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Justisigns: A European overview of sign language interpreting provision in legal settings

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1. Introduction

There is a growing body of literature that examines sign language interpreting provisions and practices in legal contexts in various countries. The common theme in the results of all these studies is the limitations faced by deaf sign language users in gaining access to justice, either through inadequate interpreting provision, poor quality interpreting services, or lack of training, accreditation and standards for legal signed language interpreters and translators.

The Justisigns project being conducted by a consortium of hearing and deaf researchers and interpreter practitioners across Europe¹ represents a ground-breaking initiative focusing on providing qualified and qualifying sign language interpreters new competencies in interpreting within a legal setting. The remit of the project is to develop training courses to be made available to sign language interpreters, legal professionals and deaf sign language users in Ireland, Belgium, Switzerland, and the UK. In addition the project will develop: a European guide for interpreters practicing in legal settings; a European guide for legal professionals working with Deaf communities and signed language interpreters to improve their communication skills; an information tool-kit for Deaf people in the national sign language to better understand the legal framework in each country; European outreach seminars and awareness sessions; project information leaflets; training posters with practical legal/sign language/Deaf culture & communication tips; and case studies of best practice and experiences from Deaf users.

¹ This project is funded through the European Commission DG Justice Leonardo Da Vinci Lifelong Learning programme, and is conducted in collaboration with the Interresource Group (Ireland) Limited, European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters (efsl) and the European Legal Interpreters & Translators Association (EULITA), Trinity College Dublin, University of Applied Sciences of Special Needs Education and Heriot Watt University.

This mixed-methods study involves surveying deaf people, interpreters and legal professionals through questionnaires, focus groups and interviews, as well as conducting qualitative linguistic case study analyses of signed language interpreter-mediated legal communication, with a view to informing the development of the training courses and other deliverables in the project. The first phase of the project involved a survey of professional signed language interpreter associations across Europe to gain a snapshot of the provision of, and training, assessment, certification and accreditation available to, legal signed language interpreters across Europe. The purpose of the survey was to contextualize the research and future development of training materials.

This paper presents the results of this 'scoping' survey analysis, bringing current concerns to the fore and highlighting the topics that emerge as priorities for research and development in making quality legal sign language interpreting accessible.

2. Literature review

- Research on SLI in different contexts: medical, VRS, legal
- Overview of SLI in Europe: De Wit 2010
- Medisigns project

2.1 *Legal interpreting research*

There is a growing body of research on legal interpreting that is dominated by studies of spoken language interpreting, which draws on different research methodologies but primarily focuses on interpreting in the courtroom (Hale, 2006). Various studies explore courtroom interpreting practice, the role of the court interpreter, and ethical dilemmas faced by court interpreters (e.g., Angelelli, 2004; Carroll, 1995; Colin & Morris, 1996; Edwards, 1995; Fenton, 1997; Fowler, 1997; Gonzalez, Vasquez, & Mikkelson, 1992; Kadric, 2000; Kelly, 2000; Lane, McKenzie-Bridle, & Curtis, 1999; Mathers, 2006; Mikkelson, 1998, 2000; Morris, 1999; Robinson, 1994; Schweda Nicholson, 1994). Other discourse based studies have systematically examined the nature of language use in the courtroom, and how the interaction is impacted through interpreter mediation (Berk-Seligson, 1990; Hale, 1999, 2002, 2004, 2011)

There has been some discussion of other aspects of legal interpreting, such as solicitor-client interviews, police interviews, police interrogations and confessions, tribunals or immigration/ refugee hearings (Barsky, 1996; Fowler, 2003; J. Gibbons, 1995; Krouglov, 1999; Maley, Candlin, Koster, & Crichton, 1995; Pöllabauer, 2004; R. Shuy, 1998; Zambrano, 2006).

With respect to deaf people's involvement in the legal system, there have been a number of publications that specifically discuss deaf people's access to justice via signed language interpreters (Brennan & Brown, 1997; Brennan, 1999; Fournier, 1997; K. Miller, 2001; K. Miller & Vernon, 1994; Nardi, 2005; Russell, 2002, 2008; Stevens, 2005; Tilbury, 2005; G. Turner, 1995; G. H. Turner & Brown, 2001; Wilcox, 1995). Katrina Miller and Vernon McCay have contributed significantly with their discussions of the potential linguistic barriers that deaf people face in the legal system (McCay & Miller, 2001, 2005; K. Miller, 2003; K. R. Miller & Vernon, 2001); and researchers have concentrated on the challenges for deaf prisoners (McCay, 2010; Gahir et al, 2011).

Emerging body of work on remote interpreting in legal settings via video conference, for both spoken and sign language interpreters (AVIDICUS projects, Braun et al: Napier, Mathers...).

