. According to the forecasts of its Executive Board, SYDISE as a national association of conference interpreters is expected to grow considerably within the next few years.

Conference interpreting has not been a regulated profession so far and there is no official outline for it (only for sign interpreters). However, thanks to constant efforts, mainly by SYDISE, the government (including the ministries, regions and local authorities) has started including SYDISE or equivalent membership as a necessary qualification for conference interpreters in the invitations to tender and efforts continue for SYDISE membership to become a prerequisite for the selection of conference interpreters in Greece. In general, they work as freelancers at a daily fee of €300-400 for a full day and approximately €250-300 for up to 2 hours, although these rates are not officially documented.

Regarding community interpreting, conference interpreters would interpret for refugees only if the assignment comes from a "normal" client, e.g. journalists visiting refugee camps etc. Respectively, they interpret for the courts only if the assignment comes from a client for reasons stated below.

COURT INTERPRETING

APPOINTMENT OF COURT INTERPRETERS/PROOF OF QUALIFICATION

According to the Greek Criminal Procedure Code (Article 233), the judges have to resort to a List of Court Interpreters in order to appoint an interpreter and only in exceptional cases is the appointment of someone from outside the List allowed. However, the Greek law does not impose any requirements or qualifications for court interpreters, nor does it provide any mechanisms to qualify them. As a result, *anyone* can declare to be an interpreter and request that their name, as well as their working language(s), be included on the List, without having to provide any proof of qualifications. This lack of accreditation and certification procedure has often raised quality and human rights issues (such as, for instance, the case of a woman who was appointed as an interpreter by the criminal courts of Thessaloniki in trials involving Albanian witnesses or defendants, despite her not knowing the Albanian language).

EDUCATION

In Greece, there is no educational programme specialising in court interpreting.

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

In Greece there is no professional association for court interpreters, let alone a Code of Ethics.

THE STATUS OF THE PROFESSION

Court interpreters in Greece are represented through a professional association or a trade union. Their working conditions, as well as their rights and obligations, are not regulated by any collective agreement. Their remuneration is established by an old Law and amounts to €11.74 for each interrogation procedure and €17.64 for each court case, even if it has to be extended over several court sessions. Court interpreters are obliged to attend the court room at 9 am, without knowing when or whether their services will be required. This depends on the number of case assigned to them on the court docket and the speed at which the judges reach a settlement. In case the trial is postponed, the interpreter receives no remuneration, although he/she was ready to deliver his/her services on the spot. There is no provision in the Law regarding additional charges for overtime work, while in many cases significant delays in excess of twelve months in the payment of these remunerations are the rule rather than the exception.

COMMUNITY INTERPRETERS AND INTERCULTURAL MEDIATOR

Among other southern European countries, Greece bears the heaviest load of migration inflow nowadays and gradually it has turned from a traditionally outgoing-migration country (early 1920s, 1950s-1960s and during the current economic crisis) to an incoming-migration country, having its society transformed into a multicultural community. The need for trained and qualified community interpreters and cultural mediators is greater than ever. Nevertheless, there is no clear distinction between the two professions. Usually, community interpreters are called to provide cultural mediation services and vice versa – terms rather unknown until recently in the Greek society. In fact, in Greece the definition and practice of cultural mediator is closer to what is described as community interpreting, meaning the interpreting offered in the public services environment in order to ensure that immigrants are able to enjoy the right to have access to health and legal services of the hosting country (hospitals, police departments, public offices as well as intercultural education and training).

In Greece, the concept of cultural mediation has not been officially introduced in the Greek Law. However, the 3386/2005 Law refers to the integration of Third Country nationals into the Greek society, but does not specify measures for such processes of integration and, as a result, does not refer to cultural mediation either. The only indirect implication for cultural mediation is the official definition of integration from the part of the Greek state as a two-way process, where the migrants adapt to the new country while the country adapts to the newcomers, which leaves some space for a future introduction of the concept of cultural mediation.

