

## IMPLEMENTATION OF CONFERENCE INTERPRETING COURSES IN UKRAINIAN EDUCATION PROCESS: EUROPEAN INTEGRATION CONTEXT<sup>1</sup>

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### INTRODUCTION

Conference interpreting education in the European Union (EU) is a highly specialized postgraduate discipline designed to prepare interpreters for professional careers in multilingual communication. Given the complex linguistic and cognitive demands of the profession, training programs follow rigorous admission criteria, intensive curricula, and strict evaluation standards to ensure graduates meet the quality expectations of international institutions such as the European Commission and the United Nations. This chapter examines the structure of postgraduate conference interpreting training in EU member states and highlights best practices that contribute to producing highly competent interpreters. The objective of this paper is to:

- Conduct a comparative study of conference interpreting education in Ukraine and EU member states, identifying best practices and existing gaps.
- Investigate the key skills and qualifications required for interpreters in EU and EP institutions, including expertise in simultaneous interpreting, legal and political terminology, and accreditation standards.
- Assess the challenges and opportunities associated with establishing such training programs, particularly in terms of financial constraints, educator shortages, and institutional accreditation.
- Analyze existing research, statistical data, and case studies related to conference interpreting education within the EU framework.
- Provide an in-depth evaluation of conference interpreting programs currently offered at Ukrainian universities, with particular emphasis on the Department of Applied Linguistics at Lviv Polytechnic National University.

Introducing comprehensive conference interpreting courses into Ukrainian higher education presents several challenges but also significant opportunities, particularly in light of Ukraine's European integration process.

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## 1. Postgraduate training model: European experience

In the EU, conference interpreter education is typically structured as a postgraduate specialization, usually in the form of a Master's or a postgraduate diploma in Conference Interpreting. These programs span one to two years (60–120 ECTS credits) and are offered by leading universities and interpreter training institutions<sup>2</sup>. Admission is highly selective, requiring candidates to pass rigorous entrance examinations assessing language proficiency, general knowledge, and interpreting aptitude. This process ensures that only students with the necessary bilingual (or multilingual) fluency and cognitive skills embark on formal training. For instance, the University of Geneva's renowned Master of Arts in Conference Interpreting (MA CI) mandates applicants to demonstrate an approved language combination and interpreting potential through entrance assessments<sup>3</sup>.

Let us consider curriculum and structure of the educational training model. Once admitted, students engage in an intensive, skills-based curriculum emphasizing practical interpreting exercises. Core training components include:

- **Consecutive Interpreting:** Developing note-taking techniques, memory retention, and structured speech delivery.
- **Simultaneous Interpreting:** Practicing real-time interpretation in soundproof booths with professional equipment.
- **Sight Translation:** Enhancing on-the-spot translation skills from written texts.
- **Interpreting Theory and Public Speaking:** Understanding cognitive processes in interpretation and mastering clear, confident speech delivery.
- **Specialized Terminology:** Covering terminology in law, politics, and economics relevant to international meetings.

A distinguishing feature of European interpreting programs is the integration of courses on international and regional institutions. Students gain knowledge of EU and UN bodies, their operational procedures, and multilingual communication norms. This prepares graduates for assignments such as EU parliamentary debates or UN conferences<sup>4</sup>. Notably, the Ternopil interpreting course in Ukraine aligns with EU curricula by incorporating a module on EU institutions<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Standards in Conference Interpreter Training (AIIC/EU/EMCI). URL: CONFERENCE INTERPRETER TRAINING – Türkiye Konferans Tercümanları Derneği

<sup>3</sup> Geneva MA in Conference Interpreting (EMCI implementation, professional instructors). URL: <https://www.unige.ch/fti/en/enseignements/ma-interpretation/>

<sup>4</sup> Standards in Conference Interpreter Training (AIIC/EU/EMCI). URL: CONFERENCE INTERPRETER TRAINING – Türkiye Konferans Tercümanları Derneği

<sup>5</sup> Ternopil NPU Conference Interpreting Course Modules <https://tnpu.edu.ua/news/10710/>

Training methodologies prioritize practical learning over traditional lectures. Students participate in small-group interpreting sessions in professional booths, receiving immediate feedback from instructors. They progressively interpret speeches of increasing complexity on diverse topics to build versatility. Graduation requirements typically include demonstrating proficiency in both consecutive and simultaneous interpreting for all working languages. Final assessments simulate real conference conditions, ensuring students can perform under professional constraints<sup>6</sup>.