Questionnaire based studies in the sign language sector have included a survey of legal professionals on their perceptions on whether deaf people can serve as jurors (Napier, 2013, in prep). One such study that is of particular interest to this study is the survey of American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters conducted by Roberson, Shaw and Russell (2011). In their study, standard demographic information was collected on ASL interpreters working in legal settings in order to examine various aspects of legal interpreting work, including use of consecutive interpreting, deaf-hearing interpreting teams, interpreter role and preparation for working in legal settings. Essentially they found that respondents to their survey did not choose to specialize in legal interpreting due to a lack of training.

The common theme in the results of all the studies on sign language interpreting in legal settings is the limitations faced by deaf sign language users in gaining access to justice, either through inadequate interpreting provision, poor quality interpreting services, or lack of training, accreditation and standards for legal sign language interpreters.

2.2 Legal sign language interpreter preparation and training

The importance of training for interpreters to work in the legal context is not a new discussion (Benmamen, 1999). However, in recent times there has been new attention drawn to this need in the sign language interpreting sector in relation to the need for interpreters to specialize in legal interpreting, and for adequate training to be provided.

- Witter-Merithew & Nicodemus, 2010, 2011; Roberson, Russell & Shaw, 2012 – need for specialization in legal interpreting
- Walker 2011 – survey of ASL interpreters – legal interpreting is most common specialized setting where respondents said that they would not interpret due to lack of preparation and training
- Mathers

- NCIEC papers

2.2 European standards for legal interpreting

- overview of spoken language legal interpreting – standards, training, codes of conduct (Hertog, et al,
- survey of legal interpreting in Europe (SCIC)
- assessing legal interpreting quality – QUALITRAS project (Giambruno et al, 2014)
- Provision of legal interpreting in UK inconsistent (Leung, 2003)
- Scotland – Wilson, Perez...
- ImPLi and Co-Minor/INQUEST projects
- Ref. European Directives: Criminal Proceedings

It can be seen that provision is variable. Research has also revealed that nobody yet has conducted pan-European survey of legal *sign language* interpreting provision, standards, and training.

There is a growing urgency to identify needs specifically in the deaf community in order to develop standards for legal sign language interpreting provision across Europe – to align with Directives and provide access to justice for Deaf sign language users in range of legal settings. Anecdotal research reports that there is a significant gap of knowledge amongst the Deaf community about accessing legal systems, knowledge about access, rights and systems as well as evidence from experiences of deaf people who report negative experiences when dealing or being part of a legal process.

Thus the goal of the Justisigns survey was to develop an overview of sign language interpreting in legal settings across Europe to better understand what the training needs of interpreters, and other stakeholders such as police officers and Deaf people themselves might be. The objective of the survey was to collect data to answer the following research questions:

1. Are sign language interpreters consistently provided in legal settings across Europe?
2. Who is responsible for organising and paying for sign language interpreters in legal settings?
3. Which are the most common legal settings where sign language interpreters are required to work?
4. What qualifications are required of sign language interpreters in legal settings?

3. Method

Drawing on a survey of the literature it was decided to conduct a mixed-methods study

combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to examine the provision of legal sign language interpreting across Europe. Initially desk-research was conducted to collect information about statutory provisions in each country. Next, a questionnaire instrument was developed and delivered through the online survey tool ‘Survey Monkey’² to elicit information on the status of sign languages, the Deaf population and the provision, quality, payment and training available with respect to legal sign language interpreting in European countries.

3.1. Participants

Participants were national Deaf Associations that represent sign language users, professional sign language interpreter associations or other relevant organisations that either provide sign language interpreting services or training from 21 different countries across Europe. In some cases there was more than one response from a country. The organisations were targeted as the most appropriate entities that would be able to provide the information needed on legal sign language interpreting in their countries. Organisations were identified through the membership databases of the European Union of the Deaf (EUD) and the European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters (efsl).

3.2. Questionnaire instrument

An online questionnaire instrument was developed in collaboration with the Justisigns project partners, and also by drawing on questions previously asked as part of the Medisigns project with respect to sign language interpreting in healthcare settings. The survey, in written English (the written language expected to be most widely-understood by prospective respondents), contained 30 questions, which gave a range of single choice answers, multiple choice answers and open-ended questions.

The questionnaire collected background information about the Deaf community and sign language in each country, and asked specific questions concerning the provision of legal sign language interpreting in each country, the payment of, and training available for, interpreters. All the questions were written in plain English. At the end of the survey, respondents were also offered the opportunity to make general comments.

