

# THE DIGEST



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*Special*

*Anniversary*

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Celebrate we said we would, and celebrate we certainly did- in great style! When ExCo decided back in July 2022 that we would push out the boat to celebrate AIIIC's 70th birthday, we couldn't possibly have imagined what an incredible success our Brussels events would turn out to be. From ExCo's get-together with our lovely pre-candidates, to the Intersectoral and the Research Event, all of them without exception proved to be well-attended by a truly international audience, and gave rise to fruitful and active exchange, as did AIIIC Belgium's International Outreach Event.

And then there was the party, and what an evening that turned out to be! The spectacular venue of the Atomium got us off to a great start; the good mood, dancing prowess and energy of the 225+ attendees did the rest. Had the Atomium staff not had to close the premises, we could probably have partied all night!

An enormous thank you once again to everyone who helped us make our official AIIIC@70 celebrations such a memorable success, proving if proof were needed that AIIIC is alive and kicking and still going strong at 70, buoyed by the support and energy of its remarkably capable and committed volunteers. We can all be very proud!



## *The Cristina Amils Quartet*

For me (Cristina) as a member of AIIIC it has been a pleasure and a great honour to be able to actively participate in the 70th anniversary of AIIIC with our music. We prepared a repertoire that not only reflected the essence of jazz but also the linguistic plurality in which we move every day in our profession.

It was a very special occasion in which we were also able to unite father and daughter on the same stage, with the participation of AIIIC member Mike Lucas on saxophone and his daughter Elia on piano. We were all very impressed by performing in one of the spheres of the Brussels Atomium and we will never forget this experience.

# AIIC AWARDS

This year ExCo launched the AIIC Awards with 3 prizes awarded by ExCo during the celebrations at the Atomium.

- **AIIC Turkey** were recognised for having the highest percentage of new active members in their region. Thanks to their efforts, they welcomed 2 new members in 2022. Seray Okan, AB member for AIIC Turkey, picked up the award.
- **AIIC Brazil** won the award for the highest percentage of pre-candidates. Over the last few years, they have worked hard on outreach activities and have seen their efforts rewarded with 6 new pre-candidates. Fernanda Mathias, AB member for AIIC Brazil, picked up the award.
- The Special Recognition Award went to **Christiane Driesen** for her work on updating the AIIC Code of Ethics. ExCo asked the AB to scour the Association to find the volunteers whose quiet contributions are vital but often unrecognised. They came back with a list of 6 recommendations for ExCo to select from. The following candidates were shortlisted by the AB:

1. Christiane Driesen (AIIC Germany)
2. Monika Kokoszycka (AIIC UK & Ireland)
3. Elke Limberger-Katsumi (AIIC Germany)
4. Stefano Marrone (AIIC Italy)
5. Nikoletta Pagoni (AIIC Greece & Cyprus)
6. Maya de Wit (AIIC Netherlands)

You can learn more about the AB's choices on the [AIIC News](#) page.

ExCo considers our volunteers to be AIIC's most valuable asset, and it is extremely important to recognize their contribution to the Association. The three winners received a big round of applause, and Christiane moved everyone present with a heartfelt speech. This ceremony was just the first of many!

## VIDEO

A big thanks to all the regions and individual members who sent their birthday wishes to AIIC. You can watch the video on the Anniversary page in the portal and on AIIC's YouTube channel

 [Take me to YouTube](#)



# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Given the confidential nature of many of the issues ExCo has to discuss, it's never easy to come up with a report from one of our meetings. Simply listing the decisions taken does not really provide a fair reflection of what our twice-yearly in-person meetings entail, so here goes in a slightly different format.

Our plenary ExCo meetings are always approached with trepidation, in full knowledge of the intensivissimi working days that lie ahead, not to mention the fact that it will take a week to recover once it's over. Not for nothing do we start by adding our contributions to the ExCo Goodies Pool (EGP for short, with alfajores in abundance...), to dip into whenever a little boost is needed. And necessitating a week of post-meeting fasting.

