

General Assembly 2022 Minutes

The General Assembly (GA) of the ECSPM, based on the attached Agenda, sent to the members of the GA prior to the online meeting, on 31 May 2022. had quorum. Besides the President, Professor Emerita Bessie Dendrinis and the General Secretary of the ECSPM, Guðrún Gísladóttir, the following representatives of member organisations took part:

- 1) ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe), represented by Waldemar Martyniuk
- 2) Babylon (Center for the Study of Superdiversity) University of Tilburg, represented by Massimiliano Spotti
- 3) Cambridge Language Sciences Interdisciplinary Research Centre, University of Cambridge, represented by Linda Fisher
- 4) CEM (Centre for Excellence for Multilingualism and Language Policy), National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, represented by Bessie Mitsikopoulou
- 5) Center for Multilingualism Universität Konstanz, represented by Theo Marinis
- 6) Centre for Research on Bilingualism Stockholms universitet, represented by Caroline Kerfoot had proxied the General Secretary of ECSPM
- 7) Centro di Eccellenza della Ricerca (Permanent Linguistic Observatory for Italian Abroad and Immigrant Languages) Università per Stranieri di Siena, represented by Monica Barni
- 8) EDiLiC – Éducation et Diversité Linguistique et Culturelle, represented by Ildikó Lőrincz
- 9) EARights (European Artists’ Rights) represented by Guðrún Gísladóttir
- 10) EFNIL (European Federation of National Institutions for Language) represented by Sabine Kirchmeier
- 11) FUEN (Federal Union of European Nationalities) represented by Gösta Toft
- 12) GEO (Groupe d’Études orientales, slaves et néo-helléniques, Université de Strasbourg, represented by Irini Tsamadou-Jacobberger
- 13) GL/ML (Greek Language and Multilingualism Laboratory), University of Thessaly, represented by George Androulakis
- 14) GS/FL (German as a Second / Foreign Language, Research Group), Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, represented by Tanja Rinker
- 15) ICC (The International Language Association) represented by Ellinor Haase
- 16) Institute of Linguistics and Literary Studies, Division of Multilingualism, Technische Universität Darmstadt, represented by and her name is Stefanie Nölle-Becker
- 17) LAF (Literature Across Frontiers) represented by Alexandra Büchler
- 18) LiLPa (linguistique, langues, parole), Université de Strasbourg, represented by Andrea Young
- 19) Mercator (European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning) represented by Cor van der Meer
- 20) MIRCo (Centre on Multilingualism, Discourse and Communication), the Autonomous University of Madrid, represented by Luisa Martín Rojo
- 21) MRN (Multilingualism Research Network), University of Cardiff, represented by Jonathan Morris
- 22) NPLD (Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity) represented by Vicent Fenollar

After welcoming everyone and before the discussion of the issues on the agenda began, the GA participants were asked to briefly present themselves and their institution.

ECSPM's endeavours 2020-2021

The president took the floor, thanked everyone for their presence, and presented participants with ECSPM's endeavours this past year which include:

1. ECSPM's support of minority, regional and heritage or community language spoken in Europe through our participation in the [European Language Equality project](#) – digital equality, that is. She explained that ECSPM was one of the 52 project partners and both the Prof. Dendrinis and Guðrún Gísladóttir – who had, from the start (January 2022), been appointed as LEAR (Legal Entity Appointed Representative) in the project – responded to the needs of the project to the extent that its members' knowledge and skills allowed them. In order to complete our deliverable, however, we had the help and support of three of our member organisations:
 - FUEN (Federal Union of European Nationalities)
 - NPLD (Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity).
 - CEM (Centre of Excellence for Multilingualism & Language Policy of the University of Athens)

ECSPM appeared in [ELE's Newsletter #6](#) (January 2022) and has published information on its website. You can find information about this significant flagship project of the EU on our [website](#). The project comes to an end on 30 June 2022. An ELE2 will follow and the ECSPM may be involved through project work rather than as a partner next time around.

