



European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters

Wetstraat 26/15

1040 Brussels - Belgium

efсли AGM and Conference

Handout for hosting NASLIs

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1. INTRODUCTION

Each year, the European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters (efsli) organises its AGM and conference. Traditionally, efsli invites one of its National Sign Language Interpreter organisations (NASLI), Full Member of efsli, to host these events. In this document you can find suggestions on how to co-organise the efsli AGM and conference in close cooperation with efsli. It is understood that these annual events define and identify the “efsli brand”. Therefore, any final decision has to be approved by the efsli Board.

A. BEFORE THE EVENT

Agreement between the NASLI co-organisers and efsli

There are a series of tasks that need to be shared between the efsli Board/team and the NASLI Organising Committee hosting the efsli AGM/Conference.

A formal agreement in which responsibilities are clearly stated and shared is to be signed by both the NASLI and the efsli presidents (or any designated person).

NASLI Organising Committee

We advise to set up a local Organising Committee with volunteers to carry out the variety of tasks required in hosting the event. The Organising Committee can be headed by one or more coordinators, who have a general overview of the overall event and who can execute the final decisions as approved by efsli. A co-operative working relationship should be established in order to work together with the efsli team during the year prior to the events.

Event’s Master plan

As soon as volunteers have been found and the NASLI Organising Committee’s roles delegated, a Master Plan can be drafted to plan the time scale. It is advisable to work the time frame backwards, from after the date of the event (closing the budget, closing the books), to the date of the event (AGM/event), till the day the NASLI Organising Committee starts working on it.

Dates and programme

The efsli AGM and conference take place annually in the month of September, preferably in the middle of September. The AGM takes places on a Friday (full day) and the Conference during the Saturday (full day) and Sunday (half day).

Event's Bank account and official correspondence

The NASLI opens an independent joint account for all payments - registration fees, accommodation and other services related to the Conference.

Official papers/documents related to the organisation of the event should include the NASLI logo, the efsli logo and the EU logo (the NASLI should contact efsli for the correct logos). The efsli Board recommends designing a special logo for the event, related to the main conference topic, which can be used in all promotional materials.

Budget and fundraising

The very first step for the hosting NASLI is to work out *a provisional budget* which should be made on the basis of a template (to be provided by efsli) and submitted to the efsli Board for approval. The final budget has to be agreed by both the hosting NASLI and efsli. This should cover accommodation and meals for the efsli team (please check the exact number of members of the efsli team), two members of the NASLI Organising Committee, volunteers, interpreters (spoken, SL and IS) keynote speaker/s, organisation expenses.

When developing the budget it is important to know what expenses and income are associated with the event. Some expenses (for example interpreters, keynote speaker/s etc,) are estimated, whereas others - such as everyday management costs - cannot be predicted. It is always safer to overestimate expenses and have fewer costs in the final balance. Please feel free to refer to the efsli team to fill budget figures in.

The efsli Board needs to approve the budget BEFORE the opening of registration. Any change has to be agreed between efsli and the hosting NASLI.

B. AFTER THE EVENT

Profit or loss

Profit/loss will be split 50/50 between efsli and the hosting NASLI. Any funds left over from the efsli AGM and Conference will be transferred to efsli, according to the agreement with the NASLI. This money may become part of the capital of the following year's efsli conference.

2. ACTIONS – BEFORE THE EVENT

a. Finding a location

The following settings can be considered when selecting a venue: Colleges/Universities, schools, hotels, conference centres, etc. Other consideration that should be taken into account:

- **Venue:** to save on logistics Nasli will take care of the conference venue and let attendees organise their own accommodation (at the conference venue if accommodation available or elsewhere). In any case, any information regarding local accommodation should be provided. The efsli team, guests, interpreters, and keynotes should be accommodated at (or very close to) the AGM and conference venue.
- **Conference room/s:** Select the location also in accordance with the structure of the conference programme. If you have no parallel sessions, you would need one large room for all the participants. If you have also parallel sessions, you will need smaller rooms available at the same time. The following is recommended:
 - o AGM room: for approximately 150 people (full members at rectangular table + gallery for onlookers and invited guests);
 - o Large plenary room: up to 250 or 300 persons, preferably with a stage or a stage that can be put in. The stage must be accessible to people with disabilities, There should be enough space for technical equipments for palantipysts, spoken language interpreters' booths and screens (for interpreters and subtitles);
 - o Break out rooms for parallel sessions (if the programme has parallel sessions): approx. 100 persons per room with a stage or platform for presenter(s) and interpreter(s);
 - o Interpreter room: separate room for interpreters for their meetings and preparation
 - o Storage / admin room: a separate room to store boxes, materials, administration, etc. that both the NASLI and efsli will need for during the conference;
 - o An office or room with printing facilities which can be used for administrative purposes by NASLI & efsli staff and / or efsli Board/team members;
 - o Restaurant / cafeteria: room /open space for all participants to have (seated) coffee breaks and lunches;