THE PROFILE

The unprecedented humanitarian crisis that initially sparked mainly in the countries of the Middle East has led to a massive migratory influx of people having a multicultural and multilingual background. In order to respond to their needs, the stakeholders having the general mandate of the refugee crisis management, hastily recruited native speakers as interpreters (or cultural mediators) aiming to bridge the communication gap with the refugee population. The criteria set by the job offers in any NGO are simply the knowledge of the source language, good command of Greek or English and some relevant experience in the field (if any). Community interpreters are basically native speakers that speak fluently the source languages and, at the same time, may master certain dialects of their country of origin (a representative example is that of Iraqi citizens who, apart from Arabic, also have a command of Kurdish dialects such as Kurmanji, Sorani, Palewani etc.). Nevertheless, there are major challenges even in the use of the mother tongue, especially when it comes to languages such as Arabic, since e.g. a Lebanese interpreter cannot easily communicate with an Algerian beneficiary and vice versa (the Arabic language having many variations within the Arabic speaking countries). Furthermore, during certain procedures prior to the asylum service, at the court or in sessions with doctors, things are even more complicated since most of the interpreters are not familiar with the legal or medical terminology mainly due to the fact that they either lack relevant education or experience (or both).

Interpreters – currently working within that framework – have a competitive advantage of the in-depth knowledge of cultural background. This is a specific feature that is of vital importance since they can provide useful input either to a lawyer or a psychologist as to traditions, beliefs, history etc. of a specific ethnic group, a minority or a political group of a country. Nonetheless, in some cases that knowledge might not be used properly since an interpreter might be prejudiced towards a beneficiary because of his/her origin. A proper educational programme has to set the boundaries and frame the services provided by the interpreters in order to avoid such implications.

As far as the education level of the interpreters is concerned there are many variations. Since a university degree is not a prerequisite, an interpreter might have either completed high school in his/her country of origin or have

started his/her studies at the university which were then abruptly stopped by war and only few had graduated from the Faculties of Arts (English, French etc.). Others have just been in Greece for a long time, working as housekeepers, receptionists, plumbers, or are asylum applicants themselves, having a good command of English yet lacking a relevant professional experience. The lack of previous experience renders the provision of interpreting services more complicated given that interpreting is by default a multitasking condition that requires special skills and competences. In addition, a community interpreter has to be equipped with additional skills such as flexibility. In practice, a community interpreter has to work from 9 to 5 at a refugee camp, exposed to harsh weather conditions, at a hospital for an urgent medical incident, or even during a fight between members of certain ethnicities.

EMPLOYMENT

At the beginning of the refugee crisis, UNHCR has been called to provide expertise in the management of the needs resulting from it. Also, various NGOs, both national and international, are in place to provide mainly legal, medical and psychosocial assistance, recruiting a great number of interpreters for such needs. The funding for these activities mainly comes from the European Union, as well as from international organizations such as the International Organization for Migration. Gradually, the Greek state (namely the Ministry of Migration) will undertake this task, and control over both the refugee camps as well as any accommodation facilities will pass to state agencies.

In 2013, the Registry of Trained Intercultural Mediators was created (www.intermediation.gr, EIF 1.1.b/11 project). The registry offers all institutions in need of interpreters and/or mediators' services the opportunity to search for a trained mediator for the language and the area in question, and contact him/her directly. Agreements on the terms of cooperation are made by the parties involved. No data is available on the extent of the registry use. Of the 586 interpreters and/or mediators that had been trained in Greece by 2013, only very few reported working regularly for NGO's involved in migrant issues. Some reported that they offer mediation services through migrant organizations or through direct contact with local authorities. Others reported that they would occasionally offer their services voluntarily. Of the 417 mediators that could be contacted, 36 (8.6%) declared that they are no longer interested in working as intercultural mediators. Despite the positive attitude of the majority (87.7%) towards the creation of a mediator registry, only 139 mediators registered (33.3% of those contacted).

Recently, the Hellenic Centre for Disease Control & Prevention (*KEELPNO*) opened an invitation to tender for interpreting among other services, which is the first time that interpreters will be recruited for a state agency as part of the refugee crisis management framework. This is a great opportunity for the community interpreters as

well as an open window for the integration of the interpreters who are either asylum applicants or recognized refugees.