2. The promotion of ECSPM-CURUM members' expertise in relation to Multilingualism in HE – an issue which the 2021 and the 2022 symposia tackled – is happening and it will be put to use for the preparation of a two-volume proposal, which we have been asked to submit to Bloomsbury Academic. The edited collection on the issue will include selected papers contributed by European and international speakers at our symposia, to be edited by members of the ECSPM-CURUM who volunteered to act as editors: Monica Barni, Bessie Dendrinis, Theo Marinis and Max Spotti.
3. ECSPM has a continued presence in the European Commission Transparency Registry, which is updated by Guðrún Gísladóttir annually.
4. ECSPM continues to support of the European Commission's work related to "Multilingualism and Schools" as well as the Council of Europe's projects, including the CEFR-CV for which a conference was recently organised by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg to launch the edited collection with case studies operationalising the CEFR-CV. [Entitled, *Enriching 21st Century Language Education: The CEFR Companion volume in practice*](#), the volume includes a critical review of the cases studies by Bessie Dendrinis, invited to the conference, given her expertise on the issue of cross-linguistic mediation, which was the focus of 2019 ECSPM Symposium hosted by the University of Reading in the UK. It is also the topic of an edited collection in which a number of ECSPM members are contributing, and the theme of an ECML action research project that we are supporting.
5. The strong support of the European Education Area through common project work and action among the ECSPM-CURUM which is growing, as it now consists of 16 research units (minus one research centre which is temporarily not extending membership) but to which two more will be added after today's GA.

ECSPM membership news

The President informed GA participants that she has asked representatives of the prospective ECSPM-CURUM members, i.e., organisations which have applied to become members, to present themselves and their organisation before the voting procedure starts, though they have already received the

membership form which they have completed. Antonella Sorace spoke on behalf of BILINGUALISM MATTERS (BM), explaining that it is “a community of organisations and individuals who share the commitment to make the latest, research-based evidence on multilingualism and language learning available and accessible to families, communities, and professionals in education, health or policy.” She also informed participants that BM (<https://www.bilingualism-matters.org/>) was established in 2008 at the University of Edinburgh as an information service for parents and in 2014 it became a Research and Information Centre. “Since then, the model of public engagement developed in Edinburgh has been replicated in multiple Bilingualism Matters centres across the world, carrying out similar work in their own communities. All centres of Bilingualism Matters are members of the BM International Network.”

Professor Francis Hult, Director of the Consortium for Language Policy and Planning (CLPP), University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) spoke next explaining that CLPP, founded in 2001, was originally housed at the University of Pennsylvania, under the leadership of Harold F. Schiffman. Now hosted at UMBC, the CLPP is an international network for researchers and practitioners of language policy and planning. It hosts lectures, symposia, workshops, institutes, and the Language Policy [listserv](#).

The voting procedure followed and the new members – BM and CLPP – were welcomed to the ECSPM-CURUM unanimously.

Next the General Secretary announced that the Centre for Literacy and Multilingualism (CeLM) of the University of Reading, a valued member since 2018, decided to temporarily not extend their membership to ECSPM-CURUM. Finally, she also announced that a founding member of the ECSPM, the European Esperanto Union, decided not to extend their membership. The President proposed that our organisation readily dissociate itself from EEU whose mission and goals differ significantly from those of those of the ECSPM and this was unanimously agreed upon.

The Executive Committee

The President and General Secretary thanked the following people who have served ECSPM on the Executive Committee (ExCom) since 2017:

- Alexandra Büchler: Translator/Editor, director and delegate of Literature Across Frontiers (LAF)
- Britta Hufeisen, Professor in Linguistics and Multilingualism and delegate of the Division of Multilingualism, Institute of Linguistics and Literary Studies, Technical University of Darmstadt
- Cor van der Meer, delegate of the Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning
- Johan Van Hoorde, ex-Senior Advisor at Taalunie (Union for the Dutch Language), ex-president and delegate of the European Federation of National Institutions for Language
- Terry Lamb, Professor of Languages and Interdisciplinary Pedagogy, University of Westminster, and delegate of the Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes (FIPLV).

The people who have been nominated by ECSPM members to serve on the new ExCom and have accepted their nomination, upon condition that they will have an advisory and consultancy role on all activities and events organised by ECSPM, are the following:

- Monica Barni, Centre of Excellence for Italian and the Languages spoken in Italy, UNISTRASI
- Linda Fisher, Cambridge Language Sciences
- Theodoros Marinis, Center for Multilingualism, Uni Konstanz
- Tanja Rinker, GS/FL, Bilingualism Matters, Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt
- Nikolay Slavkov, CCERBAL, University of Ottawa

Professor Emerita Bessie Dendrinis, delegate of the Centre of Excellence for Multilingualism and Language Policy, NKUA, has been nominated and is willing to continue her role as President and Guðrún Gísladóttir, delegate of EARights, has also been nominated and is willing to continue her role as General Secretary.

The new ExCom was elected with a unanimous vote of confidence.

Amendments to the ECSPM Statutes

The General Secretary took the floor and to point to the most basic differences between the old and the new Statutes, about which members had already been informed – as the new Statutes had been circulated prior to this GA and members could compare them with the previous version of the ECSPM Statutes which anyone interested could find on the ECSPM website. The new version of the Statutes passed unanimously.