When talking about best practices at top institutions, we must admit that elite interpreter training institutions in the EU adhere to widely recognized best practices, many of which are endorsed by professional bodies such as the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) and the European Masters in Conference Interpreting (EMCI) consortium. Key best practices include:

– **Professional Instructors:** Courses are taught by experienced conference interpreters, many of whom have worked for EU or UN institutions. Geneva’s MA CI program, for instance, ensures that all interpreting instructors are active professionals with UN and/or EU accreditation, ensuring real-world expertise is incorporated into training<sup>7</sup>.

– **Abundant Practice Hours:** Programs prioritize hands-on practice over theoretical lectures. Students spend extensive hours in interpreting labs, often participating in simulations and mock conferences with invited guest speakers<sup>8</sup>.

– **Dedicated Lab Facilities:** A professional simultaneous interpreting laboratory is essential for effective training. Leading universities maintain facilities with interpreter booths, professional conference audio systems, and recording tools, enabling students to practice under realistic conditions<sup>9</sup>.

– **Comprehensive Language Combinations:** European programs encourage interpreters to work with at least two passive (source) languages in addition to their active target language. Many institutions follow the EMCI guideline of an A-B-C language combination structure, ensuring graduates can interpret from multiple foreign languages into their mother tongue<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Standards in Conference Interpreter Training (AIIC/EU/EMCI). URL: CONFERENCE INTERPRETER TRAINING – Türkiye Konferans Tercümanları Derneği

<sup>7</sup> Geneva MA in Conference Interpreting (EMCI implementation, professional instructors). URL: <https://www.unige.ch/fti/en/enseignements/ma-interpretation/>

<sup>8</sup> Standards in Conference Interpreter Training (AIIC/EU/EMCI). URL: CONFERENCE INTERPRETER TRAINING – Türkiye Konferans Tercümanları Derneği

<sup>9</sup> Standards in Conference Interpreter Training (AIIC/EU/EMCI). URL: CONFERENCE INTERPRETER TRAINING – Türkiye Konferans Tercümanları Derneği

<sup>10</sup> EU Parliament DG LINC Goals for Ukrainian Interpreters. URL: <https://fasi.eu/en/grants/a06efd3a-cbb8-38f2-887a-d9a3f967c9a3>

– **Integration of EU Priorities:** Some institutions explicitly tailor their programs to prepare graduates for EU work. For example, the Institute of Translation Studies at Charles University in Prague designs its EMCI Master’s program to equip interpreters for European institutions, particularly the European Commission and the European Parliament. Such curricula emphasize EU-specific terminology and meeting formats<sup>11</sup>.

– **Assessment and Certification:** Stringent final assessments uphold training quality. Students must pass comprehensive exams in both consecutive and simultaneous interpreting for each working language<sup>12</sup>. Diplomas are awarded only upon successful demonstration of professional-level interpreting competence, effectively certifying graduates for the conference interpreting market.

## 2. Ukrainian experience in implementing grant funding into educational process

The structure and best practices of European conference interpreting education provide valuable insights for Ukraine as it expands its postgraduate interpreter training programs. Several key takeaways include:

– Establishing graduate-level training programs with a strong emphasis on practical exercises and professional instruction.

– Implementing selective admission processes to ensure candidates possess the necessary language and cognitive skills.

– Designing curricula that align with EU and international standards, including courses on EU institutions and multilingual diplomacy.

– Investing in specialized laboratory facilities for simultaneous and consecutive interpreting practice.

– Encouraging diverse language combinations to enhance graduate employability in international markets.

– Adopting rigorous assessment methods to certify interpreters based on professional performance.

