

## *The (Un)discarded Cloak of Invisibility*

### **BACKGROUND NOTE ON THE INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM OF THE ZKTS**

In its early days in the 1970s, the Slovene Association of Conference Interpreters (ZKTS) played a pivotal role in achieving recognition for the conference interpreting profession in Slovenia and contributed to the recognition of Slovene as a conference language.

In the 1990s, right before and after Slovenia became an independent state, its members consistently provided high-quality interpretation services at the historic events of that period, which further consolidated the profession in Slovenia. The post-independence period was characterised by integration into the European Union, and Slovenia's membership of international organisations such as the Council of Europe, the UN and the OSCE, when the Slovene language was given additional prominence at the international level, including also through interpretation.

Throughout the years, the ZKTS has endeavoured to promote the highest standards of the profession, providing specialised training for conference interpreters and its members have regularly assisted in the interpreting courses for future generations of interpreters in Slovenia and abroad.

The 50th anniversary provides an excellent opportunity to reflect on the path travelled and the way forward, which is the aim of our symposium. Many continue to expect interpretation services to be as invisible and unobtrusive as possible for listeners and event organisers, yet this can only be achieved under the right conditions and in accordance with professional standards. The recent disruptions caused by the pandemic, which led to the expansion of virtual or hybrid events, have clearly shown the importance of working conditions if meetings and events are to pursue the objective of fostering diversity and accessibility via the principle of multilingualism.

The necessary tools and frameworks consisting of professional norms as well as technical and general standards to ensure this are available already, including the most recent ISO 23155:2022. During the pandemic, the interpreting community proved willing to adapt, as so many continued to learn and train to ultimately adopt new solutions. When new technologies are developed and introduced in cooperation with the profession, then the progress and its benefits can be enjoyed not only by clients and interpreters, but also by society as a whole.

The world is changing, and emerging technologies will undoubtedly shape our future lives as well as working processes and conditions, including in the interpreting profession. The ZKTS stands ready to embrace these challenges by counting on increased cooperation: among colleagues and within the profession, with researchers and academia, with technicians and event organisers, as well as with other profiles that can assist us in future-proofing our profession. With or without our proverbial cloak of invisibility, interpreters can only work their magic under the right conditions and well prepared.