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Editorial

In the last couple of years, current affairs television and radio programmes in most countries have discussed or announced cuts in public services. Recession oblige... It may therefore seem as an inappropriate time to publish an issue about public service interpreting. There is evidence that interpreters working in the commercial sector have recently experienced a decrease in work demand. Computer-assistance in interpreting, so prevalent in translation, is also growing in that sector.

Yet curiously, public service interpreting does not seem to have suffered from substantial funding cuts. In the UK, the high cost of public service translation and interpreting in some areas such as the police, is at times brought to the fore by the media, but has not been questioned by the authorities. In many language pairs, a shortage of interpreters is acknowledged. For instance, in the UK, the need for public service interpreters has been officially recognised since 2005 and the EU launched a recruitment drive last year for English-speaking mediators. Last month, the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs supported a high standard of protection for suspects' interpretation and translation rights in criminal proceedings in the European Union.

So it would seem that if the recession has taken its toll on commercial interpreters, often perceived as an extra cost in international business meetings that are not taking place so frequently, public service interpreting is rising steadily.

It is therefore more than appropriate that *JoSTrans*, under the editorship of Jan Cambridge, devotes an issue to public service interpreting. For the same reason, it is perhaps not surprising either that this turns out to be a 'bumper issue,' although research in PSI has only attracted interest recently. This is because of the large array of areas covered, from sign-language and medical interpreting to the training of interpreters, but also because of its international overview: three contributions from the UK, six from various EU countries, two from Australia, and one each from Canada and the USA.

So, while interlingualism and their agents are often discarded in our globalised world, public service interpreters voice its undeniable necessity.

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