TRAINING

Things are even more blurry when it comes to training and education of community interpreters.

A primary research held in 2013 on a sample of 75 participants activated in cultural mediation in Greece and trained in the framework of the SONETOR project has shown that most cultural mediators are in the work informally; the great majority are not trained and/or certified as cultural mediators; there is a poor connection between certified cultural mediators and the labour market; certified cultural mediators are scarce compared to the needs and offer their services voluntarily or, in some cases, they are contracted for a limited period of time; migrants are not always aware of their right to ask for a cultural mediator or they are unwilling to have one recruited for them as there is often a matter of distrust.

So far, there has been a complete absence of certified programmes in Higher Education and in private education. The only exception is a course, entitled *Interpretation and Cultural Mediation*, offered at the Police Academy. Usually, whenever a new humanitarian programme starts to be implemented, focusing for example either on child protection or on the protection of victims of torture, interpreters – as members of an interdisciplinary team – are being introduced to a code of conduct with which they have to comply. Furthermore, they are trained how they have to cooperate with other colleagues. These training sessions usually last only a few hours and offer a superficial approach as to the terminology that will eventually be used and the procedures that will be applied. Between 2006 and 2009, several training programmes (250 hours each) for cultural mediators were organized by the Department of Social Inclusion of the General Secretariat of Immigration and Social Integration Policy. The programmes were carried out by two private vocational training centres (more than 100 persons were trained). Furthermore, as a part of the *Professional and Social Inclusion Actions Horizons Programme*, the AKMH Private Vocational Training Centre organized a 300-hour programme for the training of 20 cultural mediators.

On the other hand, there is a Greek NGO, Metadrasi, which provides some training to future interpreters, without nevertheless having been recognized by the state as a formal educational institute, therefore simply taking advantage of the absence of a formal response. Metadrasi started offering training in 2010 and has since then been offering “seminars for training interpreters” which last 10 days and are followed by written and oral exams. Those who pass the exams can be registered at the organisation’s “Register for interpreters”, an internal pool of community interpreters who are obliged to work only for Metadrasi. Metadrasi acts as a subcontractor

for several NGOs etc. The validity of the certificate of the interpreter lasts for a year, then a new assessment is required.¹

CERTIFICATION

There are still no registered professional rights for cultural mediators nor is there any official professional profile; that is to say a cultural mediator is not recognized yet as an independent and legally self-standing profession but mostly as a supplementary qualification and skill of a professional in the field of Humanities and Social Sciences. Timid steps have been made as to certification since some workshops have been organized by the **Panhellenic Association of Translators**. Nevertheless, it remains unclear whether a certificate of attendance in such workshops shall be considered as an official proof of knowledge and mastery of interpreting techniques and skills. It seems that we are in the uncharted waters as far as certification is concerned and it is imperative to effectively respond to it. It will certainly improve the provision of interpreting services and better facilitate our communication with beneficiaries of these services.

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Implementation of the Directive 2010/64/EC and Court Translation and Interpreting Greece, April 2016
https://ec.europa.eu/greece/sites/greece/files/docs/body/20160610_conclusions_workshop_courts.pdf

TIME Train Intercultural Mediators for a Multicultural Europe – Erasmus+ Synthesis report, June 2016.

¹ “Metadrasi has carried out 53 Interpreters’ Training Seminars, has created a pool of 350 interpreters for 38 languages and dialects and has been providing quality interpreting services in the following contexts: Asylum Procedures, First Reception & Identification Procedures, Hospitals, NGOs and Agencies involved with the Target Group, as well as the embassies of other European countries by locally based teams in Athens and 23 other points in Greece or missions of interpreters.” <https://metadrasi.org/en/campaigns/training-of-interpreters/>

NORWAY

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COMMUNITY INTERPRETER

THE PROFILE

Norway has PUBLIC SERVICE INTERPRETERS.

