

## CENL Executive Committee Meeting (40)

19 May 2025, 13:05-15:15 CEST

Videoconference via Zoom

### Attendees

Frank Scholze, CENL Chair  
Karin Grönvall, EC Treasurer  
Sara Lammens, EC Member  
Tomáš Foltýn, EC Member  
Ivanka Stričević, EC Member  
Susanne Oehlschläger, CENL Secretary

### In attendance

Annika Wenzel, CENL Secretariat, minutes

Frank Scholze welcomed all EC members and started the meeting at 13:05 CEST.

### 1. Approval of the agenda

Paper 01

The agenda was approved by all.

### 2. Minutes of the last EC meeting, 27 February 2025

Paper 02

The minutes were approved without further additions.

### 3. Matters and actions arising from EC minutes

Susanne Oehlschläger reported about the Action Points from the last meeting:

Action Point 1 was for Sara Lammens to contact the LIBER board concerning a cooperation with CENL and to keep the EC members updated. Sara Lammens replied that she wanted to plan a meeting, but it did not work out yet. Their AI Taskforce has appointed a new chair in the meantime. She will try to find a new date for a meeting.

A stated in Action Point 2, the Secretariat will recalculate the CENL membership fees to discuss at the 2026 AGM. This action is still ongoing as the Secretariat would like to make the model simpler. There are currently five different tiers and they would like to reduce this to no more than three. Sabina Henn tested several models on how to recalculate and has now remodelled the British Library model. The Secretariat will meet with the British Library soon to discuss this. It is planned

to present the results to the EC to discuss at their September meeting in Luxembourg and to vote on at next year's AGM.

Action Point 3 stated that the Secretariat will open the travel bursary eligibility to the second lowest tier of membership fees (13 more members) if the full € 13,000 is not spend. The Secretariat did not open the bursary as recommended. They informed the 13 eligible members like in the years before and, as expected, only three members replied. Six more have registered - and will probably claim. In order not to have trouble after the AGM, Susanne Oehlschläger recommended to change the procedure for 2026 and to inform the Board of Directors at this AGM. All EC members agreed with this proposition.

**Action Point 1: The Secretariat will inform the Board of Directors at the AGM in Edinburgh about the changes concerning the travel bursary**

Action Point 4 was that the membership fee 2025 for the National Library of Ukraine will be suspended subject to approval of members at the AGM. It is included in the budget plan for 2026 and will be voted upon in Edinburgh; *see Finance paper 04 for the AGM.*

Action Point 5 said that the Secretariat will inform BANG that they cannot transfer their yearly budget unless they submit a substantiated application for a larger spending to the EC well in advance. The Secretariat did not inform them so far as this will affect this year's budget to be transferred into the next year. At the same time, the term of the Network groups will end in December this year; *see agenda item 7 Network groups.*

In fulfilment of Action Point 6 the Secretariat informed the approved EKN applicants.

Action Point 7 was fulfilled by taking into account the increased amount for the SKE grants when preparing the 2026 budget; *see Finance paper 04 for the AGM.*

Action Point 8 concerned the Secretariat updating the AGM agenda in the light of the last meeting, which was done.

#### 4. Reports by Chair und EC members

Frank Scholze started by mentioning that he welcomed the new members from Iceland and Denmark.

Gilles Pécout reported about the anniversary celebration of the BnF in March. Also, he will speak at a meeting in Québec about artificial intelligence on French speaking platforms. As well, from this year forward, the BnF will organise a LGBTQ+ mobilisation day on 17 May with public debates of documentation and authorship sources. He invited the other EC members to organise something together at the European level for the upcoming years.

Tomáš Foltýn updated the EC on the European Open Method of Coordination (OMC) group. Next month they will publish the first edition of their guidelines and meet with the European Commission. He will share the updates in Edinburgh. Ivanka Stričević added that OMC has intensified cooperation with LIBER, but there is still no substantial overview of their activities,

besides the survey a year ago. Tomáš Foltýn responded that the key issue was getting and correcting the statistic feedback from the public and municipal libraries, which took a long time. Robin Dale from IFLA, who is actively involved, will hopefully advance the procedure. Frank Scholze agreed to wait for the first edition and then respond.

