

## TAO ACTIVELY FOLLOWS-UP ON SCIC INTERPRETERS' AUDITORY HEALTH



Brussels, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025

We have detected a passive approach to Health and Safety in the competent instances of the European Commission on an issue which intimately and **deeply concerns SCIC interpreters**, sound quality and the immediate and long-term life-altering effects of harmful sound. There is an unfortunate coincidence; interpreters' professional tool is also a very sensitive organ. The human ear connects them to their source material in the booth, but also to the world. Interpreters therefore need to fulfil their professional duties safely so that they are not wilfully damaged.

The deployment of new delivery modes of interpretation was decided with no previous risk analysis. It is being conducted now, 4 years after the introduction of a new technology: SIDP simultaneous interpreting delivery platforms and it will not be specifically focused on platforms, but rather on establishing a global risk profile. It will also focus on the sound chain, but **not specifically on the effects of harmful sound on the auditory system** from an epidemiological perspective.

We fear that the risk analysis demanded by the CPPT (*Comité pour la prévention et protection au travail*) and already underway might not offer the expected results if we do not **follow the process closely** and the competent instances, spurred on by the trade unions, if need be, have a real will to influence the outcome. Platforms as a risk factor must be identified, characterized, and quantified. Ultimately **platforms must be declared safe** for interpreters or alternatively **credible mitigation measures** must be proposed.

Currently the CPPT has been preliminarily informed of the methodology which will be applied to the risk analysis. However, there is a tendency to discharge responsibilities on the Health and Safety Group within SCIC. **CPPT is organically responsible** for this file and must exert informed pressure on the competent DGs and subcontractors. In particular, the **GT-Interpreters** within CPPT created precisely to come up with Recommendations for platform work, **must be reactivated** as it is currently dormant. The solutions the institutional level has come up with to date are not ideal. We must remain vigilant to make sure that this state of affairs changes.

**TAO's** message is loud and clear: the risk analysis must be serious, objective, and reliable.

**Health is not a laughing matter.**

We have demanded an application of the Canadian model: **mandatory code of conduct, peripheral detection, no interpretation of non-approved peripherals**. This solution has been endorsed by CPPT Recommendations and has achieved critical mass as it is being currently applied by the European Parliament and the Court. SCIC and the European Commission have taken the political decision to disregard this approach.

We reiterate our will to uphold Directive 89/391 and Decision C(2006) 1623. In particular its general principles: **combat risks at source, adapt the work to the individual especially regarding the choice of equipment, adapt to technical progress, give collective protective measures priority over individual protective measures.**

**TAO** remains attentive and would be grateful to receive input from our colleagues to guarantee that the technical approach chosen is beyond the shadow of a doubt, because this is an issue which if not tackled properly has potential to become a **public health problem.**

Your **TAO** team



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