



CercleS Coordinating Committee Meeting 16 May 2025, 10:00-13:00 (CET)

Via Zoom

Minutes of the meeting

National Association	Country	Present
ACLES	Spain	Juana Sanmartín Vélez
AICLU	Italy	Carmen Argondizzo
AKS	Germany	Maike Engelhardt
AULC	UK	Ana de Medeiros & Oranna Speicher
CASALC CZ	Czechia	Blanka Pojslová
CASALC SK	Slovakia	(Peter Gergel) Proxy: Erika Jurišová
FINELC	Finland	Emmi Huttunen
NUT	Netherlands & Belgium	Esther Scheeren
RANACLES	France	(Tom Grainger) Proxy: Peggy Candas
ReCLES	Portugal	(Manuel Fernando Moreira da Silva) Proxy: Joaquim Agostinho de Oliveira Guerra
SERMO	Poland	(Lucyna Skwarko) Proxy: Jolanta Wielgus
SSH-CHES-CSUS	Switzerland	Sara Cotelli Kureth
VUS	Austria	Norbert Conti
Total votes	13	

Executive Committee	Votes	Present
	3	Julia Zabala Delgado (President) Libor Štěpánek (Vice-President) Mia Panisse (Secretary General) Alessandro Fazio (Deputy Secretary General) Tom Grainger (Treasurer) Ruth Tobias (Deputy Treasurer) Zaan Bester (Assistant to the General Secretariat)
Total votes	16	

1. Welcome and approval of agenda (slides 2-3)

Julia Zabala Delgado welcomes everyone at the meeting, especially Esther Scheeren (NUT) and Oranna Speicher (AULC) who are attending their first CC 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 13 December 2024, via Zoom → email attachment (slide 4)

Votes in favour: 15 | Votes against: 0 | Abstentions: 1

(NAs present/represented to vote: AICLU, ACLES, AKS, AULC, CASALC CZ, CASALC SK, FINELC, NUT, RANACLES, ReCLES, SERMO, SSH-CHES-CSUS, VUS)

The minutes are approved.

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3. Short reports of the EC activities – questions and feedback by CC members

January 2025-May 2025:

a. Presidency:

- Host XIX CercleS Conference 2026 → *email attachments (slide 6)*

Three applications were received:

- Université de Namur - Belgium
- Università degli studi di Roma "Foro Italico" - Italy
- University of Navarra - Spain

The EC compiled a set of criteria to help us decide. This document can be used as a guideline for choosing hosts for future events.

- Position in Europe (reachable for most CercleS members)
- The dates of the conference (if given)
- Confirmation/support from the specific university
- Information about venues for the combined sessions and for the parallel sessions (and networking areas)
- The availability of technical facilities (like computers and projectors in the rooms)
- Space (and flexibility) for lunch/tea and for exhibitors and posters
- The availability of accommodation
- Good transport links (reachable by train)
- Sustainability/eco-friendliness

Based on these criteria, Università degli studi di Roma "Foro Italico" was chosen by the EC.

→ Maike Engelhardt asks if we considered the impact of allowing a new member (Namur) to host, as it can give momentum to the centre. Julia Zabala notes that we thought about it and will consider supporting them with another CercleS event, but since they have not yet joined CercleS officially, we opted for a current member.

→ Emmi Huttunen asks if the dates of the conference are available yet. Alessandra Fazio notes that specific dates are not yet fixed, but it will be in line with the regular conference dates in September.

- Survey of members *(slide 7)*

The EC would like to distribute a survey of CercleS members so that we can paint an accurate picture of our current members and landscape. It can then inform the support and activities CercleS offers to members. It was sent to all NA presidents, Julia asks them to share the survey amongst their members.

- CercleS Teacher Training project "Boost your language teaching skills" - update and electives for September-December 2025 *(slide 8)*

The training is in full swing and the core modules are wrapping up. There were several proposals for elective modules in the second half of the year, so instead of the organisers choosing the electives, they asked the participants to choose which ones were more relevant to their context. The three electives are:

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1. **The action-oriented and task-based approach in university language teaching, learning and assessment: The role of the learner and test-taker as a social agent.** Dr. Johann Fischer, Leitung ZESS Göttingen, Germany.

