

Cercles Coordinating Committee Meeting 17 May 2024, 09:00-12:00 (CET)
Minutes of the meeting (held via Zoom)

ACLES	Spain	Juana Sanmartin
AICLU	Italy	(Carmen Argondizzo) Proxy: Alessandra Fazio
AKS	Germany	Maike Engelhardt
AULC	UK	Mark Critchley
CASALC CZ	Czech	Blanka Pojslová
CASALC SK	Slovak	(Peter Gergel) Proxy: Erika Jurišová
FINELC	Finland	Emmi Huttunen
NUT	Netherlands	Katja Hunfeld
RANACLES	France	(Tom Grainger) Proxy: Laurent Rouveyrol
ReCLES	Portugal	Manuel Moreira da Silva
SERMO	Poland	<i>Excused: Lucyna Skwarko</i>
SSH-CHES-CSUS	Switzerland	Elisabeth Paliot & Sara Cotelli Kureth
VUS	Austria	Katrin Mayr
Total Votes	12	

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) Tom Grainger (Deputy Treasurer) Zaan Bester (Assistant to the General Secretariat)

1. Welcome and approval of agenda: (slides 2-4)

Sabina Schaffner welcomes everyone and gives an overview of the meeting.

Approval of CC minutes of the meeting of 13 October 2023, on Zoom → email attachment (slide 5)

Votes in favour: 9 NA + 3 EC votes = 12 | Votes against: 0 | Abstentions: 0

(NAs present to vote: AICLU, AKS, AULC, CASALC CZ, FINELC, NUT, RANACLES, ReCLES, VUS | NAs not present to vote: ACLES, CASALC SK, SERMO, SSH-CHES-CSUS)

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

- September 2023 – December 2023: E-Bulletin No 11 → email attachment
- January 2024 – May 2024

a. President:

- Working groups: (slide 7)

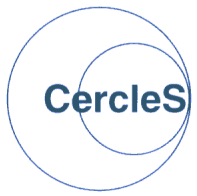
Survey on research culture in language centres, offspring of FG on Management & Leadership:
Mark Critchley (Lead), Irmgard Wanner, Sabina Schaffner (Mark Critchley to give a short report under agenda point 3b)

Presidency

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- Cooperation with partner institutions (ECML): (slides 8-9)

From the meeting in Graz in December 2023, there was good and positive feedback regarding cooperation with CercleS.

At the PNF meeting, an overview was given of activities in 2023 and invitations extended to activities in 2024. Some of the partners who mentioned upcoming events include ECML, EALTA, ECSPM, CEL/ELC.

- Follow-up Discussion of CC meeting of 13 October 2023: strategic goals (slides 10-11)

Measures to implement opportunities for international cooperation:

- The COIL webinar was very positive, but the speed dating event did not happen online due to low numbers, so time will be given for a speed dating event at the conference in Durham.
- We have tried to mobilise Focus Groups (FGs) and report their activities to members via the newsletter to inform about their actions. Three FGs will meet in Durham.
- We have scholarships available for members to attend NA conferences and workshops (none have been used yet)
- We want to give a CercleS prize at the conference – to be discussed under point 4b.
- We remain committed to invest in projects raised and driven by members.

- Outline of CercleS Teacher Training project “Boost your language teaching skills” (slides 12-17)

- It was initially submitted as proposal and was not accepted, not enough funds or partners via PNF, so it was decided to make this a 3-year CercleS project.
- It has a European profile but it also wants to make contribution to education in Ukraine.
- The idea is to focus on self-study and peer learning, to engage people in learning and sharing. Engage CercleS peers as experts and trainers, use webinars, face to face workshops, peer work and a logbook. We want to use the expertise of the CercleS community. The material will be in English and also in Ukrainian.
- The goal is to create online materials and curate existing resources.
- The team will write up a teaching concept and deliver the training via peer groups, webinars, podcasts, a forum and other.
- Difference between existing webinars and this project is that the same team will work on the project and create a wholistic approach.
- The group includes members from various CercleS members, and from Ukraine.
- There will be a preplanning meeting at the end of May in Valencia and then a report will be given at the CC meeting on 11 September, with regular meetings with the CC and EC to give feedback.
- Sabina Schaffner asks for any comments:
→ Maike Engelhardt says that AKS has a similar project (although only in German). There is a push that certification for such projects is recognised in job adverts and that there is credit for participation in such projects or programmes.
- The next feedback will be at the CC meeting in September.

b. General Secretariat:

- Membership management: (slide 19)

We currently have 378 from National Associations and 23 Associate members. This is good news because more than 400 members means a reduced fee to LLHE. We have had a big increase in website subscriptions recently, and we ask NA presidents to encourage members to register for the website, as they will have access to various benefits, and will receive the newsletter, which is our primary way of communicating news and events to members.

