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PSI and Languages of Lesser Diffusion: a 4-level learning & certification system

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Abstract:

Ensuring interpreting in languages of lesser diffusion (LLD) remains a major challenge in today's increasingly diverse migration contexts. Machine interpreting is not (yet?) a viable solution, meaning that sustainable answers must be found in the high-quality training of human interpreters.

The aim of this presentation is to share the solutions implemented in French-speaking Belgium to 1/give access to higher education to people who do not necessarily have the required credentials, 2/take into account specific personal situations by offering modular learning that allows students to progress at their own pace, and 3/provide access to credit-based training (ECTS) that serves as a socio-professional springboard.

The result is a unified university-level educational path in LLD which is based on the needs expressed by interpreting service providers. It is accessible to all communities regardless of educational background. Learners gradually acquire the knowledge and competencies essential to quality PSI, first in a formative way (levels 1 and 2), then in a certifying way (level 3) and finally in a spirit of continuing education (level 4):

- Level 1 – Awareness-raising: introduction to ethical and communicative principles governing interpreter-mediated interactions.
- Level 2 – Basic knowledge and competencies: acquisition of disciplinary foundations in PSI, combining theoretical insights and practical exercises.
- Level 3 – Mastery: specialization in a specific setting (legal, health, asylum).
- Level 4 – Specialization: advanced seminars closely aligned with evolving professional realities.

This innovative learning & certification system shows how higher education can contribute to transforming our societies by fostering inclusion, professionalization, and high quality in LLD interpreting.

Keywords: PSI, LLD, university-level curriculum, certification, accessibility, continuing education process, professionalization

References: Delizée, A. & Michaux, M. (2025). Public service interpreters education in French-speaking Belgium. *FITISPos International Journal*, 12(1), 104-121.