Public service interpreter is a term used in Norway for interpreters working in institutional discourse, i.e. encounters between an institution or the professional representing it and the person(s) seeking the institution's services' (Agar 1985). Norwegian official documents accordingly define public service interpreting as interpreting that enables professionals and official servants to hear, guide and inform their clients in the case of language barrier (NOU 2014, *Interpreting Act* under hearing 2019). The Norwegian definition takes on the perspective of the professional in charge of the institutional encounter, and hereby the responsibility for bridging the language gap instead of ascribing this responsibility to the speaker of the minority language. The Norwegian delineation also embraces courtroom interpreting, since the same interpreters work in the courts and in community settings. The term "community interpreting" is not in use in Norway.

Since 2005, interpreters practicing in the Norwegian public sector have been listed in Norway's National Register of Interpreters. The register is transparent and information on the interpreters' qualifications and contact details is accessible at www.tolkeportalen.no.

The register currently has five categories: the top category (1) is reserved for practitioners who have passed both an accreditation exam and completed a minimum one semester (30 ECTS) university level training. Categories (2) and (3) display practitioners who have passed the accreditation exam or completed training, respectively. The two bottom categories are for practitioners who have passed an exam on written translation (4) or have passed an oral bilingual vocabulary test (5). To enter categories 4 and 5 contenders must complete a weekend course on interpreting ethics. The categories of the national register are under revision and will, from 2021 on, include practitioners with a BA in PSI in the top categories.

According to the current register, license and mandate for serving as an interpreter in the PSI setting is (a) documented basic bilingual skills and (b) documented knowledge of the interpreters' code of ethics or area of responsibility in the public sector (Felberg & Skaaden 2012; Skaaden 2018).

EMPLOYMENT

The majority of PSI practitioners are freelance and are hired directly from the register (although not a commercial register) or via interpreting service providers, which are municipal or private agencies or generic in-house services of large hospitals and asylum institutions. The practitioners' remuneration is not regulated except for the courts and asylum institutions. Therefore, interpreters' hourly remuneration varies from €20 (when hired via agencies) to €90 (when hired directly by the court). Interpreting expenses are covered by the Norwegian state in all institutional encounters, both in legal and medical settings.

PRACTICE

All interpreters listed in the National Register are to follow the code of conduct as defined by Norwegian authorities, that is to render as accurately as humanly possible one person's speech into another language at the time the speech is made, while observing an impartial role and absolute confidentiality. The Norwegian interpreters' code of conduct explicitly states that they are not to act as cultural mediators or cultural advocates. As mentioned under profile, in the Norwegian market interpreters are not specialized to work in specific settings, and most work both in the 'community' and courts or in the conference setting.

TRAINING

Since 2007, approximately 1,000 students covering 57 working language (in addition to Norwegian) have completed a one-year university level basic course (30 ECTS) in the consecutive interpreting of institutional dialogues at the Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet). Through blended learning the course accepts students living all over Norway and other European countries, but the students must have Norwegian as one of their working languages. In addition, approximately 500 students completed up to 90 ECTS, in add-on courses on different interpreting methods such as note-taking, remote interpreting and simultaneous interpreting, and sight interpreting along with courses on individual and cultural variation in interpreting.

Since 2017, the Oslo Metropolitan University offers a full-time BA on Public Sector Interpreting. The BA is organized as blended learning over a four-year trajectory, and includes the aforementioned courses.

CERTIFICATION

In 1997, Norway established a National Interpreters Certification Exam – NICE (Mortensen 2012). The NICE is an independent exam that tests the candidates' practical skills in consecutive interpreting of institutional encounters, both medical and legal. To sit the oral test, the candidates' must first pass a written component. Hitherto, approximately 3,000 candidates in 40 language combinations (where one working language is always Norwegian) sat the test, whereof fewer than 300 candidates in 30 languages passed it. The certification exam's pass rate is accordingly 10%.

INTERCULTURAL MEDIATOR

THE PROFILE

There is no officially recognized definition for intercultural mediator in Norway. A variety of terms in use in reports (Holm-Hansen et al. 2007: 127-131) signifies the state of affairs: *naturlig hjelper* ("natural helper"), *minoritetsrådgiver* ("minority advisor"), *kulturveileder* ("cultural guide"), *kulturtolk* ("cultural interpreter"), *kulturfortolker* ("cultural construer"), *linkarbeider* ("link worker"), *helsekommunikator* ("health communicator").

