

CENL Executive Committee Meeting (35)

18 September 2023, 10:00-16:00 CEST

Kungliga Biblioteket / National Library of Sweden, Stockholm

Attendees

Frank Scholze, CENL Chair

Karin Grönvall, EC Treasurer

Laurence Engel, EC Member (online, from 14:00 CEST)

Sara Lammens, EC Member (online)

Hans Petschar, EC Member

Ivanka Stričević, EC Member

Susanne Oehlschläger, CENL Secretary

In attendance

Ophélie Ramonatxo, BnF (online)

Stefanie Schust, CENL Secretariat, minutes

Before the business part of the meeting started, those present were given a guided tour of the National Library of Sweden from 10:00-12:00 CEST.

Frank Scholze welcomed all EC members and started the hybrid meeting at 12:05 CEST.

1. Approval of the agenda

Paper 01

The agenda was approved by all.

With regard to next year's EC elections, Frank Scholze asked all EC members to consider by the lunch break whether they would be willing to stand for another term, or whether they have other members in mind who would be willing to do so.

2. Minutes of the last EC meeting, 17 April 2023

Paper 02

Minutes were approved with no further additions. The EC thanked Constanze Schwikart for the minutes.

3. Matters and actions arising from EC minutes

The results of the survey on European national libraries' support for Ukrainian libraries and cultural heritage are now available on the CENL website after some technical difficulties. Susanne Oehlschläger added that the feedback had varied a lot and therefore an evaluation was difficult. However, the results would show a trend and what the libraries have done.

Still to come is the survey of all CENL members on the status of their libraries with emergency plans and their possible need for CENL support. A new fund was discussed earlier in the year, but it was decided at the AGM 2023 that the budget would continue to be spent as before. The Secretariat was therefore faced with the question of whether the survey should nevertheless be

prepared. Frank Scholze felt that the survey would be valuable even if the EC decided against a new funding programme (to be discussed later under agenda item Grants and bursaries update). A survey would show what precautions the individual libraries have already taken and where they still need an exchange of experiences or other support. Sara Lammens interjected that although it was interesting to have this information, one had to be careful not to do too many surveys. A discussion arose about what kind of questions the survey should cover. As each national library is supposed to have an emergency plan anyway, the survey would need to be more specific, e.g. ask how often the plans are updated. Frank Scholze's main concern was that the survey should ask how resilient the national libraries were in case of natural disasters or war. Although the national libraries have different approaches to the issue, it is important that they all align themselves to become more resilient.

The Chair summarised that the survey should not be linked to the funding programme for the time being, but that the two could be combined at a later stage if necessary. Furthermore, so far there are no other surveys planned over the next few months. Susanne Oehlschläger suggested that the Secretariat prepare a draft survey for discussion with the EC.

- **ACTION POINT 1:**

- The Secretariat will prepare a draft survey of CENL members on the status of their library emergency plans. The draft will be sent to the EC members for discussion.

4. Minutes of the AGM 2023 in Paris

Paper 03

EC members thanked Julijana Nadj-Guttandin and Stefanie Schust for preparing the comprehensive minutes. Ophélie Ramonatxo added that she had some minor corrections that she would send to the Secretariat. At the AGM 2024, CENL members will decide on the minutes.

5. Matters and actions arising from AGM 2023

The general feedback for the AGM 2023 was very positive and the EC members once again thanked the BnF for hosting it. Susanne Oehlschläger reported that almost all the presentations as well as pictures of the AGM have been uploaded to the members area of the CENL website. In addition, an online publication of the AGM presentations on sustainability is planned and is expected to be published by the end of this year. The new CENL strategy was also published on the website and announced to members in the August/September issue of the newsletter.

Regarding the amendment of the Statutes, the Secretary is in contact with the Dutch notary: according to Dutch law, amendments to the Statutes made must be written in the original language, i.e. Dutch (as CENL is a foundation under Dutch law) and not in English. This requires a formal new decision, so the process will have to be repeated at the AGM 2024: The Board of Directors will have to vote once again, this time on the changes to the Dutch language version. Until then, the previous Statutes apply, which means that decisions can only be taken if all EC members are present. Frank Scholze added that, according to the Statutes, the leaving of Janne Andresoo was not a problem as long as three members remained in the EC.

