

CENL Executive Committee Meeting (36)

5 February 2024, 13:05-15:05 CET
 Videoconference via Zoom

Attendees

Frank Scholze, CENL Chair
 Karin Grönvall, EC Treasurer
 Laurence Engel, EC Member
 Hans Petschar, EC Member
 Ivanka Stričević, EC Member
 Susanne Oehlschläger, CENL Secretary

In attendance

Ophélie Ramonatxo, BnF
 Stefanie Schust, CENL Secretariat, minutes

Absent

Sara Lammens, EC Member

Frank Scholze welcomed everyone to the first EC meeting in 2024.

1. Approval of the agenda

Paper 01

The agenda was approved by all.

2. Minutes of the last EC meeting, 18 September 2023

Paper 02

Minutes were approved with no further additions.

3. Matters and actions arising from EC minutes

Paper 02a

Frank Scholze proposed to go through the five action points from the last meeting.

Regarding Action Point 1, Susanne Oehlschläger reported that two experts from the German National Library had drafted questions for the survey on the status of member libraries' emergency plans. This is a brainstorming of possible questions and it was suggested not to discuss them in detail, but if the EC members want to have specific questions included, they should mark them. The planned procedure is as follows: The final draft of the questions will be circulated to EC members in advance before being sent to CENL members (around April). This would give CENL members enough time to complete the survey before the AGM in Warsaw. In addition, a session will be scheduled at the AGM to present the results of the survey. The results will not be published as the data is too sensitive.

Laurence Engel confirmed how important this survey is. She and her colleagues are very interested in the results in order to achieve a common view on the work of the national libraries regarding emergency planning. Laurence Engel also suggested to compare the questionnaire with that of the UNESCO for museums and recommended Céline Allain as a colleague who could provide information on this. Susanne Oehlschläger agreed to get in touch with Céline Allan before preparing the final draft of the survey. Ivanka Stričević added that the feedback from her colleagues on the survey was that the questions should be more specific and not too complicated. Furthermore, the focus should be on planning, whether the libraries have emergency plans at all and which threats have been taken into account. Frank Scholze pointed out that the questionnaire should not ask for data that can be requested elsewhere. It is much more about sharing different approaches.

Action Point 2 dealt with the question of the extent to which the host of this year's AGM would allow other participants outside the Board of Directors. The Secretary reported that the organisers had no restrictions on the number of participants.

Action Point 3 was fulfilled by informing the National Scientific Library of Odesa and the National Academy of Agricultural Sciences of Ukraine of the EC's decision to reject their applications to join CENL. No further responses have been received from either library.

Action Point 4 was for the Secretariat to advise the AI Network Group to contact the LIBER working group on AI. This was done and the AI Network Group agreed that this was a good idea as there had been no contact to date.

The Secretariat was also able to fulfil Action Point 5 by informing CENL members about the activities of SusNL-Net on 6 October 2023 and sending a letter of support to Prof. Gobinda Chowdhury on 11 October 2023. When asked in January 2024, Prof Chowdhury replied that they are still waiting for a response and hope to receive further results in February.

- **ACTION POINT 1:**
Susanne Oehlschläger will contact Céline Allan (BnF) to finalise the draft survey on the status of library emergency plans of CENL members.

4. Amendment of CENL statutes

Paper 03

As already explained at the last EC meeting, contact with the Dutch notary has revealed that the statutes can only be amended if they are based on the original text, i.e. the Dutch language. The procedure for amending the statutes must therefore be repeated.

Susanne Oehlschläger reported on a video meeting with the Dutch notary on 11 January 2024, in which the formal procedure was clarified as follows: First, the EC members must approve the changes to the draft in the original language at the next regular meeting. There is also a translation into English. The Board of Directors must then confirm this decision at the AGM in Warsaw, only then will the revised statutes become legally binding.

This includes some changes that have to be made because of Dutch law, as well as additions that had not been made before. The EC members agreed that these were minor changes and that they had learnt from this experience how they would deal with such amendments to the statutes in the future. The notary will prepare the Dutch text for the amendment of the Statutes now. In their next meeting in April, all EC member have to be present to agree on the amendments.