3.3. Procedure

The survey was available from May 2 through May 31, 2014. An invitation to participate in the survey was presented in plain English. Using network and snowball sampling techniques (Hale & Napier, 2013), the invitation was disseminated through the professional networks of the Justisigns consortium partners, through the

² See <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HBRJSQJ>

membership lists of efsli and EUD and the Sign Language Linguistics Society (SLLS) mailing list, as well as via various social media networks, such as Twitter and Facebook. The invitation reached circa 2800 people via the *Justisigns* social media networks page, and was shared by followers to an unquantifiable audience. The data was analysed using statistical software package SPSS.

3.4. *Follow-up interviews*

Follow up interviews from partners countries and focus groups will also be reported at a later stage.

4. Results

In total, 87 responses were received, but after removing incomplete and non-European responses, the final number of responses for the purposes of analysis was 49.

4.1 *Profile of respondents*

Respondents were from 21 countries, with the largest contingent of respondents from the UK, followed by Switzerland (see Table 1). The largest proportion of organisational respondents were sign language interpreter associations (43%), followed equally by service providers and educational/research institutions (24% respectively) and then Deaf Associations (9%). A detailed breakdown of respondents by country and organisations can be seen in Appendix A.

Table 1: Summary of respondents

Category	N=	Sub-category	N=
Total no. of complete responses	49		
Total no. of countries	21		
Total no. of organisations	42	Total no. of Deaf Associations	4
		Total no. of Sign Language Interpreter Associations	18
		Total no. of service providers	10
		Total no. of educational/research institutions	10

When asked which signed languages they used, respondents reported 21 different sign languages that are recognized as the national sign languages of these countries (see

Table 2). Two respondents also claimed that they used American Sign Language (ASL) and International Sign (IS)³, but given that neither of these are national sign languages of the countries featured in the survey, the responses were discounted. It is likely that the individuals who filled in the survey was able to use ASL and IS, rather than this language or sign pidgin being widely used in their countries.

Table 2: Official sign languages reported

Austrian Sign Language	Icelandic sign language
Belgian-Flemish Sign Language	Irish Sign Language
British Sign Language	Italian Sign language
Catalan Sign Language	Norwegian Sign Language
Czech sign language	Polish Sign Language
Dutch Sign Language	Romanian Sign Language
French Sign language	Slovene Sign language
Finnish Sign Language	Serbian Sign Language
German Sign Language	Spanish Sign Language
Greek Sign Language	Swiss-German Sign language
Hungarian Sign Language	

In order to gain a snapshot of whether sign language interpreting provision may be meeting the needs of Deaf sign language users in legal settings across Europe, it was important to get a sense of the general population and ratio of Deaf people to interpreters. So two questions were asked requesting an estimation of the number of Deaf sign language users in the country and the number of recognized (qualified) sign language interpreters in the country. Table 3 reveals that the numbers varied greatly according to country. Obviously the size of the Deaf population was influenced by the size of the country, with smaller countries having smaller populations, but the number of qualified interpreters was not necessarily relative to country size or Deaf population.

Table 3: Estimations of Deaf population and qualified interpreters

Country	Deaf population	Interpreters
Austria	10,000	80
Belgium (Flanders)	5,000	400

³ **International Sign (IS)** is a contact variety of sign language used in a variety of different contexts, particularly at international meetings. It is not an official language but a negotiated form of signing by a multi-party interaction of sign language users.

Czech Republic	10-15,000	50-100
Finland	5,000	700-800
Germany	200,000	unknown
Greece	unknown	47
Hungary	5,000	450
Iceland	250	48
Ireland	5,500	90
Italy	unknown	250
Netherlands	3-10,000	780
Norway	5-6,000	300-400
Poland	50,000	unknown
Romania	unknown	69
Serbia	30,000	90
Slovenia	1,000	46
Spain	150,000	~ 5,000
Switzerland	8-10,000	60 (German) 30 (French) 10 (Italian)
UK (England, Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland)	70,000 (Scotland 7-8,000)	(Scotland 70-100)

In an attempt to determine whether the legal interpreting provision meets the needs of deaf sign language users in each country, we asked respondents to supply information about deaf people in the legal system, that is, number of deaf people arrested each year, average length of stay in jail, typical crimes arrested for, etc. Unfortunately, however, respondents were not able to supply any figures.

4.2 Legal interpreting provision

With respect to the Justisigns project we were specifically interested in eliciting information about legal interpreting provision, and in which specific legal settings that sign language interpreters are provided. Two respondents did not answer the question, so of the possible 47 responses it was interesting to see that sign language interpreting is most commonly provided in legal settings where deaf people are involved as complainants, defendants, or witnesses, rather than for deaf people serving as jurors (see Table 4). This finding is not surprising given that the majority of countries do not allow deaf people to serve as jurors (Napier & Spencer, 2008). The issue of deaf participation in jury deliberations through interpreters is being investigated (Napier 2013) and may well lead to law reform in this area.