With regard to the AGM 2023 and the possible improvements for the AGM 2024, EC members agreed that the many best practice examples presented were well received, although it was demanding to see so many presentations. Karin Grönvall added that it was nice that so many methods had been presented and asked that more time be given to this at the AGM 2024. This

gives directors more opportunities to share their experiences of how to deal with specific issues. Frank Scholze agreed that the balance between presentations and time to exchange is always a challenge, but that it was well achieved at the AGM 2023. Sara Lammens suggested that having the breakout sessions at the end of the conference was difficult as some members had to leave early, and suggested that they might be considered at the end of the first day instead.

Ophélie Ramonatxo highlighted another organisational aspect by pointing out that some institutions come to the AGM with more attendees than others. The EC members agreed that it should be communicated more clearly that the AGM is a Directors' Conference. They were in favour of a "one plus one" rule of thumb, so that another person can accompany the director general. Laurence Engel noted that it is good to have people present who are involved in library management or international affairs. At the same time, it should be taken into account that some institutions also need to travel with translators, which also results in more attendees. The same would apply to bringing life partners, some came together with their families at this year's meeting. It was agreed that as few extra people as possible would be taken. However, as long as this is the minority, no limitations should take place and the point should be discussed with the host of the next AGM.

- **ACTION POINT 2:**

- Secretary to discuss the number of participants per country to the AGM with the host of the 2024 AGM.

6. CENL AGM 2024

Papers 04

Susanne Oehlschläger informed the EC members that she is in contact with Julia Konopka-Żołnierczuk, the Deputy Director of the National Library of Poland. During IFLA WLIC 2023 in Rotterdam, a meeting took place where she reported to the Secretary that the Polish colleagues were eagerly working on the preparations for AGM 2024.

The EC members discussed possible topics for the next AGM. Karin Grönvall suggested that the theme should be related to the specific business of national libraries, e.g. digital legal deposit. Even if this is handled differently in different countries, one could generally talk about the main tasks being not only collecting but also providing access (e.g. music, streaming platforms) and the idea of a shared European digital legal deposit. In the future, digital transformation will raise the question of the extent to which there is an overlap between AI and legal deposit, so the two issues could be well linked. Topics could be discussed that explore the question of what happens when AI replaces cataloguing and whether physical copies still need to be collected at all or whether it is not enough to receive a digital copy from the publisher.

All EC members agreed that the legal deposit had changed and that it should be dealt with at an AGM at a strategic level rather than in technical detail. As legal deposit is one of the core concepts of national libraries, it will be important to discuss where we are today and what common ground can be found to still be able to function in 10 years' time. As the topic is very broad, the Chair suggested focusing mainly on digital legal deposit (or e-legal deposit). Laurence Engel supported the proposal and added that IFLA is in the process of updating its standard for legal deposit. Ophélie Ramonatxo also mentioned that the breakout sessions could be used to address more specific issues and that a link could be made with the AGM 2023 by discussing sustainable legal deposit.

The Polish colleagues have also already submitted topic proposals that could also be well related to the theme. It was agreed that the structure of the breakout sessions would be considered and that management issues in national libraries could be a topic at one of the next AGMs, but that the focus for 2024 would be on digital legal deposit.

7. EC elections 2024

Paper 05

Frank Scholze took up the question whether the EC members had a tendency to stand for election again. He answered the question for himself that he enjoys working with everyone and would like to continue his work as EC Chair together with CENL Secretary Susanne Oehlschläger and the CENL Secretariat. The EC has already lost Janne Andresoo, but as the term is almost over, there is no need to elect a new member of the EC. Hans Petschar is not available for another term as he will retire.

Elections will be held under the previous Statutes. The Secretariat will announce a call for nominations in early 2024. The election itself will take place from 24 April to 24 May 2024 and will be confirmed by the Board of Directors at their business meeting during the AGM.

All other EC members replied that they would like to remain in office, but would have to make this conditional on the continuation of their mandate as directors. In this context, Ivanka Stričević asked whether members should be approached strategically in order to achieve a geographical balance within the EC. Laurence Engel replied that she felt that the current EC was very representative with different nations being represented.

