

TÖI  
Tolk- och översättarinstitutet

**COMMUNITY  
INTERPRETING IN  
SWEDEN**

A short presentation

2004-05-19  
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## COMMUNITY INTERPRETING IN SWEDEN

### A short presentation

#### *Introduction*

TÖI, the Institute for Interpreting and Translation Studies at Stockholm University, has the overriding responsibility for interpreter training in Sweden. This little booklet contains information about community interpreting in Sweden, both interpreting for immigrants / minorities and for the deaf, deaf-blind and deafened adults. It does not present TÖI's training programmes for conference interpreters. Information about all of TÖI's training programmes, including the European Masters in Conference Interpreting and the various translator training programmes can be found on TÖI's website at <http://www.tolk.su.se>.

Sources for the compilation of facts and figures have been official statistics, government reports and information from government agencies concerned.

I am grateful to Anna-Lena Nilsson and Birgitta Englund Dimitrova for allowing me to quote from their articles concerning sign language interpreting and training of trainers, respectively.

I am indebted to Anna-Lena Gemming, Karin Andrée-Heissenberger and Christina Grefveberg for providing me with up-to date information about the training scene. My thanks also go to David Jones for proof-reading the English version.

All deficiencies and shortcomings in this material are of course my own responsibility. I appreciate any comments and suggestions for improvement for a possible future update.

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### ***Interpreter service for immigrants - scope and organisation***

The point of departure of the interpreter services for immigrants are the aims of Swedish immigrant policy unanimously adopted by the Swedish Parliament thirty years ago: *equality, freedom of choice and co-operation*.

In 1997 the Parliament further defined the goals of Swedish integration policy:

- Equal rights, obligations and opportunities for all, regardless of ethnic and cultural background
- A societal unity grounded on social pluralism
- A social development which is characterised by mutual respect and tolerance and which everyone, regardless of background, will take part in and will feel responsible for.

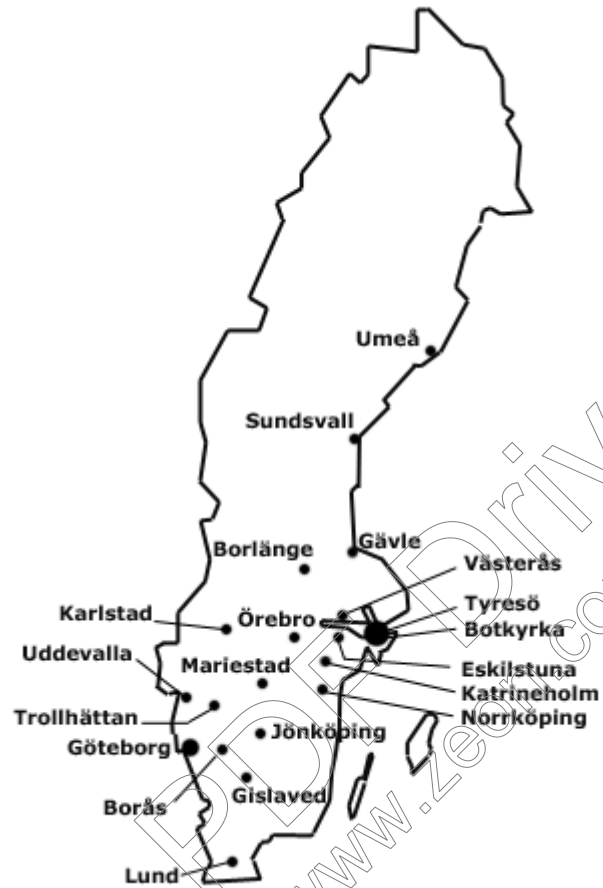
Integration policy aims at enabling individuals to support themselves and take part in society. It is also intended to safeguard basic democratic values, work for equal rights and opportunities of men and women, and prevent and counteract discrimination, xenophobia and racism.

The number of interpreter service agencies in Sweden is nowadays about 60; out of this number the majority, 40, are run by towns and municipalities, and 20 are privately owned. Earlier there have been at times up to a hundred agencies, most of them run by the local authorities. During the 1990s however, the interpreting service was deregulated, many municipal agencies were privatised or closed down and a number of new, private agencies entered the market.