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- Webinars and meetups: (slides 20-21)
Recent webinars include a webinar on COIL formats, a joint webinar with UNITAR, and a very successful webinar on the use of AI in the classroom.
Leadership meetups have been quite active and most had a thematic topic. The attendance of these meetups, however, is not very good and at the last leadership meetup there were no people. The teachers' meetups' attendance also varies a lot, and we are not sure why this is – if it related to the subject or people's schedules.
- Training: (slides 23-27)
30 people will attend the CercleS/RANACLES Teacher training week in Nancy on 11-14 June. Tom gives an overview of the programme. One third of the participants is from France, but the rest is a very diverse spread among our NA members and AMs. The presenters of the workshops are from France, Spain, the Netherlands, and Switzerland.
- Update on the EC elections process
There have been one application for the position of President, Vice-President, Secretary General, and Treasurer, and two applications for the position of Deputy Secretary General and Deputy Treasurer. Anne Chateau and Sabina Schaffner will meet with the election officer, Regina Mügge on 22 May and we will share the details about the nominees with the NA presidents by the end of May. (slide 28)

c. Vice-President:

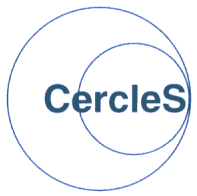
- LLHE (slides 29-31)
LLHE issue 14.1 (May 2024) is online on time – the title is *Worldwide voices of experience in language education*. It contains 13 research articles, most covering common topics, but there are also some new topics like ChatGPT and the use of AI, plus a very specific topic focused on student athletes. Contributions were received from Europe and also abroad, which gives an interesting perspective on what is happening in other parts of the world.
Carmen Argondizzo gives an overview of the articles that have been published in the LLHE from 2020 to 2024: there were a total of 96 articles and 14 activity reports.
- Cooperation with De Gruyter: (slide 33)
Outlook on cooperation within the Editorial Board: at the CC meeting in October Carmen was worried about the editorial board and extended a call for expert reviewers. There are now 6 new reviewers, from FINELC, RANACLES, AICLU and SSH-CHES-CSUS.
The editors, De Gruyter, and Sabina Schaffner have considered the format of the current editorial board. The expectation was that there would be support from all these roles (editors-in-chief, assistant editors, scientific board, technical assistants). But there is not such a big distinction between the support given. Carmen proposes a new format that she believes may streamline the functioning of the Editorial Board: editors-in-chief, editorial board, and advisory board
- Annual Report 2023 → email attachment (slide 34)
Statistics from the annual report of 2023: 56 submissions; 37 published: 27 research articles, 7 activity reports, 598 pages, 16 pages average article length, 6 open access articles. In the past year, there was only a 1-month delay in the first issue, and no delay in the second issue. The submissions have come from mostly non-European countries. Usually after a conference, there will be more submissions from CercleS members, but the submissions from outside the CercleS community are necessary during times of fewer submissions from CercleS members.
- Carmen reminds everyone of the LLHE webinar on the 30th of May.

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- Sabina Schaffner asks about publications per country: about half of the publications are from CercleS members. Sabina notes that CercleS should support the publication of articles in countries where they do not have such journals, in addition to providing a platform for CercleS members. Carmen agrees that we should support language centre staff who do research.
- Maike Engelhardt thanks Carmen Argondizzo for all the work going into the journal because it is a very big task. AKS also finds that there are more submissions after a conference. She also feels that LLHE as a source of international publications from around the world, not only inside Europe, is beneficial also for European colleagues.

d. Treasurer's report:

- Final balance budget 2023 and updated budget 2024 → email attachments
There are two versions of the final balance budget 2023, namely accounting (the amount of money in our account) and accrual (the amount of money we should have, theoretically). There are small differences, which will be explained by Marta Estella Clota.
- Final balance budget 2023 Accounting basis (slide 36)
We started the year with 116 580.22 and ended with 129 512.84. We allocated money for FGs or scholarships but did not use the money that was budgeted. Income came from membership fees and from De Gruyter (subscriptions and royalties). Expenses included LLHE, bank fees, web maintenance, Zoom license, personnel (fixed costs), and scholarships and Focus Groups (variable costs).
- Final balance budget 2023 Accrual basis (slide 37)
The main difference with the budget (accounting basis) is the AM fees – in 2023 we received money for 2022 membership fees. There is also a difference in subscription to the journal because De Gruyter sends the 2023 invoice in 2024.