- Exhibitors space: If you would like exhibition stalls, please make sure this space is close to where the conference participants will be during the breaks;
- efsli stand and hosting NASLI stand: please make sure this space is close to where the conference participants will be during the breaks.
- **Easy to reach:** The efsli AGM/conference venue should be easy to reach by public transportation. Please especially consider the travel time and access to and from the nearest airport, since most participants tend to come from abroad.
- **Accessibility:** the AGM and Conference venue as well as any facilities must be accessible to people with disabilities (e.g. wheelchair users). The same rule applies to guided tours, social programme activities and Saturday's Gala dinner.
- **Visit location:** Please go and see the venue before deciding if it meets efsli's requirements. Please also keep in mind that working interpreters will need to be clearly seen (e.g. lighting, platforms, stage). And consider the use of spoken language interpreters, in which case room for booths need to be reserved. If the event is being organised at a conference centre rather than at a hotel, you should also negotiate catering requirements well in advance.
- **Exhibit:** Make sure that there will be enough space for exhibitor stalls, which are also a source of income.
- **Technical facilities:** If you are using a sound system provided by the location, make sure the equipment is in working order and that a technician is available on the day of the event in case of problems. Also, inquiry if they have technical facilities e.g. laptop, projector, overhead, sockets, multiple screens and internet access.
- **Negotiations with the venue:** When negotiating with the venue about the above items, it is also crucial to discuss:
 - A possible request for an upfront payment: many venues will request a percentage of the expected expenses. If your association does not have sufficient funding before the opening of the registration, you can ask if they will accept a bank statement, claiming that in case of insufficient financial means, they can claim a specific amount from your bank account.
 - Ensure that the deadlines by which you can cancel the number of reservations are just following the registration deadlines. For example, if the late registration deadline is the end of August then you would need approximately two weeks before the events in order to do the counting and then inform the venue of any possible

cancellations. If you do not do this, the venue might charge you for those unused rooms if you cancel just before the event. It might also be possible to negotiate several deadlines - the closer to the event, the higher the cancellation percentage.

- efsli may also require the hosting NASLI to find a suitable location for the efsliDI and efsliDb annual seminar to be held two days before the AGM (usually Wednesday and Thursday).

b. Determining audio/visual needs

Please cooperate with the Head of Scientific Committee about presenters' needs beforehand. Equipment needs might include a TV (with USB), an overhead projector and screen, flip charts or a white Board and pens, a microphone or a closed-loop system, and/or a display projector for PowerPoint, and internet access. Once you have determined what presenters need, make a checklist and double-check that the equipment is in good order the day of the events. **Free wi-fi connection for all attendees is highly recommended.** Find out if you will need an external agency/company to provide the equipment and a technician, or if equipment is available at the venue you selected. If the venue provides the equipment, find out if there are any additional costs for its usage.

c. Selecting accommodation

If the AGM/conference is going to be held in a different venue from the hotel, you will need to choose a hotel to accommodate the presenters, the efsli team/Board members, one or two representatives of the NASLI Organising Committee (about fifteen rooms).

It is also important to make sure there are hostels/Bed and Breakfast and Airbnb options nearby and create a list to inform participants.

Most hotels can also offer a suitable space for the Saturday Gala Dinner and/ or evening entertainment. This is traditionally part of efsli's Saturday night's programme. Make sure that you check the possibilities for the menus for the lunches/dinners/Gala. Please ensure to provide allergy -free menu and special dietary options.

d. Fundraising, sponsorship and donations

The hosting NASLI should also take a proactive role in fundraising as well as finding sponsors/donations/advertisers. Businesses and companies may donate funds or even services. Money can also be raised by raffles or auctions if donations are in the form of products. In any case, official receipts must be produced.

efsli suggests that one member of the Organising Committee should be in charge of this work (fundraising and sponsorship).