Overall it was agreed that special attention should be given to approaching members from Southern Europe (especially Spain, Portugal and Italy), the Baltic States and the South East to see if they would be interested in becoming a member of the EC. Regarding the size of the group, it was pointed out that the elections should be neutral, but that it should be mentioned again that experience has shown that seven members is the ideal group size for the EC (and that the Board in principle agreed already on this). In terms of the further procedure, it was noted that the schedule mentioned in paper 05 would be followed, starting with the announcement of the call for nominations in January 2024.

8. Finance Update

Paper 06

Karin Grönvall confirmed that everything was on track financially. There was nothing new to report. Only Spain and Ireland had not yet paid their membership fees. Spain has had problems with this in recent years and Ireland is probably in a transitional phase.

9. Grants and bursaries update

Paper 07

The Secretary reported that Hungary, France and Moldova have been awarded the EKN 2023 grant. One point to be discussed in the EC: the colleagues from Moldova are planning to organise a conference and spend a part of the money on social events, so the Secretariat has contacted Karin Grönvall as CENL's treasurer for advice.

All EC members agreed that spending 10 % of the grant on social events seems reasonable, and therefore the National Library of Moldova should be allowed to spend the money in this way.

Susanne Oehlschläger announced that three applications for the Hidden Stories Fund (HSF) had been received. The Secretariat recommends approving the application from Greece as the concept of the project seems to be well-designed and focuses on a hitherto less visible community. The other two applications, from Romania and Croatia, both focus on women and are interestingly designed, but very similar. It was therefore proposed to approve only one of the two projects. As Ivanka Stričević is biased in this case, she left the room for a short period of time to allow the other EC members to discuss and come to a decision.

After a short discussion, the EC decided to approve all three applications. This was mainly agreed on because there were only minor differences between the Romanian and Croatian applications and almost no reason to choose one over the other. In addition, as this was seen as the last call for the HSF, there would be no opportunity to reapply. The EC decided to use the remaining money for 2023 from the Skills and Knowledge Exchange (SKE) Fund. This fund is not in great demand at the moment, and the year is coming to an end anyway.

Regarding the future direction of the funds, the EC confirmed that the HSF shall not be continued. Frank Scholze asked the EC members if they wanted to add further programmes and in which direction they wanted to develop (also with regard to the Emergency Planning Fund). All agreed that the existing system was working well and should therefore continue with the EKN Grant and Skills and Knowledge Exchange Fund.

In this context, Ivanka Stričević pointed out that people from Eastern Europe are less interested in receiving money from CENL for their projects than in the message it sends. The application from Croatia is a good example of this: the project would have gone ahead even without CENL's financial support. But when CENL supports such projects, there is automatically an added value. She asked the EC members to keep this in mind for the next decisions.

10. Membership applications of Odesa National Scientific Library and National Academy of Agricultural Sciences of Ukraine

Paper 08

The Secretariat has received two applications for CENL membership: From the Odesa National Scientific Library and the National Academy of Agricultural Sciences of Ukraine. The question is whether these libraries can be included and how many national libraries are allowed per country. Frank Scholze explained that, according to the Statutes, several members per country are allowed in principle, but only one is entitled to vote.

Hans Petschar replied that there were two conditions to be accepted at CENL: they must be a national library by law (with legal deposit) and they must be a member of the Council of Europe. If these conditions are not met, no exception could be made in this case either. Should the status of the libraries from Ukraine change, the issue could be discussed again. The EC agreed and decided not to accept the applications of the Ukrainian libraries for formal reasons. Karin Grönvall stressed that it was important to communicate the message appropriately so that the resignation would not be received too negatively by Ukrainian colleagues. Even though they cannot formally be a member of CENL at this point, they should be offered help on how to get into exchange with other national libraries.

- **ACTION POINT 3:**

The Secretariat will inform the National Scientific Library of Odesa and the National Academy of Agricultural Sciences of Ukraine that the EC has decided to reject their applications to join CENL.

11. Network Groups Update

Paper 09

Susanne Oehlschläger reported that the AI Network Group had been very active and had held a total of three webinars. She apologised that the attachment on the activities of the BANG Network Group was missing in paper 09, but promised to correct this. The new EDI Network Group is now starting its work and in the meantime has made contact with its sponsor Karin Grönvall. They asked to change their name from "Equality, Diversity and Inclusion" to "Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion". The EC agreed that the change of name makes sense as equity and equality are two different things. It will be proposed to the Network Group to keep the acronym EDI.

