



CercleS General Secretariat Mid-Term Report 2024–2026

This report presents an overview of the activities and developments of CercleS during the first half of the four-year mandate of the current Executive Committee. It highlights the key achievements, initiatives, and organisational developments that have taken place during the 2024–2026 reporting period.

Membership

Category	Dec 2024	Jun 2025	Dec 2025	Jun 2026	Increase	Change (%)
Full Members	13	13	14	14	+1	+7.7%
Institutional Members	387	385	396	402	+15	+3.9%
Associate Members	24	24	27	28	+4	+16.7%

CercleS continues to strengthen and expand its membership network. During the reporting period, one new Full Member, CLUB, joined the association, bringing the total number of Full Members to 14. These institutional members remain at the core of CercleS and reflect the association's ongoing vitality and relevance within the European higher education language-centre community.

The number of Institutional Members has continued to grow steadily, demonstrating the strengthening of the CercleS network and the sustained commitment of member institutions to collaboration and professional exchange.

Associate Membership has shown particularly strong growth over the past two years, confirming the increasing international reach and visibility of CercleS. Associate Members now represent four continents and 21 countries. The majority are based in Europe (16 countries), while additional members come from Asia (2 countries), Africa (1 country), and North America (1 country). This geographical diversity highlights the growing global profile of the association and its ability to connect language-centre professionals across different educational and cultural contexts.

In recognition of the challenging circumstances faced by higher education institutions in Ukraine, CercleS has continued to waive membership fees for three Associate Members since they joined the association. These institutions are the Center for Modern Languages at Ukrainian Catholic University, including its School of Ukrainian Language and Culture; the Foreign Languages Intensive Study Centre; and Zaporizhzhia National University.

Webinars, workshops, talks

One of the strengths of CercleS is its commitment to providing opportunities for professional development, knowledge sharing, and international collaboration throughout the year. During the reporting period, the association organised a diverse programme of webinars and online talks, addressing topics ranging from language policy, assessment and testing, and language teaching methodologies to artificial intelligence, sustainability, and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). These events brought together experts and practitioners from across the network, fostering discussion and the exchange of good practices. Several webinars attracted particularly strong participation, with attendance reaching 150 members.

Presidency

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2024

- **15 November** – *Policy Paper Applied*
- **19 November** – *CercleS Online Talk: Leveraging AI Tools for Language Testing*

2025

- **12 February** – *Focus Group on Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP) Webinar*
- **6 March** – *Associate Members Focus Group Webinar*
- **9 April** – *CLIL/EMI Focus Group Webinar: English as a Medium of Instruction* (150 participants)
- **29 April** – *LSP Focus Group Webinar: How to Follow UNESCO's Goals of Education for Sustainable Development*
- **8 May** – *Associate Members Focus Group: Third Exchange of Good Practices*
- **14 May** – *Assessment and Testing Focus Group Webinar: Using a Learning-Oriented Assessment Approach to Measure 21st-Century Language Competencies by Means of Scenarios*, presented by Professor James Purpura (150 participants)
- **17 June** – *LLHE Webinar: In Conversation with the Authors*, featuring Carmen Argondizzo
- **11 November** – *Aligning Language Education with the CEFR: Handbook in Use*, presented by Neus Figueras
- **10 December** – *Webinar on Aligning Examinations to the CEFR: The NULTE Examinations Alignment Process*

2026

- **18 March** – *Language Teaching and Assessment Focus Group Webinar: Intercultural Issues in Language Testing – Cultural Sensitivity in Language Assessment: Will GenAI or a Human Win the Game?*, presented by Barbara Sawicka and Laurent Rouveyrol
- **17 June** – *Introducing the CercleS ADAPT Focus Group*, presenting the aims, scope, and upcoming activities of the new ADAPT Focus Group ahead of its opening meeting in Rome.

Focus Groups

The CercleS Focus Groups continue to play a central role in the association's activities, providing members with opportunities to collaborate, exchange expertise, and explore developments in key areas of language education and language-centre management. During the reporting period, the association supported a total of 11 active Focus Groups, covering a wide range of topics relevant to the work of university language centres.