There is an estimated number of 5 000 community interpreters in Sweden, in over 100 working languages. To provide interpreters in an acute situation, an on-call service has been set up in the largest municipalities.

There are also a number of agencies that offer remote interpreting by telephone or video.

Every day, 3000 hours of interpreting are provided, mainly in medical care and social welfare services. The yearly cost of interpreting amounts to over 400 million SEK (45 million EUR), mainly financed by public funds.

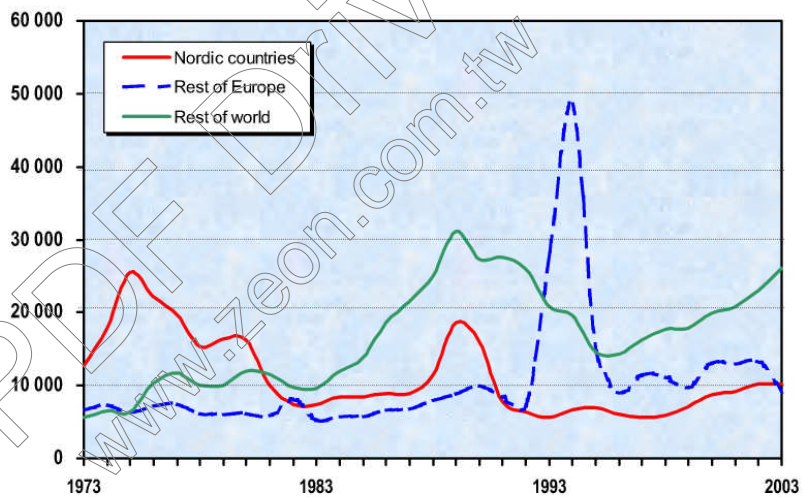


Interpreter service agencies which are members of TSR, Tolkservicerådet, the Council for Interpreter Service Agencies.

## Immigration to Sweden

The Swedish interpreter service started in the late 1960s at a time when there was a great influx of immigrants, mainly labour force to Swedish industry from the Nordic countries and Southern Europe. From the 1970s and onwards immigration shifted towards family reunion and an increase in refugees and asylum seekers from non-European countries.

**Immigration 1973-2003**  
(Registered residents of Sweden)



<b>Asylum seekers 2003</b>	
Serbia and Montenegro	5,305
Somalia	3,069
Iraq	2,700
Stateless	1,787
Bosnia-Herzegovina	1,397
Russian Federation	1,360
Azerbaijan	1,032
Byelorussia	901
Afghanistan	811
Iran	787
Other countries	12,206
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,355</b>
Migrationsverket / Swedish Migration Board 2004 ( <a href="http://www.migrationsverket.se/english.html">http://www.migrationsverket.se/english.html</a> )	

### **Residence permits 2003**

A total of 46,857 individuals were granted residence permits in Sweden in 2003, 6,460 of them as refugees or on other protective grounds and for humanitarian reasons. 942 individuals were brought to Sweden within the so-called refugee quota.

Residence permits were granted to 24,553 individuals because of family ties, permits to visiting students to 5,509 and permits on grounds of adoption to 782. Residence permits under the EU/EEA agreement were issued to 9 234 individuals.

Altogether 31,355 individuals requested asylum in Sweden during 2003. The largest group consisted of citizens of Serbia and Montenegro (5,305). The second and third largest groups came from Somalia (3,069) and Iraq (2,700).

### ***Interpreter service: a right***

Anybody who does not speak Swedish or who is severely impaired in speech and hearing enjoys a statutory right to an interpreter under the Code of Judicial Procedure (*rättegångsbalken*), the Administrative Court Procedure Act (*förvaltningsprocesslagen*) and the Administrative Procedure Act (*förvaltningslagen*). The first two laws deal with interpretation in a judicial context, and the Administrative Procedure Act regulates the way cases are handled by the administrative authorities and is thus of great importance for the entire field of interpretation.

Section 8 of the Administrative Procedure Act (1986:223) provides that a public authority should use an interpreter ‘if necessary’, when dealing with a person who does not speak Swedish.

**“When an authority is dealing with someone who does not have a command of the Swedish language or who has a severe hearing impairment or speech impediment, the authority should use an interpreter when needed.”**

(Administrative Procedure Act § 8.)

Immigrants are generally considered to be entitled to interpreting services, and in most cases the cost is met by society, i.e. the authorities and institutions where interpreting takes place.

