

Focus Groups are mainly self-organised interest groups concentrating on research, exchange and development on topics of interest to the CercleS community.

CercleS promotes more active participation among its member institutions and their staff via Focus Groups. These groups help members to:

- learn from each other with the aim to further develop ideas
- enhance the quality of our everyday work
- stimulate innovation and involve more CercleS members in the daily management of our network.

CercleS offers organisational and financial support for Focus Group meetings.

CercleS members are invited to express their interest and commitment in working in any of the activities listed below:

### **FG Associate Members**

So far, Associate Members have not played a central role in CercleS and do not always feel they are a part of our confederation at the same level as full members. In some cases they are not in a position to create a National Association. With this focus group we would like to invite Associate Members to become more active in CercleS by discussing their specific problems, their needs and their potential, sharing with us their experience and competencies.

FG coordinator and contact person: Olga Filipchuk - [filipchuk\\_o@mail.ru](mailto:filipchuk_o@mail.ru)

### **FG Autonomy**

Since CercleS was established in 1990, language centres have offered their learners various ways of improving their language skills. They are often innovative places where new pedagogical approaches and devices for language learning are proposed.

Among the different learning possibilities offered to students in language centres, some aim at facilitating the development of learner autonomy. Some language centres indeed offer tools such as self-access centres, and language advising facilities that enable learners to take more control of their learning to support autonomization.

The purpose of this focus group is to investigate the relationships between learner autonomy and language centres. It will also try to clarify the concept of autonomy, which, although widely used in language learning publications these last 30 years is complex and open to various interpretations.

This focus group will collaborate e.g. with Focus Group 4 (Innovation) and 6 (ELP / CEFR).

FG coordinator and contact person: Anne Chateau - [anne.chateau@univ-lorraine.fr](mailto:anne.chateau@univ-lorraine.fr)

## **FG Conference and Event Management**

This focus group will develop guidelines for the organisation of CercleS conferences and events, i.e. develop a framework for CercleS conferences, CercleS seminars and workshops, and events organised in co-operation with CercleS. This comprises structural and budgeting aspects, the use of languages, the question of follow-up activities, etc.

FG coordinator and contact person: María del Carmen Arau Ribeiro - [maricarmen@ipg.pt](mailto:maricarmen@ipg.pt)

Guidelines for the organisation of CercleS conferences and events

- [wiki.helsinki.fi/x/5w7OBQ](http://wiki.helsinki.fi/x/5w7OBQ)

## **FG CLIL in Higher Education**

This focus group aims to bridge the learning experience in CLIL up through higher education (HE) so that content and language integrated learning is not limited to English-medium instruction. With cutting edge research that draws upon the potential of technology for terminology-based growth and advances in classroom management and scaffolding that places the learner at the center, the FG examines how to deal effectively with staff training and certification for HE teachers who have not previously trained to teach through another language, administrative objectives for internationalization, and the roles that language centers can play.

This focus group will collaborate with Focus Groups 1 (Language Policy) and 4 (Innovation).

FG coordinator and contact person: María del Carmen Arau Ribeiro - [maricarmen@ipg.pt](mailto:maricarmen@ipg.pt)

## **FG Language Policy**

This focus group covers a wide variety of themes and leaves room for various activities and initiatives. The group may discuss and analyse the following questions:

What language policies have universities in Europe adopted so far? What form should or could a suitable university language policy take?

Is there a need for language centres to have a language policy? Do the individual National Associations have their own clearly defined language policy?

- What language policy should CercleS adopt?
- How can we contribute to creating plurilingualism within CercleS and at CercleS events in order to reach our members that are not confident in English? How can we convey information across the different languages?
- How can languages become a bridge rather than a barrier within CercleS?

FG coordinator and contact person: Dr. Regina Mügge - [regina.muegge@sprachenzentrum.uni-halle.de](mailto:regina.muegge@sprachenzentrum.uni-halle.de)

## **FG Language Testing and Assessment**

Several National Associations have set up their own language testing network or system, or are in the process of setting them up. However, cross-border co-operation is still at an initial stage. This focus group will analyse the models available within our National Associations (and outside), analyse their strengths and weaknesses, perhaps develop ideas for new models, seeking to promote harmonisation and / or mutual recognition through agreements at bilateral or multilateral levels.