Recent developments in Ukrainian interpreter training programs indicate progress in aligning with European models. For example, Precarpathian National University (PNU) has increased practice hours and introduced a second foreign language component to mirror European interpreter profiles<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> EMCI Consortium Aims (training for EU institutions). URL: <https://utrl.ff.cuni.cz/en/miscellaneous/emci/#:~:text=EMCI%20,Commission%20and%20the%20European%20Parliament>

<sup>12</sup> Standards in Conference Interpreter Training (AIIC/EU/EMCI). URL: CONFERENCE INTERPRETER TRAINING – Türkiye Konferans Tercümanları Derneği

<sup>13</sup> PNU’s Continued EP Cooperation and Program Improvements. URL: <https://kaf.pnu.edu.ua/en/2024/08/09/pnu-continues-cooperation-with-the-european-parliament-in-training-conference-interpreters/>

As Ukraine continues to develop its conference interpreting education, adopting EMCI core curriculum standards will further enhance international recognition and graduate success.

Setting up a quality conference interpreting program is resource-intensive. It requires specialized infrastructure, such as soundproof interpreter booths, consoles, and audio equipment to simulate real conference settings. Many Ukrainian universities operate on tight budgets and struggle to afford fully equipped interpreting labs without external aid.

Maintaining a low student-to-instructor ratio, crucial for practice-intensive training, necessitates hiring more staff or limiting enrollment, further straining financial resources. Before receiving European Parliament grants, most Ukrainian programs lacked modern equipment. For example, PNU managed to open its simultaneous interpreting lab only after securing EU financial support<sup>14</sup>. Ongoing funding for equipment updates and technical support remains a challenge, as does financing faculty and student international exchanges to gain exposure and training.

Conference interpreting is a niche skill, and Ukraine has a limited pool of professionals experienced both in high-level interpreting and in teaching those skills. Many of the country's best interpreters work for international organizations, embassies, or as freelancers rather than in academia. As a result, universities often find that their existing language faculty lack practical conference interpreting experience.

Training a competent interpreter is a hands-on craft best taught by someone who has experienced real conference pressure. Ukrainian universities have had to bring in external expertise or retrain their staff. For example,<sup>15</sup> PNU's faculty members attended training visits in Stockholm and Ljubljana to learn best practices. Scaling up interpreter training requires developing a cadre of trainer-interpreters, and while the European Commission and European Parliament offer "Training for Trainers" programs, Ukrainian academia must find ways to incentivize professionals to join as lecturers.

Implementing a new course or specialty requires navigating academic bureaucracy. Universities must update curricula, secure approval from academic councils or the Ministry of Education, and ensure compliance with national education standards. This process can be slow and may encounter resistance from faculty unfamiliar with conference interpreting as a discipline.

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<sup>14</sup> PNU's Conference Interpreting Lab and EU-standards Curriculum. URL: <https://pnu.edu.ua/blog/2024/09/30/61374/>

<sup>15</sup> PNU's Conference Interpreting Lab and EU-standards Curriculum. URL: <https://pnu.edu.ua/blog/2024/09/30/61374/>

Additionally, integrating a practice-heavy course into traditional academic schedules is challenging. University leadership support is crucial to securing lab space and adjusting teaching loads. Until recently, few outside language departments recognized the strategic importance of interpreter training for EU integration, making advocacy for these programs essential.

A potential challenge is the loss of trained talent. High-quality conference interpreters with EU languages are in demand internationally. If Ukrainian programs successfully train graduates to EU standards, many may pursue careers abroad, freelancing for EU institutions or working in Brussels. While this supports Ukraine's integration, it could leave domestic institutions struggling to retain experienced alumni as educators or professionals in Ukraine. This long-term concern underscores the need to train enough interpreters to meet both EU and national needs.

Maintaining high standards in new interpreting programs is crucial. Without a history of conference interpreting education, Ukrainian universities must ensure their courses adequately prepare students for EU accreditation tests. There is a risk of offering programs in name only, without sufficient rigor, leading to graduates who are not market-ready.

Quality assurance mechanisms, such as external examiners and accreditation from bodies like EMCI, need to be established. EU interpreter accreditation requirements are stringent, requiring mastery of multiple languages and top-tier performance<sup>16</sup>. Universities must resist diluting standards for enrollment numbers, which might initially result in small class sizes and high dropout rates.