Any money coming from fundraising, sponsorship and donations must be budgeted as an income.

e. Publicity & Promotion

The event needs to be publicised. efsli will provide you with a web space and the accompanying efsli conference web address and email addresses for that year. The co-organisers are responsible for adding the content but are supported by efsli and the efsli webmaster for technical assistance and to verify the content. Aside from the web page, a pdf leaflet or announcement should be prepared to be distributed to potential participants. A facebook page / Twitter account would be nice to be used for regular communication. The promotion strategy has to be approved by efsli.

The information on the leaflet and on the web page should contain the following:

- 3 logos: of the event, of the hosting NASLI, and of efsli and possible a fourth one from the EU, if funding is received through efsli
- Dates, place and city of the event
- Information about the hotel/venue and other accommodation options
- Web site address /Facebook page and Twitter account
- AGM agenda and conference programme
- Social programme
- Contact email addresses
- Conference languages and interpretation services
- Registration information
- Important dates, such as registration deadline(s)

All information should also be available in International Sign on the website and Social Media.

f. Dissemination

Dissemination of conference results and follow-ups in terms of conference impact at national and international level should be extensively made and shared with efsli and efsli Full Members after the conference. The hosting NASLI and efsli should work out a mutual dissemination strategy.

g. Registration

The registration fees and opening of registration should preferably take place in January of the year the efsli conference is organised in. efsli is in charge of making an online registration form, which is designed and supported by the efsli administrative back-office.

The following different registration options for the participants are recommended:

1. AGM Full member delegate (free)
2. AGM and conference
3. AGM
4. Conference
5. Student price, conference*
6. Accompanying interpreter**
7. Social programme 3 evenings
8. Social programme 2 evenings
9. Social programme Saturday Gala dinner only

* Students up to 26 years of age. A scan of the student ID card with a photograph proving full time student status should be sent to the conference local organisers as proof of the student status.

**A special fee should be made for interpreters who are working during the conference, and are not booked through the conference organisers, but are booked by individual deaf participants. This fee should cover the real costs of the hotel and meals, and no additional conference costs.

Registration fees of conference participants should in principle cover all the costs for organising the conference.

Please add a registration deadline for selected presenters to ensure their participation in the conference in cooperation with the Head of the Scientific Committee. If the presenter has not registered by the deadline an alternative presenter can be selected.

Using different registration deadlines, such as early bird, regular, and late, will encourage participants to register timely. This will give good indication of how many participants are interested in attending the event. The registration deadlines should be set in line with the cancellation deadlines. The following deadlines are recommended:

- April 30th (early bird)
 - July 20th (regular)
 - After July 20th (late)
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All registered participants will receive a certificate of attendance. The certificate should include efsli, EU, NASLI and event logos and list the theme and event details (date, place, etc.).

h. SAF participants

The efsli Special Attendance Fund (SAF) annually makes it possible for interpreters selected by the fund to participate in the efsli AGM and conference. It is important to stay in contact with the efsli Board and the SAF Committee to know how many participants will participate through SAF. The application process of the efsli SAF often takes quite some time and is often not finalized before the early registration deadline. It has been agreed that SAF participants will be registered for the AGM and conference for the early bird price, even after the early bird registration deadline.

3. THE NASLI ORGANISING COMMITTEE: ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES

a. Scientific Committee of the efsli Conference

The Scientific Committee is responsible for managing the following tasks:

- Call for presenters and selection process
- Selection of abstracts, papers and biographies
- Conference programme

An attractive programme is essential to run a successful conference. It is recommended that the chair of the Scientific Committee is a well know professional (interpreter, researcher, trainer, etc) from the country hosting the conference. Next to other professionals a representative from the hosting association should also take a seat on the committee. efsli will provide one Board/team member to be on the Scientific Committee representing efsli.

Once the main theme has been decided and approved by the efsli Board, as well as the conference content, a potential keynote speaker/s will be contacted by efsli and a call for papers will be sent out. The invitation letter for keynote speakers is sent by the efsli President. If there are parallel sessions during the conference, you can use pre-registration forms for participants to sign up for specific sessions. If poster presentations are also called for, it is recommended to have a specific time slot for this in the programme. In this case you must also remember to reserve a space in the venue for hanging posters.

b. Registration

One or two people of the Organising Committee should be in charge of the following registration tasks:

- Send confirmations and information materials
- Confirm room bookings at the conference hotel (efsli staff)
- Confirm number of participants for coffee, lunch, dinner
- Following up of registrations and payments

- Prepare conference/seminar welcome packs
- Maintain mailing list of participants and presenters
- Prepare and print Certificates of Attendance

efsli provides the link to the web page allowing to register and pay either by Paypal or by bank transfer.

