

## CENL Executive Committee Meeting (32)

28 September 2022, 10:15-15:05 CET  
Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, Frankfurt am Main

### Attendees

Frank Scholze, CENL Chair  
Karin Grönvall, EC Treasurer  
Laurence Engel, EC Member  
Sara Lammens, EC Member  
Hans Petschar, EC Member (from 13:00 CET via video conference, Zoom)  
Ivanka Stričević, EC Member (via video conference, Zoom)  
Susanne Oehlschläger, CENL Secretary

### In attendance

Ophélie Ramonatxo, BnF  
Michael Duchardt, CENL Secretariat (until 12:20 CET)  
Sabine Schrimpf, CENL Secretariat (until 12:20 CET)  
Stefanie Schust, CENL Secretariat, minutes

### Absent

Janne Andresoo, CENL Vice-Chair

The meeting started at 10:15 CET.

Frank Scholze opened the meeting and welcomed all those present at the German National Library in Frankfurt as well as the attendees who had joined via video conference.

This was the first hybrid CENL EC meeting as some EC members were unable to attend due to other appointments. As one of the members was not able to attend the meeting at all, the meeting had no quorum. According to the statutes decisions can only be taken if all members are present, which means a solution would have to be found here. Frank Scholze said that as long as no groundbreaking decisions are taken, it is sufficient if the majority of the EC members are present. Laurence Engel agreed that it is likely to become the new normal that not all members will be able to attend a meeting, even without the Covid-19 pandemic. All EC members present agreed that for this reason the statutes should be amended so that not all members have to be present to have a quorum.

Ivanka Stričević asked whether a replacement for the expelled EC member Vadim Duda had to be found. Frank Scholze replied that no successor for Vadim Duda has to be nominated, and that there is no need in general to elect a new EC member as there is no specific group size for the committee besides a minimum of three. Susanne Oehlschläger mentioned that more members would lead to even more difficulties in finding a meeting date. In addition, the balance between 46 members and the number of EC members should be taken into account. 7 out of 46 seem to be more than enough.

She also suggested to review the entire statutes to see if there were any other paragraphs that should be amended. The formal procedure still needs to be discussed, but Frank Scholze advocated that proposals to amend the statutes should ideally be discussed at the next EC meeting.

- **ACTION 1:** Secretariat to propose amendments of the statutes for discussion at next EC meeting: with special attention to the quorum of EC meetings.

A round of introductions followed, in which the attendants expressed their joy at seeing each other again and looked forward to the agenda for today's meeting.

## 1. Approval of agenda

Paper 01

The agenda was approved with no further additions.

## 2. Minutes from last EC meeting, 23 May 2022

Paper 02

Sara Lammens asked whether the BNF micro-survey on document communication in national libraries was now available. Ophélie Ramonatxo reported that the process is still ongoing and they plan to present the results in the next EC meeting. Laurence Engel stressed the importance of the opportunity to exchange ideas, but pointed out that it was difficult to provide the results in time and, in general, to determine which parameters should be used for such surveys. This would make it easier for libraries to compare their results with each other, which is why she suggested that there should be more collaboration among each other to agree on common indicators.

Frank Scholze welcomed this proposal and reiterated that CENL should support such surveys. It should therefore be discussed what kind of information is needed by the national libraries to move forward. For this, a bundle of key indicators would be essential. On the other hand, with the IFLA map of libraries of the world which was presented at the AGM in Ankara by Marcie Hopkins, there is already a lot of statistical information. Susanne Oehlschläger mentioned that also ISO 21248 Quality assessment for national libraries could be taken into account. She agreed that more surveys would be a good idea, especially in regard of the new CENL strategy and because all (national) libraries have similar questions. The EC members agreed that it would be good to think about standardised parameters and that it would also be a valid point for discussion at the next AGM.

Ophélie Ramonatxo gave an update about the support for Ukraine and Ukrainian libraries. There is a potential interest to form a group, but there is no news about the UNESCO initiative yet. Regarding SUCHO, there is some progress. Conversations will take place soon to negotiate the details. This could also show the extent to which CENL members can help.

The Chair requested EC members to ask around for information from other members. Ivanka Stričević picked up on the theme and stressed that these are difficult times. It is therefore imperative to exchange what other libraries in Europe are doing in this direction, by identifying where Ukrainian literature and heritage are already stored abroad. Frank Scholze agreed and, like Ophélie Ramonatxo, suggested planning another survey for this purpose.

Minutes were approved with no further additions.