These functions seem to perform a plethora of different tasks, sometimes including interpreting, and even serving as "role models" to service users from their own country of origin (PROBA 2003).

The function of *linkarbeider* is defined (albeit vaguely) in some official documents as someone paid to help migrants find their way in the Norwegian society, predominantly in the domains of the social- and healthcare systems and the child welfare services.

EMPLOYMENT AND PRACTICE

As far as we have been able to establish, cultural mediator is a concept often associated with Child Welfare Services and some social- and healthcare settings, where their services are often combined with other tasks – such as indicated in the case description below. Thus, they predominantly work part time.

The costs of these services are covered by the Norwegian state and municipal budgets, but are often outsourced to private agencies that specialize in the “asylum and migration business”. The costs are never covered by the minority service users, however.

Remuneration to the “cultural mediators” varies, and depends on how they are hired. For example, when hired by the municipality directly, as the case described next shows, remuneration offers are between 350 000 NOK to 465 000 NOK per year, depending on the practitioner’s qualifications.

A brief case description serves to illustrate the situation:

In a recent employment announcement from the social services of an Oslo suburbs (retrieved online 01/01/2019), the following work description was provided for “cultural interpreter” (*kulturtolk*) in combination with “administrative assistant” where the main qualifications sought are described as follows:

- completed secondary school,
- service minded,
- some experience from work within the field of cultural sensitivity,
- good cultural knowledge.

In sum, the qualifications for this type of function are very vague.

TRAINING

There is no systematic training for intercultural workers in Norway. However, in its programme on professionals’ further education OsloMet offers courses on diversity issues for professionals working with people from different cultural backgrounds. These courses’ aim is to raise knowledge and understanding of the complexity of identities in the labour market and social life in general in a society characterized by diversity. This path to integration is an alternative solution to employing the function of ‘intercultural mediators’ and seems more sustainable than the latter strategy, which may easily result in *culturalization*. That is, a practice where certain situations, problems and issues related to difference are construed as culturally-rooted phenomena rather than as problem constellations created by or influenced by individual, social and political factors (e.g. class) (Rugkaasa, Eide, Ylvisaker 2015).

This means that in Norway diversity issues are mainstreamed and are not treated isolated as issues of “cultural mediation”, which may lead to othering and segregation.

CERTIFICATION

None.

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COMMUNITY INTERPRETER AND INTERCULTURAL MEDIATOR

Dr Mauricio Viezzi and Dr Caterina Falbo

THE PROFILE

Interlingual communication in Italy is characterised by some confusion as to the names and roles of those who practice it. The word *interprete* (= interpreter) is generally only used for conference interpreters and court interpreters. In public service or community settings, the words *mediatore* (= mediator; also *mediatore linguistico*, i.e. linguistic mediator) and *mediatore culturale* (= cultural mediator; also *mediatore interculturale* or *mediatore linguistico-culturale*, i.e. intercultural mediator / linguistic-cultural mediator) are used. The words *mediatore* and *mediatore culturale* correspond to different figures whose roles to some extent overlap.

A *mediatore* is, for all intents and purposes, an interpreter working in public service settings. The profession is not officially recognised and there are no requirements as to education level, training, accreditation etc. In other words, anyone may claim to be a *mediatore* and public service providers may (and often do) resort to untrained and non-professional *mediatori*. *Mediatori* may be Italian or not; they are typically freelancers working through agencies in all public service settings.

Interpreting is provided both by *mediatori linguistici* and by *mediatori culturali*. In terms of perception and irrespective of training or qualifications, *mediatori culturali* are often regarded by public service providers as *better* than *mediatori* because “they do not confine themselves to language but also deal with culture”. It is a rather widespread attitude which, by distinguishing between language and culture in interpreting settings, clearly shows a lack of awareness of the nature and functions of interpreting.