### **3. Initiating the funded project by EU at Lviv Polytechnic National University**

Ukraine's progress toward EU membership is a powerful motivator for supporting these programs. Preparing interpreters is increasingly seen as part of the broader integration strategy. The European Parliament has already invested in Ukraine's interpreter training<sup>17</sup> and may continue to prioritize language and interpreter education as a national interest.

This framing can attract funding and talented students who see a clear career pathway. Public visibility of Ukrainian interpreters in high-profile EU meetings further builds the prestige of the profession and these courses.

EU institutions actively support Ukraine's interpreter training initiatives. The European Parliament (DG LINC) offers grant programs to Ukrainian

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<sup>16</sup> EU Freelance Interpreter Accreditation Requirements. URL: <https://europa.eu/interpretation/freelance.html>

<sup>17</sup> European Parliament DG LINC Call (Ukrainian "A" interpreters for EU). URL: <https://fasi.eu/en/grants/a06efd3a-cbb8-38f2-887a-d9a3f967c9a3>

universities for creating or upgrading conference interpreting courses<sup>18</sup>, covering up to 75% of costs in some cases. These funds help universities acquire equipment, develop curricula, and train faculty.

Additionally, EU bodies provide expertise, dispatching trainers, hosting study visits for students, and sharing training materials. Ukrainian students have already participated in Brussels-based study visits to experience live interpreting at the European Parliament<sup>19</sup>. Such cooperation ensures that Ukraine’s programs align with international best practices.

With increased awareness, more Ukrainian students are expressing interest in conference interpreting as a career. Bilingual youth, particularly those motivated by future EU membership, see interpreting as a promising profession. Early programs in Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk have reported strong interest and enrollment.

Ukraine has a large population of multilingual individuals due to its emphasis on foreign language education. Universities can recruit candidates with proficiency in Ukrainian, English, and another EU language, making them strong candidates for interpreter training. As success stories emerge – such as graduates securing EU roles – interest will likely continue to grow, justifying program expansion.

Implementing interpreter training can catalyze broader modernization efforts in Ukrainian universities. It encourages new pedagogical methods, such as interactive, student-centered learning, and the integration of technology in teaching. These improvements can positively impact other programs as well.

Additionally, pursuing interpreter training partnerships may lead universities to join international consortia or seek accreditation. For example, Lviv Polytechnic’s Applied Linguistics department could leverage this opportunity to update its curriculum with practical interpreting components and collaborate with European universities, enhancing its reputation.

When Ukraine joins the EU, Ukrainian will become an official EU language, creating significant demand for conference interpreters. The European Parliament and European Commission will require interpreters to service meetings, just as they do for the EU’s 24 current languages. The EP is proactively ensuring that enough qualified conference interpreters with Ukrainian as their “A” language are available<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> European Parliament DG LINC Call (Ukrainian “A” interpreters for EU). URL: <https://fasi.eu/en/grants/a06efd3a-cbb8-38f2-887a-d9a3f967c9a3>

<sup>19</sup> EP Study Visit for Ukrainian Interpreting Students. URL: <https://pnu.edu.ua/en/blog/2024/10/22/62215/>

<sup>20</sup> European Parliament DG LINC Call (Ukrainian “A” interpreters for EU). URL: <https://fasi.eu/en/grants/a06efd3a-cbb8-38f2-887a-d9a3f967c9a3>

For Ukrainian universities, this means that graduates will have direct employment pathways, making interpreter training an attractive career choice. Robust programs can achieve nearly 100% graduate employment, providing a strong incentive for universities to invest in these courses. The prospect of Ukrainian as an EU language may also prompt international organizations to fund more scholarships or training programs, benefiting local institutions.

Traditionally, Ukrainian universities have focused on translation and general linguistics, with conference interpreting only recently gaining attention. However, a few pioneering institutions have begun establishing dedicated interpreter training programs, often with support from European partners.

For instance, Ivan Franko National University of Lviv<sup>21</sup> has enhanced its Master's program in interpreting with a grant from the European Parliament. This funding has enabled the university to purchase professional interpreting equipment and provide faculty training, aligning the curriculum with EU standards. Similarly, Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University (PNU) in Ivano-Frankivsk has launched a project to strengthen its conference interpreting training by increasing course hours in Simultaneous and Consecutive Interpreting and updating syllabi to meet EU requirements<sup>22</sup>. With European Parliament support, PNU has also opened a new interpreting training lab featuring modern booths for students to practice real-time interpretation.