Apart from the fact that this July we were meeting in Brussels rather than Geneva, our meeting followed the usual pattern. Nine o'clock sharp, off we went, a particularly packed agenda to get through, so not a moment to waste. First up was a review of the various Strategic Projects (SPs) comprising ExCo's Strategic Plan, with the key decision being taken to discontinue SP1 on moving AiiC's legal HQ from Paris to Geneva. We had promised members that the transfer would only take place if we had full legal certainty that none of our Agreements or contracts would be put at risk. Those watertight guarantees not being forthcoming after consulting our lawyers in both France and Switzerland, however, it was decided that the transfer would not go ahead. Clarification of the legal address needed to take place before two of the other SPs, numbers 2 (Foundation) and 3 (Basic Texts), could get underway. Work can now start in earnest on both.



*AiiC's Executive Committee: Haris Ghinos (Greece & Cyprus), Micky Friedman (Italy), Jenny Fearnside-Bitsios (Italy), Paco Hurtado (USA), Damien Fan (Asia Pacific), Martin Barrère (South America), Sylvia Amisi (Africa)*

One of the most pleasant parts of our ExCo meetings is welcoming our "invitees". Our first guests in Brussels were the Basic Texts Group together with Christiane Driesen and Myriam Nahón from the AB, the two highly committed and much appreciated colleagues behind the overhaul of the AIIIC Code of Ethics and Professional Standards. With them we discussed the first steps for SP3, which will consist of a mapping exercise of what texts we have and need, leading up to a first meeting in September of the Joint Working Group on the Basic Texts, comprising representatives of ExCo, the AB StC and the Secretariat, together with Christiane and Myriam. This SP also ticked several boxes on another agenda item- the review and implementation of Assembly Resolutions, where we are happy to report that ExCo has to the best of its ability done everything that you, the members, asked of us!

Under SP4, Damien Fan shared with us the results of the Interpreting Technology Survey, in advance of a more in-depth presentation at the Research Event, after which we celebrated (with an alfajor or two) the first of our SPs to have been brought to fruition- SP5, the Secretariat. As we go to press, Nutthaya, our latest staff member, who will woman AIIIC's Bangkok office, is in Geneva at the start of her training, which will then continue in Bangkok once the new office is inaugurated at the end of August.



*ExCo members meet pre-candidates in Brussels*

Some of the issues to emerge from the various SPs will feature in the first Written Consultation that we decided should take place in October this year. All the details will follow later, but please mark it in your diaries as of now. Votes by Written Consultation have the same validity as votes by Assembly, and may touch on issues crucial to the Association. Every single vote counts so make sure to cast yours and to have YOUR say in matters of importance to us all.

The overhaul of the AIIC website was also a point of discussion, a project that has been dragging its feet, not through lack of trying, but rather through lack of input. It was decided that, come what may, the new website will go live by October at the latest with whatever material has been made available. So, if you belong to a group, committee or region that has so far not come up with the goods, please be aware that the go-live will happen, with or without you (and we would definitely prefer it to be with...!).

Outreach and welcoming newcomers have been very much a focus of this ExCo mandate, linked also with the AIIC4000 project. Internally we spent time talking about VEGA and its role in AIIC, before hosting a get-together with around 20 pre-candidates, some of whom had come from as far away as Peru to take part in the events in Brussels. It was truly a pleasure to meet them all, to take their questions, but in particular to hear their input about what AIIC could and should be doing for them. Many of their questions related to the admissions process, and we were happy to share with them that ExCo has set up a Joint Taskforce with CACL, at which we will look for ways to streamline procedures and to resolve some of the obstacles currently complicating admissions in some Regions in particular, without watering down AIIC's quality requirements. During the morning of our last day in Brussels, ExCo was invited by CACL as they began their own meeting, allowing us a fascinating and very useful insight into their working methods before we then proceeded to a constructive discussion about the path ahead.

Having assured ourselves that AIIC's finances are in sound state and confirmed that we had managed to pull off the AIIC@70 celebrations well within budget, it was then off for our annual joint meeting with the AB, to discuss issues of joint concern regarding the Association. There, we were finally able to announce that ExCo has accepted AIIC South America's bid to host the 2025 Assembly in Lima, pending confirmation following a technical visit to be conducted in late October. Peru, here we come!...

... via the Atomium for a memorable 70 th anniversary celebration, the culmination of a year's hard work and planning- it was certainly worth it!