- **ACTION 2:** Planning for another survey to check the current status of assistance for Ukrainians and to record where Ukrainian literature and heritage is already stored abroad.

## 3. Minutes from AGM 2022 in Ankara

Paper 03

Ivanka Stričević thanked the Secretariat for preparing the minutes which reflect the AGM 2022 well in terms of content and emotion.

Ophélie Ramonatxo drew attention to the fact that some members had expressed surprise during the AGM in Ankara about how the choice of venues for the next AGMs had been made. The Chair and the Secretary noted that there had been a call for applications. All applications received were accepted and distributed over the next years. The three applicants (National Libraries of Poland, Scotland and Luxembourg) had accepted the year that the Secretariat has planned it for. Sara Lammens reported that some members had expressed disappointment because they had assumed that it was possible only to apply for 2024. Frank Scholze admitted that it was obviously not communicated well enough that applications are also possible beyond the advertised year, e.g. if the member libraries would like to arrange the AGM in the context of an anniversary. The EC members agreed that all members should be able to express interest in hosting the AGM at any time, but that in future the decision shall be made for one year only.

Minutes were approved with no further additions.

- **ACTION 3:** Improve communication to members on how the decision for the AGM venue is taken after the applications.

#### 4. Matters and actions arising from EC minutes and from AGM

No formal action plans in the minutes, the other items were on today's agenda.

#### 5. Finance Update

Paper 04

Michael Duchardt, responsible for finances within the CENL Secretariat reported on the status of the figures as at the end of August 2022. According to this, all outstanding membership fees have been paid. Overall, there is currently less in the account than when it was opened in January, but this was to be expected due to member libraries not being able to pay or being excluded, and also due to the increase in bank charges.

One of the biggest problems for the Secretariat at the moment is changing the address to Germany as everything goes back to the UK. The whole procedure seems to be very difficult on the side of the ING bank. As two EC members (the Chair and the treasurer) must sign a document, Michael Duchardt managed to get an appointment at the Frankfurt office of the bank where Frank Scholze and Karin Grönvall have to appear in person after today's meeting to sign.

The Chair opened the discussion by stating that a moderate overspend was necessary to reduce the reserves and therefore it would have to be discussed whether to set a specific sum for this. Laurence Engel spoke in favour of acting quickly and asked whether the budget would allow someone to be recruited for the CENL Secretariat. Susanne Oehlschläger confirmed that staff costs were covered by the budget and that there were sufficient reserves overall. However, she pointed out that nobody knows what the future will bring and one can always expect unforeseen costs, especially with regard to grants. Sara Lammens expressed her concerns about the structural overspending and said it has to be dealt with very transparently. In her opinion, before thinking about new projects, it is important to see that it is only seven years to continue the budget this way. In that time, libraries are not expected to get richer, so increasing income should be avoided. Karin Grönvall therefore stressed that it would be necessary to discuss different scenarios in order to see what kind of security is needed. In preparation for the next EC meeting, all agreed to draw up a plan of what the basic amount of reserves required should be and that it is in line with the next strategy cycle. Ivanka Stričević therefore suggested that another working group be formed to consider how these reserves could be spent and advocated ensuring direct benefits for projects

that urgently needed the money. When asked how these reserves had come about, the Chair explained that it was still the money from the European Library (TEL). Michael Duchardt added that it would be necessary to find out whether there were specific guidelines on how the money from TEL could be used, which was also a reason why the money had not yet been spent.

Frank Scholze summarised that he sees these reserves as an opportunity to create and shape. At the same time, he emphasised the responsibility to ensure the stability of the organisation. For the transparency of the members, he said, it was also important to clarify that permanent additional expenditure is not possible. The EC meetings should be used for internal discussions leading to a common position, while the AGM is meant to communicate the results of the deliberations to the membership.

- **ACTION 4:** The Chair and the Treasurer have to appear in person at ING at the end of the meeting to sign a document and to verify their identity.
- **ACTION 5:** Draw up a plan of how high the basic amount of the required reserves should be and think about how exactly to spend the rest of the reserves.

## 6. Grants and bursaries update

Paper 05

Sabine Schrimpf, within the CENL Secretariat responsible for grants and bursaries, summarised the report on which grants and bursaries were given in 2022. There was a total of two applications for the Covid-19 Support Fund, only one of which was accepted (North Macedonia). For the Hidden Stories Fund (HSF), two applications were approved (Scotland, British Library), and for the Skills and Knowledge Exchange Bursary Scheme, the application from Bosnia and Herzegovina was considered along with those from Romania and Bulgaria, following a decision at this year's AGM to increase the fund.