In eastern Ukraine, Karazin Kharkiv National University introduced a specialized conference interpreting course in 2023, explicitly designed in accordance with the requirements of the European Parliament<sup>23</sup>. These initiatives mark the first wave of structured conference interpreter education in the country.

The development of conference interpreting programs in Ukraine is closely linked to the country's EU integration ambitions. The European Parliament's Directorate-General for Logistics and Interpretation for Conferences (DG LINC) has identified Ukrainian-language interpreters as a priority and provides financial and professional assistance to Ukrainian

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<sup>21</sup> European Parliament Grant to Lviv University's MA in Interpreting. URL: <https://lnu.edu.ua/en/ivan-franko-national-university-of-lviv-s-faculty-of-foreign-languages-secures-european-parliament-grant-for-master-s-program-in-interpreting/#:~:text=The%20Faculty%20of%20Foreign%20Languages,%E2%80%9D%20initiative>

<sup>22</sup> PNU's Conference Interpreting Lab and EU-standards Curriculum. URL: <https://pnu.edu.ua/blog/2024/09/30/61374/>

<sup>23</sup> Karazin Kharkiv's EP-funded Interpreter Training Project. URL: <https://karazin.ua/en/mizhnarodna-diialnist/mizhnarodni-proiekty/proiekty-ievropeiskoho-parlamentu/>

universities<sup>24</sup>. Under a series of grants, multiple institutions – including Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kharkiv, and Ternopil – have introduced courses or full programs in conference interpreting.

For example, **Ternopil National Pedagogical University** now offers an intensive course for its linguistics MA students, covering modules such as the Theory of Interpreting, Simultaneous and Consecutive Interpreting, Sight Translation, Terminology, and an overview of EU institutions<sup>25</sup>. The program also integrates masterclasses and training sessions led by practicing interpreters, ensuring students gain practical insights and skills. Upon completion, students receive certificates recognizing their training. These programs share a common objective: to produce graduates who meet EU accreditation standards for interpreters<sup>26</sup>.

At **Lviv Polytechnic National University**, the **Department of Applied Linguistics** has the potential to develop a strong conference interpreting training program but currently offers only limited options. The department primarily focuses on translation studies and computational linguistics, granting degrees in philology and translation with an emphasis on technical skills<sup>27</sup>.

Interpretation is covered only briefly in the curriculum. A notable example is an elective course in **Oral Translation (Consecutive Interpreting)**, offered in the final undergraduate semester. This three-credit course introduces basic interpreting principles, such as switching between languages, memory techniques, and diction, and is typically taught in a second foreign language (e.g., German). However, Lviv Polytechnic does not yet offer a specialized Master's program in conference interpreting, nor does it have simultaneous interpreting training or dedicated interpreting equipment.

Despite these limitations, Lviv Polytechnic has valuable assets to build upon. The department produces highly skilled translators, employs faculty with expertise in linguistics and translation pedagogy, and benefits from the university's robust technical infrastructure. With targeted investments – such as the establishment of an interpreting lab and curriculum expansion – Lviv Polytechnic could develop a modern conference interpreting program, aligning itself with other leading Ukrainian universities in the field<sup>28</sup>. While its current interpreter training remains rudimentary, the institution is well-

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<sup>24</sup> EU Parliament DG LINC Goals for Ukrainian Interpreters. URL: <https://fasi.eu/en/grants/a06efd3a-cbb8-38f2-887a-d9a3f967c9a3>

<sup>25</sup> Ternopil NPU Conference Interpreting Course Modules <https://tnpu.edu.ua/news/10710/>

<sup>26</sup> PNU's Conference Interpreting Lab and EU-standards Curriculum. URL: <https://pnu.edu.ua/blog/2024/09/30/61374/>

<sup>27</sup> Education Process in Lviv Polytechnic National University. URL: <https://lpnu.ua/en/al/education-process>

<sup>28</sup> Education Process in Lviv Polytechnic National University. URL: <https://lpnu.ua/en/al/education-process>

positioned to evolve into a key player in Ukraine’s growing conference interpreting education landscape.

