

The Spanish Professional Association of Court and Sworn Interpreters and Translators (APTIJ) is a collective of translation and interpreting professionals active throughout Spain, working with the courts and security forces at the State and regional level, also including sworn translators- interpreters appointed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation or by the autonomous regions authorised to do so, as well as lecturers and researchers in the field of court or sworn translation and interpreting.

APTIJ is a founding member of EULITA (European Legal Interpreters and Translators Association), the non-profit international association comprised of European legal translators and interpreters, and forms part of its executive committee.

It is also a member of Red Vértice, the network of translation, interpreting and proofreading professional associations in Spain.

With a view to helping to enhance the dignity and professionalisation of the activity of court translators and interpreters, and with the aim of establishing and maintaining standards of professional ethics, practice and competence, APTIJ presents this Best Practice Guide which is also designed to raise awareness and serve as a guide for legal operators on how to work with interpreters.

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Asociación Profesional de Traductores e Intérpretes Judiciales y Jurados

Spanish Professional Association of Court and Sworn Interpreters and Translators

BEST PRACTICE GUIDE FOR POLICE AND COURT INTERPRETING

Founding member of

eulita[™]

EUROPEAN LEGAL INTERPRETERS
AND TRANSLATORS ASSOCIATION

TRAINING OF A COURT OR POLICE INTERPRETER

A court or police interpreter should have a perfect command of the **two working languages**. The interpreter will also have a good understanding of the two **cultures** in contact, proper mastery of **interpreting** techniques and have sound **legal** knowledge.

The interpreter will be familiar with the **legal system** of the countries involved in the interpreting, as well as of the **terminology used** in court proceedings. The bridges built during this type of interpreting are particularly complex, because there are often no exact equivalences in terms of either the legal concepts or the proceedings themselves.

DEONTOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES OF A COURT OR POLICE INTERPRETER

Given that the profession has not yet been regulated in Spain, APTIJ has drawn up its own **deontological code** to be observed by its members and which may be used as a model by any court or police interpreter.

It contains, besides others, the following **principles that should be respected**:

ACCURACY AND INTEGRITY OF TEXTS OR ORAL COMMUNICATION

The interpreter or translator will provide a **true and complete translation, as far as is possible, without altering, omitting or adding anything** to what is declared or written.

IMPARTIALITY AND ABSENCE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The interpreter or translator will work **impartially and independently**. This independence will be maintained in the face of any kind of outside interference, demands or interests that could undermine their work.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The interpreter or translator **will not disclose confidential or privileged information** of which they have become aware while providing their professional services or while preparing them.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

The interpreter or translator will act in **good faith, with loyalty and respect**. They will act in a manner consistent with the dignity of the court or institution in which they are providing their services.

PROFESSIONAL LIMITATIONS

The interpreter or translator will only interpret and translate. They will **not provide legal advice, express personal opinions** to those for whom they are interpreting or become involved in activities other than those pertaining specifically to their work.

PREPARATION FOR INTERPRETING SESSIONS

In order to prepare their interpreting sessions, the interpreters must have **access to all the relevant documentation of the proceedings in good time**. In criminal cases, access to the complaint, charge or indictment, and any expert reports or prior statements that may exist will be essential. In civil cases, it is advisable that the interpreters consult the claim, the statement of defence and, if applicable, the documents attached to these, such as contracts, wills or deeds.

MAIN INTERPRETING TECHNIQUES

Interpreting techniques are the different ways in which interlingual mediation can take place. The use of one technique or another will depend on the communication needs and the resources available at any given time.

The main interpreting technique used at police stations and in courts is **bilateral interpreting** (also known as consecutive interpreting or liaison interpreting). It consists of interpreting the dialogue between two interlocutors to and from both languages, generally in an exchange of short sentences. It may or may not involve taking notes, depending on the length of the interventions.

Other commonly used techniques are **sight translation** (oral translation of a written text: proceedings, reports, etc.) and **simultaneous whispered interpreting** (*chuchotage*), which is used to interpret what the other speakers intervening are saying completely to the foreign interlocutor, when this person is not intervening directly in the communication exchange (for example, during the intervention of witnesses or experts). In this way, their full and effective participation in the proceedings is guaranteed.

There is also **simultaneous interpreting**, which requires specific technical equipment, and **remote interpreting** (by telephone or videoconference).