P.S. For a touch of couleur locale, we also spent one of our evenings over moules-frites, getting to know Victoria and Alex, the two new Geneva-based members of the Secretariat, and yet another tasting two more Belgian specialities- beer and chocolate- at an event kindly organised by the AB.



*ExCo members and AIIC Spain member, Mike Lucas, celebrating at the Atomium*

# THE WRITTEN CONSULTATION

ExCo has agreed that the Written Consultation will take place **in October**.

Written Consultations were a mechanism introduced during the pandemic to allow the membership to take important decisions outside the Assembly. This not only helps the Association to run more smoothly, but it allows members more time to debate the amendments and for every active member to exercise their right to vote.

Here's how the written consultation works:



ExCo decides on the amendments that will be put to the members and consult the Basic Texts Group.



On **15th September**, the proposed amendments will be added to the members' portal, like they are in the run up to the Assembly. Members will have time to study the proposals and debate them in the members' forum.



All active members will be invited to a Town Hall meeting on **Saturday 23rd September**, where ExCo will further explain the reason for the proposals and the consequences should the amendments pass.



2-3 days before voting opens, all active members will receive their voting credentials.



Voting opens on **Sunday 15th October** and members will have 7 days to cast their vote. During that time, the Secretariat will work extended hours to provide technical support if necessary,



The results will be published in the members' portal

# ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Advisory Board (AB) members from all over the world spent four jam-packed days in Brussels - hard at work with a wonderful 70th anniversary party to top it all off.



In this change of pace from interpreting, AB members representing the Regions and Groups learnt about best practices around the world, discussed with ExCo about its vision of the future and had interesting talks with CACL about developments in online applications for precandidates and candidates.

Some of the most serious news came from the ISO Group: Vicky Massa-Bulit urged AIIIC members to join their National Standards Body (NSB) so that our voice may be heard during the ISO standards' mandatory review period. If you need further information, do contact the [ISO\\_group](#).

## Agenda highlights included:

- AB endorsement of the revised Professional Standards
- Detailed reports from all regions and groups present
- Joint meeting with the Executive Committee (ExCo)
- Joint meeting with the Committee on Admissions and Language Classification (CACL)
- Election of a new Steering Committee for the next 12 months
- Training session on communications







A more visible side of the AB's work took centre stage during the celebrations at the Atomium: party-goers were handed a mysterious raffle ticket and, while nobody won an all-inclusive trip to Bali for the next PRIMS meeting, winners were ecstatic, as seen in the picture.

Members of the AB racked their brains to find a raffle prize which represented the essence of their region or group - looks like it paid off!

*Left: Living in the birthplace of the deep-dish pizza, Tony Rosado (AIC USA) brings home a slice of Italy, a chunk of Parmigiano Reggiano. Tony celebrates with PRIMS StC member, Verónica Pérez Guarnieri.*

## AB STEERING COMMITTEE

During the meeting, the AB elected their new Steering Committee (StC). Let's hear what their impressions were of the AB meeting!

