

**Minutes of the Cercles Coordinating Committee Meeting
12 May 2023, 10:00-13:30 (CET)
Via Zoom**

| | | |
|--------------------|-------------|--|
| ACLES | Spain | Juana Sanmartin |
| AICLU | Italy | Carmen Argondizzo |
| AKS | Germany | Maike Engelhardt |
| AULC | UK | Mark Critchley |
| CASALC CZ | Czech | Libor Štěpánek |
| CASALC SK | Slovak | (Peter Gergel) Proxy: Žaneta Balážová |
| FINELC | Finland | Emmi Huttunen |
| NUT | Netherlands | (Katja Hunfeld) Proxy: Evonne van van Genderen |
| RANACLES | France | Tom Grainger |
| ReCLes | Portugal | Manuel Moreira da Silva |
| SERMO | Poland | Lucyna Skwarko |
| SSH-CHES-CSUS | Switzerland | Stefanie Neuner; Elisabeth Paliot |
| VUS | Austria | Katrin Mayr |
| Total Votes | 13 | |

| Executive Committee | Votes | Present |
|---------------------|-------|---|
| | 3 | Sabina Schaffner (President) Anne Chateau (Secretary General) Marta Estella Clota (Treasurer) Carmen Argondizzo (Vice-President) Mia Panisse (Deputy Secretary General) Zaan Bester (Assistant to the General Secretariat) |

1. Welcome and approval of agenda

Sabina welcomes everyone on behalf of the EC, especially those joining for the first time (Emmi Huttunen, Katrin Mayr, Lucyna Skwarko). Apart from the 3 members of the Executive Committee, 13 National Associations are present, which means all 16 members of the Coordinating Committee are represented. According to article 8.3 of the CercleS Statutes, except for the election of the Executive Committee (see Standing Orders), the Coordinating Committee decides by a simple majority of the votes cast by the members present and represented excluding abstentions, blank or invalid votes, which shall thus not be added to negative votes for the calculation of the majority.

Approval of agenda

Everybody agrees with the agenda as presented by Sabina and no points were added. (*Slides 3-4 Cercles CC meeting 20230512.pptx*)

Approval of CC minutes of meeting of 14 September 2022, ISCAP, Porto

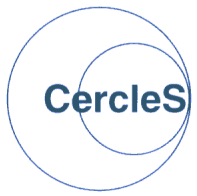
The minutes of the Coordinating Committee meeting of 10 September 2021 are approved. (13 votes in favour, 0 against, 0 abstain, 3 not present to vote)

Presidency

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2. Short reports of the EC activities – questions and feedback by CC members (January – May 2023):

a. President (*Slides 7-13 CercleS CC meeting 20230512.pptx*)

Working groups:

- As an offspring of the FG on Management & Leadership, a working group linked to research at LCs was created: Mark Critchley (Lead), Irmgard Wanner, Sabina Schaffner (Mark Critchley will elaborate more on this under point 3 of the agenda).

Cooperation with partner institutions

- The cooperation with partner institutions remains important to CercleS. We ask members of the CC to please promote the upcoming ECML call - and webinar - webinar "Language education at the heart of democracy" in the NAs.

Follow-up Round Table discussion at Porto Conference

- We are continuing to implement suggestions that were raised at the conference round table, and these are happening slowly but surely.
- We have made changes on the website to reflect our partnerships with the ECML and ELC.

Research

- We have completed a study on the teaching of Ukrainian as a foreign language. The report is ready to be disseminated to members on the website very soon.

Cooperation with Ukrainian Language Centres

- We continue to support Ukrainian colleagues and centres where we are able to identify concrete opportunities. Three Ukrainian colleagues will be travelling to Jaén for a workshop on test validation organized by the University of Jaen. They received scholarships for the workshop and accommodation from the organisers, and their travel costs will be covered by CercleS.
- One Ukrainian language centre has joined as an Associate Member this year. We have waived their membership fees for this year.

b. General Secretariat (*Slides 14-19 CercleS CC meeting 20230512.pptx*)

Webinars

- We are continuing to offer webinars and online talks. One upcoming webinar that we are excited to offer is about machine translation on 8 June by colleagues from the University of Neuchâtel and the University of Lorraine.

Workshops

- Upcoming workshops include a workshop on Language Education for Sustainability on 25 May 2023 (to be confirmed), and a workshop on Machine translation and AI in the language classroom on 12 June 2023.

Meetups

- We have been offering regular (more or less monthly) meetups for Language Centre managers and for teachers. For the Teachers' meetup, we offered a variety of languages in the breakout rooms, and are happy to include more languages if there is a need.