At least two hours before the AGM, the Organising Committee will need to set up a reception desk at the venue for registrations and to give out the welcome conference bags. Credentials (name badges) for participants, presenters, coordinator(s), and exhibitors should also be made.

The registration list will be updated regularly by the efsli back office and will be sent to the Organising Committee which is responsible to check payments and send requests of payment to register participants when they don't pay their fees in due time. This list is useful to check number of attendees, special diet requirements, accessibility needs, hotel reservations, etc. And it also can be used to get in contact with participants to send them updates, materials and information about the AGM and Conference.

For the sake of good communication, the efsli back office should be copied in:

- when reminders of payments are sent out by the Organising Committee;
- if any participant asks to cancel his/her registration;
- if any participant does not finalise his/her registration with payment.

c. AGM room

The efsli Annual General Meeting of Full Members takes place the day before the conference starts. It is advisable to obtain a room spacious enough for arranging tables in a rectangle, plus space for onlookers and observers. Each Member Delegate will be represented by his/her national flag, and will be provided with voting cards.

efsli has a special backpack that has been handed over annually at the end of the event to the hosting NASLI of the following efsli conference. In the backpack there are flags and voting cards that are needed during the AGM. Please check them that they are in good order and count that they are enough to cover NASLIs' attendance. The Organising Committee will also need to make last minute checks of the room/s for the event, including layout for the efsli AGM, equipment such as beamer, overhead projector, screen, and microphones. Please also add paper

sign-posts for each delegate on which they can write their names, and visible to all AGM delegates. Exhibitors usually set up stalls on the morning of the conference. We recommend designating one person to look after them, to make sure spaces allocated are respected and provide assistance, if needed. NASLI and efsli stalls are usually set up on Friday before the opening of the AGM.

d. Proceedings

A copy of the proceedings (of the conference's previous year) goes to each efsli Full Member. They can be distributed at the following efsli AGM (efsli will provide copies of them in due time) or sent to each Full Member. If the proceedings are sent, the postal cost should be incorporated in the conference budget.

e. Interpretation services

The efsli Board recommends having national sign language and international sign interpreters interpreting during the AGM and conference. efsli and the hosting NASLI should also decide whether the event is going to be interpreted by spoken language interpreters. The provision of spoken language interpretation may increase the number of participants to the conference. It is advised to have an interpreter coordinator during the event, who is responsible before and during the event of coordinating the interpreters, such as collecting preparation materials from presenters and positioning of interpreter teams.

Calls for interpreters and interpreter coordinator have to be sent out as soon as the programme is ready. efsli strongly encourages mixed teams of interpreters with a variety of language combinations such as sign languages as L1 or L2, IS and spoken English. Other language combinations are welcome according to the linguistic needs at the conference.

f. Budget and Finance – Tasks for the Organising Committee

Budget and Finance tasks are as follows:

- Develop a budget
- Fundraising – Sponsorship
- Bookkeeping and accounts
- Official receipts

- Registration fees
- Refunds
- Contracts

g. Contracts

The Organising Committee is also responsible for drawing up and signing contracts with the exhibitors, the caterers, the equipment providers, the interpreters, and the agreements with the hotel providing accommodation. Please note that if efsli receives EU funding for this, efsli is the contracting party with interpreters and presenters.

h. Cancellation / refund policy

Another important task is to set up a refund and cancellation policy. Refunds will have to be in line with the cancellation deadlines required by service providers, accommodation, etc. The following cancellation policy is recommended:

- before 1 April 20xx: 50% refund minus bank transfer fee
- from 1 May - 30 June 20xx: 25% refund minus bank transfer fee
- after 1 July 20xx: no refund

Changes in registration: 50 euro (will be applied if a participant decides not to cancel his/her registration but send someone else instead of him/her).

Cancellations must be sent by email to a given email address and need to be confirmed by the NASLI by email.

4. POST-EVENT ACTIONS

a. Evaluation forms

The efsli back office will send an online evaluation form of the AGM and conference to participants through the efsli Survey Gizmo account. Results related to the organisation of the efsli AGM and Conference will be shared with the hosting NASLI.

b. Payments and budget overview

The Organising Committee will be responsible for paying all expenses such as equipment hiring, and all professionals' fees including presenters and interpreters. In the last few years efsli was able to pay some of these fees in advance. Before any payment is made, this must be verified with the efsli treasurer. A final overview of the budget, expenditures and income will be sent to the efsli Board by the NASLI organisers.