At work places, bilingual trade union representatives are entitled under the Union Representative Act to interpret during working hours.

In criminal cases, the Swedish court arranges and pays for interpreting services as well as for the translation of documents submitted as evidence which the judge deems relevant to the case. In civil cases, the cost of an interpreter is usually financed by the person’s legal expenses coverage insurance, or through the State legal aid system.



### **The Nordic Language Convention**

Citizens of the five Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) have specific rights with respect to interpreting and translation services in other Nordic countries. These rights are specified in the Nordic Language Convention (*Nordiska språkkonventionen*, in effect since 1987). The Nordic Language Convention guarantees all Nordic citizens the right to use their native language when dealing with the authorities or public offices of another Nordic country. These include health care, social, tax, school, and employment authorities, the police and courts.

In practice, the language convention is not very well known. The convention is only a recommendation. The countries have committed themselves to providing services in various languages, but citizens have no absolute rights except for criminal and court matters. A citizen must demand an interpreter - the convention does not automatically require authorities to provide services in another language. Furthermore, the convention only provides for interpreting or translation in Swedish, Danish, Finnish, Icelandic and Norwegian, thereby excluding minority languages like Sami and Romany, and most immigrant languages.

### **National minorities in Sweden**

The policy on national minorities was adopted by the Swedish parliament in December 1999, and the Government subsequently ratified the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

The policy decision on minorities recognises five national minorities in Sweden. These are the Sami –an indigenous people–, the Swedish Finns, the Tornedalers (on the Finnish border in the north), the Roma and the Jews. All of these groups have existed in Sweden for a very long time and are therefore part of Sweden's cultural heritage. Since the Sami are an indigenous population, Sweden also has a specific Sami policy.

### **Minority languages**

Providing support for minority languages with a view to keeping them alive is an important part of the Swedish policy on national minorities. The recognised minority languages in Sweden are all forms of Sami, Finnish, Meänkieli (Tornedal Finnish), all forms of Romany and Yiddish.

Three of these languages, Sami, Finnish and Meänkieli, are historically associated with specific localities and are thus covered by special regional measures. There are special laws entitling individuals to use Sami, Finnish and Meänkieli in dealings with administrative authorities and courts of law in the geographical areas in which these languages have traditionally flourished. This legislation comprises a number of municipalities in the Northern Swedish county of Norrbotten, which are known as the administrative districts for Sami, Finnish and Meänkieli.

Two district courts in Norrbotten employ “public interpreters” (*allmän tolk*) for the Finnish and Meänkieli-speaking population. Interpreting service in Finnish and Romany is part of the regular community interpreting service all over the country. There is state authorisation of interpreters in Sami, Finnish and Meänkieli.

## **Community interpreter training - scope and organisation**

Training of interpreters for immigrants has been organised since 1968. Since its inauguration in 1986, TÖI, Tolk- och översättarinstitutet (Institute for Interpretation and Translation Studies), Stockholm University, has the overriding responsibility for all interpreter training in Sweden. There are two types of interpreter training programmes, academic courses at Swedish universities, and vocational training courses at adult education centres and voluntary educational associations.

The Institute regularly organises academic training at different universities in Sweden, mostly Stockholm, but the greater part of the training of community interpreters is in the form of short courses at adult education centres and voluntary educational associations. Non-academic level courses for community interpreters and sign language interpreters are not organised directly by the Institute, but its task is to distribute government grants and to supervise and evaluate the training.

The areas of instruction in community interpreter training are social welfare, medical services, labour market and legal interpreting. The basic training can then be supplemented with special courses and further education in, for example, psychology, dental care, women's diseases, tropical diseases, and interpreting for special categories of clients, e.g. children and victims of torture. In a few languages, university training is available, leading to state authorisation.

The number of immigrant languages in Sweden is at least 150. In the last 10 years, more than 140 languages have been represented at interpreter training courses; however, it has been possible to arrange bilingual instruction in only 38 languages. The remaining language groups have had instruction in Swedish only.

Every year, more than 3,000 participants attend some two hundred different courses with a total of about 7,000 hours of instruction.

## ***Objectives of training***

### **The objectives of interpreter training at adult education centres and voluntary educational associations**

Adopted by the Board of TÖI, 2003-09-23.