The 2023 Symposium: preliminary considerations

The President explained that at the meeting following the 2022 ECSPM symposium it was decided that the 2023 event be hosted by the University of Strasbourg, collaborating with two of our member institutions, both of which are research units of this University. That is GEO (Groupe d'Études orientales, slaves et néo-helléniques), represented by Professor Irini Tsamadou-Jacoberger, who is also Vice-Rector of International Affairs of the University, and the LiLPa (linguistique, langues, parole) represented by Professor Andrea Young.

Prof. Jacobberger took the floor and said that they would be happy to host the next ECSPM Symposium in the Spring 2023, and to continue working on multilingualism in higher education, but the exact dates, as well as details about the format (probably hybrid), the languages of the symposium, etc. will be announced later.

The exact title of the symposium, the issues to be tackled, and the speakers will be decided by the symposium's organising committee, and hopefully announced by late September. Before that however, the President is expecting a response to her suggestion to Dr Michael Remmert, Head of Education Policy Division, of the Directorate General of Democracy of the Council of Europe, that the 2023 ECSPM Symposium be carried out under the auspices of the Council of Europe (see: **Addendum 1**, p. 7). Dr Remmert's initial response was positive, but he must consult with his department.

Participants wanted to know what it means to have an event "under the auspices" of an institution such as the Council of Europe – if it means that they determine our symposium's contents, its speakers, or if they might request that they provide us with guidelines regarding our event or give us a mandate. The answer being negative to the aforementioned, the GA was generally very pleased about this development because placing the 2023 symposium under the auspices of the CoE, would mean greater visibility for the ECSPM, and added value towards our organisation's face validity and recognition of our capacity to act as language policy advisors.

Brief introduction of ECSPM actions

The General Secretary informed members about the ongoing efforts to continuously update the new website, to keep up the News Bulletin functionality, and requested that everyone send their important news to include them in our ANNOUNCEMENTS page.

Then the president took the floor to inform members of the following:

- Concerned about the fact that university rankings take no account of higher education institutions' efforts to create a multilingual environment, an effort was made to collaborate with the European Commission on this issue. For the relevant letter addressed to the European Commission see: **Addendum 2** (p. 8) and for their answer see: **Addendum 3** (p. 9).
- The ECSPM will inform all members about the ELE2 project and will attempt to participate in a way which is mutually beneficial.
- Support to the home of one of our member institutions at the University of Ghent and specifically to their Centre for Innovation in the Early Years, which recently received a mandate from the European Commission to write a NESET analytical report on multilingualism

in the European Compliance and Ethics Conference. The aim of this report is to provide EU policymakers (as well as ECEC management and staff) with an overview of the state of research, knowledge, and practices on a topic that can lead to specific guidelines and policy initiatives. Given that a lot has been done in Europe regarding multilingualism in the early years, the objective is to gather and summarize available secondary data (e.g., existing reviews and projects) with a focus on professional development initiatives to support ECEC professionals' work with multilingual families. As the President spoke to the people who contacted us, of ECSPM, see **Addendum 4** (p. 10) for the message that we received, which will be passed on to the ECSPM members that might be interested in providing information on projects and actions that might help the EC.

- Monica Barni has provided information about the Horizon 2023-2024 call, and all of the ECSPM members have in turn been informed, turning everyone's attention to the "HORIZON-CL2-2023-HERITAGE-01-04: Strategies to strengthen the European linguistic capital in a globalised world" call (to be submitted 2024), whereby all projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:
 - Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2023-2024 Culture, creativity and inclusive society
 - Strategies for protection of the European linguistic capital including socially sustainable and economically affordable implementation measures and processes in the short and medium term.
 - Enhanced cooperation at the European level between experts on the subject and other relevant stakeholders including educational institutions.
 - Recommendations to inform the EU's multilingual and education policies on new measures targeting the promotion of use of more than the native languages and the embrace of humanistic studies by EU citizens and in particular by the youth.

Those who are thinking about collaborating to put forth a proposal should communicate with each other and centrally so that they are helped in their task.

- Finally, the General Secretary informed members about the efforts that have been made and suggestions put forth to develop Forum functionalities on our website, but so far it has not worked out. The discussion on this issue was postponed.

ECSPM accounts and membership fee

The General Secretary asked participants to make any inquiries about ECSPM's 2021 accounts about which they had been informed since she had sent out a detailed account of incoming and outgoing expenses. As there were no questions, the accounts issue was approved unanimously. It was also unanimously decided that there would be no changes to the membership fees. The annual account is still 200 euros.

