Confédération Européenne des Centres de Langues dans l'Enseignement Supérieur

European Confederation of Language Centres in Higher Education

Europäischer Verband der Hochschulsprachenzentren

Secrétariat Général
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CercleS Coordinating Committee Meeting 09 September 2026, 14:00-17:00 (CET)

Minutes

National Assocation	Country	Present
ACLES	Spain	Juana Sanmartín Vélez
AICLU	Italy	Carmen Argondizzo Proxy Alessandra Fazio
AKS	Germany	Maike Engelhardt Proxy: Niels Rambags
AULC	UK	Marion Sadoux (arriving late)
CASALC CZ	Czech	Blanka Pojslová
CASALC SK	Slovak	Peter Gergel
CLUB	Belgium	Dominique François
FINELC	Finland	Emmi Huttunen
NUT	Netherlands	Esther Scheeren Proxy: Niels Rambags
Ranacles	France	Tom Grainger
ReCLes	Portugal	Manuel Moreira da Silva (arriving late: Proxy: Libor Štěpánek)
SERMO	Poland	Jolanta Wielgus
SSH-CHES-CSUS	Switzerland	Sara Cotelli Kureth
VUS	Austria	Norbert Conti Proxy: Margareta Strasser
Total votes	**12 (out of 14)**	

Executive Committee		
		Julia Zabala Delgado (President) - *voting* Libor Štěpánek (Vice-President) Mia Panisse (Secretary General) - *voting* Tom Grainger (Treasurer) Alessandra Fazio (Deputy Secretary General) Ruth Tobias (Deputy Treasurer) - *voting* Zaan Bester (Assistant to the General Secretariat)
Total votes	**3**	

1. **Welcome and approval of agenda** *(slides 2–3)*
   Julia Zabala Delgado welcomes everyone to the meeting. She gives an overview of the agenda and asks if anyone wants to add anything to the agenda under AOB. No points are added.

2. **Approval of CC minutes of the meeting of 15 May 2026** → *email attachment (slide 4)*
   Votes in favour: 13 | Votes against: 0 | Abstentions: 0
   (NAs present/represented to vote: ACLES, AICLU, AKS, CASALC CZ, FINELC, NUT, RANACLES, ReCLes, SSH-CHES-CSUS, VUS) NAs not present/represented to vote AULC, CASALC SK, CLUB
   The minutes are approved.

Presidency
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3. Selected items from the EC – questions and feedback by CC members

a. Presidency

• *Feedback on the results of the survey on LC needs (slides 6-16)*

Julia Zabala reported on progress during the first half of the 2024–2026 mandate, structured around the priorities of networking, professionalism, reach and strengthening the role of language centres in Europe. Key achievements include the first network-wide survey of language centre needs, the development of Focus Groups and white papers, increased visibility and engagement, the establishment of the necessary EU credentials to support European projects, and the development of the CercleS Manifesto, Training Framework, Mobility Scheme and Quality and Excellence Framework.

The survey provides evidence of the scale and diversity of language centre activities and identifies training and professional development, together with networking and the exchange of good practice, as members' leading needs. Julia emphasised that the second half of the mandate should focus on translating these achievements into practical resources and services for members, particularly through the proposed training framework and quality checklists.

• *Categories of CercleS training courses/programmes (slides 17-21)*

Julia presented the proposed structure for CercleS training, based on six agreed categories covering teaching and curriculum design, assessment, learner support, digital innovation and AI, management and leadership, and research and projects.

The proposed framework comprises three levels: centrally organised CercleS programmes, training provided by National Associations and shared through the CercleS platform, and common quality criteria for training and trainers. Two proposal formats are envisaged, for short workshops and courses and for longer courses and programmes. The proposed financial framework allows for subsidies of up to one third of training costs, capped at €1,000, subject to minimum participant numbers and financial feasibility. Training proposals would be reviewed by the EC and submitted to the CC for approval as part of the annual budget allocation. The CC was invited to provide feedback on participation by National Associations, the development of quality criteria and the proposed subsidy ceiling.

Questions to the CC *(slide 21)*

1. Will your National Association list its training on the CercleS platform?
   The CC is open to this possibility. The EC stresses that we are not asking NAs to change their offering, but to consider whether it can be open to a broader audience.
2. Who will help define quality criteria for training and trainers?
3. Should the subsidy ceiling of €1,000 be revisited for 2027?

b. Vice-Presidency

• *Checklists for quality marks (slides 20-26)*

Libor Štěpánek presented the proposed voluntary Quality and Excellence Framework for language centres. The framework is intended to provide a flexible reference for evaluating and developing language centre provision, supporting internal reflection and dialogue with institutional management, and offering a pathway towards formal recognition.

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The framework distinguishes between Quality, which focuses on essential standards, and Excellence, which recognises outstanding practice. It proposes four progressive levels, from self-assessment and improvement through to formal certification and audit. The checklists cover organisation and management, teachers, and learners. Certification would involve evidence-based assessment and validation by an evaluation committee, with National Association involvement. Proposed fees distinguish between CercleS members and non-members, with substantially reduced costs for members. The CC was invited to comment on the framework, the checklist criteria, proposed fees and participation in the working group tasked with finalising the initiative.