#### **4. Challenges and Opportunities for an EU-Wide Digital Platform**

Despite clear benefits, implementing specialized digital tools across the EU faces several challenges. A primary barrier is technical infrastructure disparities: not all universities (or students) have access to high-bandwidth internet, professional-grade headsets, or modern labs. Without reliable audio and video quality, the efficacy of remote interpreting training plummets, hindering students’ progress and even straining their health. Ensuring a baseline of equipment and connectivity in all member states is therefore critical.

Another challenge is pedagogical adaptation. Interpreter trainers who have taught in person for decades must adjust their methods for online environments – learning to use new software, manage “virtual booth” dynamics, and keep students engaged through a screen. While some trainers innovate quickly, others face a steep learning curve. The lack of tactile, face-to-face immediacy in online training is a concern; skills like note-taking for consecutive interpreting or nuanced voice coaching can be harder to supervise remotely.

Additionally, there is lingering resistance in the interpreter community to some technologies. Professional interpreters have historically been wary of remote interpreting due to fatigue, decreased quality, and technical failures, and this skepticism can trickle into training. Some trainers may doubt that a “true conference atmosphere” can ever be recreated online. There are also institutional hurdles: EU-level initiatives must coordinate with national education authorities and university policies, which takes time. Funding, while available, can be bureaucratic to obtain, and some universities might struggle with co-financing requirements for EU grants<sup>29</sup>.

Finally, a unified platform must accommodate Europe’s linguistic diversity – ensuring lesser-used languages receive equal support (speech materials, ASR tuning, etc.) and that content is not overly geared toward just the major EU languages.

Despite these challenges, the push for digital tools presents exciting possibilities for enhancing and unifying interpreter training across Europe.

One major opportunity is the creation of a unified EU-wide digital platform for interpreter training – a comprehensive hub integrating the best existing resources. This platform could combine a speech repository, a suite of practice modules (e.g., SCICtrain videos, quizzes on EU terminology), and

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<sup>29</sup> European Parliament – Grant programs for interpreter training (2022–24). URL: [https://cost-action.eu/cyproit\\_projects/promotion-of-excellence-in-conference-interpreter-training-cooperation-among-universities-training-conference-interpreters-and-research-into-technical-developments-in-the-area-of-conference-interpret/](https://cost-action.eu/cyproit_projects/promotion-of-excellence-in-conference-interpreter-training-cooperation-among-universities-training-conference-interpreters-and-research-into-technical-developments-in-the-area-of-conference-interpret/)

a virtual class system with built-in remote simultaneous interpreting (RSI) capability. Such a platform would allow students and teachers across participating institutions to access high-quality materials and simulation environments regardless of location, promoting equity in training.

A unified platform also fosters cross-border collaboration. Students from different countries could meet in virtual booths to practice and exchange peer feedback, truly harnessing Europe’s multilingual richness. The concept of online “communities of practice” in interpreting is gaining traction<sup>30</sup>, and a well-designed platform could facilitate such interactions EU-wide.

Another opportunity is data-driven improvement. Digital tools can collect performance data (with proper privacy protections) to identify common weaknesses and refine curricula. Additionally, EU institutions could observe promising talent early by tracking practice performance.

Moreover, a unified platform aligns with the EU’s broader Digital Education Action Plan, demonstrating how technology can support language learning and preserve linguistic heritage. It could serve as a flagship initiative showcasing Europe’s commitment to both innovation and multilingualism.

Let us consider recommendations for policymakers and institutions. To realize these opportunities, several concrete steps are recommended:

1. **Invest in Infrastructure & Access:** The EU should provide funding (via Erasmus+ or dedicated grants) to equip universities with necessary hardware and ensure students have access to the internet and devices required for online interpreting practice. This could include grants for interpreter training labs or subsidizing student equipment in lower-income regions.

2. **Leverage and Integrate Existing Tools:** Instead of building from scratch, the EU-wide platform should integrate successful existing tools. For example, the Speech Repository could form the content backbone, the GT Edu virtual booth technology could be licensed or replicated for interactive practice, and the SCICtrain video library could serve as a skills curriculum. Ensuring interoperability with UN speeches and other external resources would further enhance the platform’s appeal.

