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Universidad de Alcalá (Madrid)

Carfagnini Astrid, UMONS
Delizée Anne, UMONS
Bruwier Nicolas, SeTIS Bruxelles

The challenges of recognising the profession of public service interpreter. The Case of French-Speaking Belgium

Abstract: In French-speaking Belgium, a university-level training programme for public service interpreters (PSIs) have existed since 2015 (Delizée et al. 2025). This curriculum is informed by ongoing dialogue between interpreting service providers, teacher-researchers and stakeholders from various settings with extensive experience of working with interpreters. However, as in most European countries (Hodáková et al. 2025), the profession remained without official recognition until 2025.

This communication aims to describe how the joint efforts of all stakeholders have made it possible to meet this challenge. In 2021, a joint request was submitted to the public body responsible for recognising professions and qualifications (SFMQ) in French-speaking Belgium. Over a period of four years, two committees of field experts developed a competency framework and a training profile tailored to the professional needs in the region. The competencies are developed around 4 key activities: Preparing an interpreting assignment; Interpreting a dialogue; Following up on an interpreting assignment; and Participating in continuing professional development and well-being at work. The training profile focuses on 6 progressive learning units: Applying an intercultural approach; Applying an ethical approach; Conducting documentary and terminological research; Managing the emotional burden and learning to protect oneself from it; Applying the communicative and interactional fundamentals of interpreting a bilingual interaction; Interpreting in administrative, social, medical and asylum settings. This sustained collaboration led to the official validation of the PSI profession by the SFMQ (2026), acknowledging its particularities within French-speaking Belgium.

Keywords: academic recognition partnership, collaborative project, competency framework, institutional recognition

Delizee, A., & Michaux, C. (2025). Public service interpreters education in French-speaking Belgium. *FITISPos International Journal*, 12(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.37536/FITISPos-IJ.2025.12.1.403>

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