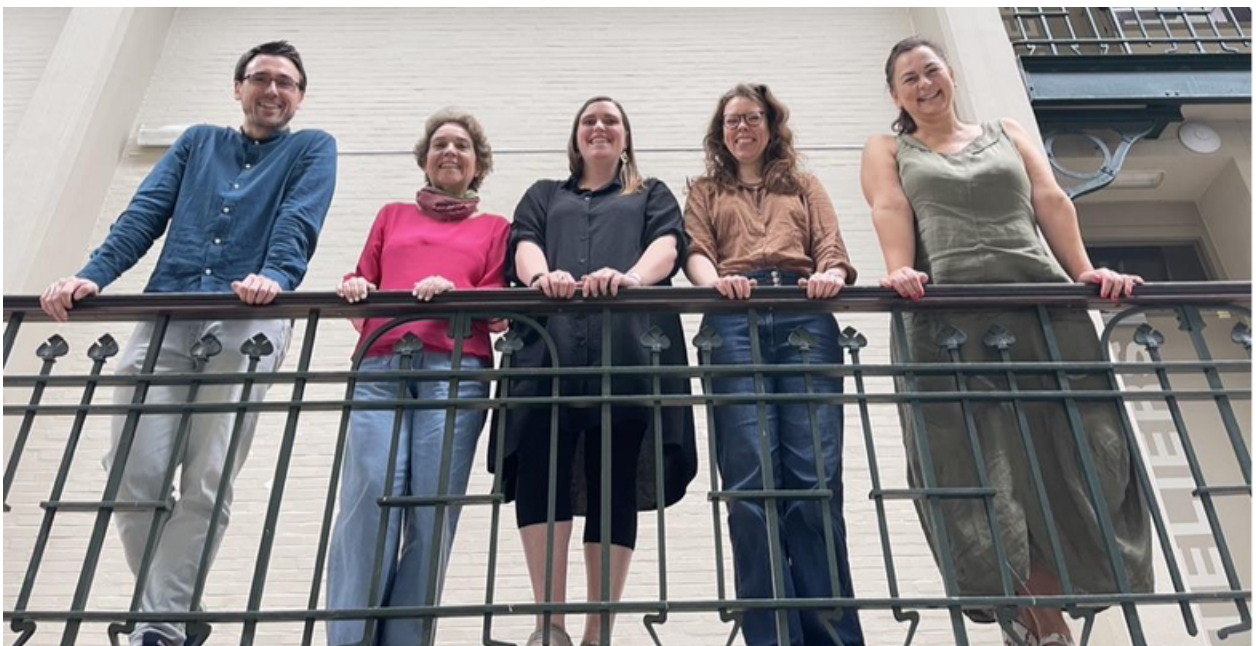
**Camille** "Clearly, meeting in person, spending 4 days together and having an opportunity to listen to everyone's activity report, from Asia-Pacific to Luxembourg to South America, from PRIMS (private market sector) to ICZ (interpreters in conflict zones) to CDP (comité des permanents) is a great source of inspiration and pride in our Association. Despite long hours, I was personally impressed with how engaged each member was, listening closely to what everyone had to say, asking questions, adding their own experience... a perfect illustration of interpreters' excellent listening and critical thinking skills. No Candy crushing or side discussions! I left Brussels both exhausted and reenergised, full of appreciation for what colleagues do for our profession and full of new ideas!"

**Ben** "There are two kinds of people in the world: those who like subpar coffee, and those who will complain loudly about it and band together to find the nectar of the gods. (We won't talk about people who don't drink coffee at all.) And yet these groups can work incredibly well together, as seen at the recent AB meeting. We celebrated collectively at the Atomium and individual successes of the regions, groups, and committees. Belgian chocolate was shared, exciting events in the UK and The Netherlands were announced (watch this space!), and upcoming, interregional projects and plans were hatched. Oh, and a cafe serving amazing espressos was located right next door, so even this coffee snob was happy. 10s across the board!"

**Jenny** "Throughout the year, AB members - representatives from the Regions, from AIIIC Groups and Committees - meet online to discuss thematic issues of interest to all, our so-called Keep in touch (KIT) meetings. But nothing can compare to meeting up in person! From the moment I walked into the room, there was a great sense of camaraderie, colleagues who hadn't seen each other in a year reconnecting and sharing. To me, these types of meetings are the AIIIC family at its best - open and thoughtful discussion that everyone comes away from richer and wiser. Now it is up to the AB members to transmit that sense of international unity back to their regions and groups!"

**Katerina** "I found the AB to be a font of creative ideas. I remain very much inspired by initiatives that I heard from Regions and Groups. These include ensuring that we close the loop when meeting colleagues so they can stay in touch with AIIIC: giving them the VEGA and Friends of AIIIC website. Thank you Brazil! While from Italy the notion of interpreters as cultural actors, associating with cultural events. In fact in one such organised with a University, students participated in a flash mob event wearing AIIIC t-shirts! Absolutely amazing."

**Hedwig** "This AB in-person meeting has been amazing, more than I ever expected. Newcomers and familiar faces, interpreters from all over the world representing their regions, committees and working groups came together to share their work, successes and difficulties in a very professional and friendly atmosphere. Despite our differences, we have more in common than I thought. Four days of hard work, an amazing party and a lot of networking is what I needed to go back home filled with energy and incredible new ideas to continue working for AIIIC."