Ivanka Stričević mentioned the National Library of Slovenia and how happy they are to have a new director. The National Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina still has serious budget problems and only an interim director.

Tomáš Foltýn reported that Slovakia will appoint a new cultural minister next week and therefore a new national library director as well. Susanne Oehlschläger mentioned two Slovak registrations to the AGM by people, who are according to Tomáš Foltýn not in management positions.

**Action Point 2: The Secretariat will contact the Slovak National Library.**

Karin Grönvall reported that the National Library of Sweden has many ongoing AI projects and hopes to get funding for them. Especially in the field of modernizing cataloguing, where quality assurance competes with cataloguing costs. She also informed the EC that her position as director was extended for another three years, for which the other EC members congratulated her.

Sara Lammens asked if anyone present will attend the LIBER AGM in Lausanne this year as very few national library directors seem to be present at those meetings. No one from the EC will be able to make it. Sara Lammens will report of the meeting.

## 5. CENL finance update

### AGM Paper 04

Sabina Henn prepared the financial papers for the first time. Karin Grönvall did not get to read the draft completely yet, but from what she saw, it looked fine. The draft will be finalised before the AGM. She reported that they overspent in 2024 less than planned, but next year is in perfect accordance with the overspending plan. She has no questions concerning the 2026 budget. Due to inflation, the costs for services have risen, which was to be expected. The SKE grant was raised to € 1500 as agreed by the EC.

Susanne Oehlschläger mentioned the CENL policy to transfer money only to a national library's account and not to personal bank accounts. In some cases, this causes problems as the concerned libraries state that money transferred to the library account would end up in the government's hand and would not reach the library. The Secretariat then pays service providers or travel agencies directly and in advance. In rare cases even this is not possible. Besides, this procedure is accompanied with a lot of bureaucracy for the Secretariat, therefore they would like the EC to discuss whether in those rare cases, they could make an exception from our general policy. Karin Grönvall agreed, but said that good documentation is important. Frank Scholze proposed a four eyes principle with the Secretariat and Karin Grönvall as the Treasurer. The others agreed to this.

## 6. Bursaries and Grants Update with Future of EKN Grant

Paper 03 and Paper 03a

The Secretariat reported that one SKE fund, which was awarded to the National Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2024 is still open, due to their former director's retirement. The money has already been transferred to the library, but they do not know yet who might use it. The Secretariat received five SKE applications for 2025 so far, two of them have already been completed with the reports on the website.

Concerning the EKN Grants, two from last year have been postponed to this year. The National Library of Georgia had their conference in late April, the Secretariat is waiting for the report. The National Library of Moldova postponed their meeting for organisational reasons to a later date this year. The third report from 2024 is now available as a video report in the member's area of the website.

Paper 03a concerns the future of the EKN Grant. It was decided in 2022 to extend the grant until 2025, now the EC is asked to discuss whether to extend it for another four years. 21 EKN Grants were awarded since its foundation.

The Secretariat recommended to extend it until 2029 as it is one of only two CENL funding programme remaining. The EC all agreed to extend it, but discussed whether to specify the application criteria. Points were made to highlight audience and geographical reach in the project and the inclusion of more than two national libraries to differentiate it from the SKE Bursaries. The Chair asked the EC whether they should state explicitly that the EKN Grant should consist of more than two partners. In contrast it was stated as there are few applications already, the criteria should not be too severe. In addition, the Secretariat only recommends the grant receivers to the EC and they can decide which ones to accept based on these discussed priorities. The Chair summarised that they will not change the formalities, but the Secretariat will take note of this discussion and consider it during their choosing procedure.

**Action Point 3: The EKN Grant will be extended for a further four years until 2029.**

## 7. Network Groups Update

Paper 04

All Network Group reports are included in the CENL Annual report; *see AGM paper 03*.

Jean-Philippe Moreux, Chair of the AI-Network Group, will give his annual report online during the AGM as an introduction to the break out groups. BANG and EEDI sent video reports, which will be published on the website and shown during the AGM.

The term for the current network groups will end in December this year and they are all expected to apply again. In order to ensure a smooth transition to the next term 2026-2028, the Secretariat wanted to publish the call for applications after the AGM in June with a deadline for submissions

by the end of August. This will ensure that the EC can decide on the Network Groups for the next term at the EC meeting in September.