2. **Supporting Learner Autonomy.** Mgr. Martina Šindelářová Skupeňová, Vice-Director of the Language Centre, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic.

3. **Intercultural Communication in the professional development of academic language teachers.** Prof. Liliana Szczuka-Dorna, Centre of Languages and Communication, Poznan University of Technology, Poland.

- Standard-setting process to align CercleS language certification systems to the CEFR: update and preliminary results ([slides 9-10](#))

In February, a meeting was held to align the CercleS language certification systems to the CEFR. The expert judges included, 2 Acert experts (SERMO – Poland), 2 ACLES experts (ACLES-Spain), 2 CLES experts (CLES-France), 2 UNicert experts (AKS – Germany), and 3 international experts on standard-setting processes and CEFR alignment. The goals were to share expertise, provide validity evidence for the exams and ensure that the certification systems were aligned to the CEFR levels and comparable amongst them. The results were very positive and will be published on the CercleS website soon.

b. Vice-Presidency:

- LLHE editorial board proposals from Full Members ([slide 11](#))

We did not have enough reviewers and therefore NAs were invited to nominate reviewers. There were 17 reviewers, and after the first call, there are now 21 reviewers: The current editorial board consists of the following representatives: 5 from Ranacles, 4 from AULC, 4 from SSH-CHES-CSUS, 2 from AICLU, 2 from ACLES, 1 from CASALC CZ, 1 from ReCLES.pt, 1 from FINELC, 1 from AKS. We therefore once again ask NAs to nominate reviewers, which will help to reduce the overall workload.

→ Ana de Medeiros asks if the persons who were suggested by the NAs were contacted by us. They have not been notified.

- LLHE updates (issue 15.1 and LLHE webinar) ([slide 11](#))

Issue 15.1 contains 12 papers, of which 6 are from the 2024 CercleS Conference in Durham, and 4 activity reports also from the Durham Conference. De Gruyter had some technical issues, so there may be a delay with the online and physical issues.

Issue 15.2 will be published in October.

There will be another LLHE webinar with interviews with authors whose articles have been published. This will take place on 17 June from 16:00-18:00 CET.

- Requests for collaboration: ([slide 12](#))

- *International Association for Language Learning Technology*

They are a US-based association with links to Europe, and have collaborated with, i.e., AKS in the past. Julia and Mia met with them on 26 February. The collaboration will entail promoting our work to their contacts in the USA, and they are interested in joining our conferences and events, as well as exchanging material and know-how.

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- *Libertas International University in Zagreb, Croatia*

They have a European project focused on language teaching in higher education, and they would like to share some information and use CercleS to help disseminate the results and also be part of our network for further collaboration with other colleagues. To this purpose, they want to apply for Associate membership.

- *Community of Practice (CoP) FOREU4ALL framework*

This is an alliance of alliances: the call unites 16 European alliances. The aim of this CoP is to establish groups across Europe focused on different areas, such as multilingualism, plurilingualism, different approaches to teaching, and to form communities of practice. CercleS did not form part of the call when it was proposed to the EU, but asked to join later, which they were happy to accommodate.

c. General Secretariat:

- Membership management and requests (*slide 14*)

Member management

- 385 Institutional members from 13 Full members
- 24 Associate members
- 1114 subscriptions to the cercles.org website

Membership requests

- Libertas International University in Zagreb, Croatia (Associate membership)
They want to join CercleS activities in a variety of fields including LSP, Assessment, Teaching, and others.
- Centres de Langues Universitaires de Belgique francophone (Full membership)
This network represents various Belgian francophone universities, since 2005.

- Webinars/Talks (*slide 15*)

The recent webinars have been organised by our Focus Groups, who are very active.

- 9 Apr: Webinar on English as Medium of Instruction – hosted by FG EMI
- 29 Apr: How to follow UNESCO's goals of education for sustainable development hosted by FG LSP
- 8 May: Third Exchange of Good Practices – hosted by FG Associate Members
- 14 May: Webinar on scenario-based assessment – hosted by FG Assessment and Testing (154 registrations!)

Some of the webinars and talks can be watched on our YouTube channel ("CercleS organisation").

