Confédération Européenne des Centres de Langues dans l'Enseignement Supérieur
European Confederation of Language Centres in Higher Education
Europäischer Verband der Hochschulsprachenzentren

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CercleS Executive Committee Meeting
10 June 2025: 16:00-17:30 CET / 17:00 Finnish time
Université Aix-Marseille, Marseille

Minutes

Approval of EC minutes of 12 May 2025

The minutes are approved.

Update from President

a. Update on white papers

The FG coordinators of the groups who submitted white papers have been informed of the feedback received from the Coordinating Committee. Julia suggests giving them a template so that all the papers look the same. Zaan will format the layout so it is consistent. Libor says it may be good to have the deadline before the GM in October. Deadline for final version: 15 September

- Introduction to the topic and relevance
- Proposed solutions
- Intended impact
- Sources

These papers will be published as policy briefs on the Website (What we do → Focus Groups) and shared on LinkedIn, and disseminated among relevant stakeholders.

b. CercleS Conference 2026

Alessandra Fazio has the floor for updates on the conference in Rome. Alessandra and Libor met informally to discuss initial planning.

- The conference dates will be 10-12 September 2026 (Thursday to Saturday). Tom notes that this is a bad time for French universities. The suggestion is to do a poll at the GM in October to gauge the suitability of the following periods for future conferences (so from 2028 onwards): the beginning of June, the end of August, the beginning of September, the end of September, and the beginning of October.
- Proposed theme: The role of Language Centres in a fast-changing world: Responding to emerging needs in society, communication and learning. The EC agrees that this is a good theme.
- Participants and modality: participants expected: 250-300; modality: the focus will be on in-person, and possibly streaming to allow online viewing, but not online participation as it requires extensive technological support (perhaps just recording?).
- Format: traditional keynotes on different aspects, like a sociologist and an expert in communication; parallel sessions; panel discussions; roundtables; poster sessions (perhaps online?); time for FG meetings in the morning before the conference.
- The decision is taken by the EC that – as in past years – CercleS will make a financial contribution to the Conference. The amount is to be decided.

c. Boost payments and regulations

The payments approved in the CC in September do not appear to correspond with the budget presented and approved in the CC meeting in December. A summary of the decisions taken is→ as follows:

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1. In September 2024, with the previous executive, the CC approved the following costs for Boost:
Core modules preparation: 7,680
Preparation elective modules: 1400
Webpage and Moodle 3000
Total **12,080**

2. In November 2024, with the current executive, it was approved that instead of offering 1 elective, Boost would offer a choice of three electives, including also trainers from more universities, but we did not want for the teachers to pay for that, so it was agreed that an extra of **1000** euros would be budgeted (because the web and Moodle ended up costing much less than expected, so 1440 x 2 was 2880 euro, but the web and Moodle were 1800 euro cheaper than initially budgeted)

3. At the CC meeting in December 2024, the budget for professionalisation indicated 6000 euro, which mismatched the amount approved in September 2024 but was approved by the CC. This means a difference of 7080 euros.

4. Sabina informed Zaan that the previous executive had approved that the registrations would be distributed amongst the trainers, but she could not find this in any of the minutes of the previous exec. This is a **total of 4900.**
Post scriptum: We received confirmation of the decision to divide the registration fees paid by the participants among the trainers (at the CC meeting in Durham on 11 Sept 2024).

→ 6000 euro was approved by the CC in the budget for 2024, but it was not spent. A further 6000 euro was approved in December 2024 for the financial year 2025. The amount available is therefore 12 000 euro and the amounts agreed upon are in order.

d. Preliminary results from the questionnaire: focusing on challenges and expectations from members (74 replies)
Challenges

- Institutional recognition: budget cuts, lack of teachers
- Plurilingualism: fewer students in languages, particularly other than English
- Assessment: quality of internationally recognised exams
- AI and technology (to enhance learning – also to avoid cheating)
- Adapting courses to increase student motivation

Expectations

- Policies/statements/best practices defending LC
- Networking possibilities (collaborative projects, resource sharing)
- Professional development (AI, testing, teacher training)
- Cyprus and Greece association
- Language testing models
- Funding for events (networking/research)
- Exchanges with other centres (staff mobility)

→ Brainstorming

- Organising a winter course?
- Face-to-face meetings for FGs?
- Online training (3-4 hour webinars) free of charge, cost covered by CercleS – with certificates (AKS model), a system of micro credentials? Julia suggests talking to AKS colleagues who have been involved in such training, and then to present something concrete to the Coordinating Committee.
- Visibility of policy papers – how? Perhaps contact the EU.

