LIST OF TECHNICAL, PRACTICAL AND ORGANISATIONAL ASPECTS TO BE CONSIDERED FOR

REMOTE SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETATION PLATFORMS

ACCOMPANYING NOTE - NATO

In compliance with Chapter IX of the supplementary agreement with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, this note shall be reviewed and updated on a regular basis between the AIIC negotiating delegation and NATO (Ms. Frédérique Pillet, Head of Interpretation & Conference Services).

I On the technical side

Platforms and headsets

When using soft consoles, USB headsets are installed with the laptops by our technical services. These USB headsets are ISO compliant and include acoustic shock protection.

Consoles

We use 2 types of consoles:

- Hard consoles connected to the RSI platform
- Soft consoles with the following features:
    - A microphone on/off button;
    - A mute/cough button;
    - Outgoing and incoming channels (for relay interpretation) and
    - A volume control.

Screens

All booths are equipped with at least two large screens per interpreter. They are positioned in the interpreter's line of vision.

Sound and image quality

When fluctuations in sound and image or poor synchronization between the two occur, priority is given to sound quality.

Video feeds/inputs

Screens in the booth can be used to access glossaries and other tools relevant to interpretation; they also display any speaker taking the floor and/or presentation taking place in the room.

When using virtual platforms, these screens display the console interface and shall include a panoramic or partial view of the meeting room (close-up view of the active speaker and/or close-up view of the chair/moderator).

II On the practical side

Conference Technician

Technicians operate meeting rooms remotely via a control room located in the conference centre. When a virtual meeting has been set up, technicians are available via intercom.

Pre-meeting set-up

The system/connection is tested with at least one interpreter any time between 24 hours to 1 hour before the meeting is scheduled to start.

Sound checks can also be organized with the help of the platform's provider. For other platforms, tests are organized by the technicians as well as virtual participants.

Before high-level virtual meetings, a roll call is performed to test individual connections and sound quality for all participants.

Paper documents

Interpreters shall, when available, receive all paper documents (including the chair's speaking notes) for all RSI assignments.

Team communication

Interpreters shall have the possibility of communicating with their team partners throughout the meeting.

III Recommendations to delegates in remote

Headphones and microphones

In order to optimize sound quality, participants should use quality headphones with an integrated microphone, plugged into their device.

Microphones should be muted when not speaking.

Using the computer's inbuilt loudspeaker and microphone system will cause a feedback loop, and must therefore be avoided.

Ambient noise interference

Participants are encouraged to select a quiet place from which to connect to the meeting, in order to avoid interferences from the outside environment.

Ambient noise interference causes additional hearing stress to the interpreters and impinges upon their ability to provide quality interpretation, and should therefore be avoided wherever possible.

Participants should be asked to turn off all sound notifications (skype, WhatsApp, emails, etc.) while attending virtual meetings.

Connection stability

In the interest of uninterrupted two-way communication, and to avoid audio buffering and video freezing wherever possible, participants shall ensure that they are using the most stable network connection available to them, preferably via Ethernet rather than WiFi.

Scripted speeches

Participants shall wherever possible submit scripted speeches in advance to the interpreters.

Participants should avoid reading from documentation, wherever possible.

IV Guidelines for organizers

Moderator

All RSI meetings will be assisted by a meeting moderator who will help the Chair manage the speakers' list (amongst other things).

Owing to VoIP latency, RSI meetings do not lend themselves to quick exchanges. The moderator shall ensure that sufficient time is granted between each intervention to allow the interpreters to finish sentences (and switch channels, where appropriate).

Distribution of documents

A member of the secretariat or an interpreter shall be in charge of distributing paper documents to be discussed during the meeting to the interpreters present in the hub.

Communication

The designated meeting team leader has the possibility of communicating with the event moderator (Secretariat member) throughout the meeting.

Authorization to stop interpretation

A designated team leader shall indicate that no interpretation should take place if the sound is truly inadequate. Interpretation resumes when the sound has improved. A set declaration shall be used to say over the microphone when interpretation has to be interrupted because of sound issues.

Typology of meetings

Some types of meetings such as drafting groups do not lend themselves to RSI.

11 December 2020

For AIIC   For NATO

President