- Meetups (*slide 16*)

- Leadership Meetups: 24 February, 17 March
- Teachers' Meetups: 10 March, 28 April

- Ranacles & CercleS: Joint Teacher Training Week, Aix-Marseille Université, 11-14 June (*slides 17-18*)

- 30 available places - only 26 signed up, please advertise (deadline 25 May)
- Can count as Erasmus+ Teacher Training
- The training will include 3 conferences/lectures and 6 workshops
- So far, we have representatives from Belgium, Czechia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Spain & UK

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d. Treasury: Budget

Update on payments received from Full Members and Associate Members ([slides 19](#))

As of 12 May, the following payments have been received: National Associations: AKS, AULC, FINELC, VUS. Associate members: 8 have paid or are exempt. The deadline for payments is 21 June.

Cercles budget execution 2025 ([slide 20](#))

The only element that is new on the budget from December 2024 is the income from the *Boost Your Language Teaching Skills* training. The budget shows 4600 euro income, but it will correspond to expenses to the trainers.

We had to buy an additional Zoom license for the webinar on 14 May, as our current license only allows us to host 100 people at a webinar, but we had 150 at the webinar this past week. We opted to buy the additional license for only one month (instead of an annual subscription).

Questions and feedback by CC members ([slide 21](#))

→ Carmen Argondizzo thanks the EC for all the work. She emphasises the need for reviewers, and also thanks Ana de Medeiros and Alessandra Fazio, who are on the editorial board. Almost all the papers received from the CercleS Conference 2024 have been reviewed: about half the papers received will be in Issue 15.1 and half in Issue 15.2. Sixty papers from independent authors have also been received, so there is a lot of work ahead for her and Anne Chateau. She again invites everyone to the LLHE webinar on 17 June.

4. Proposals, reports, motions from members

- a. Update on Joint Ranacles/Cercles Teacher Training Week: “Language Teaching and Artificial Intelligence” (Marseille, 11-14 Jun 2025) (Tom Grainger) ([slide 22](#))

There are still 4 places available, so we ask NAs to promote the training (we normally accept slightly more, as there are usually a couple of cancellations). The training will be conducted by 10 contributors from various countries: Belgium, Czechia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, and the UK. Tom reminds everyone that Erasmus+ funding is possible for Teacher Training mobility.

→ Maike Engelhardt asks how this (Erasmus) process works. Libor Štěpánek says from the perspective of the receiving university, it is just signing a form that comes from the sending university. The receiving university has to confirm that the person participated in events/training as agreed upon. The administration goes via the Erasmus office of each university. If it is staff mobility for training, then no prior agreement between the sending and receiving universities is necessary.

- b. LinkedIn profile (Libor Štěpánek) ([slide 23](#))

This was discussed at a previous CC meeting. We started posting in spring and so far have 122 followers, which is positive. We would like to encourage members to send us information to promote or share. At the moment, the process is to send the information to Zaan (generalsecretariat@cercles.org), who will then post it. We are happy to – in return – follow any accounts from universities.

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c. Changes on the website (Julia Zabala) ([slides 24-26](#))

We now have all institutional members listed on the website following a request. It gives visibility to centres as CercleS members, and makes it possible for centres to identify each other as CercleS members. We also changed and reorganised the content in the section WHAT WE DO. There is now a [Professional Development](#) tab, which contains all training/courses under one heading.

We have an updated section on [Assessment](#) with information on the different language certification systems, plus a table of equivalences. The [Research](#) section will also contain information such as the white papers.

Questions and feedback by CC members ([slide 27](#))

There are no questions.

5. Discussion

Feedback on FG white papers: → *email attachments* ([slide 28](#))

- White Paper on Associate Members
- White Paper on EMI in Higher Education
- White Paper on Assessment
- White Paper on Leadership and Management

- White Paper on Associate Members

Feedback from Ana de Medeiros:

All the white papers were excellent. Regarding this white paper: Differentiation is necessary between full membership and associate membership. It is suggested that this should be made clear. Julia notes that it can perhaps also be made clearer on the website.

Feedback from Jolanta Wielgus:

All the papers were very thorough. As presidents of NAs, they were not able to really judge the needs of AMs.