Approval of the final balance budget 2023

Votes in favour: 12 NA + 3 EC votes = 15 | Votes against: 0 | Abstentions: 0

(NAs present to vote: ACLES, AICLU, AKS, AULC, CASALC CZ, CASALC SK, FINELC, NUT, RANACLES, ReCLes, SSH-CHESSUS, VUS | NAs not present to vote: SERMO)

Budget 2024 – variable costs and special items that support the actions from Sabina's report (slide 39)

Contributions to conferences / activities: EUR 19,100

- Sponsoring of CercleS Conference fee: EUR 50 per person (200 persons) → EUR 10,000
- Sponsoring of CercleS Conference travel fees: EUR 80-100 per person (100-125 persons) → EUR 10,000
- Prize for CercleS projects: EUR 500 per project → EUR 2,500
- Contribution to ECML project work: EUR 2,000 per person → EUR 4,000
- Contribution to National Associations contributing to professionalisation:
→ EUR 3,000 per person → EUR 6,000
- Contribution to Focus Group meetings (accommodation): EUR 1,000 per meeting
→ EUR 3,000
- Contribution to Teacher Training week: EUR 5,000

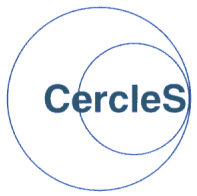
- Mark Critchley has a comment about the money to subsidise 200 registration fees for CercleS members for the conference. There will probably be more than 200 attendees, but more financial support from CercleS is not needed.

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- Forecast budget 2024 Accounting basis (slide 40)
Sabina Schaffner notes that we do not know if we will spend all the money for the travel subsidies for the CercleS conference, so spending will depend on members' requests.
- Forecast budget 2024 Accrual basis (slide 41)
Marta Estella Clota presents the same budget, with small differences which will become apparent when we close the budget at the end of the year.

3. Proposals, reports, motions from members

a. Update on XVIII CercleS Conference 2024 (Mark Critchley) (slide 44)

- Conference title: Multilingualism & the Anglosphere
- Dates: 12-14 September 2024
- Conference website available and being updated routinely
- Multilingual conference: DE, EN, ES, FR with interpreting (Arabic and Chinese have been dropped, and some presenters in English may be asked to consider speaking in a different language)
- 4 keynote speakers: Colin Crooks (UK ambassador to South Korea), John Bei (Universität Oldenburg), John O'Regan (University College London), Manuela Guilherme (Universidade de Coimbra)
- Call for Papers: 170 abstract submissions received
- 138 presentations accepted after review; 12 workshops accepted
- All NAs (except ReCLes) represented by the papers, about 50 participants from UK and 250 from outside UK
- 18 requests for revisions; 8 declined
- 2 poster presentations accepted
- 3 late presentation submissions declined
- 9 parallel sessions; Poster session for students and early-career academics
- Sessions for EC & CC meetings and Focus Groups on 11-12 September, including EC elections

(slide 45)

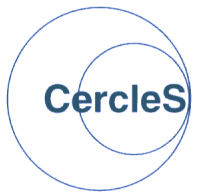
- Registrations are progressing
- There have been 63 registrations as of 10 May 2024
- Organisers are anticipating 300 registrations in total
- Early bird deadline of 30 June 2024
- Closing date for registrations 27 August 2024
- Conference venue: Teaching & Learning Centre
- Welcome Reception: Durham Castle, but a second venue is available as backup
- Conference Dinner: Ramside Hall Hotel – transport will be provided
- Social excursion: Beamish open-air museum – transport will be provided
- Meetings also to be organised for Teacher meetup, COIL speed-dating event, LLHE Editorial Board, poster session and various exhibition activities (there are various rooms available for Teacher meetups)
- There will be a social event for those attending the CC meeting on 11 September
- Mark will send an email to members CC members to ask about attending in person in Durham
- Sponsors: Cambridge University Press & Assessment, Oxford University Press, Sanako. Hachette tbc

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→ Sabina Schaffner thanks Mark for the planning. Once the provisional programme is available, the EC can discuss with Mark when to schedule the COIL event and Teachers' meetups.

b. Survey intended to provide an overview of the research activities carried out in LCs (Mark Critchley)
(slide 46)

The goal is to inform CercleS member institutions about how a research-enhanced teaching & learning culture can contribute positively to the LC's mission and how it can be supported and sustained within a language centre environment.

- Working group: Sabina Schaffner, Irmgard Wanner, Mark Critchley
- Survey launched October to November 2023
- 99 responses received, 74 from ACLES, AKS, AULC, FINELC & SSH-CHES-CSUS
- Report nearing completion (May 2024), with a presentation of results planned for CercleS conference, and a paper for LLHE.

