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**Subject:** Intention to stand for election – position of Deputy Secretary General, CercleS Executive Committee

Thursday, 2 May 2024

Dear Dr. Regina Mügge, Election Officer,

I am writing to express my intention to stand as a candidate for the position of **Deputy Secretary General** in the upcoming elections to the Executive Committee of CercleS, the European Confederation of Language Centres. As such, it would be a privilege for me to work in a team, alongside the Secretary General, in supporting the work of the CercleS President and Vice-President, Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer.

As Director of the Université Libre de Bruxelles language centre, ULB Langues, I can confirm that I am a member of a Language Centre that contributes to CercleS. Until recently an 'Associate Member', ULB Langues is now affiliated to RANACLES (France) and is hence a fully-fledged 'Institutional Member' of CercleS. Incidentally, the French-speaking region of Belgium, the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, under whose authority the ULB operates, does not currently have its own 'national association' of language centres. My candidacy is supported and thus proposed by the President of RANACLES.

I can also confirm, and am willing to demonstrate should it be required, that I have the full support of my home institution, its rectoral team, and my language centre's academic coordination and management team. I affirm my motivation and suitability for the post of Deputy Secretary General and am committed to the responsibilities it entails.

**David Albert BEST – Personal Statement:**

**Candidacy for election to the position of Deputy Secretary General – CercleS Executive Committee (2024-2028)**

I am the Academic Coordinator (Director) of the language centre at the Université Libre de Bruxelles, known as 'ULB Langues'. Alongside this role, I remain Head of the English Department at ULB Langues, as well as serving as its International Relations academic officer, and have been since 2019. I have also held my post as Senior lecturer in English at the Faculty of Law and Criminology (ULB) since 2011.

Born in Ireland and educated in both Ireland and the UK, after graduating with a BA in European Studies from University College Cork (1999), I undertook research for a PhD in Modern Languages at the same institution (conferred 2008), with a thesis on Representations of rurality in 20th-century central Italian literature (published as *Ruralism in Central Italian Writers 1927-1997: From 'Strapaese' Landscapes to the Gendering of Nature*, Ancona University Press, 2010).

Between 2003 and 2009, I lectured and carried out research on Italian language and culture at the Universities of Cork, St Andrews, and Trinity College Dublin. I subsequently taught English language, translation, and intercultural mediation studies at the University of Naples 'L'Orientale' (2009-2011). My research takes in Italian/European languages and 20th-century literatures, informed by cultural geography, landscape and rural studies, ecocriticism and ecofeminism, gender and postcolonial studies, and translation.

My papers range from analyses of language and interpretation issues for Italian PoWs in rural Scotland (WWII), to studies of multilingualism policy, drafting practice, and assuring equivalence in EU legal documents. Within this framework, I edited and translated (from Italian) Domenico Cosmai's volume, *The Language of Europe: Multilingualism and Translation in the EU Institutions* (Editions Universitaires de Bruxelles, 2014).

Based in Brussels, where I moved in February 2010 to gain direct experience of European political affairs at the EU Committee of the Regions, I took up my post at the Faculty of Law and Criminology, Université Libre de Bruxelles, in October 2011. As a Legal English expert and educator, I was nominated as Country Representative for Belgium of the European Legal English Teachers' Association (EULETA) in 2014 and went on to be elected to serve two terms as the EULETA President (2016-2021). I remain active in bringing relevant, dynamic and authentic methodologies into the teaching of legal language for future lawyers and legal professionals.

In the Faculty of Law and Criminology at the ULB, I am a member of the International Relations Commission and serve as Erasmus Incoming academic coordinator. In my roles at ULB Langues, I was nominated Academic Coordinator (Head) of the English department in October 2019, while at the same time being delegated as the language centre's International academic officer. In June 2023, I was elected to the position of Academic Coordinator (Director) of ULB Langues. I took up this role last October.

Since becoming a member of the academic coordination and management team at ULB Langues, I have been committed to:

- bolstering the centre's visibility,
- strengthening its position as an interface between ULB and international partners (via Erasmus and other forms of cross-border collaboration),
- deepening its internal partnerships with other centres and services at the ULB,
- furthering teaching excellence and innovation,
- restructuring and modularising the teaching offer,
- bringing innovation to evaluation and assessment methods, especially in relation to special needs learners
- professionalising the management of people,
- promoting continuous professional development,
- cultivating an environment of research and development in language teaching and sharing best practice,
- defining key areas for improvement and growth where budget can be allocated.

I believe the factors listed thus far soundly qualify me to stand for the aspired position on the Executive Committee of CercleS and am committed to bringing the vast range of skills and experience gained in such work as outlined above to the role of Deputy Secretary General, if elected in September 2024. I would like to stress that, as a team-member on the CercleS Executive Committee, I am ready to contribute to carrying out such tasks as:

- Day-to-day running of the association,
- Executing strategic decisions taken by the Coordinating Committee,
- Coordinating CercleS activities,
- Collaborating with local organising committees in organising CercleS international congresses,
- Managing the publications of CercleS.

More specifically, I would be happy to support the elected Secretary General in administering the affairs of the association, managing membership, and communicating with members.

In order to perform the above tasks, I am ready and willing to play an active role in the Executive Committee team, making myself available for several hours per week dedicated to CercleS activities: enjoying regular contact with other members of the Executive Committee, participating in monthly meetings, exchanging ideas and participating in planning for and work related to all CercleS activities, especially by attending CercleS events and meetings. I can ensure that my institution is prepared to cover, within reason, CercleS-related travel expenses not normally covered by the association.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,



David Albert BEST (PhD)