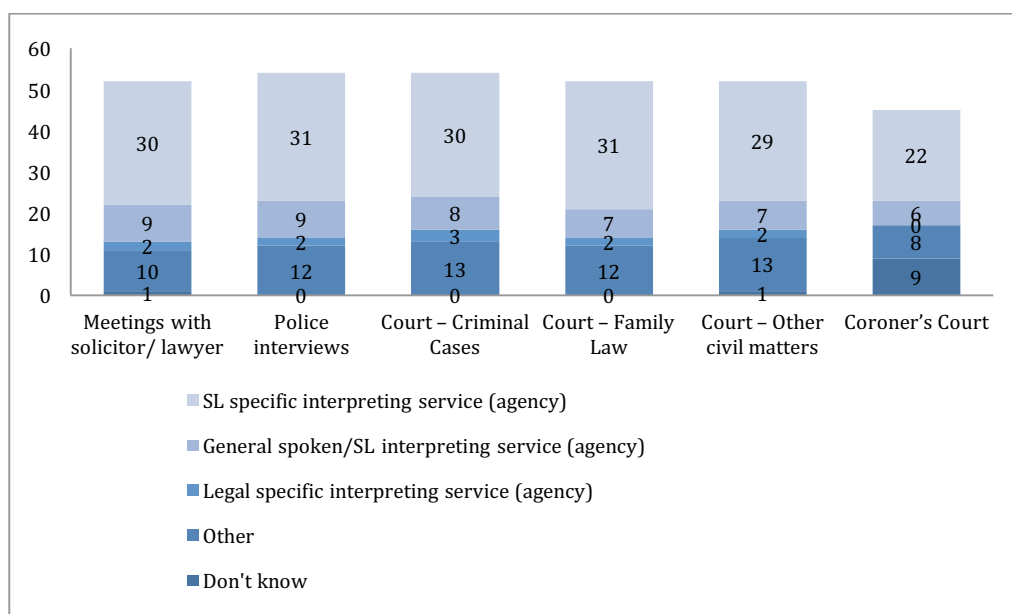
Table 4: Availability of sign language interpreting services in specific legal settings

Settings	Response Percent	Response Count
Court	97.9%	46
Police interviews	93.6%	44
Meetings with solicitor/ lawyer	89.4%	42
Jury Service Duty (criminal/civil/coroner's court)	46.8%	22
Jury Service Selection	40.4%	19
Other	38.3%	18
<i>Answered question</i>		47
<i>Skipped question</i>		2

The other legal settings offered by respondents included: notary public, child protection, tribunals, prison, domestic abuse, sexual violence.

We then wanted to drill down further and collect information on who is responsible for providing the sign language interpreting services in each of these settings. In particular, we were interested to ascertain if the provision comes from sign language-specific interpreting services, generic services that provide both spoken and sign language interpreting, or legal-specific services. Figure 1 reveals that in the majority of cases, across all the legal settings, services are provided by sign language specific agencies, that is, those that have the specialist knowledge of the Deaf community and the local/national sign language interpreting population. It has been noted elsewhere that sign language interpreter services can be in a better position to match the needs of Deaf clients with appropriate interpreters, due to their community knowledge, rather than just booking any interpreter that is available. This would be particularly important in the legal context, due to the potential impact on life changing decisions.

Figure 1: Legal sign language interpreting service providers



Some respondents offered comments to clarify how the provision occurs, and any particular circumstances worth noting.

We ticked the first column (Sl specific interpreting services (agency)) referring to our association. We are not an agency, but we get called when interpreters are needed in legal contexts (FILSE, Spain)

Every department of justice have their own list of qualified interpreters. They contact themselves if those interpreters aren't available, they will contact the agency (CAB) about their needs. We're still negotiate with other spoken interpreting service in legal settings, so we're (SLI) also included in their agency (Serbia).

The SL users have their rights given through the National Insurance Act, and is provided a SL interpreter by the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Department. The court/and police must pay when they are responsible for the assignment, but if a deaf person wants to meet his lawyer or seeks the Police on his or her own initiative, The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Department pays for the SL interpreter. (Norway)

SL interpreting in Finland is provided by the government. If the interpreting happens in a place that is managed by the government (for example the police, the court or a public hospital) then the interpreting should be provided by that place. (Finland)