EMPLOYMENT

A *mediatore culturale* is someone who practices a profession that has been recognised since 1998 and whose tasks are: to facilitate relationships between authorities and foreign residents; to serve as a bridge between migrants and the host society; to dismantle barriers related to language and culture; to favour the socio-economic integration of migrants and to promote the enjoyment of rights and the fulfilment of duties and obligations.

PRACTICE

Typically a *mediatore culturale* is a long-time foreign resident, with a good education level (secondary school at least) and a good knowledge of the Italian language, society, institutions. *Mediatori culturali* are often freelancers, working in all public service settings and, interestingly, their activities include language mediation proper, i.e. interpreting.

TRAINING

Norms officially recognising *mediatori culturali* and regulating the way in which the qualification may be obtained exist in several regions and provinces. Many regions and provinces also keep an official register of *mediatori culturali*.

Several regions and provinces organise ad-hoc courses for aspiring *mediatori culturali*. There are considerable differences in terms of course structure and length. The emphasis, however, is generally on areas such as legislation, rights, services etc. They are typically attended by foreign residents with some experience in the field. The language and language mediation aspects are largely neglected or have little importance attached to them.

Degree programmes or postgraduate courses in language and cultural mediation are also offered by several Italian universities. The emphasis is generally on language and language mediation, although the languages offered are generally not those that are most needed in public services. They are typically attended by Italian students.

INTERCULTURAL MEDIATOR IN EMILIA-ROMAGNA

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INTERCULTURAL MEDIATOR

To date, there is no officially recognized profile of intercultural mediator at a national level; furthermore, mediation activities themselves and how they are carried out (from recruitment to training) are far from clear and are often taken from circulars, interpretations and guidelines arranged individually by different Ministries

(in particular Ministries of Justice, Education and Health). This occupation, although called upon by several parties, is neither regulated nor well defined either in terms of denomination (cultural mediator, intercultural mediator, linguistic-cultural mediator) or in terms of content and tasks. In the *Testo Unico sull'immigrazione* (Consolidation Act on immigration - Legislative Decree 286/1998 and subsequent amendments), both figures that of "cultural mediator" and of "intercultural mediator" are cited without specifying the profiles and differences between the two. Cultural mediators are first cited in Article 38, Paragraph 7, with reference to the scholastic integration of foreign students and facilitation of communication with their families. However, intercultural mediators appear instead in Article 42, among the measures of social integration, where it is envisaged that local Authorities may "employ within their own structures [...] foreigners holding a residence card or residence permit with a duration of no less than two years as intercultural mediators in order to facilitate relations between individual administrations and foreigners belonging to different ethnic, national, linguistic and religious groups ". In 2009, the *Consiglio Nazionale dell'Economia e del Lavoro, CNEL* (National Council of Economy and Labour) on the one hand and the *Conferenza delle Regioni e delle Province Autonome* (Conference of Regions and Autonomous Provinces) on the other hand tried to define a common profile and bring back to unity what, in reality, turned out to be a strong opposition between the suppliers of training. In fact, there seems to be a certain discrepancy between those who want a training more focused on university curricula - and for this reason it is much more open to Italian mediators - and those who support professional training and training in the field that would offer more opportunities for the aspiring mediators of the foreign population.

THE PROFILE

Emilia-Romagna is one of the few Italian regions to have defined the areas of intervention of intercultural mediators as well as their characteristics and profiles (Regional decree of Emilia-Romagna, N.152, 10 November 2004 and further developed in the Emilia-Romagna Regional Council Resolution No. 141, 16 February 2009). In the Regional decree, *intercultural mediator* is described as a person "able to identify and convey the needs of foreign users, assist them and facilitate their integration in the host country, act as a link between the user and the network of services available in the area and promote interventions intended to spread interculturalism". The Regional decree places intercultural mediator in the professional area of "social, health and socio-health care". All 15 local health units of the Emilia-Romagna region employ intercultural mediators to support communication of migrant users with healthcare and social care providers.