The General Secretariat maintained regular communication with Focus Group coordinators, providing information and support on matters such as available subsidies, contributions to the e-bulletin, and the preparation of sessions for the CercleS Conference in Rome. This ongoing dialogue has helped to strengthen coordination across the network and ensure that Focus Group activities remain visible and accessible to members.

The Focus Groups have continued to organise a variety of activities, including webinars, workshops, and meetings, both online and in person. These events have provided valuable opportunities for professional development, networking, and the sharing of good practices among members. In addition, several Focus Groups have contributed to the development of white papers, further enhancing the association's role in promoting expertise and informed discussion within the field.

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Information about all CercleS Focus Groups, including their aims and activities, as well as the names and contact details of their coordinators, is available on the CercleS website under *What We Do* > [Focus Groups](#).

Leadership and Teachers' Meetups

In addition to its webinars and Focus Group activities, CercleS continues to offer regular online meetups for language-centre leaders and language teachers. These informal gatherings provide a welcoming and supportive space in which colleagues can share experiences, discuss challenges, exchange ideas, and learn from one another in a spirit of mutual support.

The Leadership Meetups bring together managers and directors of language centres to discuss issues related to leadership, strategy, administration, and the changing role of language centres within higher education. During the reporting period, Leadership Meetups were held on 24 February, 17 March, 19 May, 6 October, and 10 November 2025, and on 9 March, 13 April, 11 May, and 8 June 2026.

The Teachers' Meetups provide language teachers with an opportunity to connect with colleagues from different institutions, share classroom experiences, and discuss practical aspects of language teaching. Meetings took place on 10 March, 28 April, 16 June, 13 October, 17 November, and 16 December 2025, and on 2 March, 13 April, 1 June, and 6 July 2026.

Although these meetups are intentionally kept small and informal, participants consistently value the opportunity to engage in open discussion with peers facing similar opportunities and challenges. CercleS encourages all members interested in leadership, language-centre management, or language teaching to join future sessions and contribute to these growing communities of practice.

Teacher Training Weeks

CercleS has continued its successful collaboration with Ranacles through the organisation of annual Teacher Training Weeks. The Teacher Training Weeks provide an opportunity for language educators from different institutions and countries to come together for exchange, reflection, and hands-on collaboration. The events are designed to foster professional dialogue and the sharing of innovative practices, while addressing current challenges and developments in higher education language teaching.

The Second Annual Teacher Training Week took place from 11–14 June 2025 in Marseille, France, and focused on the theme “AI in Language Teaching.” The event brought together 26 participants and 26 contributors, creating a highly interactive environment in which participants could explore both the opportunities and challenges presented by artificial intelligence in language education.

The Third Annual Teacher Training Week was held from 19–22 May 2026 in Namur, Belgium, under the theme “Co-operation, Collaboration and Integration: the Role of LSP Instructors in Higher Education.” The event attracted 15 participants and 10 contributors and explored ways in which language instructors can work more closely with disciplinary specialists and academic programmes to support student learning.

Across both events, key areas of discussion included cooperation between language instructors and content specialists, interdisciplinary collaboration and programme integration, and research-informed pedagogical

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strategies for supporting diverse groups of learners. These Teacher Training Weeks continue to provide a valuable forum for networking, professional development, and the exchange of expertise among language educators across Europe.

Communication with Members

CercleS maintains a range of communication channels to ensure regular, transparent, and accessible information flow between the Secretariat and its members. The association's main online hub is its website, cercles.org, which serves as the central point of reference for organisational updates and resources.

Within the members' area of the website, members have access to agendas and minutes from Executive Committee (EC), Coordinating Committee (CC), and General Meeting (GM) meetings, as well as Focus Group reports. This section supports internal transparency and allows members to follow the association's governance and activities in detail.

In addition to the website, CercleS produces two e-bulletins per year, providing structured updates on key developments, alongside a monthly newsletter that keeps members informed of ongoing activities, opportunities, and announcements.

Direct communication is also maintained through the CercleS [mailbox](#), which is used for membership management and individual correspondence, ensuring that queries and administrative matters are handled efficiently.

CercleS further engages with its community through its presence on [LinkedIn](#), where updates and news are shared with a broader professional audience.

Finally, General Meetings remain a key channel of communication, offering members the opportunity for direct exchange, discussion, and participation in the strategic direction of the association.

