



Tips for speakers

What should speakers remember?

Here are a few tips to ensure successful communication with your audience when you deliver a speech during a multilingual event

Interpreters convey ideas rather than words. That is why they should be given manuscripts or notes in advance, so they can prepare themselves for the ideas you will be expressing. Material in several languages is also extremely helpful for the interpreters. It goes without saying that all documents are treated confidentially and returned to you afterwards, if required.

Before the conference starts, it is helpful to hold a briefing session with the speakers and interpreters at which any possible questions can be clarified. This will improve the quality of the interpretation.

If you aim to use OHP slides, photos or video clips during your talk, you are requested to provide the interpreters with copies. Often the interpreters are situated far from the screen, so it is much easier for them to have the material in front of them in the booth.

Please always remember that your words are being interpreted and you should therefore speak slowly, audibly and clearly.

When they are reading from a written text, people tend to speak faster than when they are talking freely. The optimum rate of delivery is about three minutes for a page of 40 lines. The interpreters – and also audience members listening to you directly – will be very grateful if you can stick roughly to this speed.

Before you begin, you should check that the microphone is switched on – but please don't tap it or blow into it, as the sound is amplified before it reaches the interpreters' ears!

Also: please don't position yourself too close to the microphone and don't place your own headphones next to the microphone, as this can cause unpleasant acoustic feedback. Any asides that you make during your speech should be made into the microphone, as they will otherwise be lost. If you are going to have to turn away from the lectern to comment on images on the screen, you should perhaps use a lapel microphone to make sure the interpreters can hear what you're saying at all times.

During your talk you should always have headphones at hand in case a question comes from the audience in a foreign language and you have to rely on the interpretation.

Please be aware that there is a slight time delay before the interpretation is heard, so if you direct a question or comment to an audience member who speaks a different language, you should wait for a few seconds rather than just assuming that he or she has not responded!