5. CENL finance update

Paper 04, Paper 04a, Paper 04b

Karin Grönvall confirmed that everything is going according to plan, and there is only minimal overspending. Susanne Oehlschläger pointed out that there is not yet a budget plan for 2025. As Michael Duchardt from the CENL Secretariat is currently only working on a limited basis, it could take some time to draw the next budget. In principle, the EC members agreed that the moderate overspending should be continued. Laurence Engel spoke in favour of waiting a little longer before deciding on additional expenditure as ideas for new projects might come up after the AGM 2024, concerning emergency planning and e-legal deposit. As the Board of Directors decides on the budget at the AGM, the budget plan would have to be finalised beforehand. It was discussed whether it would be useful to have a certain budget (e.g. EUR 5,000) in order to be able to react to new developments after the AGM if necessary. The EC members agreed to continue these considerations at the next EC meeting.

Susanne Oehlschläger informed that the Secretariat proposes to continue the financial support for members wishing to travel to the AGM in Warsaw, Poland, according to the same scheme as in the last two years. The EC members present agree to this proposal. Sara Lammens signalled her agreement in advance of the meeting. The Secretary will ask her for confirmation.

Furthermore, the Secretariat is in favour of continuing the suspension of Ukraine's membership fee, as the situation in 2024 has not changed as a result of the war. Although there is no quorum to take a formal decision at today's meeting, the EC members expressed their agreement with the Secretariat's proposals.

6. Bursaries and Grants update

Papers 05

As already announced on the CENL website, the Hidden Stories Fund was closed at the end of 2023. The three approved projects from 2023 are still running. Due to the cyber-attack on the British Library, they were unable to continue their project and have been allowed to complete their work this year.

Currently CENL offers only the EKN Grant and the Skills and Knowledge Exchange Fund. The call for applications for the EKN Grant 2024 will be opened soon. Last year there were three EKN grantees, of which two projects have been completed and one is still ongoing.

The Chair thanked for the report and confirmed that there is no need for discussion on an additional fund program before the results of the survey on emergency planning are known. The issue could be discussed again at the next EC meeting after the AGM.

7. EC elections 2024

Paper 06

Susanne Oehlschläger explained that she had not sent a paper on this point. Instead, she reported that during the preparation of the EC elections, the question arose as to whether it would really be necessary to vote online. The Dutch notary recommended to hold the vote directly at the AGM in Warsaw by a show of hands during the business meeting. The Secretariat will also prepare a

written vote if the Board of Directors requests an anonymous vote. A call for applications will be sent out in advance by the Secretariat and candidates will be presented at the AGM in Warsaw.

The EC members were all in favour of this approach. Frank Scholze summarised that everyone had signalled their willingness to continue and that only Hans Petschar would definitely be leaving the EC due to his retirement. In the meantime, it has emerged that Ivanka Stričević will be able to continue as General Director, while Laurence Engel stated that her situation would become clearer in April. The Secretariat will emphasise in the call for applications that seven members is preferred as the optimum group size for the EC. This is in line with what the Board of Directors agreed last year and shall be part of the amended Statutes. The Chair underlined that, as agreed, he would speak to colleagues from Southern Europe (Spain, Italy, Portugal) and the Baltic States to see if they would be willing to stand as candidates. Susanne Oehlschläger pointed out that applications could also come from candidates who are not yet foreseeable. The Secretariat needs to consider a procedure for electing a maximum of seven candidates from a larger pool of candidates. To this end, it is necessary to look closely at the statutes to see how flexible the election procedure can be. It was also pointed out that the current members of the EC must also formally apply. Even if this should not be part of the official announcement, Frank Scholze said that it would be communicated informally that the existing EC members would like to continue their work.

8. CENL AGM 2024

Paper 07

The Secretary gave an overview of how far the planning for this year's AGM in Warsaw, Poland, had progressed. Julia Konopka-Zolnierczuk (Deputy Director of the National Library of Poland) announced that the cultural programme will begin in Warsaw's largest park, Łazienki Park (Royal Baths Park).¹ There will be a free open-air concert of Chopin's music for those interested. This will be followed by a lunch together near the park. Afterwards, a guided tour with three different routes through the park will be offered and the day will end with the registration dinner at the National Library of Poland.