*New AB Steering Committee (left to right): Ben Barclay (Portugal), Hedwig Spitzer (South America), Jenny Taylor (Staff Interpreters), Camille Mercier-Sanders (France) and Katerina Apostolaki (Greece and Cyprus)*

# CACL MEETING

The Committee on Admissions and Language Classification held its semestral meeting on 1-3 July 2023 in Brussels. This allowed CACL to fully profit from the inspiring atmosphere of the AIIIC@70 celebrations.

The Committee had a wonderful joint session with the Advisory Board, had a blast at the Atomium, contributed to the plenary and break-out sessions of the International Outreach Event, and held another very fruitful joint session with AIIIC'S ExCo and Executive Secretary.



*CACL members: Marjolaine Escande-Wadike, Darinka Mangino Wilhelm, Francesca Lo Truglio Lombardo, Eva Gilmore, Nazan Kiziltan, Anna Vianna*

AIIIC members will soon receive the lists of CACL's July 2023 decisions on precandidates, candidates and reclassification requests.



The Committee kindly reminds all members that training sessions are not admitted as meetings vouched for by sponsors.

We also recall that no regional requirement applies to sponsorship in the case of language reclassification.

Last but not least, CACL is thrilled to announce Anna Vianna from AIIIC Brazil as a member.

# INTERSECTORAL

Developments in the so-called Agreement Sectors tend more often than not to be an indicator of what is already happening or is likely to happen in the broader world of interpretation, and reaction to those developments can also have a knock-on effect on the private market. Hence the importance of colleagues getting together to exchange experiences, opinions and best practices, to catch up on the state of play regarding the various markets on which interpreters work and, ultimately, to help define AIIC's approach to common challenges and situations.

The Intersectoral, convened by SCAS (the Standing Committee of the Agreement Sectors) on 1st July at the K.U.Leuven Brussels campus as part of the AIIC@70 events, gave colleagues the opportunity to hear first and foremost an update from representatives of all of AIIC's Negotiating Delegations (NDs) and to ask questions about issues affecting them in their daily working lives. Opening the meeting, Jenny Fearnside, the AIIC President, stressed the importance of the AIIC Agreements and their further existence, before SCAS Coordinator Tomas Opocensky then gave the floor to the NDs:

Frédéric Girard and Christina Scardulla- European Union  
Bettina Ludewig-Quaine - Coordonnées  
Pauline Mercier – World Customs Organisation  
Nyssa Fiona Gregory – United Nations

The second part of the meeting showcased the most pressing issues set to impact conference interpreters in the coming years, with presentations on Auditory Health by Andrea Caniato, AI by Professor Jan Niehues from the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology and Cognitive Load by Andrew Constable.

Taken alongside the overall focus within AIIC on enhancing cooperation between the various components of the Association, the fruitful exchange triggered by the event and the questions raised and addressed on the side-lines make the Intersectoral set to become a regular in the AIIC calendar.



*Pictures from the Intersectoral and research event*

# RESEARCH

The first-ever AIIIC Research Event took place on July 1 at KU Leuven Brussels Campus, moderated by Marzia Sebastiani, the Coordinator of the Technical and Health Committee.

During the event, KU Leuven professors Heidi Salaets and Geert Brône, recipients of the 2022 AIIIC Research Grant, presented the preliminary findings of their research project. Their studies underscored the significance of the "human factor" in the field of interpreting. Professor Salaets conducted interviews revealing that interpreters have become less visible due to remote work. Despite their interpretations being of comparable quality to those conducted on-site, interviewees expressed challenges related to stress, fatigue, loneliness, technology, and the inability to observe meeting participants' body language. Professor Brône utilized eye-tracking technology to examine the overt visual attention, which serves as a proxy for cognitive processing, of three interpreters. His findings indicated that interpreters primarily focus on the main screen during interpreting. Interestingly, their gaze was often directed towards the participants displayed on the screen, although they occasionally shifted their attention to a "thinking space," such as trees outside the window or a blank wall.

AIIIC VP Damien Fan presented the results of the AIIIC Survey on Interpreting Technology. The survey, which encompassed the opinions of 495 interpreters worldwide, revealed that their likelihood of adopting AI-powered interpreting technologies, assuming they possess high accuracy and low latency, is minimally influenced by factors such as AIIIC membership, geographical location, or years of experience. The usage and perception of technology among interpreters are only slightly impacted by age, but significantly influenced by their status as freelancers and the frequency with which they engage in translation work for income.