#### Overall aim

The overarching purpose of community interpreter training is to help fulfil the need of adequate interpreting service in society between a person who does not master the Swedish language and authorities, service institutions and organisations.

#### Fields of instruction

Instruction shall be given in the following main areas: Social and security interpreting, medical interpreting, labour market interpreting, basics of law and court interpreting. In addition, introductory courses and advanced and special courses can be organised, as well as training of interpreting teachers/instructors.

#### The objectives are:

- to develop the community interpreters' language proficiency and knowledge of terminology in Swedish and in their other interpreted language in a contrastive perspective;
- to provide training in interpretation technique as well as knowledge of the ethical and psychological demands of interpreting;
- to provide factual knowledge in relevant fields, and to provide a good understanding of social, political, cultural and labour affairs in Sweden and the other language areas.

#### The instruction should furthermore:

- be organised to allow the interpreters themselves the opportunity to expand their knowledge independently, both during the instruction period and afterwards,
- provide information on the channels available to them in this respect in the various fields.

Guidelines and syllabuses for community interpreter courses in Sweden are laid down by TÖI. See the appendix for sample syllabuses.

## ***Interpreting for the deaf, deaf-blind and deafened adults***

### **Interpreting service**

Under the new Health and Medical Services Act (1994), all of Sweden's 20 county councils and one local authority (Gotland) are responsible for organising, financing and providing interpreting services for the deaf, deaf-blind and hearing impaired persons. These services include interpreting in daily activities like health care, contacts with authorities, important purchases, information and meetings at the workplace, weddings, funerals. They also include interpreting in leisure-time activities and working life. The law specifically states that interpreting services should not be restricted to those situations listed in the law itself. There is no upper limit to the number of hours of interpreting a person is entitled to.

The first mention of deaf people's right to an interpreter, and legislation regarding their right to an interpreter during legal proceedings, dates back to 1947. In 1968 the Swedish Parliament provided money for interpreting services on an experimental basis, and in 1969 one full-time interpreter was employed. As of 1976, there have been full-time interpreters employed throughout the country, financed by public funds as part of the health budget.

In 1981, deaf people in Sweden were acknowledged as bilingual with a right to be "fluent in their visual/gestual sign language and in the language society surrounds them with - Swedish." (Swedish Parliament, 14 May 1981.) This recognition has led to an increased awareness of the importance of the language for the deaf, and hence a greater interest on the part of the public.

There are about 8,000 – 12,000 deaf persons in Sweden, and the need for interpreters is far from satisfied. This deplorable lack of qualified interpreters is obviously the most serious threat to deaf people's legal right to interpreting services.

**Training programmes for sign language interpreters**

Training programmes for sign language interpreters have been developed constantly over the years. The first courses were organised in the late 1960s, and the courses lasted one to six weeks. The first courses in interpreting for the deaf-blind were organised in 1975 and for the deafened in 1981. The training programmes have since then been expanded in parallel with the development of interpreting services and the rise in awareness of the needs of the groups concerned.

The responsibility for training interpreters for the deaf, deaf-blind and deafened adults rests with the adult education colleges under the supervision of TÖI. The organisation and content of the programmes have evolved as a result of the interaction between the handicap organisations, the liberal adult education colleges (*folkhögskolor*, "folk high schools") and the state authorities concerned.

**Two types of training**

Today we have two types of interpreter training in this area: a) one that prepares for the profession of sign language interpreter and interpreter for the deaf-blind; and b) one that prepares professional interpreters for the deafened.

### **Sign language/deaf-blind interpreters**

In order to broaden the recruitment base for interpreter training, since the 1970s the government has actively promoted instruction in sign language for people who did not learn sign language as a child. With the decrease of students with deaf parents, sign language education has in effect become a prerequisite for interpreter training.

Sign language education is the first step in becoming an interpreter.

Courses in sign language for beginners are offered more or less regularly at the universities of Malmö and Stockholm and some other institutions of tertiary and secondary education. Seven adult education colleges in the country offer a two year programme which is very popular, as this has up till now been the only comprehensive education for hearing persons who want to be able to communicate in sign language.

Some 200 students take this programme every year, and on average 85 persons per year graduate yearly. The aim of the programme is to give students the necessary skills in sign language to be able to start interpreter training. In practice however, only about 20 % of those who graduate go straight to the interpreting programme.