Approval of last GA's minutes

The General Secretary asked participants to approve the Minutes of the previous GA, for which the ECSPM had met online.

Closing of the General Assembly

Before coming to an end, several members announced events that might be of interest to others and the General Secretary urged them to send the information ready to be uploaded on the ANNOUNCEMENTS page of the website – including the final conference of the Marie Curie project "The Multilingual Mind" to take place 27-29 June 2022, with which the ECSPM helped secure the participation at this conference of Anna SOLE MENA, on behalf of the DG EAC, so she can present the Commission's priorities on multilingualism, especially on the last day of the conference, when there will be a round table to discuss future directions for research on multilingualism. Members who wish

to attend the conference can visit their website [here](#). Other participants announced events they are organising and which are to take place in the near future and they included the links in the chat: GA attendant posted several links in the chat:

- [Bilingualism matters, research Symposium](#)
- [Multidisciplinary Approaches to Migration and Multilingualism \(MAMM2022\)](#)
- [Language and Migration conference](#)
- [Language Assessment Fit for the Future](#)

The participants expressed their thanks for the efficient organisation and wished the members of the new ExCom success in their work.

ECSPM General Secretary

ECSPM President

Guðrún Gísladóttir

Bessie Dendrinou (Vasiliki Dendrinou)

To:
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30 May 2022

Dear Dr Michael Remmert

It was good to talk to you at the recent conference organised to launch the edited collection with case studies operationalising the new descriptors of the CEFR CV. I, myself, am also working on a volume related to linguistic mediation as a 21st century citizenry skill – to be published in 2022 – and with my team at the University of Athens, we have been carrying out relevant research and European teacher training. Moreover, the European Civil Society Platform for Multilingualism ([ECSPM](#)), of which I am president, has held an academic symposium on this topic in 2018, hosted by the University of Reading in the UK. Other thematic concerns focused on languages, multi- and plurilingualism in education have been discussed at the ECSPM annual symposia since 2017 (see) in which the members of ECSPM's Cluster of University Research Units on Multilingualism ([CURUM](#)) are systematically contributing.

More recently, we have been concentrating on the issue of languages and higher education and we are very pleased that we were able to involve many distinguished European and international scholars in our two annual symposia, hosted by different universities. Our 2021 ECSPM symposium, hosted by the University of Konstanz, was on "Multilingualism in Higher Education in Europe" (pamphlet attached) and the 2022 symposium was on "Language(s) and the construction of knowledge in European Higher Education" (pamphlet attached).

Our next symposium will be hosted by the University of Strasbourg in the Spring of 2023 , and we are planning to continue our work for research-based policy recommendations and scholarly inquiry with the intent of strengthening the role of European higher education in transforming attitudes to languages, multi-/ plurilingualism for linguistic justice and more inclusive societies, during these trying times for Europe and the world facing challenges of interconnectedness, a drift towards political privatisation that may have a backsliding on democracy, and the Englishization of higher education. Our vision is related to the potential of universities to contribute to human and social development in democratic societies through the facilitation of greater inclusiveness and, of course, respect for linguistic-cultural diversity and multi-/plurilingualism which is at the heart of the matter. It is also consistent with the first of UNESCO's six guiding principles in their Roadmap to 2030, i.e., "Greater inclusion and promoting diversity", as announced at the UNESCO World Higher Education Conference 2022.

As I heard your colleague Dr Villano Qiriazzi say at the conference opening that one of the 2022-2030 aims of the CoE is to concentrate on the social role of education with a special focus on Higher Education, I approached you and briefly mentioned this to you to propose that it would be mutually beneficial that our event may be held under the auspices of the CoE, as we would be happy to put our expertise to use and provide research-based recommendations that could be of value to the to the Council.

With many thanks for the conference organised on the CEFR-CV case studies in which it was a pleasure to take part, I await your reaction to my proposal regarding the 2023 ECSPM symposium in Strasbourg.

Best wishes

Bessie Dendrinou

Addendum 2

12 May 2022

To: Ms Vanessa DEBIAIS-SAINTON
Head of Unit for Higher Education (EAC B.1)
European Commission, DG for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture

cc. Ms Tine DELVA, Deputy Head of Unit EAC B.1

Dear Vanessa (if I may):

The European Civil Society Platform for Multilingualism ([ECSPM](#)) that I am representing, and specifically our cluster of university research units ([CURUM](#)), has been working on issues related to language policies and practices of multilingualism in European Higher Education. In fact, we have just had two annual symposia in this thematic area – that of [2021](#) and that of [2022](#).