Sabina Schaffner says that the results obtained so far are quite interesting, and will be valuable for members.

4. Discussion

a. Member management:

Associate membership versus institutional membership within National Associations of LCs in Universities of Applied Sciences (UASs) (slide 47)

Anne Chateau explains that we have had requests for membership from universities of applied sciences in countries where there are NAs that do not accept technical universities. One request was made to FINELC directly. In FINELC, universities of applied sciences are not accepted to the NA because not all of them have language centres. In addition, CercleS had a request directly from Kufstein in Austria who wanted to join CercleS. They cannot join through VUS because VUS does not allow technical universities to join.

Kufstein has been able to join CercleS via AKS because AKS allows universities of applied sciences. However, CercleS would like to deal with this matter in principle to avoid similar individual issues arising in future. The CercleS Statutes (2020) article 3.1 states that "HE institutions" includes universities and also other types of institutions. In France, for example, *Grandes écoles* can join RANACLES. There was also a case of one French-speaking university in Luxembourg – which does not have its own NA – that joined RANACLES. And in Belgium, a French-speaking university decided to join RANACLES instead of NUT, which is for Flemish-speaking universities in Belgium and Dutch universities in the Netherlands.

UASs could become associate members, but associate membership according to the CercleS Statutes (2020) is only for countries where there are no NAs. But this would require that the Statutes be changed.

Therefore, either we need to give these universities the option to join other NAs, or FINELC and VUS must allow universities of applied sciences to join their associations.

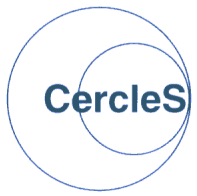
Emmi Huttunen notes that in FINELC it is a complicated topic. Many (most) UAS do not have a language centre. They have individuals that work as language teachers but they are most often linked to the subject (content) field where they teach, and it would be difficult for them to join FINELC individually. It appears that they identify more with the subjects that they teach (e.g. a nursing teacher who teaches languages) rather than as a language teacher. The FINELC code of conduct that was signed by Council of Directors of Language Centres (2012) stipulates membership that is linked to the Universities Act. Changing it would require a unanimous decision

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from the council. They have a meeting on 12 June and this topic is on the agenda, and Emmi can give feedback after this meeting.

- Anne Chateau notes that one solution could be for FINELC to accept only universities that have language centres. Emmi says that UASs are known to often change their structure, so this may mean regular changes in membership.
- Tom Grainger emphasises the role of NAs: there are some universities where language teaching is not organised. The statutes of RANACLES states that it wants to promote the creation of Language Centres, as part of the function of RANACLES. So perhaps FINELC should consider if they want to take up the position of perhaps supporting the creation of LCs in UASs.

Katrin Mayr describes the situation for VUS. At the time that VUS joined CercleS, UASs in their current form did not exist yet. There are now 21 UASs in Austria. In autumn, last year, this issue popped up for the first time, with Kufstein's request, and it was a new situation. VUS was founded on behalf of the ministry for universities with the aim of putting all language centres at the universities under one roof. It was never the intention for VUS to exclude the other universities.

VUS had a board meeting at the end of April, where they discussed this topic. The two options that were on the table were:

- 1) VUS opens up and accepts LCs from UAS, meaning that VUS dissolves and a new NA is created and their statutes change.
- 2) VUS does not open and does not change, but there is a way for UASs to become members of CercleS.

The board chose the second option. The proposal is that VUS remains an organisation, and that LCs of UASs organise themselves under a separate organisation, and this organisation and VUS create an umbrella organisation including both the new organisation and VUS and the umbrella organisation becomes part of CercleS.

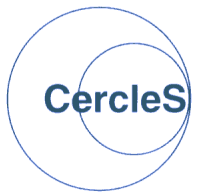
- Anne Chateau: The aim of CercleS since its creation in 1992 was to unify Language Centres, so an umbrella organisation may be a good solution.
- Maike Engelhardt: AKS is happy to accept Austrian institutions, but support the proposal by VUS. Although UASs sometimes do restructure, they sometimes contact AKS before they start a LC, as a way to ensure the quality of the centre, or to help educate the staff and support them. CercleS and NAs can really help in this regard. Although all centres look different, they have a great deal in common. NAs should really support the creation of good LCs in UASs.
- Sabina Schaffner: UASs can be members of NA, and sometimes there are double memberships (for example, UZH/ ETH LC is also member of AKS) and this is also beneficial. From management point of view: Austria will have one organisation and one contact person and one vote. We support VUS in the creation of this new umbrella organisation. CercleS remains committed to include members where possible and not to exclude.
- Elisabeth Paliot: 10 years ago there was a big discussion if the Swiss NA should accept UASs or not, because the differences between them and traditional universities were too big. They decided to focus on the similarities instead of the differences. They looked at the mission and the vision of the NA. In Switzerland, membership of universities and UASs in the NA is currently half-half. For example, Elisabeth is from a university that does not have a LC. But the NA has really been focusing on similarities rather than differences.
- Maike Engelhardt: AKS has found because it is such a big organisation, it is not always possible to have one meeting for everyone all the time. There is one big AKS meeting once a year, but other meetings are between universities and UAS separately.