Frank Scholze reported that there is a LIBER working group on AI and recommended contacting the AI Network Group. Even though there are differences between the two groups (LIBER focuses more on research libraries), from CENL's point of view this collaboration would be useful to exchange ideas as the overlap of common topics will be large.

- **ACTION POINT 4:**
 Secretariat to propose AI Network Group to contact LIBER working group on AI.

12. Dialogue Forums Update

Paper 10

Susanne Oehlschläger gave a brief update on the activities of the FEP CENL Dialogue Forum. The biggest issue they talked about is the European Copyright Directive. The increasing amount of additional metadata will also have an impact on the processing of e-Deposits. In addition, more new formats, more multi-models will be a challenge.

Laurence Engel asked that in future Ophélie Ramonatxo be informed of the dates of the meetings so that she could attend herself. Frank Scholze welcomed this and said that he would pass this on to Ute Schwens, the Chair of the Dialogue Forum. In principle, it would be good to have more CENL members in attendance, which is why Ute Schwens considers a call for participation. The French-German Meeting on Copyrighted Works in Digital Libraries is a subgroup of the FEP CENL Dialogue Forum. Their next meeting will take place on 14 December 2023 at the National Library of France in Paris.

The CENL Dialogue Forum National Libraries as Data Infrastructures had a presentation at AGM 2023 in Paris with Sally Chambers as speaker. The group is very active and has provided the results of its survey of national libraries on their participation in research infrastructures. They plan to publish some information on the CENL website. Frank Scholze added that the results show that this forum, with active members from CLARIN and DARIAH, is focused on European research data infrastructures. Future discussions within the group should be followed up as the forum cannot cover all areas.

13. SusNL-Net: Sustainable National Libraries Network

Paper 11

Amina Shah, the Director of the National Library of Scotland, informed the Secretariat that her library had been approached by Professor Gobinda Chowdhury, Professor of Information Science at the University of Strathclyde, about the possibility of collaborating on an Arts and Humanities Research Council grant. He is proposing a project to look at the sustainability of legal deposit in national libraries within the UK and Europe.

It has been discussed whether the initiative would like to partner with CENL or whether the input of individual national libraries is required. Frank Scholze replied that he had the impression that CENL was needed as a facilitator, but that they would ask again about their motives. The EC made it clear that CENL could not participate as an official project partner with financial support, but that it was important to inform the members about this initiative. Hans Petschar pointed out that the deadline for applications for this grant was already 19 October 2023, and he thought that this was maybe too late if national libraries had not yet been contacted.

- **ACTION POINT 5:**
 The Secretariat will inform CENL members about the activities of SusNL-Net with a strong recommendation to become part of it, and write a letter of support to Prof. Gobinda Chowdhury.

14. Any other business

The next EC meeting will be held virtually on 5 February 2024 from 13:00-16:00 CET.

Frank Scholze took the opportunity to mention that he is in favour of at least one physical meeting of the EC in addition to the AGM. The EC agreed to meet in person meeting in September 2024 at the National Library of Austria in Vienna.

The Chair closed the meeting at 15:35 CEST and thanked Karin Grönvall for her great hospitality and all others for their participation.

Summary of action points:

- **ACTION POINT 1:**
 The Secretariat will prepare a draft survey of CENL members on the status of their library emergency plans. The draft will be sent to the EC members for discussion.
- **ACTION POINT 2:**
 Secretary to discuss the number of participants per country to the AGM with the host of the 2024 AGM.
- **ACTION POINT 3:**
 The Secretariat will inform the National Scientific Library of Odesa and the National Academy of Agricultural Sciences of Ukraine that the European Commission has decided to reject their applications to join CENL.
- **ACTION POINT 4:**
 Secretariat to propose AI Network Group to contact LIBER working group on AI.
- **ACTION POINT 5:**
 The Secretariat will inform CENL members about the activities of SusNL-Net with a strong recommendation to become part of it, and write a letter of support to Prof. Gobinda Chowdhury.