After finishing the introductory two-year sign language programme, students can apply to the interpreting programme. This is also a two-year programme. In practice, this means that a full training programme for sign language/deaf blind interpreters takes (at least) four years. Prerequisites are completion of secondary school, very good skills in Swedish and sign language, and the passing of an admittance test.

The interpreter training programme is a highly qualified tertiary educational programme at university level, albeit given at adult education colleges.

An integrated four-year training programme, consisting of both sign-language education and interpreter training, is given at one adult education college (Väddö). This programme is divided in modules, which means that students who have already acquired the necessary skills in sign language or other subjects, can start their training at an appropriate level.

In this programme, sign language education has great importance during the first years of study, whereas no formal sign language education is given during the fourth year. Other subjects taught in this programme are Interpreting, Swedish and Deaf-blind interpreting. Factual knowledge subjects like Deaf society and culture, Social psychology and Civics are integrated in Sign language and Interpreting.

In the course of the studies, the students are given 8-16 weeks of practice as an interpreter at an interpreting service agency.

There is a great deficit of sign language/deaf-blind interpreters in Sweden, especially in Norrland and Skåne. An estimated 30 interpreters can be trained every year. This volume would need to be increased 10-fold to cover the need.

### **Interpreters for deafened adults**

The training of interpreters for deafened adults is a three-year programme which is given at two adult education colleges. It is a full-time training programme, and the prerequisites are secondary school with a good grade in Swedish and the passing of an entrance test.

A total of some 30 students attend this programme. A great deal of time is devoted to learning how to use the Veyboard, a special keyboard for fast on-screen translation. Several other special interpreting methods for deafened and hearing-impaired adults are also presented.



### ***Training of trainers***

Training the trainers of translators and interpreters is necessary both in view of promoting professionalisation in the field and for establishing translation and interpreting as an academic discipline.

The majority of those who train community interpreters are immigrants to Sweden. Their educational and professional backgrounds vary a lot, but few of them have had any specific interpreter training or professional experience in that field before coming to Sweden. They usually teach at evening or week-end courses. Short methodological seminars ranging from two week-ends up to two weeks have been organized regularly for this category of interpreter trainers since the beginning of the 1980s. These seminars usually cover the methodology of teaching adults, methods for training interpreting technique, interpreting ethics, testing and evaluating interpreters, and factual knowledge within one or several subject areas. The total number of community interpreter trainers is about 200.

Trainers of sign language interpreters, interpreters for deaf-blind and interpreters for deafened adults are generally Swedes, and their background includes a formal interpreter training of various length, from just a few weeks or months up to two years. Many of those teachers have substantial teaching experience. As a group, these teachers are often better prepared, both in linguistic matters and in methodology, than are the community interpreter trainers. The total number in Sweden of this kind of interpreter trainer is only about 20, but there is a shortage.

## **An academic course for interpreter trainers**

As a national institute for interpreter training, TÖI has a responsibility for all of the three main areas of interpreting which are usually distinguished – sign language interpreting (including various techniques for interpreting for deaf-blind and deafened adults), conference interpreting, and community interpreting (including court interpreting). It has become clear to us that many skills which are taught and trained in interpreter programmes are common to all or several kinds of interpreting. These include interpreting techniques, memory skills, skills of analysis of speeches and of turn-taking in conversation, terminology management in potentially new areas of expertise, interpersonal “skills”, language competence in more than one language, rhetorical skills, etc. All this enhances the likelihood that experiences from one area of interpreter training will be of interest and value to other areas as well.

It was therefore decided to launch a special course for interpreter trainers where one of the main goals was to give impetus to “cross-disciplinary” development and cooperation in the training of interpreters.

### **The programme**

The programme is given at Stockholm university, formally at undergraduate level. A prerequisite for enrolment is documented experience as an interpreter trainer or as an interpreter. The whole course consists of 20 credits, which equals 20 weeks or half an academic year; one credit is equal to one week of full-time study.

### ***Syllabus***

The course is divided into five modules:

1. Language, communication and interpretation, 4 credits.
2. Language for specific purposes, terminology and lexicography, 3 credits.
3. Teaching the techniques and ethics of interpretation, 5 credits.
4. Assessment of interpretation, 4 credits.
5. Course paper, 4 credits.