There are also two open cases with projects from the last few years. One of them is from Russia, which is a loss for the budget because an upfront payment had already been transferred shortly before their exclusion.

According to Sabine Schrimpf, a total of 20,000 euros in open scholarships and grants should be available, including the grants for 2022 and a few cases from previous years. She concluded by stating that the further direction of the new funds was still open, especially the question of how "Endangered Cultural Heritage" should be defined.

### *Covid-19 Support Fund:*

Regarding the Covid-19 Support Fund, Janne Andresoo and Hans Petschar had already commented in advance that they would agree to expire the funding at the end of the year. The EC members also voted in favour and Frank Scholze emphasised that the effects of Covid-19 were still a problem, but that there was no longer any need for an extra fund.

### *Hidden Stories Fund:*

Sabine Schrimpf reported that the HSF continues to be very popular, with more applications received than could be funded. Laurence Engel started the discussion about the extent to which such topics should still be funded or whether other subjects would not need more support. Frank Scholze agreed that this was a point to talk about in the future, but at the same time the HSF is broad, so other topics could be accommodated. All EC members agreed to continue the HSF for another year. An extension of two years directly was not considered as reasonable, both in terms of finances and the new CENL strategy. After the further year, it could be discussed whether another extension for one year would be appropriate.

*New Fund for Endangered Cultural Heritage (ECH):*

Hans Petschar had suggested that a brainstorming group could be set up for this purpose. In this informal group, there should be an exchange on how to define the terminology in order to decide whether a fund for endangered cultural heritage is really a topic for CENL. This group will include: Frank Scholze, Susanne Oehlschläger, Ivanka Stričević and Sabine Schrimpf.

The EC members agreed that there has to be a structure, also in terms of affordability. In order to talk about reducing overspending, a second group will be formed, including Frank Scholze, Susanne Oehlschläger, Karin Grönvall and Michael Duchardt. Both groups should come up with proposals by the next EC meeting.

- **ACTION 6:** The two brainstorming groups (Finances and Funds and grants) have to come up with proposals by the next EC meeting on how a possible new fund for ECH can be financed and what criteria it should contain.

## 7. CENL strategy

### Paper 06

The Chair assessed the contributions of the breakout groups at the AGM in Ankara as very valuable. With this input in mind, the CENL strategy paper was revised and should be discussed for further changes. Frank Scholze suggested some terminological, but also content-related rewording. Above all it is important to clarify that CENL as an umbrella organisation can support the development of national libraries, but cannot develop them itself. In general, the EC members shared the opinion of the breakout groups that the bullet points go too much into detail and therefore could be read like an obligation. It was agreed to formulate the wording more open and also to choose a different order of priorities, with member libraries first and then CENL as an organisation. Sara Lammens mentioned that examples were not necessary in a strategy. Deleting the examples would also contribute to a more general wording.

Frank Scholze explained that the current strategic plan would be valid at least until the next AGM, where the final draft of the new one would be presented to the members. In addition, an action plan for 2023 is needed, which the Secretariat will take care of. The revision of the draft strategy will therefore be an internal process among the EC members and not in exchange with the members, as they were already consulted on this at the last AGM.

- **ACTION 7:** Revision of the CENL draft strategy by the CENL Secretariat. CENL Secretariat also to draft an action plan for 2023. The final drafts will be emailed to EC members before Christmas and shall be discussed at the next EC meeting.

## 8. Network Groups Update

### Paper 07

Frank Scholze introduced this item by proposing to decide on whether the term of the network groups should be extended for one year when the new CENL strategy comes to life, or whether the (re-)application process should take place this year as planned, when the network group's term officially ends.

The EC members discussed that in the case of the Copyright Network Group, a new round of applications would seem to make sense as the workload is too great and no one has yet been found to take on the responsibility to chair the group. The Books and Audiences Network Group and the Artificial Intelligence Network Group have already signalled that they would like to apply again. However, the latter group had already announced that they intend to continue their work

for another year only, which could cause a problem. The CENL Chair clarified that the network groups meet on a voluntary basis and therefore there should be no obligation for them to fulfil the full term of three years. Should a group wish to end their work prematurely, this would have to be discussed in due course.

All EC members agreed to start the application process of the network groups this year as planned. Hans Petschar asked whether new network groups could also come up in this context, to which Frank Scholze replied in the affirmative. At the same time, the Secretary emphasised that for organisational reasons she considered more than three network groups to be difficult to manage.