The programme for the business meeting is similar to that of the 2023 AGM, and is particularly important this time, given the need to vote on amending the statutes and to elect the EC. Susanne Oehlschläger was happy to announce that Minna Karvonen (Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland) could be won as keynote speaker. She and Frank Scholze got an impression of her online as part of the German EU Council Presidency a few years ago during the coronavirus pandemic and are convinced that she is an important expert. There was an open discussion about whether another keynote speaker should be invited, or whether there should be more time for dialogue on aspects of e-legal deposit. EC members tended not to request another keynote speaker, unless ideas for proposals were brought forward in the next two weeks.

As the first keynote addresses a very broad topic, Karin Grönvall argued that someone from the research community should be invited to give an overview of the legal situation in CENL member countries, the consequences for research and what can be done together. This should not include a second keynote, but rather could be an inspiring speech before the breakout groups. This time the break out groups shall be on the first day of the AGM so that all members can participate. The Secretary added that the second day of the conference would include a session on "When cultural

¹ <https://www.lazienki-krolewskie.pl/en/poznaj-lazienki>

heritage becomes the target of damage and aggression" with a report on the results of the survey, a speech on the current situation in Ukraine by Lyubov Dubrovina (in person or pre-recorded) and a presentation by Roly Keating on the cyber-attack suffered by the British Library. It is hoped that all of these topics will be of such interest that members will be encouraged not to leave early.

Laurence Engel noted that she considered the following presentation "National libraries as coordinators of nationwide networks" very interesting, but was not sure how this contribution would fit into the rest of the AGM and whether half an hour was not too short for such a broad topic. It was explained that this had been suggested by the host country and that they had been given this point out of courtesy. It had also happened at other AGMs that although there was a main topic, the presentations did not always fit exactly. Since the cyber-attack on the British Library, this issue has become increasingly important and has led to the idea of either cancelling the EKN reports altogether or at least shortening the time required for them, as the written results can also be viewed on the CENL website. The Secretariat was asked to prepare a second draft of the programme by shortening the time of the EKN reports and starting the conference earlier on the second day.

Susanne Oehlschläger informed the EC members that the National Library of Poland, in cooperation with the Smithsonian Institution and the Kosciuszko Foundation, is planning a short conference on Ukrainian heritage, literature and art on Saturday 15 June 2024, just before the AGM in Warsaw. The Polish colleagues hope that Ukrainian scholars, artists and librarians will attend. All CENL members are welcome to join this event on a voluntary basis.

- **ACTION POINT 2:**
The Secretariat will inform members about the conference on Ukrainian heritage, literature and art organised by the National Library of Poland on Saturday 15 June, which CENL members can attend on a voluntary basis.

9. Network Groups Update

Susanne Oehlschläger explained that there were no written reports this time as they had been received just before today's meeting. Overall, the three Network Groups (AI, BANG and EEDI) had been very active. The Secretary announced that the reports would be sent to the EC members after this meeting.

Frank Scholze added that updates on the CENL Dialogue Forums are also requested, both for the EC meetings and as a time slot during the AGM.

- **ACTION POINT 3:**
Receive reports from the CENL Dialogue Forums and include a time slot at this year's AGM.

10. Any other business

Susanne Oehlschläger announced that the publication on Sustainability in European National Libraries is in the final stages of proofreading and is expected to be published by the end of February 2024.

The Chair emphasised that he greatly appreciated the cooperation within the EC and that he was in favour of continuing to meet in person once a year. It is planned that the next face-to-face meeting will take place in Vienna at the National Library of Austria in September 2024, even though Hans Petschar will no longer be a member of the EC at that time. The next regular EC

meeting will be a virtual meeting. It will be held before the next AGM (probably in April, date to be announced).

Karin Grönvall asked the group if anyone would be attending the CDNL conference in Brisbane in October 2024. Frank Scholze explained that he had already cancelled his participation, but that he had communicated the topic of this year's AGM (legal deposit of digital publications) as this could also be of interest to CDNL. The other members of the EC also stated that they were unlikely to attend the CDNL conference due to scheduling difficulties.

Frank Scholze closed the meeting at 15:05 CET.

Summary of action points:

- **ACTION POINT 1:**
Susanne Oehlschläger will contact Céline Allan (BnF) to finalise the draft survey on the status of library emergency plans of CENL members.
- **ACTION POINT 2:**
The Secretariat will inform members about the conference on Ukrainian heritage, literature and art organised by the National Library of Poland on Saturday 15 June, which CENL members can attend on a voluntary basis.
- **ACTION POINT 3:**
Receive reports from the CENL Dialogue Forums and include a time slot at this year's AGM.