***Working forms***

The course is offered half-time during one academic year. The group meets in Stockholm for two days roughly once a month, from September to May. The meetings are devoted to lectures, seminars, discussions, group work, etc. Students read general literature on language and linguistics, as well as specialized literature on conversation analysis, on interaction, and naturally, on interpreting and on how to teach it. In choosing literature dealing more specifically with interpreting, great care has been taken to include books and articles from all areas of interpreting, and as much as possible in equal proportions.

***Examination***

Each module also contains an independent project, which simultaneously constitutes the examination for that module. The topic for this project work is selected by the respective student, and should preferably have a close relation to their own daily teaching or interpreting practice.

For instance, the project in the terminological module consists of conducting a terminological investigation in a restricted subject area according to terminological principles. The project in the module on didactics consists of detailed planning of a training lesson.

The concluding course paper can for example be devoted to developing the syllabus of a completely new course, improving the syllabus of an existing one, planning one semester of a course, etc. It can also consist of developing new teaching and learning materials.

The project format allows the students to specialize individually in their respective areas. Cooperation between students is encouraged. An interesting, innovative project "across boundaries" was the design of a course aimed at training community interpreters in interpreting for deafened immigrant adults.

### ***Authorisation of interpreters***

State authorisation of community interpreters in Sweden started in 1976. The number of authorised interpreters was 215 in 1978; in 2003 the number had risen to 825. This is not a very impressive number, given that the total number of interpreters is estimated to be about 5,000.

Authorisation tests are currently arranged in the following 37 languages:

Albanian, Arabic, Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Danish, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Cantonese, Latvian, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Meänkieli (Tornedal Finnish), Dutch, North Kurdish (Kurmanji), Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Standard Chinese (Mandarin), Romanian, Russian, Sami (North Sami), Somali, Spanish, South Kurdish (Sorani), Swedish Sign Language, Tigrinya, Czech, Turkish, German and Hungarian.

### ***The scope of the authorisation test***

It is important to bear in mind that the Swedish authorisation test was developed for testing community interpreters, i.e. interpreting in encounters between immigrants and Swedish-speaking representatives of society, mainly in institutional settings. The test is not automatically relevant for other types of interpreting, e.g. testing conference interpreters.

As of the autumn 2004, Swedish Sign Language interpreters can also be authorised in the same way as interpreters between two spoken languages. There is still no authorisation of conference interpreters in Sweden.

### ***Organisation and content***

It has been officially stated several times, that the authorities should in principle employ authorised interpreters if they are available.

Authorisation of interpreters is undertaken by a special section at the Swedish Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency (*Kammarkollegiet*). To become authorised, one must be of age, domiciled in a country within the European Economic Space, be of good standing and otherwise suitable as an interpreter, and have completed the examination prescribed by the Agency. There are two types of examinations: those who pass the basic test become authorised interpreters. They can then sit for an examination in special competence as a legal interpreter, or as a medical interpreter.

The examination is both written and oral. Only those who pass the written part are permitted to take the oral. The written part tests the candidates' linguistic and terminological knowledge in both interpretation languages,

and their knowledge of practical matters. The basic examination also tests knowledge of the social security system, medical care, the labour market and everyday law. The oral consists of interpreting two to four role plays dealing with these subject areas. Here accuracy of information, interpreting technique, oral language skills and professional ethics are examined.

The basic level test is divided into two parts: a written part and an oral part. The written test is organised twice a year in four cities in Sweden. The test takes four hours and consists of the following:

1. Factual knowledge test (“realia”). 30 questions from the areas of medicine, social welfare, the labour market, general knowledge about society, and everyday law;
2. Terminology test. 100 special terms to be translated into Swedish and 100 from Swedish into the other language. The terms are taken from the areas listed above. No aids are allowed.

The oral test is carried out in Stockholm 2-3 months after the written test. Only those who pass the written test may sit for the oral section, which has the following content:

1. interpreting (1-4 role plays);
2. professional ethics and interpreting technique (4 or more questions);
3. if needed, an oral test of factual knowledge.

The test is carried out before an examining committee of 4-5 persons and takes about two hours. The use of dictionaries and note-taking is encouraged.

The authorisation test for Sign language interpreters will look slightly different. For example the terminology test in Sign language will be part of the oral section.

In the special-competence examination the requirements are considerably higher. Passing these examinations demands very comprehensive knowledge of the special area, and the required level of interpreting skills is very high.

