

INFORMATION FOR IMMIGRANTS REGARDING LIAISON INTERPRETING

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www.mol.fi/migration

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This brochure outlines liaison interpreting and the work of liaison interpreters as well as providing instructions for immigrants when conversing through an interpreter. The brochure can be found on the website of the Ministry of Labour at: www.mol.fi/migration

GENERAL INFORMATION ON LIAISON INTERPRETING

Interpretation is required when people do not share a common language. Interpreting makes communication possible and helps to create understanding despite language and cultural barriers.

Liaison interpreting relates to the interpretation of a dialogue between a public authority and a customer, for example interviews or interrogations. Liaison interpreting can be carried out either consecutively whereby interpreting into another language immediately follows each section of speech, or simultaneously whereby the interpreter carries out the interpreting almost simultaneously with the speech of the person who is being interpreted. Liaison interpreting is either carried out on site or as distance interpreting via a telephone or with the help of video interpreting equipment.

In addition to language skills, liaison interpreters have excellent communication skills and knowledge of the culture. Interpreters will have been specially trained by obtaining a vocational qualification in liaison interpreting or by studying interpreting at a university.

The task of the interpreter is to interpret the speech in liaison situations. The interpreter does not act as an assistant or an agent of the public authority or of the customer immigrant. Close relatives, friends or children of the people involved in the liaison cannot act as professional interpreters.

In their work, interpreters follow the professional code of liaison interpreters and the instructions on liaison interpreting. The most essential instructions include:

- The interpreter is obliged to maintain confidentiality.
- With regard to the liaison, the interpreter is an impartial outsider. The personal attitudes or opinions of the interpreter do not affect his/her work.
- The interpreter cannot act as an interpreter in liaison situations that involve his/her close relatives or friends, for example. In these kinds of situations the interpreter is therefore exceptionable.
- The interpreter interprets everything that is spoken. He/she does not add anything nor omit anything.
- During the interpreting assignment the interpreter only carries out interpreting tasks.

HOW TO ACT IN AN INTERPRETING SITUATION:

- Speak clearly.
- Do not speak to the interpreter. You are liaising with the public authority, not the interpreter. Remember that interpreting is carried out in the singular first person.
- Give the interpreter time to interpret your speech.
- The interpreter interprets everything. Therefore, only say what you want to be interpreted.

The public authority and the interpreter are only available at certain times; it is therefore important to adhere to agreed meeting times.