Since 1998, the Local Health Unit of Reggio Emilia (AUSL RE) has established a coordinated *Servizio di mediazione linguistico-culturale* aimed at reducing the negative consequences of linguistic and cultural barriers both in clinical communication between migrant patients and healthcare professionals and in institutional communication between migrant groups and healthcare services (Chiarenza, A. Chiesa, V. 2018). In clinical

encounters, the role of intercultural mediator proved fundamental to ensure effective communication between the patient and the professional through the entire care process, from admission to treatment and discharge. Without the intervention of intercultural mediator clinical interviews can be misleading and only minimal medical information can be obtained; migrant patients may not understand explanations, and full adherence to care may be compromised; at discharge, patients may leave ill-informed regarding the follow-up treatment and continuity of care (Bischoff, A. 2006). Moreover, in the AUSL RE intercultural mediator assists the organisation in the process of making services offered to migrant users appropriate (Chiarenza A. 2008), helping them access and navigate through the health system; accompanying them to various services and departments; providing information on migrants' rights to healthcare and other available services and fostering their active participation in meetings organised in the community.

EMPLOYMENT

Intercultural mediators working in the AUSL RE are employed by an external agency (a social cooperative) that is appointed through a national bid and renewed every three years. A total of 43 intercultural mediators (8 males) in the AUSL RE cover the most common languages: Chinese (six); Arabic and French (seven); Ukrainian and eastern European languages (four); Albanian (two); Romanian (one); Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi and Creole (eight); Bengali (four); Ghanaian (two) and Nigerian (three). It is also possible to expand the programme to offer less commonly spoken languages. The most commonly requested languages are Chinese (26%), Arabic (23%), Indo-Pakistani languages (23%), eastern European languages (9%), Ghanaian (9%) and Albanian (6%). Less-frequently required languages include Spanish, Portuguese, Macedonian, Turkish, Tagalog and Tamil. Intercultural mediators are employed full-time or part-time, with a permanent or fixed-term contract. Their fee varies from €20 to €40 per hour.

Different types of intercultural mediation services are available, including onsite interventions, scheduled interventions, urgent interventions (within 40 minutes), over-the-phone interventions, interpreting services and written translation. In all hospitals of the AUSL RE, intercultural mediators are available on site, for telephone consultation, for translation upon request from the wards, and to inform, listen to and support the patients. Intercultural mediators are also available on site in community-based facilities, in particular for antenatal care services. In other services, intercultural mediation interventions are scheduled upon request on a weekly basis.

Given the large geographical size of the province, service coordination at the central level links each health district. The central coordination system comprises the booking system, the list of intercultural mediators and the languages available, evaluations of intercultural mediators and logging the number of hours per

intercultural mediator, per district and per facility. A clear organizational policy sets out how intercultural mediation is defined in order to ensure effective access to and utilization of services. This includes written procedures and guidelines on interpretation, translation and intercultural mediation; staff guidelines for organizing interpreters or communication support; training courses for staff on how to work with an intercultural mediator; and a documentation system to control the budget and the quality of the service. Socio-linguistic research is regularly undertaken in collaboration with the Department of linguistic and cultural studies (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia) in order to investigate the dynamics of mediated communication between patient and healthcare provider with the intervention of the intercultural mediator, and to provide scientific insights for the improvement of the quality of mediation service.

PRACTICE

Intercultural mediation is the facilitation of linguistic understanding and acceptance of cultural differences in communication, which allows for an effective and satisfying care relationship (Baraldi, C., Gavioli, L., 2013). Core knowledge and skills of intercultural mediators working in the Local Health Authority of Reggio Emilia are described below.

Core knowledge

1. Comprehension of medical terminology and concepts in the local language and in all languages to be used for interpreting. Knowledge of commonly used terms and concepts related to the human body; symptoms, illnesses and medications as well as healthcare specialties and treatments in each language.
2. Familiarity with common, relevant socio-cultural circumstances that may impact the provider-patient interaction, including a knowledge of specific cultural concepts as well as an understanding of biomedical culture.
3. Understanding “untranslatable” words which represent source language concepts for which there is no comparable referent in the target language.