Authorisation tests started in 1976, and they have not always looked the same. In fact, the content has changed quite a lot over the years, especially of the written test. In the beginning, there were many more items / sub-tests: cloze-tests, underlined phrases that were to be translated, synonym tests etc., but most of these have been abolished over the years.

## The interpreters - labour market and working conditions

### Interpreting for minorities and immigrants

Two district courts in Northern Sweden (Gällivare and Haparanda) employ “public interpreters” (*allmän tolk*) for the Finnish-speaking population. Otherwise, community interpreters, including court interpreters, are usually employed on a freelance basis. While some community interpreters can earn up to 40,000 SEK (4,500 EUR) a month, the majority are working part-time with a monthly salary in the range between 7,000 and 15,000 SEK (800 – 1,600 EUR), making community interpreting a typical low-income job.

The salaries vary between different cities and institutions, and are related to the competence of the interpreter. There are usually three tiers of salaries: the highest tier III is for authorised interpreters with special competence in court or medical interpreting; tier II concerns interpreters who have only the basic (general) authorisation, and tier I is for unauthorised interpreters. In courts, the basic interpreter fee for the first hour (as of 1.1.2004) is 237 SEK (26 EUR) at tier I, 323 SEK (36 EUR) at tier II and 408 SEK (45 EUR) at tier III. The corresponding fees for police interpreting are 197, 269 and 344 SEK. The salaries in hospitals and other public and private institutions are not regulated, and vary greatly.

Deregulation of interpreter services during the 1990s has in some regions lead to a deterioration of the interpreters’ job situation. Being free-lancers, interpreters have to register at many agencies which compete with each other by offering low-cost interpreters. Consequently, there is an influx on the market of badly trained interpreters who accept work for less money than competent, trained and state accredited (authorised) interpreters. To amend the situation, a government report published in 2004 (SOU 2004:15 *Tolkförmedling – kvalitet, registrering, tillsyn*) recommends that an authorisation system of interpreter service agencies be set up under state supervision.

**Sign language interpreters**

The labour market for sign language interpreters is good. There are at the moment (2004) some 450 sign language interpreters, and the need has been estimated to 1,000. Most of the interpreters work for the interpreting services of the county councils, many are self-employed free-lancers.

There are reports suggesting that the number of hearing-impaired or deafened adults is rising, thereby suggesting an increased future need of interpreters for deafened adults.

**Educational interpreting**

There is no sign language interpreting in primary schools in Sweden. Deaf children attend special schools, where sign language is the language of instruction. This is usually the case for secondary school students as well. In tertiary education however, deaf students attend the same courses as other students. When a deaf person is accepted as a student, the school/university has to hire interpreters to interpret classes, seminars, student discussions groups etc. This service is free of charge for the student. There are some 50 interpreters employed in Sweden as full-time interpreters in tertiary education.

At Stockholm University, the educational interpreters form a special division of TÖI.

### ***Rules for interpreting***

The chief ethical guidance for community interpreters is published by the Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency as *God tolksed* (Good Interpreting Practice). In principle, these rules do not differ from those for international conference interpreters: only accept a commission one is competent for; remain neutral and impartial in the interpreting situation; observe the obligation to secrecy; strive to maintain and develop one's ability as an interpreter and perform one's commissions conscientiously and accurately.

In addition, *God tolksed* contains a number of rules that reflect the community interpreter's special work situation. Thus interpreters shall, if necessary, inform the parties of what is and what is not included in their job, and how the interpreting will be managed. The interpreter's role is not always self-evident, either to the Swedish representative or to the immigrant.

Information that should be given before interpreting starts is: don't say anything that you don't want to be interpreted: the interpreter will interpret everything; use short phrases/clauses and avoid difficult technical terms or professional jargon: the interpreter may not give explanations on his own initiative; if either of the parties does not understand words or expressions, that party should ask the other party, via the interpreter; the parties must talk to each other and not to the interpreter; the interpreting is to take place in the first person ('I'-form); the interpreter is neutral and must not be an advocate for either party; the interpreter is under an obligation of silence.

Furthermore, the interpreter may not assume or be asked to undertake any other function than to interpret. The interpreter may not assist by asking questions, acting as a representative or giving expert opinions. Often great pressure can be placed on the interpreter by both the immigrant and the Swedish representative, so this rule is then of great help to the interpreter.