3. **Train the Trainers:** The human element remains vital. The EU should expand “train-the-trainer” workshops focused on digital pedagogy for interpreting. The Knowledge Centre on Interpretation could offer regular webinars for instructors on using the platform, sharing best practices for online teaching, and updating on new features. Appointing digital champions at each interpreter school will help drive adoption.

4. **Pilot and Scale:** The initiative should begin with pilot projects involving volunteer universities (one per region/language group) to test the platform concept. Feedback from these pilots can refine the system before

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<sup>30</sup> Knowledge Centre on Interpretation – Trends in technology and training (online speech banks, communities of practice, blended learning). URL: <https://knowledge-centre-translation-interpretation.ec.europa.eu/en/technology-interpreter-training>

scaling it up to all European Masters in Conference Interpreting (EMCI) member institutions and beyond. Encouraging EU internship or accreditation exam candidates to log practice hours on the platform could boost engagement.

5. **Ensure Multilingual and Multicultural Coverage:** The platform's content should reflect the EU's linguistic diversity, covering a wide range of policy areas and cultural contexts in all EU languages. Member state language services or universities could contribute a set number of practice speeches or scenarios annually to keep the repository current. Including sign language interpreting materials would further align with EU accessibility goals.

## CONCLUSIONS

Postgraduate conference interpreting education in the EU is distinguished by its rigorous selection process, practice-intensive curriculum, and adherence to international quality standards. Leading institutions set benchmarks for best practices, including professional instruction, state-of-the-art facilities, and EU-focused training. These elements contribute to the production of highly skilled interpreters ready for international careers. As Ukraine expands its interpreting education sector, embracing these best practices will ensure its graduates achieve competitive standards and professional recognition in the global interpreting community.

Navigating these challenges and opportunities requires a collaborative approach. Partnerships between Ukrainian universities, EU institutions, and established interpreter schools in EU member states can mitigate many barriers while maximizing opportunities. The momentum of European integration provides strong support for these efforts.

Ensuring sustainability will require Ukrainian stakeholders to institutionalize progress by securing long-term state funding and incorporating interpreter training into national education strategies. Despite initial obstacles, Ukraine is successfully laying the groundwork for a new generation of conference interpreters and positioning itself for an integral role on the EU stage.

By addressing challenges proactively and capitalizing on EU strengths – collaboration, funding, and linguistic diversity – a unified digital platform can elevate conference interpreter training to a new level of excellence and inclusivity. The period 2020–2025 has demonstrated both the necessity and feasibility of digital approaches. With coordinated effort, the coming years could usher in a truly pan-European ecosystem for interpreter education, ensuring the EU's multilingual communication needs are met in the digital age.

## SUMMARY

Postgraduate conference interpreting education in the European Union is characterized by a rigorous selection process, a practice-intensive curriculum,

and adherence to international quality standards. Leading institutions set high benchmarks by offering professional instruction, state-of-the-art facilities, and EU-focused training, producing skilled interpreters ready for international careers. As Ukraine develops its interpreting education sector, incorporating these best practices will ensure its graduates meet global standards and gain professional recognition.

To navigate the challenges and opportunities of this process, a collaborative approach is essential. Partnerships between Ukrainian universities, EU institutions, and established interpreter schools in EU member states can help overcome barriers and maximize opportunities. The ongoing European integration process offers strong support for these initiatives.

Ensuring the sustainability of interpreting education in Ukraine requires securing long-term state funding and integrating interpreter training into national education strategies. Despite initial challenges, Ukraine is making significant strides in preparing the next generation of conference interpreters, positioning itself for an important role within the EU.

By proactively addressing challenges and leveraging EU strengths – such as collaboration, funding, and linguistic diversity – a unified digital platform could elevate conference interpreter training to new levels of excellence and inclusivity. The years 2020–2025 have shown the necessity and feasibility of digital solutions, and with coordinated efforts, the coming years could lead to the development of a pan-European interpreter education ecosystem, ensuring that the EU’s multilingual communication needs are effectively met in the digital era.

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