After this year's symposium, during which we discussed concerns regarding the absence of indicators for university rankings that promote European assets and values – an absence which results in the adoption of ideologically permeated and symbolically interested indicators published by *private*, market-oriented establishments (the QS, ARWU, etc.). The discussion, stimulated by one of our invited speakers, Prof. Michele Gazzola, who made an excellent presentation on "[Multilingualism through university rankings](#)", continued after the symposium and presently we would like to know if the Commission is interested in the project work we are considering to undertake so as to create rankings suitable for European universities committed to internationalisation – and the kind of transnational epistemically fair educational standards we wish to foster.

Of course, we are aware of that in 2011 the Commission funded the development of "U-Multirank" which however was severely criticised and ended up being quite unpopular mainly because it does not produce league tables and because it constitutes a mechanism of comparison rather than a ranking system with scores. However, it was also severely criticised (here's [an example](#)) to the extent of being boycotted by some (e.g. LERU) because of its data collection methodology leading to accumulating non-standardised, incomplete data – so much so that some claimed that if U-Multirank were to be used to inform policies, it would encourage manipulation of data.

If the Commission is interested in supporting the ECSPM-CURUM project, we could try to reform U-Multirank, which has not been funded since 2017. We could perhaps make its website multilingual, reform indicators, and produce a league table. Our data accumulation strategies would be carefully planned and fed into much needed European data.

Looking forward to hearing your take on this matter, my colleagues and I are at your disposal for further information, ideas, suggestions, while – as we are devoted advocates of the EEA – we are open to collaborating and offering research based-advice to the Commission – which was the institution which launched our civil society platform in the first place.

Cordially

Bessie Dendrinou

31 May 2022

Dear Bessie Dendrinou,

I thank you for consulting us and for your patience with our reply.

As announced in the [European strategy for universities](#) presented in January this year:

“In 2023, the Commission will set-up a **European Higher Education Sector Observatory** in order to provide evidence on the progress made in the implementation of the European strategy for universities. This Observatory will combine the best of the current EU data tools and capacities (including **U-Multirank**) in one single place, while further enhancing their use and relevance for policy makers, universities, students and researchers. Streamlining and upgrading existing European data sources will enable institutions and governments to strengthen their evidence basis on key topics such as inclusion, learning outcomes, progress on digital, green and entrepreneurial skills, technology transfer, employability, students and labour market needs, strengthening research careers, open science, the institutions’ role in innovation ecosystems, and transnational cooperation in the higher education sector. The Observatory will make it possible to compare, analyse and showcase the higher education sector’s performance across various fields. By building on the synergies among the existing data tools, it will ensure focused and purpose-driven monitoring, eliminating potential overlaps and decreasing data collection burden on higher education institutions”

We will launch multiple consultations to develop it.

We will be happy to involve your organisation in its development and I copy my colleague in charge, Marc Goffart.

With best regards,

Vanessa

Vanessa Debiais-Sainton

Head of Unit B1 Higher Education



DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture

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[Erasmus+](#) [Higher Education](#)

Dear Bessie,

Thank you once again for finding the time to talk to us yesterday. We were very happy to learn that you and the ECSPM are enthusiastic about the project and willing to provide support.

Your proposal to consult several members from within the ECSPM not only was very generous, it also inspired us to propose an alternative methodology to the European Commission regarding inspiring practices about professional development on multilingualism to support refugee families in ECEC.

We suggested to the commissioners to organize an additional expert consultation, based on a DELPHI method.

This would allow us to:

- Reflect on how the guidelines that will be proposed in the NESET report can be interpreted and adapted to the particular - and often very context-specific - reality of receiving young refugee children and their families in ECEC services.
- List and prioritize interesting actions implemented in different European countries.
- Be on the lookout for currently emerging initiatives.

The proposed methodology, if retained from the exchanges with EAC, can be adapted according to the scope that we wish to give it. Delphi methods allow for the consultation of one or more panels of experts, through a few iterative rounds of questions, comments and clarifications, in order to reach a consensus on an issue.

Most of the consultations will take place via online survey tools, but it is possible to add a focus group of experts at the end of the process. The process could start in July '22 with a first online round, based on the preliminary findings of the literature review and an expert brainstorm.

For now, we do not expect any action from you or the ECSPM. Once we have received the feedback of the European Commission, we will get back to you in the course of June.

We hope this is clear and that it makes sense to you.

Kind regards,

Lisandre Bergeron-Morin & Brecht Peleman

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