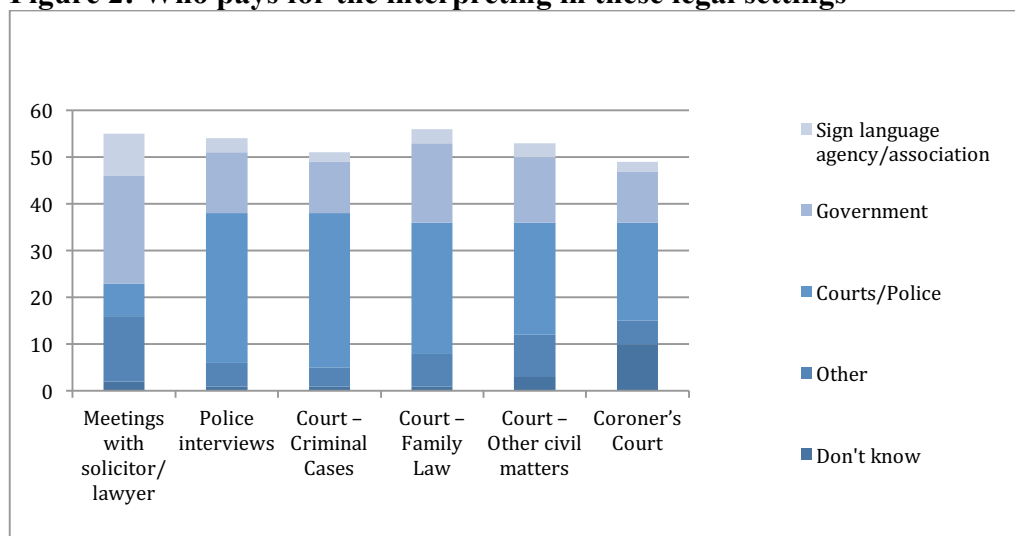
Some spoken language agencies supply sign language to hospitals. I believe

these people are often not qualified sign language interpreters. I am not certain, but I do not think they supply any part of our legal system. (Ireland)

The institutions have legal obligation to formally order and pay for the SL interpreter. They can only appoint an interpreter from the Registry, and the easiest way for them to do is through the official SL interpreting agencies. When a Deaf client wishes to meet with a solicitor/layer he may order the interpreter but the fees are covered by the state (Deaf clients are entitled to 150 hours of free interpreting services annually.) (Hungary)

These comments reveal that the provision of legal sign language interpreting is very much dependent on whether government systems or legislation are in place to provide for interpreting, and essentially who covers the cost of the interpreting. Figure 2 shows explicitly who pays for sign language interpreting provision in different legal contexts. For the most part, it can be seen that the government or the justice system (i.e., police or courts) cover the cost of interpreting provision.

Figure 2: Who pays for the interpreting in these legal settings



Open-ended comments revealed however, that often the Deaf client is expected to pay, especially in solicitor meetings. So even though there may be provisions for costs to be covered, it is not always in every aspect of the justice system.

Another issue that was highlighted by the survey responses was the availability of interpreters for legal work: when asked how easy or difficult it was to book interpreters, the most common response was 'sometimes difficult' (see Table 5).

Table 5: Difficulty in booking interpreters in legal settings

Settings	Very easy	Quite easy	Sometimes difficult	Always difficult	Don't know	Response count
Meetings with solicitor/ lawyer	4	13	19	6	2	41
Police interviews	5	11	14	10	3	41
Court- Criminal Cases	5	10	15	10	4	41
Court – Family Law	5	12	16	8	3	41
Court – Other civil matters	4	10	17	8	4	41
Coroner's Court	3	8	10	8	11	39
<i>Answered question</i>						41
<i>Skipped question</i>						8

Fifteen respondents provided further comments, which provide further insight into why it may be sometimes difficult to book interpreters, ranging from Deaf client preferences to limited number of interpreters who are qualified or experienced enough to work in the area. A few examples of which can be seen below:

Sometimes the Deaf person does not accept the interpreter for personal reasons. But in the legal setting, once you explain the interpreter's role, it is quite easy to be accepted by the police, judge, etc.

Only one of the 10 SL interpreters in the region of Salzburg is on the list of the court and the police. The reason for that is the low payment of interpreters in those settings. Therefore it is sometimes difficult to make appointments.

In Flanders they're not many interpreters who like to work for justice. So in many cases it's really difficult to find an interpreter. Main reason is the payment. Interpreters don't get easy their money and since 2014 the wages are included with VAT, which makes it complicated because all our other work is VAT excluded. It's not clear what we have to do, so a lot of interpreters don't work in legal settings.

I suppose it is hard, because there are just maximum 20 interpreters for legal settings (recognized and registered by the courts).

Due to shortages in qualified interpreters. Also, due to short notice in emergency situations.

Difficult when you want to use a trained highly skilled interpreter.

The issue of availability seemed could be affected by two key issues in relation to education and training: whether legal professionals have received adequate preparation to understand when and how to work with sign language interpreters; or whether

interpreters are sufficiently prepared to work in the legal context.

4.3 Education and training

When asked if there were any specific educational modules for legal professionals as part of their university training on how to work with sign language interpreters and deaf people, 51% responded no, 24% said yes, 15% did not know and 10% said ‘other’, with estimations of ECTS/ hours ranging from 1 or 2 days to 80 ECTS.