Feedback from Peggy Candas:

One question that can also be raised is not what CercleS provides to AMs, but also what the AMs bring to CercleS. Is encouraging and helping to establish NAs where there isn't one an aim? Libor Štěpánek notes that this is not necessarily the aim regarding AMs, as it is not always possible for various reasons. Where possible, we do encourage it. CercleS offers support in countries where there is an NA or none. Tom Grainger notes that the Statutes do not specify as an aim of CercleS to establish NAs. If we wanted to establish this as an aim, we may need to revisit the Statutes down the road.

- White Paper on EMI in Higher Education

Feedback from Ana de Medeiros:

They felt the paper was excellent and timely. They asked if it would be possible to link with European University alliances that are also working on this and developing language policies.

Feedback from Jolanta Wielgus:

They also felt it was a good document. However, it felt very teacher-centred – could it perhaps include some learner-centred issues?

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Feedback from Peggy Candas:

They also felt it was a good paper. Could more learner support be provided by Language Centres? How do LCs and faculties collaborate to achieve the best learner support?

They wondered if there shouldn't perhaps be a FG focused on plurilingualism or plurilingual internationalisation? Peggy says that plurilingual internationalisation (as opposed to just English internationalisation) is a very important topic, and should be defended by CercleS.

Libor Štěpánek says there is a group from 3 or 4 universities who are very active and could form a FG on plurilingualism. They are expected to submit a formal plan/proposal before the EC meeting in June.

Peggy asks if FGs talk to each other and collaborate. Libor mentions that in the past, FGs had an event for themselves, where they could meet, collaborate, or visit each other. This could be arranged at the CercleS Conference in Rome.

- White Paper on Assessment

Feedback from Ana de Medeiros:

They felt it was a highly relevant and excellent topic, and thank the group for the work they are doing.

Feedback from Jolanta Wielgus:

The document covers all the important points – they are doing very good work and the members are very active.

Feedback from Peggy Candas:

They feel that formative assessment is mentioned only briefly, and could be highlighted (not only for teachers but also for learners). They spoke about good practices, but the context is important. Maybe the paper could look at ways to adapt practices for particular contexts.

- White Paper on Leadership and Management

Feedback from Ana de Medeiros:

Suggestions for more attendance at the meetups: contact LC directors. The issue of the timing of the meetings is difficult for colleagues who have responsibilities with caregiving in the afternoons. They should consider the impact of having meetups on the same day of the week and time, or vary the day and time. There is an idea to have a meeting or one-day event for LC directors at the CercleS Conference – perhaps the day before the conference starts.

Feedback from Jolanta Wielgus:

Jolanta feels that a day for LC directors is a good idea to discuss relevant issues, similarities, and differences.

Feedback from Peggy Candas:

The issues are very relevant. They ask whether it would be possible to show greater diversity in leadership styles. Depending on objective and interlocutors, top-down directness can sometimes be counterproductive, and ideas will not always be accepted positively.

→ Maïke Engelhardt asks what happens now. Julia Zabala says that the ideas and comments will be sent to the FGs and that they can edit the papers accordingly if they wish to. We will then post them on the website to make our position visible – what we stand for regarding different topics. Libor Štěpánek says that we should also use these papers to encourage other FGs to be more active, and to encourage people to join FGs.

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6. Outlook on concrete activities May 2025 → (slide 29)

- Leadership meetup on 19 May – topic: *the White Paper on Leadership and Management*
- Teachers' meetup on 16 June – topic: *Integrating cultural awareness into language classes*
- The LLHE webinar will be on 17 June from 16:00-18:00 CET.
- The next e-bulletin will be published on 20 June.
- Please advertise NA/Full member activities and webinars within the CercleS community.

Questions and feedback by CC members (slide 30)

There are no questions.

7. AOB (slide 31)

- Next CC meeting: Friday 12 December 2025 via Zoom

The time will be confirmed.

- Extraordinary General Meeting in October

Libor explains that the GM will be a short meeting to admit a new full member. It will not last very long.

Julia Zabala Delgado thanks everyone for their participation and adjourns the meeting. (slide 32)

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