Membership management

- Current membership numbers:
 - 375 members (from National Associations)
 - 23 Associate Members
 - 773 users of the website (including the 6 members of the EC)

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- With the honorary members, we have crossed the threshold of 400 members, which means we pay less for the LLHE journal to De Gruyter.

Updates on website

- Recent updates include the PARTNERS page which has been renamed to PARTNERSHIPS, with more information about the ECML and ELC
- We have also created a new page for TEACHING in the open area, and a TEACHING page in the members' area that allows members to post information about projects, exchange, and the forum.
- Promotion to members: Mark asks if it is possible to send a list of website users per NA.
→Zaan and Anne will work on this.
- Tom mentions that a new platform like Discord was mentioned at the Wulkow network meeting. Maïke suggests not adding another platform (like Discord) as people may feel overwhelmed. She notes that the website is very functional and user-friendly, and that we should rather maximise this. As was seen with the AKS Moodle platform, the number of active users may not be vast, but their engagement is good.
- Newsletters: Zaan notes that we have reduced engagement with the newsletters (number of clicks) – does anyone have suggestions to change this?
Libor feels that the content is excellent and the frequency is sufficient. Maïke agrees that the information is relevant. She does have some issues with viewing the content. She will send Zaan a screenshot of how her mail client shows it.

c. **Vice-President** (*Slides 20-28 CercleS CC meeting 20230512.pptx*)

LLHE publications 2023

- **Issue 13.1**, May 2023

15 research articles, 3 activity reports, (6 articles and 3 reports are based on contributions arising from the XVII CercleS International Conference in Porto, September 2022).

Topics covered include multilingual experiences, LMOocs, flipped classroom approach, academic writing, translation skills, machine translation, autonomous language learning, the development of a Language Centre, LSP courses for Engineers, dialogic co-creation in language teaching and learning.

- **Issue 13.2**, October 2023

It will likely include 7 potential research articles and 3 activity reports (from the XVII CercleS Conference, Porto) and research articles from independent authors.

Contributions received from the XVII CercleS Conference: 18 research papers, 6 activity reports: 9 published, 10 under further revision, 5 rejected

Cooperation with De Gruyter: Annual Report 2022

- Highlights from the report: the number of articles published in 2020, 2021 and 2022 is the same (30).
- There is an increase in the number of research articles from 2020 to 2022 (10, 25, 27). There is a reduction in the number of activity reports (20, 5, 3).
- The most-cited articles and most-viewed manuscripts are noted.
- We asked specifically for a competitor analysis in the annual report. The LLHE ranks in the middle of similar journals edited by associations. Sabina feels this is quite satisfactory. Anne notes that some of the higher-ranked journals have been around for much longer. LLHE has been published only for the past 10 years and was not always published regularly in the past.
We have not had an impact factor in the past but will get one from June 2023.

d. **Treasurer** (*Slides 29-35 CercleS CC meeting 20230512.pptx*)

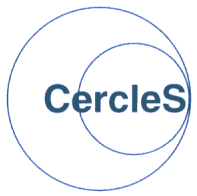
The accounting budget considers the money we have allocated to various items. The accrual budget takes into account the actual income and expenses when they are received or paid: for example, for an expenditure that appears in the 2022 budget, we only receive an invoice in 2023, so we can only pay it in 2023 (example: the 30th anniversary logo design).

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Final balance budget 2022: Accounting basis

- Income: membership fees, journal royalty statements
- Expenses: personnel costs, journal fees (which were reduced because of the higher number of members), costs for conference accommodation for EC, conference scholarships for Ukrainian colleagues, contribution to the organisers of the CercleS conference, Zoom license, logo design.
- Maïke asks about the term “scholarships” because for AKS there were tax implications related to the terminology used. The recipients may be liable for tax based on how the money is named in their accounts. We are not aware of any issues, but Zaan will follow this up with the Ukrainian colleagues receiving CercleS support. (*Postscriptum: The term “scholarships” is not problematic for them.*)

Final balance budget 2022: Accrual basis

- The logo was paid in 2022 but it was a 2021 expense, which is why it is reflected here.