Core Skills

1. General proficiency in speaking and understanding the languages in which the mediator is expected to work. Capability to interpret from and into each language pair that is being interpreted. In the case of intercultural mediation, linguistic interpreting must take into account variables and nuances that must be sought in interpersonal communication in cultural, ethnic, religious, gender and lived differences, particularly migration.

2. Ability to produce oral translations or, where appropriate, brief written translations of written texts such as application forms, signage or medicinal labels.
3. Capacity to manage the flow of communication between the patient and the healthcare provider, including attention to interpersonal dynamics between the patient and healthcare provider, as well as managing the triadic relationship so that the patient and healthcare provider relate primarily to each other.
4. Ability to anticipate and recognize misunderstandings that arise from different cultural assumptions and expectations of patients and healthcare providers, and to respond to such issues appropriately. Ability to serve as a cultural broker, if necessary, between the patient and the healthcare provider, also sensing if and when culturally based beliefs are affecting the perception and presentation of the illness, as well as being able to articulate these cultural differences or practices to patients and healthcare providers.

TRAINING

The training experiences within the Italian context, in particular those supported by regional regulations, are of various types. The most recurrent divide the training into a basic and a specialist level defined by the relevant sector of intervention, as described in the *“Linee di indirizzo per il riconoscimento della figura professionale del mediatore interculturale”* (Guidelines for the recognition of the profession of intercultural mediator) developed by *Dipartimento per le Libertà Civili e per l’Immigrazione. Direzione Centrale per le Politiche di Cittadini di Paesi Terzi dell’Immigrazione e dell’Asilo del Ministero degli Interni* (Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration. Central Directorate for Citizens Policies of Third Countries of Immigration and Asylum of the Ministry of the Interior).

Basic training

Average duration of about 400 hours: 40 introductory courses; 160 extensive courses; 200 internships. Admission requirements: age (minimum 18 years old); medium-high education level; in the case of foreign citizens, a temporary permit to stay in Italy is required in order to guarantee a good knowledge of the country system and the effective choice of integration into the Italian society; mother tongue language competence C; competence in at least one vehicular language; linguistic competence of Italian/L2 B; relational attitudes; previous experience in the social and immigration field; migratory experience is desirable.

Specialized in-depth training for services in specific areas of intervention

Duration of training: from a minimum of 40 to a maximum of 200 hours, of which at least half of the training is held on the ground, i.e. in the working environment. Admission requirements: having acquired the basic skills, in addition to the same requirements as for the basic level.

The *Linee d'indirizzo* also reports that in the area of university training, there are countless first-level degree courses (three-year) in which the preponderance of subjects relates to linguistic knowledge (especially in vehicular languages), with skills that can be used primarily in the areas of interpreting, commerce, tourism and international relations. The second-level degrees focus on the socio-humanistic subjects (cultural anthropology, psychology, sociology, etc.), provide internships in the field and are useful especially in the field of research and social services. The university and non-university masters essentially follow the line of 2nd level degrees, with a prevalence of socio-humanistic subjects aimed at field work and internships of about 1/3 or less of the total duration of the course.

The critical issues, outlined in the *Linee d'indirizzo*, related to university and master's training are:

- low marketability in areas where the need for mediation is relevant;
- lack of in-depth linguistic skills, especially with regard to the so-called "rare" languages;
- poor practice on the ground;
- limited accessibility of migrants due to the lengthy duration of the courses and high costs;
- problems linked to the unacknowledged equivalence of the qualifications obtained in the countries of origin of many foreigners.

The Ministry of Interior report "*Linee d'indirizzo*" concludes by saying that universities can rightly be considered suitable providers for higher education in the field of intercultural mediation, especially when these critical issues can be overcome to facilitate access to university courses for migrants and to ensure a closer connection of teaching materials and methods to the needs of intercultural mediation in practice.

CERTIFICATION

Many Italian regions have identified a professional profile and specific training for Intercultural Mediators, but existing certifications acquire validity only with reference to specific regional contexts and are therefore not expendable within the entire national territory. In the AUSL RE, intercultural mediator must possess a training certificate that includes at least 400 hours of training, including 1/3 internship in health services, or a first-level university degree in intercultural mediation with proved experience in the field.

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