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→ Elisabeth Paliot: because Switzerland is a small country with only 14 members, they can meet more informally and more regularly. But official meetings are twice a year.

Anne Chateau thanks everyone for their input and we look forward to hearing what FINELC and VUS will decide and what they will let CercleS know.

CercleS Conference prizes to be allocated for posters and presentations (slides 48- 49)

We wanted to allocate some money to prizes for presentations at the conference, for best conference poster, and for best multilingual presentations. However, there are only 2 poster presentations and of course many presentations.

Colleagues are invited to discuss the criteria, amount of the award and how to communicate the details about the prizes in two separate breakout rooms (one room to discuss the presentations and one room to discuss the posters), and to then give feedback.

Presentations:

Criteria: It should be considered how the abstract meets the criteria of two languages; how the presentation was presented; if there were more presenters, did the speakers speak different languages; if there was one speaker, did they use more than one language; visual help on slides; was there representation of languages from different language families; can the speaker answer questions from audience in different languages; understandability of presentation; how the speakers deal with audience; if the speaker uses a language other than English; response/reaction of the audience.

→ Elisabeth Paliot: How will the presentations be judged fairly? Is one person going to go to all the sessions? How will this be organised? Will there be a team of judges?

One option is to have a link to a Google form that all presenters fill out before the conference asking in what languages they will present, so that narrows the selection down. Moreover, we could carry out a survey to collect the audience's responses (e.g., Mentimeter).

We will, anyway, also check the possibility of sending members of a jury to be present during the presentations selected.

→ Mark Critchley: We could call for nominations where a delegate who sees a strong candidate presentation can flag this for wider review.

Posters:

Criteria: The poster should show creative and graphic presentation that makes it understandable for people from different languages. The poster should communicate what it wants to communicate in a way that it would be relevant for an international audience, and in a way that engages an international audience.

→ Mark Critchley: The original intention for the posters was that it would be for younger career researchers. We may need to have two categories: one for younger career researchers, and one for a more experienced colleague that has turned a presentation into a poster.

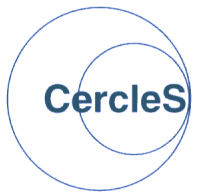
→ The Executive Committee will follow up the suggestions brought up in the two discussion groups and also take a final decision regarding the number of prizes in all categories and decide about the amount of the awards. The Executive Committee will then prepare the calls for the best presentation and the two calls for the best poster to be distributed via the CercleS and the CercleS Conference websites and further communication channels.

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5. Outlook on activities in May and June 2024

a. Talks / Webinars / Meetups (*slide 50*)

There is still a leadership meetup on 25 June on Income Generation and a Teachers' meetup on 28 May. We ask NA presidents to please promote this among staff. The next meetups will be in person at the conference and then online after the conference.

Also please remember the LLHE webinar on 30 May 16:00-18:00 – the programme was shared in the newsletter yesterday (16 May).

6. AOB (*slide 51*)

Next CC meeting: Wednesday 11 September 2023, 14:00-17:00 UK time (University of Durham).

This will be an in-person meeting and if persons cannot attend, then please appoint a proxy. On the agenda is the important point of the Executive Committee elections.

→ Laurent Rouveyrol wants to clarify that voting is allowed for all persons at the conference, and that there are no issues with online voting or voting in person.

Sabina Schaffner notes that the Coordinating Committee meeting is in person, and that the voting for the new EC (by the CC) is in person. The General Meeting will be hybrid and the EC has decided that voting at the GM will be online. Mark says that two voting systems will be available: one for persons in Durham and one online.

→ Mark Critchley says that he will be stepping down as the head of AULC after the CC meeting and it will be his last meeting. Since AULC has two votes, he would like to suggest that the new AULC president attends the CC meeting with him. Sabina Schaffner says this is fine.

Sabina Schaffner thanks everybody for their presence and contributions and expresses her hope to meet in person at the Conference in Durham in September.

Presidency

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