We also asked if there was any specific training for legal professionals on how to work with sign language interpreters and deaf people within the framework of continuing education (e.g., workshops). The responses were very similar, with 54% of respondents saying no, 24% confirming that there is training available (short courses, forums), 15% saying they did not know, and 7% said ‘other’. Short courses ranged from 6 – 20 hours.

What follows are examples of comments that were offered in the ‘other’ category that reflect the lack of systematic education and training for legal professionals:

Students of legal studies are aware of the fact that professionals are obliged to hire a SL interpreter when a Deaf client appears in Court or in a Police procedure, (as it is stated in the laws that they must study), but they have no specific training on how to work with them.

I think it varies from place to place, some interpreters get invited to make a presentation but I don't think there is a STANDARD training. I am developing one at present with a lawyer who is also an interpreter

We asked the same question with respect to sign language interpreter education, and whether there were any specific legal interpreting modules as part of university or college courses. Only 10 respondents answered the question, but there was no consistent response to what was available across the countries, and comments suggest that there is also inconsistency in terms of quality and adequacy of content. We also asked how (and if) this specialist education qualifies interpreters to work in the legal system:

There is a modules (140 h total) in Interpreting in legal setting between other fields, not only legal, but it is insufficient. There was a postgraduted course about Legal Interpreting in the Complutense University (Madrid)and the Valladolid University but at present it is not go on.

In one canton (Zurich) from Swiss German Part there is a compulsory training for interpreters in legal settings (both spoken and sign language). However, as it doesn't address specifically the SL-interpreters, it doesn't really support us in our work.

It gives you a rough overview about techniques, and if you register on court, you get an overview about the important laws. Both do not qualify you enough to fulfil the requirements.

It is actually just one course and it is not obligatory and an interpreter can do interpreting in legal settings without this course

Only trained interpreters who have passed their exams AND spent a minimum of 120 practice hours of interpreting can undertake such responsibility. All trainee interpreters, however, have been taught the basics as part of their 2-year courses.

The module gives a briefing on the legal system, legislation, and other formal proceedings. Establishes SL vocabulary related to legal settings. Introduces the particularities of these settings. Mock interpreting situations for practice of setting layouts and scenarios. In the requested hours of placement students may observe legal interpreting cases, if the formal body allows entrance or they supervisor has such cases.

There appears to be even less training for deaf people on the legal system and/or working with interpreters in legal settings, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Training for deaf people

1.	Be Interpreter qualified, and preferably if it possible with many years of experience
2.	Authorisation obtained form the Ministry of Labour (it is a general authorisation, valid for 2 years)
3.	Diploma as a SL interpreter. And in canton Zurich, the aforementioned compulsory workshop.
4.	A test and 2-5 years practice in interpreting
5.	You must be an qualified interpreter
6.	Graduation in sign language interpreter recognized by the government
7.	Depends on WHAT legal settings. In general: no requirements. Criminal cases: SIGV diploma
8.	Just be a sl interpreter
9.	To have knowledge of ISL and confidential
10.	Being recognized by the government and repeating the oath in court.
11.	To have passed your sl interpreter exam, BA degree, and training and experience
12.	No official requirements, just experience (progressive)
13.	In Zürich, there is a requirement for taking an exam
14.	For SLI: certification, for other interpreters: none besides this initial training
15.	There are basically none
16.	Unfortunately NONE.
17.	To have passed the exam
18.	No specific requirements other than Registered Member of SASLI
19.	Work experience but that is not very well monitored.
20.	England or UK
21.	To be SL Interpreter, written in register and in court it has to be sworn for the case
22.	Interpreter must be in the court register. The register last time invite interpreters to join 1997

23.	Must be a trained sign language interpreter
24.	BA in sl-interpreting and assignment through the leader of the interpreter service
25.	Court certified, but there is no testing/evaluation of the skills.
26.	attend training courses, pass exams, carry out practice in interpreting
27.	RI on Register now out of date so anyone
28.	The interpreter has to be sworn
29.	The comment you entered is in an invalid format??
30.	Qualified and registered with professional body
31.	Usually try to have experienced interpreters (5 years of experience)
32.	Have a SL interpreter Diploma.
33.	Registered experienced
34.	Fully qualified
35.	RSLI status however this is widely seen as 'best practice' and is often flouted
36.	Specific Interpreting Course as well as refresher courses
37.	Interprete di lingua dei segni assunto da PROCOM
38.	Formal qualification and being listed on the National Register of Sign Language Interpreters.
39.	Just à diploma
40.	A sign language qualification

To our knowledge, one or two workshops on legal questions took place within the last years, organized by the organization of the sign-language teachers (BGA)

I think apart from a few workshops provided by solicitors at deaf clubs on the legal system, I think there is nothing substantial that is easily or readily available. Perhaps mainstream night classes on the legal system in the ETB network but interpretation would be needed.