→ *Questions by members of the CC*

Niels Rambags (NUT) asks why we would offer this to non-members. Libor mentions that it could be an incentive to become a member, to profile CercleS, and to offer our expertise to centres that may not be able to join CercleS as members for institutional reasons.
Dominique François (CLUB) asks how this quality mark should be seen compared to other certification systems. Libor notes that there is no other certification system that evaluates language centres specifically, and additionally, CercleS wants to position itself as a body that can recognise quality.
Libor notes that there are currently people working on the criteria, and it will be presented to the CC.

• *LLHE (slides 27-28)*

Libor Štěpánek reported on developments concerning *Language Learning in Higher Education (LLHE)*, including the implementation of its revised editorial structure, the expansion of the reviewer pool and the continued growth of submissions and readership. Three issues were published during the mandate, featuring research articles and activity reports from contributors across Europe and beyond. The journal has introduced an online-first publication option, and its annual article budget has been adjusted for 2027 to reflect workload considerations.
The CC was encouraged to nominate additional reviewers through their National Associations and to promote submissions among colleagues. A call for contributions arising from the Rome Conference is also planned, with selected papers to be published in LLHE.

→ *Questions by members of the CC*

Marion Sadoux (AULC) suggests a training session for new reviewers. The EC agrees that this is a great idea.
Libor notes that it is sometimes asked whether CercleS authors should be prioritised (over authors from outside the CercleS community). The LLHE would like to remain a quality publication, and therefore quality of contributions will remain the most important criteria.

c. General Secretariat *(slides 29-40)*

• *Membership management*

Mia Panisse reported on continued growth in CercleS membership across the different categories, alongside increased international reach and institutional visibility. Activities during the mandate have included a varied programme of webinars, workshops and talks; support for 11

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active Focus Groups; and the introduction of Leadership and Teachers' Meetups to facilitate peer exchange and professional support.

She also highlighted the annual Teacher Training Weeks organised in collaboration with Ranacles, held in Marseille in 2025 and Namur in 2026, addressing AI in language teaching and collaboration between language and disciplinary specialists. Communication with members has been strengthened through the website, monthly newsletters, biannual e-bulletins, LinkedIn and direct communication. Website improvements have included updated institutional member information and expanded professional development content.

Professional development programmes have continued, although participation levels have affected the viability of some offerings. The General Secretariat will continue to support language centres through professional development, international cooperation, transparent communication and attention to emerging challenges in higher education language learning.

d. Treasury

- *Update on payments received from Full Members and Associate Members (slide 41)*

Tom Grainger is happy to report that all NAs and AMs have paid their membership fees for 2027. He gave an update on expenses to date. The association is in good financial standing.

4. Initiatives, projects and plans *(slide 43)*

a. *Proposed amendments to the CercleS Statutes → email attachments (slides 44-46)*

The proposed amendments to the Statutes will be presented for consideration by the General Meeting (GM) on 11 September 2026, as changes to the Statutes can only be adopted through a vote by the GM. The amendments were intended to update the Statutes and provide for the arrangements outlined in the proposals. The CC agreed with both the rationale for the amendments and their formulation. The proposals will therefore be submitted to the GM for consideration and a vote.

Proposed Article 5.8

"The General Meeting may also adopt its decisions per rollam (i.e. outside a formal meeting) in written form, electronically. The resolution to be voted on must include at least the proposed wording of the resolution, supporting documents necessary for its assessment or information on where such documents are published, as well as the deadline by which members of CercleS shall express their opinion. This deadline must not be shorter than 14 calendar days.
For written voting to be valid, the member's statement must be sent by email and must contain the full wording of the proposed resolution and a clear expression of in favour, against or abstention. In a per rollam vote, a resolution is adopted if a simple majority of the members participating in the vote is in favour.
The Executive Committee shall inform members of the Association of the voting results and, if the resolution has been adopted, shall also communicate the full text of the adopted resolution."

b. *Suggestion regarding a second annual CercleS Teacher Training Week (slides 47-48)*

The CC discussed the suggestion of introducing a second annual CercleS Teacher Training Week in addition to the existing summer event organised with Ranacles. The proposal responds to the

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survey finding that training and professional development are members' most requested form of support (36%), and recognises that one week per year cannot cover all six training categories or accommodate all interested participants.

A second week could take place at a different time of year, focus on a different area of professional development, and be hosted by another National Association, thereby sharing visibility and costs across the network. The CC was invited to consider members' interest, potential hosts for 2027 or 2028, possible themes, and the funding arrangements.

Offer to host the 2027 Summer Teacher Training Week
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, a CercleS Associate Member in Greece, offered to host the 2027 Summer CercleS Teacher Training Week. The proposed dates are 24–27 May 2027, with the theme: "Innovative Approaches to AI and Foreign Languages in Higher Education: Training, Teaching and Assessment".

5. AOB

- Next CC meeting in December 2026: via Zoom on Friday 4 December 2026 *(slide 49)*

Julia Zabala thanks the CC for their participation. And, as we are about to kick off the XIX CercleS Conference at the University of Rome "Foro Italico" tomorrow, we thank Prof. Alessandra Fazio and her amazing colleagues at the Language Centre for the warm welcome and their hard work.

Postscript: AKS NA president, Maike Engelhardt, who was unable to attend the CC meeting, sent a message after the meeting to confirm the offer of AKS to host the XX CercleS Conference in 2028 at FU Berlin.

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