Susanne Oehlschläger asked the EC to review the Terms of Reference for the groups before that call. Gilles Pécout asked whether the deadline for the applications could be postponed. Sara Lammens proposed to launch the call earlier instead of postponing the deadline. The Chair approved of this suggestion and asked for the call to be sent out as soon as possible.

The Secretariat would like to update the terms concerning the transfer of remaining money from their annual budget into the next year. Susanne Oehlschläger proposed that the network groups need to have a valid reason, like a planned event, to do this and need to inform the Secretariat in advance. All EC members agreed to this.

**Action point 4: The call for applications for the Network Groups will be send out as soon as possible including the updated Terms of Reference.**

## 8. Dialogue Forums Update

Video reports: <https://www.cenl.org/cenl-dialogue-forums/>

The reports are included in the CENL Annual Report, one video report by Ute Schwens is already online. Frank Scholze added that the National Libraries as Data Dialogue Forum had personnel changes. Peter Leinen from The German National Library has retired and was replaced by Philippe Genet and Andreas Witt (Professor at the IDS Institute for German language).

## 9. Annual General Meeting 2027

Paper 05

The call to host the CENL AGM 2027 was sent out in February and the Secretariat received seven applications: from the National Library of Armenia, the National and University Library in Zagreb, the National Library of the Czech Republic, the National Library of Estonia, the National Széchényi Library of Hungary, the National Library of Slovenia and the National Library of Sweden. After careful consideration the Secretariat recommended to choose of the National Library of Sweden in Stockholm as the 2027 host; *see Paper 05*.

As there were three applications to host the AGM 2027 by EC members (the National Libraries of Croatia, the Czech Republic and Sweden), it was agreed that Ivanka Stričević, Tomáš Foltýn and Karin Grönvall would leave the meeting during the discussion and for the vote.

The remaining EC members Frank Scholze, Gilles Pécout and Sara Lammens very much appreciated all the applications. They agreed with the criteria and recommendation by the Secretariat and chose unanimously the National Library of Sweden as the host of the AGM 2027. They also wanted to encourage all of the others to apply again for 2028. Ivanka, Tomas and Karin re-entered the meeting and were informed of the decision.

**Action Point 5: The Secretariat will inform the CENL members that the AGM 2027 will be hosted by the National Library of Sweden in Stockholm. When communicating the decision, they will be transparent about the decision process and criteria.**

## 10. Annual General Meeting 2025 Organisation/Programme

### AGM Papers 01-04

Susanne Oehlschläger reported that they received 63 registrations to date. Many members have one or two accompanying people. *There have been some changes to the programme; see Paper 01.*

The “AI in Action” contributions from the member libraries have been put in order, two will introduce the break out groups on Tuesday. Karin Grönvall wondered whether the “AI in Action” part would be too long and proposed a break in between. The presentations will each be about five to six minutes long followed by two minutes of Q&A. While it was agreed that the proposed time slot for all presentations should give ample time for a break in between, they should also keep some time in reserve. Frank Scholze proposed to wait until the final timetable, but was confident that it would be dynamic.

For the break out groups volunteer moderators will be needed. As decided in the last EC meeting, those should be EC members. Ivanka Stričević recommended at least 4 moderators given the number of participants, which was supported by the others. The AGM papers were approved without further additions.

## 11. Any other business

Frank Scholze addressed the CENL survey about what (national) libraries can do to support data concerns of cultural and research institutions in the United States under their current administration and reminded the others to please take part. He also asked if CENL should issue a formal support statement for Carla Hayden, former director of the Library of Congress, who was abruptly dismissed from her position via e-mail.

The EC supported the idea of the survey. While they would like to thank Carla Hayden in an appreciative statement, it should not express personal views or political judgement. CENL has never reacted to other directors being dismissed and does not have the competence to comment on the, arguably terrible, form of dismissal.

**Action Point 6: The Secretariat will draft a statement about Carla Hayden and circulate it among the EC members.**

Frank Scholze thanked the EC and closed the meeting at 15:15 (CEST).