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- Contacting institutions in Greece/Cyprus
- Section on the website for resource sharing? Members do not really use members' spaces on the website, so this is probably not as effective.

Zaan to send a reminder for people to do the questionnaire.

Update from Vice-President

a. CercleS LinkedIn page
We should approach NA presidents and ask them to share information to post on LinkedIn. Libor will send them the links they need to post and share, and we will also encourage individual centres to share information. We can also promote articles in the LLHE. The information about language test certification can also be shared. All EC members to send Libor the names of persons to contact by 20 June. Libor will handle the communication and send Zaan items to post.

b. LLHE papers from universities in Russia – should we take a political stand – decision to take
An article in the most recent LLHE by an author affiliated to a Russian university creates issues, as these staff members are generally required to publicly side against Europe and European values. → We should therefore not include articles by authors linked to Russian universities (this does not refer to Russian academics working in European universities). Libor to inform Carmen and Anne about this principle for future LLHE issues.

c. Upcoming LLHE webinar
17 June – LLHE: Julia will start the Zoom meeting.

Update from Secretary General / assistant

a. Application for Associate Membership - New York University Abu Dhabi
An application was received from a satellite university in Abu Dhabi – we are happy to accept. Zaan to follow up.

b. Proposal for new Focus Group on Plurilingualism
A proposal for a new FG was received. The group has been very active and feels their focus is distinct from multilingualism (multilingualism is the context/environment, plurilingualism refers to skills of an individual). We are happy to accept this proposal. Zaan to follow up about website information, members' area, and white paper.

c. Offer of Université de Namur to host a CercleS event
The university was not successful in their bid to host the 2026 Conference, but would like to offer a different CercleS event if possible. The EC decides that we could offer that they host the Teacher Training week in 2026 (of course, dependent on their application for membership being approved by the GM later this year). Zaan will put Tom in contact with them.

→ The EC proposes a system of two events per year. The teacher training will be in June every year and in the non-conference years there will be a winter school.

d. E-bulletin articles
Final deadline for articles is on Thursday 12 June. Deadline for feedback from the Teacher Training on Monday 16 June. The e-bulletin in December will be focused on new members, projects, and collaborations.

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Update from Treasurer

As on 10 June: NAs who have not yet paid: AICLU
13 out of 25 AMs have paid/are exempt from paying fees
Traditionally, there was a CercleS credit card held by the president. Julia suggests that the credit card is held by the treasurer. → All approve this.

Payment for EC accommodation at meetings and events
→ Zaan suggests that for future occasions where the EC meets in person, she does the bookings for the EC's accommodation all together, and not that each person does their own booking. This ensures that the EC stays together and pays one rate, and makes payment easier.

AOB

a. Last minute information on Training week: Tom
There are 27 participants

b. Leadership and management FG face-to-face events
Maike Engelhardt mentioned a possible networking agreement. It is decided that this can be discussed within the Wulkow network.

c. Networking with other associations
Julia asks if CercleS wants to join EALTA (European Association for Language Testing and Assessment) as a sister organisation. This has no financial or political implications and is just for networking and visibility. → The EC agrees.

The ECML PNF has invited CercleS to 2 events in autumn: one is focused on CLIL and the other on AI. Libor is happy to represent CercleS at these events.

d. Upcoming EC meetings
Monday 22 Sept 16:00 CET
Monday 27 Oct 16:00 CET
Monday 8 Dec 16:00 CET

Action points:

- Libor to contact NA presidents about posting on LinkedIn and send them links they need to post and share.
- Libor to inform Carmen and Anne about a decision by the EC that no articles should be published in the LLHE by authors with any affiliation to Russian universities.
- Zaan to send a reminder for people to do the questionnaire.
- Zaan to talk to Mia to change the details of the CercleS document header – her work address. (done)
- Zaan to follow up regarding the application for associate membership. (done)
- Zaan to follow up about the new FG for Plurilingualism's website information, members' area, and white paper. (done)
- Zaan to contact Université de Namur about possibly hosting the next Teacher Training week and copy Tom in. (done)

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