Website (cercles.org)

CercleS has continued to develop and refine its website in order to improve accessibility, clarity, and the visibility of its activities and membership structure.

In 2025, a reorganisation of website content was carried out. On the *Who we are* page, a new section listing institutional members was introduced, improving transparency and making it easier for members and visitors to identify participating institutions. In addition, the *What we do* section was expanded with new pages dedicated to **Assessment** and **Professional Development**. The Professional Development area now includes structured subsections such as *Boost Your Language Teaching Skills*, *Aspire to Inspire Training*, and the *Leadership Training Programme*, providing clearer access to CercleS training and capacity-building activities.

In 2026, further updates were made to the list of institutional members, reflecting an important organisational clarification within the membership structure of the Association of University Language Centres (AULC) in the UK and Ireland. The institutional members were split to better represent the two separate countries, ensuring a more accurate and transparent presentation of membership within CercleS.

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These ongoing updates reflect CercleS' commitment to maintaining a well-structured, user-friendly website that accurately represents its evolving membership and expanding range of activities.

e-bulletins

CercleS publishes an e-bulletin twice a year as part of its commitment to keeping members informed about key developments, activities, and opportunities within the association. All issues are available to members in the members' area of the [CercleS website](http://www.cercles.org).

During the reporting period, the e-bulletins have documented important milestones in the life of the association, including updates on membership growth, conference planning, Focus Group activities, and staff development initiatives.

- **December 2024 (Issue No. 13)** highlighted the introduction of new Associate Members from Latvia, Morocco, and the United States. It also included a review of the Durham Conference 2024 and introduced the newly appointed Executive team.
- **June 2025 (Issue No. 14)** announced the venue for the XIX CercleS International Conference in Rome in 2026. It also reflected on the Second Annual Teacher Training Week in Marseille (11–14 June 2025) and introduced new Associate Members from Bulgaria and Albania, as well as new Focus Groups, including the FG Plurilingualism and FG FlexiLingua Group.
- **December 2025 (Issue No. 15)** focused on preparations for the CercleS International Conference, announced the Third Teacher Training Week in Namur, Belgium, and introduced the new Full Member CLUB and its institutional members. It also welcomed new Associate Members from Turkey and reported on the association's collaboration with the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML).
- **June 2026 (Issue No. 16)** provided a reflective overview of the Teacher Training Week held in Namur, Belgium, highlighting its outcomes and contribution to professional exchange within the CercleS community.

Together, these e-bulletins offer a consistent narrative of CercleS' ongoing development, strengthening links between members and providing a regular overview of key activities across the association.

Teacher and Leadership professional development programmes

CercleS offers two structured professional development programmes designed to support language teachers and language-centre leaders in enhancing their skills and sharing good practice across the network.

The **"Boost Your Language Teaching Skills"** programme was successfully delivered in 2025, with **16 participants** completing the course. All participants received a certificate of participation in recognition of their engagement and contribution. In 2026, the programme was not run due to insufficient enrolment. As

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with all CercleS training initiatives, its delivery is dependent on reaching a viable number of participants to ensure an interactive and high-quality learning experience.

The **Leadership Training Programme** was not offered during the reporting period (2025–2026), also due to insufficient participant numbers. CercleS remains committed to supporting leadership development within language centres and continues to explore ways of ensuring that future editions of the programme are aligned with member needs and participation capacity.

Overall, both programmes remain an important part of CercleS' professional development offer, and future iterations will be guided by member interest and demand in order to ensure their continued relevance and sustainability.

Conclusion

The 2024–2026 reporting period has been marked by steady growth, active engagement, and continued internationalisation across all areas of CercleS activity. Membership has expanded, professional development opportunities have flourished through webinars, Focus Groups, meetups, and Teacher Training Weeks, and communication with members has remained strong and transparent.

These achievements reflect the dedication of our members, Focus Group coordinators, and partners, whose contributions continue to strengthen the CercleS community. As we look ahead, CercleS remains committed to supporting language centres and language professionals, fostering collaboration across borders, and responding to emerging challenges and opportunities in higher education language learning and teaching.

The General Secretariat would like to thank all members for their continued involvement, support, and commitment to the shared goals of the association. Together, we continue to build a vibrant, inclusive, and forward-looking network for language centres in higher education.

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