Approval of the final balance of the budget 2022

The final balance of the budget is approved. (15 votes in favour, 0 against, 0 abstain, 1 not present to vote)

Updated budget 2023: Accounting basis

- Income: membership fees, journal royalty statements
- Expenses: personnel costs, journal fees, conference scholarships for Ukrainian colleagues, Zoom license, web maintenance, bank fees, money for focus group meetings, money for projects.
- Sabina notes that we have money to spend and invest in projects, and invites any ideas for using this money, promoting projects and scholarships.
- Maïke asks if there is another threshold for De Gruyter that we can reach to pay even less.
Postscriptum: Based on the Company Contract with de Gruyter of 3 June 2022, §4, 4.3, we pay 30 Euros for 401-500 members (current situation); if CercleS will have more than 500 members, the price will have to be negotiated with the Publisher.
- She also asks if it is a problem for CercleS to have too much money in the bank, as it is a problem for AKS because they then look like a commercial organisation, and they are liable for tax. Sabina notes that we are spending less money for things like travel as people are not travelling for meetings and we are moving more meetings online.
- Maïke suggests that we spend more money on travel, as people do not want to travel anymore. Sabina mentions that we are keen to support attendance to NA conferences.
- Libor notes that CASALC CZ also offers scholarships, but they have a low number of applicants.
- Maïke suggest offering different types of scholarships, for example for accommodation costs for a conference (which is capped in Germany). It is easier to arrange for payment of a conference fee, so perhaps CercleS could cover an amount towards accommodation, for example.
→ Sabina says that we will address this further within the EC.

Updated budget 2023: Accrual basis

- The accrual basis is presented.

Approval of the updated budget 2023

The updated budget is approved. (15 votes in favour, 0 against, 0 abstain, 1 not present to vote)

3. Proposals, reports, motions from members (Slides 37-40 CercleS CC meeting 20230512.pptx)

a. Glimpse on XVIII CercleS Conference 2024

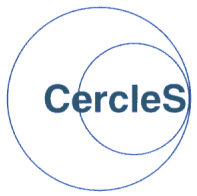
The rooms are booked, and the conference website will be live hopefully by July. The theme is “Multilingualism in the Anglosphere” and will focus on the importance of other languages in an English-speaking country. The organisers are working on the assumption of about 300 delegates. The post-conference events are also being planned. Conference date: 12-14 September 2024. CC meeting: 11 September 2024

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Sabina thanks Mark for their work so far.

b. *Report on Working group on CercleS training (Mark Critchley)*

- Development delayed
- Survey of national associations inconclusive
- Working Group to be re-constituted
- Plan for an outline programme of half-day online workshops commencing September 2023
- At the Leadership Meetup on 20 June they will discuss possible topics.

c. *Report on Survey on research culture in language centres (Mark Critchley)*

Survey intended to provide an overview of the research activities carried out in LCs with the goal to inform CercleS member institutions about how a research-enhanced teaching & learning culture can contribute positively to the LCs mission and how it can be supported and sustained within a language centre environment.

- Working group: Mark Critchley (Lead), Sabina Schaffner, Irmgard Wanner,
- Draft survey nearing completion
- Survey to be tested via a small group of colleagues (including members of the CC)
- Survey launched in September 2023
- Report by end 2023
- What is happening in our centres in terms of research, establishing good practice

2. **Strategic discussion 2023/ 2024** (*Slides 42-48 CercleS CC meeting 20230512.pptx*)

- **Exchange among national associations in 3 breakout groups.** Strategic expectations toward CercleS: report on padlet

The three groups present the results of their discussion (*Slides 45-47 CercleS CC meeting 20230512.pptx*)

- **Plenary discussion:** We should keep developing our strengths because we are doing good work
- Perhaps we could reach out to specific target groups, such as teachers of 'smaller' languages
- Maïke says that maybe we should stick to what we do regularly (like the Teachers' meetups) and then people will come gradually as they get used to it being a regular event, but then add some extra occasions for more specific target groups.
- Online conference for teachers
- Maïke notes that this may not be as feasible, as there are already national conferences and other events happening.
- Give financial support to specific projects – we should identify relevant and worthwhile projects, scholarships and awards for members of CercleS.

Postscriptum: Sabina has created a summary of all group discussions (*Slide 48 CercleS CC meeting 20230512.pptx*):

→ *The goals and the opportunities will be followed up by the Executive Committee and within the CercleS community.*

3. **Outlook on activities 2023**

a. *Talks / Webinars / Trainings*

- 14 Sept ELP Webinar (David Little)
- Oct LLHE webinar (Carmen Argondizzo)
- 15/16 Nov CercleS Policy Paper applied (Ruth Tobias)

b. *Research: Survey on research culture in language centres (See 3.c)*

4. **AOB**

- Next CC meeting: Friday 13 October 2023, 10:00-13:00 CET

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