4.4 Regulation and quality

The next domain that we wanted to collect information on what was required for interpreters to be considered ‘qualified’ to interpret in legal settings in each country. Forty of the total 49 respondents gave answers to this question, as seen in Table 6. As with previous answers, it can be seen that there is no consistency across Europe: some countries are more stringent requiring specific completion of legal specific exams or training, others only require a generalist sign language interpreting qualification, and others have no requirements at all.

Table 6:

[INSERT TABLE HERE]

When asked if is a specific legal interpreting certification that is separate from general sign language interpreter certification, 56% (n=23) said no, 17% said yes, 7.5% (n=3)

said they did not know and 19.5% (n=8) said ‘other’. The other comments referred to variation and some specific requirements in different regions:

There was at the University, but at present it is not

In canton Zurich, there is a compulsory workshop.

In some regions they have a special course for all the interpreters. If they succeed they get a different certification so they can work in legal settings in that region.

only in Canton Zürich, otherwise our Hfh BA degree suffices at this stage

none that I know of, officially. Courts may hold lists of qualified experienced interpreters though

Generally sworn interpreters

There are two qualifications: liaison/community SL interpreting, and SL interpreting (full). The former is the "general" you may say, but that does not qualify to interpret in high-risk settings, as medical, legal or any formal proceeding. The latter is the one that qualifies for all interpreting fields.

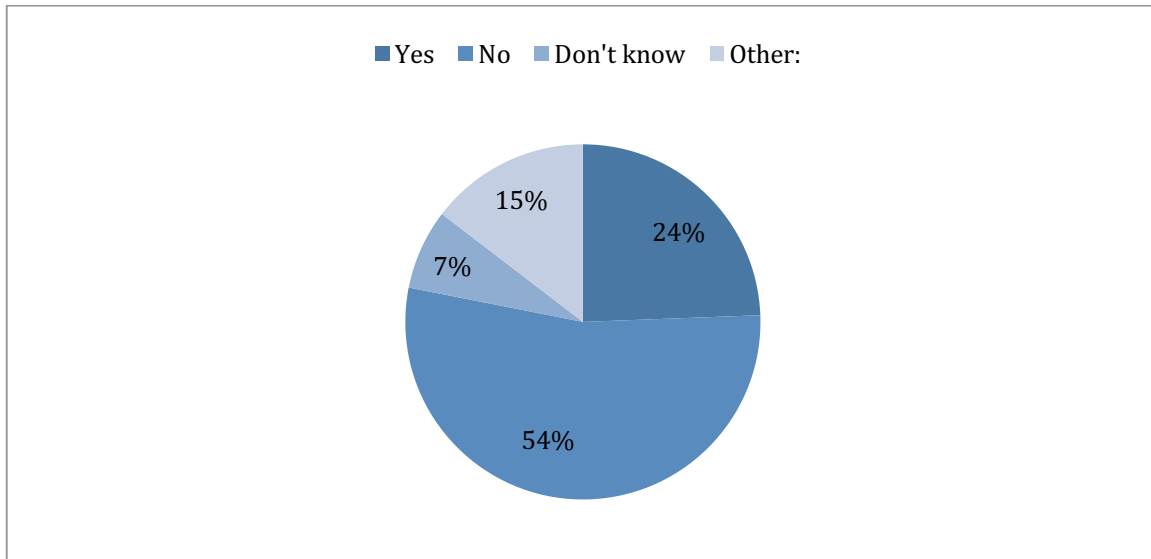
With respect to quality assurance processes in each country to ensure the standards of legal SL interpreting, through for example, monitoring, revalidation of certification or testing, 56% survey responses confirmed that there are no systems in place. The only form of quality assurance appears to be through informal monitoring practices or training opportunities among interpreters themselves, as revealed in comments in Table 7.

Table 7: Monitoring systems

Updates training every quarter of the years or monthly about training with other interpreters
Monitoring, a new interpreter in this setting would join as a third and extra interpreter, internal training, experience
OBSERVATION AND MATCH CRITERIA
Monitoring
Monitoring, always a minimum of two interpreters cooperating pluss use of video recording
Meetings with THE group, supervision, policy training etc

Finally, we were interested whether any countries have a specific Code of Ethics or Code of Conduct for working in legal settings. Figure 4 illustrates that the majority (54%) of countries do not have a specific set of guidelines.

Figure 4: Specific legal code of conduct?