Professor Claudio Fantinuoli from the University of Mainz emphasised the coexistence of human and machine interpretation, as they cater to different markets, needs, and qualities, albeit with some overlap. Language experts will remain indispensable due to AI's limitations in capturing nuances, emotions, accountability, risk management, and interactive communication with other stakeholders.

The subsequent panel discussion featured the participation of Prof. Jan Niehues from the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology. The audience raised numerous inquiries regarding the development and impact of AI, and there was a great deal of interest and lively discussions surrounding the "thinking space" identified by Prof. Brône in his study.

The event concluded with AIIIC President Jennifer Fearnside-Bitsios leading a conversation with audio specialist Andrea Caniato, focusing on the recently released results of the "microphone test." Andrea highlighted the importance of distinguishing between intelligibility and quality and stressed that good microphones not only deliver intelligible sound but also safeguard interpreters' hearing by ensuring high-quality audio.

# REACHING OUT TO THE WORLD

As part of AIIC's 70th anniversary celebrations, AIIC Belgium, which had been chosen as the host region, made the most of colleagues from all over the world gathering in Brussels to organise an International Outreach Day to showcase the various AIIC activities and groups.

In the opening, Katja Pemberton - AB member for the Belgian region - welcomed all participants and introduced AIIC Belgium, then she passed the floor to BANT (Belgium AIIC Network of Trainers), whose presentation was followed by a speech by Dr Lieven Buysse, the Dean of the Brussels campus of K.U. Leuven University, where the event was held. Throughout the morning, participants had the opportunity to listen to all of the presenters (VEGA, CACL, ATPD, the Sign Language Network and PRIMIS) in their mother tongue - German, Dutch, Chinese, Italian, French and English - thanks to the invaluable work of volunteer interpreters. They not only ensured interpretation into English and French, but also into International Sign Language (a first!). Many thanks also to the technical team who ensured the smooth running of this hybrid event.

After a coffee/networking break, participants could choose among four breakout sessions. Two dealt with topics that are on the minds of many colleagues nowadays, namely "What does the future hold for our profession and multilingual events given the rise of AI?" and "How can we guide young colleagues through mentoring?"

The third breakout session focused on the institutional market, while the fourth, organized by ATPD and entitled "Speed training", gave participants the chance to explore coping strategies to deal with fast speeches.

To wrap up the event, participants from the various breakout sessions provided a short outline of the main points covered. The AIIC Belgium Bureau thanked all participants, Annick Van Hyfte (Head of the Interpreting Section at K.U. Leuven University), and all the speakers and volunteers. Without them this event would not have been possible. The estimated number of participants was 180, making this event a true success!

To get a flavour of the nicest moments of the event, have a look at our [summary video](#) and [photo gallery](#). And if you want more, you will find the full package with the presentations and the Zoom recording of the first panel [here](#) ...

But that was not all! On Thursday 29th of June VEGA Belgium held its final event of this year's edition of the Mentoring programme. Mentors and Mentees, and prospective participants, gathered at Brewdog to toast a very successful year. A special occasion, since our Vega coordinator Leo Hailong Liu participated in the celebrations. It was a great opportunity to meet and greet new and old members, and to reflect on the programme. Thanks to everyone who came along...and stay tuned for our next event!



Photo: © 2023 HorstWagner.eu



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Here's a short video recap courtesy of AIIC Italy of the amazing party at the Atomium on June 30 and all the events (Outreach, Inter-sectoral, Research) they attended at KU Leuven on July 1st.

Thanks to the organizers and AUGURI AIIC!

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## NEWS FROM PRIMS

While AIIC was in Brussels, PRIMS launched its Speak Your Truth campaign on the AIIC website and social media, with a video introduction at the Atomium.

The campaign includes video interviews with prominent speakers from many walks of life, including business, politics, justice, sports and culture, all advocating for the use of interpretation.



In the first 10 days alone, the campaign was seen 33,358 times and was published in several global online newspapers, included Yahoo Finance.

You can help spread the message further by commenting and reposting on LinkedIn.

The campaign will be taking a summer break, then continuing in September with more speakers.