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## **FG LSP**

Over the past few years, a number of individual initiatives have led to the organisation of several Languages for Specific Purposes-related events across Europe, demonstrating the growing interest for the subject. This Focus Group aims to federate and sustain those efforts in order to establish and develop a dynamic network of LSP practitioners, representing the broadest possible range of languages and disciplines.

Our objectives are:

- to provide and foster a forum for reflection, informed by theory and/or classroom practice;
- to support colleagues new to LSP;
- to encourage colleagues working in LSP to disseminate their work (for example in the form of conference papers or publications based on the above);
- to identify areas for collaboration such as resource creation/sharing, exchange of best practice or cross-border projects;
- to organise and/or support LSP-dedicated events;
- to maintain regular communication on all of the above with the members of the Focus Group

FG coordinators and contact persons: Benoît Guilbaud - [B.Guilbaud@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:B.Guilbaud@sussex.ac.uk) and David Tual - [dhpt2@cam.ac.uk](mailto:dhpt2@cam.ac.uk)

## **FG Management and Leadership**

The focus group aims at creating a low threshold network for directors for sharing challenges, questions and by doing this provides collegial support in management and leadership.

Expected results are an intranet for directors to exchange experiences, workshops and webinars for directors and a mentoring system for new directors.

The CERCLES Coaching & Mentoring Network is now available and details can be found in the Documents section of this website for the Focus Group, including the types of coaching & mentoring that are available, and contact details for volunteer coaches/mentors. Other experienced CERCLES member Directors are encouraged also to participate, and anyone willing to join the Coaching & Mentoring Network as a volunteer should contact the FG Co-ordinator.

FG coordinator and contact person: Mark Critchley, Durham University - [mark.critchley@durham.ac.uk](mailto:mark.critchley@durham.ac.uk)

## **FG Multilingualism**

In many ways it seems obvious that university language centres and departments are multilingual institutions par excellence: they bring together speakers of different languages, work to increase individual speakers' ability to use more languages, while many members of staff are experts on how languages and their speakers relate to one another. And yet, it is not at all clear how language centres could best develop this potential to facilitate and manage their own institutional multilingualism, while also contributing to inclusive and progressive language policies at their own universities and beyond.

Two seemingly contradictory trends can be observed in the multilingual landscape of higher education in Europe today. On the one hand, internationalisation has led to an increasingly rapid process of "Anglicisation" in which English is being institutionalised as a common (second) medium of instruction at many European universities. This follows on from its establishment as the unrivalled lingua franca of academic research and publishing over the last 40 years or so. On the other hand, internationalisation and increased mobility also mean that more and more multilingual and multicultural students and staff arrive at our universities. Many issues and questions related to how language centres should react and could possible guide and influence these processes remain open, for example: the issue of acknowledging and certifying individual multilingual repertoires, the positive use of students' and teachers' multilingual skills in the language teaching classroom, the maintenance of academic knowledge and skills in languages other than English, or the question of how to relate meaningfully to multilingual communities outside of our universities.

The Cercles Focus Group on multilingualism would like to function as a platform for the exchange of ideas for colleagues who are interested in finding, researching and documenting institutional responses to the sociolinguistic changes and challenges affecting higher education. The first aim would be to develop a consultation paper with a work programme focusing on the situation and issues within higher education as well as wider linguistic developments in our societies.

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## **FG Teacher Training, Teacher Education, Staff Exchange**

This focus group will develop models and modules for professional development activities and staff exchanges within the CercleS network. It will identify areas in which training is required. It will also identify how the individual member associations can best benefit from competencies available in other member associations and thus lead to mutual exchange.

FG coordinator and contact person: Helena Šajgalíková - [helena.sajgalikova@euba.sk](mailto:helena.sajgalikova@euba.sk)

## **FG Translation**

Many University Language Centres have started to provide translation services both to their own university and to external clients. The contexts in which they operate vary considerably. Some Language Centres have a dedicated translation unit. This is in some cases organised like a small business and outsources jobs to freelancers when need arises. Other Language Centres (perhaps the majority) provide translation services on a more loosely organized basis and rely on internal staff for the most part. Whatever their organization, in providing translation services Language Centres face some common challenges and the Translation Focus Group of CercleS is interested in finding ways of sharing ideas and expertise.

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