Everything that is said must be interpreted as exactly as possible. The reasoning is that the party who does not understand Swedish should have the same opportunity as a Swedish speaker to understand what is said and to put forward their views - and vice versa for the Swedish speaker. The interpreter may not judge what is interesting or uninteresting in what is said. The principle for information transfer is, as in one passage in the witness oath: to conceal nothing, to add nothing, and to change nothing.



Since the community interpreter generally works consecutively, the importance of good note-taking technique is stressed. If the interpreter is unable to keep pace, or there is a risk of information being lost, the speaker must be interrupted in a suitable manner. The interpreter should also gently but efficiently guide the dialogue between the parties so that everything one party says is understood by the other.

Interpreting in the first person reduces the risk that interpreters, perhaps unconsciously, permit their own attitude to, or knowledge of, some circumstance to colour the interpreting.

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## Appendices

### Examples of course curricula for community interpreter training at adult education centres

#### Course curriculum for Basic course in Legal interpreting / Everyday law (about 80 hours)

##### *Purposes*

- To give the interpreter fundamental and terminological knowledge in the field.
- To deal with issues about ethics in interpreting and interpreting technique.
- To develop the participants' interpreting ability and mastery of situations in interpreting.

##### *Desired prior knowledge*

A good knowledge of Swedish and the other interpreting language.

Completion of the course Introduction to Interpreting (about 30 h.)

##### *Syllabus*

1. State administration
2. Administrative courts of law
3. Police work (pre-trial investigation)
4. The courts of general jurisdiction (criminal law cases and civil suits)
5. Legal aid
6. Family law
7. The law of inheritance
8. The law regarding foreigners, determination of asylum legibility/status
9. Overview of property and enterprise
10. Consumer law and the Sale of Goods Act
11. Overview of labour market legislation
12. Nature and recreation, traffic legislation
13. Role-play exercises in the relevant fields
14. Ethics in interpreting and interpreting technique

The basic course should give the interpreters practice in:

appropriately using and understanding technical terms and special phrases in the field

continuously improving his/her practical knowledge and terminology with the help of literature, contacts in the government and organisations, and others.

Upon completing the course, the interpreter should be able to compare legal relationships and concepts with the corresponding relationships in the interpreting country.

As part of the instruction, experts may visit the class and study visits may be made.

The course can also serve as an introduction to the course in Legal interpreting.

### **Course curriculum for Course in Legal interpreting (about 80 hours)**

#### ***Purposes***

- To give the interpreter fundamental practical and terminological knowledge in law for interpreting within the police and court system.
- To give essential knowledge of legal terminology in Swedish as well as in the interpreting language.
- To deal with issues about ethics in interpreting and interpreting technique.
- To further develop the participants' interpreting ability and mastery of situations in interpreting.

#### ***Desired prior knowledge***

A very good knowledge of Swedish and the other interpreting language.

Completion of the course Introduction to Interpreting, about 30 h.

Completion of the Basic course in Legal interpreting / Everyday law, or authorisation as interpreter

#### ***Syllabus***

1. The lawyers' association and legal assistance

2. The court system (courts of general jurisdiction, administrative courts, special courts)
3. Legal proceedings in civil cases
4. Family law
5. Simplified legal procedure
6. Landlord – tenant disputes
7. Criminal cases -- the police and prosecutorial system -- pre-trial investigation
8. Legal procedure in criminal cases
9. Classification of crimes
10. Sanctions.
11. Custody/treatment of criminals
12. The legislation on foreigners
13. Property law
14. Contracts - debt - the sale of Goods Act
15. The law on bills of exchange and checks
16. Partnerships and corporations, unions and associations
17. Real property
18. Damages
19. Recovery of debts
20. Official secrets legislation within social service, public health and sick care services, as well as in the police and court systems
21. Role-play exercises
22. Ethics of interpreting and interpreting technique

The course should give the interpreters practice in:

appropriately using and understanding technical terms and special phrases in the field

continuously improving his/her practical knowledge and terminology with the help of literature, contacts in the government and organisations, and others.

Upon completing the course, the interpreter should be able to compare legal relationships and concepts with the corresponding relationships in the interpreting country.

As part of the instruction, experts may visit the class and study visits may be made.