5. Discussion

- Majority of legal SLI services are provided by sign language-specific interpreting agencies
- Interpreting provision in courts/ police tends to be paid for by courts/police, but government pays for solicitor meetings.
- Initial overview indicates that SLIs are widely provided in legal settings, e.g.: meetings with
 - solicitor (93%), police interviews (93%), court (97.7%)
- **But** provision does not equal availability, as majority state it is sometimes/always difficult to get
 - an interpreter
- Almost 50% say no training for legal professionals on working with SLIs
- Approx 1/3 have legal modules available in SLI programmes & legal CPD training
- Majority state no training for deaf people on working with interpreters in legal settings
- More than 50% do not require specific legal interpreting certification
- More than 50% do not have QA processes legal interpreting
- More than 50% do not have legal-specific Code of Ethics
- No clear picture available on no. of deaf people in legal system in each country

6. Limitations of the study

Before concluding the report of this survey of legal sign language interpreting provision

and access across Europe, and discussing the implications of the findings, it is necessary to acknowledge the limitations of the study. There are several reasons why the findings of this study may not be readily generalized:

(1) Size of sample: The sample of 89 survey respondents is a small number for a multi-country study and we note that this is an exploratory snapshot and overview of European practices.

(2) Representativeness of sample: Respondents were self-selected through known networks who have requisite knowledge of practices of interpreting and interpreting provision.

(3) Methodology: We recognise that administering a survey in English across several countries is not ideal for collecting data from people who work with other languages. So again, the sample may not be representative of the range of interpreters working in legal settings, as only people comfortable and proficient enough with English would have been willing to respond to the survey. The ideal would have been to make the survey available in several written and signed languages.

7. Conclusions

Although there are some established provisions for legal SLI across Europe it is inconsistent.

No uniform approach across Europe to training/ certification of legal interpreters

Availability of interpreters for legal settings is a Europe-wide issue

Difficult to identify legal SLI needs when it is not possible to identify number of deaf SL users in the legal system

Statistics are scant regarding information from policing networks and justice networks about the numbers of sign language users accessing or being part of a legal system.

Editors comments and Notes

Additional Sections of the Report for completion

- Implications
- Recommendations
- Need for further research
- Need for development of training materials
- Need for development of standards

8. Acknowledgements

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Appendix A: List of respondent organisations

COUNTRY	ORGANISATION	TYPE OF ORGANISATION
Austria	Verband der Gehörsenvereine im Lande Salzburg	Deaf Association
Belgium	BVGT Flanders	Sign language interpreter association
Czech Republic	Czech Chamber of SLIs	Sign language interpreter association
	Institute of the Deaf for Specialized Education	Educational/research institution
England	Femaura	Service provider
	RAD Interpreting	Service provider
	University of Brighton	Educational/research institution
	DCAL, University College London	Educational/research institution
Finland	Diaconia University of Applied Sciences	Educational/research institution
	The Finnish Association of Sign Language Interpreters	Sign language interpreter association
Germany	BGSD (Interpreter's Association of Germany)	Sign language interpreter association
	CBM	Service provider
Greece	Greek Federation of the Deaf	Deaf Association
Hungary	National Association of Hungarian Sign Language Interpreters	Sign language interpreter association
Iceland	Communication Centre for the Deaf and hard of hearing	Service provider
Ireland	Sign Language Interpreting Services Ireland	Service provider
	Centre for Sign Language Studies	Service provider
	DeafHear	Deaf Association
	Irish Deaf Society	Deaf Association
Italy	anios	Sign language

		interpreter association
Netherlands	Collectief justitie tolken	Service provider
	Utrecht University of Applied Sciences	Educational/ research institution
	NBTG	Sign language interpreter association
Norway	The Norwegian Association of Sign Language Interpreters	Sign language interpreter association
	Fafo Institute for Labour and Social Research	Educational/ research institution
	Norwegian University of Science and Technology	Educational/ research institution
Germany	ADÜ Nord	Translators Association
Poland	Association of Polish Sign Language Interpreters	Sign language interpreter association
Romania	Romanian National Association of Authorised Sign Language Interpreters	Sign language interpreter association
Scotland	SASLI	Sign language interpreter association
	Just sign ltd	Service provider
	Deaf Action, Edinburgh	Service provider
Serbia	Association of Serbian Sign Language Interpreters	Sign language interpreter association
Slovenia	The Association of Slovene Sign Language Interpreters	Sign language interpreter association
Spain	Pompeu Fabra University (upf)	Educational/ research institution
	FILSE	Sign language interpreter association
Switzerland	procom	Service provider
	Bergen university college	Educational/ research institution

	HfH Zürich	Educational/ research institution
	Berufsvereinigung der GebärdensprachdolmetscherInnen der deutschen Schwei	Sign language interpreter association (German)
	ARILS	Sign language interpreter association (French)
	ILISSI, Interpreti di lingua dei segni italiana della Svizzera italiana	Sign language interpreter association (Italian)



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