## 9. Clarin/Dariah CENL Dialogue Forum

### Paper 08

Frank Scholze reported on an informal meeting that took place on 16 September 2022 in the form of a video conference between him as CENL Chair and representatives from the national libraries of Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands and Clarin/Dariah EU. Objective of the meeting was to discuss the idea of a possible cooperation between CENL and Clarin/Dariah EU. All participants agreed that the CENL Dialogue Forum would be a good platform for national libraries to discuss specific issues with Clarin/Dariah, and how to identify ways to benefit from the infrastructure. The small group would like to continue their discussion, prepare a workshop and then include all CENL members who are interested in the dialogue.

EC members discussed whether there is a connection between Clarin/Dariah and CENL, and whether a CENL Dialogue Forum should be obliged to report on their results such as the network groups. Frank Scholze explained that the concept of “collections as data” is a real international issue and thus also of interest to all CENL member libraries. As (national) libraries have extensive collections, Clarin/Dariah would be the obvious dialogue partners for them.

Laurence Engel and Sara Lammens reiterated the importance of finding new ways of informal exchange, but also saw a risk in not communicating clearly enough to members what exactly the Forum stands for and why it is not open to all from the start. Thought should also be given to the framework for the CENL Dialogue Forum, to what extent they should inform about the outcomes of their discussions in a non-formal way. Susanne Oehlschläger explained that CENL only provides the platform to get in touch with each other. She was not concerned that there may be too many dialogue forums, as only the EC can decide on new ones.

Hans Petschar supported the idea proposed by Frank Scholze to start with this Dialogue Forum in a small group that has a scope, but stressed that it was important to open it to all members as soon as possible and see how it will develop until the AGM in Paris.

## 10. CENL Annual General Meeting 2023

Laurence Engel reported that the BnF is currently putting together the cultural programme for the AGM 2023 in Paris. It is proposed to revisit the newly restored and redesigned Richelieu site and to visit three museums, including the BNF Museum. Ophélie Ramonatxo added that on the last day, the plan was to split the members into two groups and give them the choice of having a guided tour of the library itself or of the temporary exhibition. She also pointed out that members need to be informed in time to make their hotel reservations already at the end of this year, as there is a fair in Paris during the time of the AGM.

At the suggestion of Sara Lammens, the EC members agreed to place the AGM 2023 under the overarching theme of "Sustainability" because it is focused but broad enough to cover different aspects, and also digital issues. The Secretariat shall send a call for contributions. In terms of

keynote speeches, it was agreed on a mixture of external and internal speakers. For the total number, two or three speakers were proposed, of which at least one should be chosen from outside the community to have also the external view. As a roadmap, Frank Scholze suggested approaching external speakers before the end of the year and that everyone should think about potential speakers in general. Laurence Engel added that it might be a good idea to integrate group sessions for the overarching theme in the programme, which was affirmed by the EC members. The call for contributions should be circulated within the EC before being sent to all members in November.

- **ACTION 8:** Consider potential speakers and contact (external) keynote speakers for the AGM 2023 by the end of this year.

## 11. Any other business

Sara Lammens proposed to set the dates for the next two EC meetings. The EC members agreed on the following dates:

- Monday, 23 January 2023, in person at the BNF in Paris.
- Monday, 17 April 2023, 14:00-17:00 CET, virtual meeting.

Frank Scholze thanked everyone for today's meeting and emphasised how pleased he was to see everyone again in person. A special thank went to Ivanka Stričević and Hans Petschar who managed very well to contribute even though the meeting was hybrid.

The meeting ended at 15:05 CET.

Afterwards, the members present were given a guided tour of the German National Library.

## Summary of actions:

- **ACTION 1:** Secretariat to propose amendments of the statutes for discussion at next EC meeting: with special attention to the quorum of EC meetings.
- **ACTION 2:** Planning for another survey to check the current status of assistance for Ukrainians and to record where Ukrainian literature and heritage is already stored abroad.
- **ACTION 3:** Improve communication to members on how the decision for the AGM venue is taken after the applications.
- **ACTION 4:** The Chair and the Treasurer have to appear in person at ING at the end of the meeting to sign a document and to verify their identity.
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- **ACTION 7:** Revision of the CENL draft strategy by the CENL Secretariat. CENL Secretariat also to draft an action plan for 2023. The final drafts will be emailed to EC members before Christmas and shall be discussed at the next EC meeting.
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