

ECSPM General Assembly Report

The General Assembly, which was held online on 19 June 2023, from 16.00-19.00, had quorum. The members present virtually or represented by proxy were the following:

Bessie Dendrinou, President; Gudrun Gísladóttir, General Secretary; Waldemar Martyniuk (ALTE), Antonella Sorace (Bilingual Matters), Bessie Mitsikopoulou (CEM), Caroline Kerfoot (Centre for Research on Bilingualism Stockholm Uni), Monica Barni (Centro di Eccellenza della Ricerca Siena (and a proxy to represent Center for Multilingualism in Konstanz)), Jos Swanenberg & Maximilian Spotti (DCU Tilburg/former Babylon), Cecilia Robustelli (EFNIL), Maria Zerva (with a proxy to represent GEO), George Androulakis (GL/ML), Ramona Baumgartner (a proxy to represent GS/FL), Thomas Tinnfeld (with a proxy to represent ICC), Stefanie Nölle-Becker (a proxy to represent Darmstadt), Alexandra Büchler (LAF), Andrea Young (LiLPa, and a proxy to represent EDiLiC), Cor van der Meer (Mercator), Luisa Martín Rojo (MIRCo), Jonathan Morris (MRN). Guðrún Gísladóttir had a proxy to represent NPLD,

1. The first item on the agenda was the approval of the 2022 budget and the 2023 accounts which were presented by the Guðrún Gísladóttir, ECSPM General Secretary who is also acting as treasurer, and they were both approved unanimously. She also presented the logistics of the [European Language Equality](#) project in which the ECSPM was involved (2022-2023) as one of 52 European partners.
2. Members of the ExCom reported on important events and actions 2022-2023 and specifically in ECSPM being involved in:
 - a) The European (digital) Language Equality Project a flagship project of the EU and locating data for minority European languages
 - b) The Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) consenting to the Agreement on reforming research assessment – a venture undertaken by more than 350 organisations from over 40 countries. The ECSPM has become a signatory of CoARA that sets a shared direction for changes in assessment practices for research, researchers and research performing organisations, with the overarching goal to recognise the diverse outputs, practices and activities that maximise the quality and impact of research. With this aim in mind, along with 28 other European universities and institutions concerned with higher education research and action, we have submitted a proposal for the CoARA Multilingualism Work Group
 - c) Coordinating institution in a case study on linguistic mediation in HE (Etude de cas sur la médiation linguistique dans l'enseignement supérieur), which is being carried out in the context of an AUF funded project, led by the University of Strasbourg, under the title "Le multi-/plurilinguisme dynamique, terreau de l'excellence inclusive dans l'enseignement supérieur". The other participating universities are: Université de São Paulo (Brasil), Université Babeş Bolyai (Romania), the University of Sofia (Bulgaria), the University of Athens, NKUA (Greece), the UniSTRASI (Italy), and the University of Konstanz (Germany). This Case Study concerns the mapping a sample of the participating university

students' linguistic repertoire, with a view to investigating university students' (a) plurilingual competence and (b) linguistic mediation practices, as described in detail by the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference Companion Volume (CEFR-CV), published in English and French (EN & FR). It is a one-year project and if it yields the results which are expected, a project proposal will be submitted for European and/or institutional funding by the end of 2023.

3. ExCom's proposal for a new Multilingualism Expert Group, given that the 5-year term of the ECSPM Multilingualism Expert Group (MEG), comprised of 12 scholars who work in language and discourse studies, ended in 2022. As it had been decided that such a body could be a great asset to the ECSPM, the ExCom proposed names of eminent scholars in the field of bi-/multilingualism who could serve as MEG fellows for a three-year term. Their role will be to serve as consultants on matters of major concern to ECSPM, while they will also be asked to provide advice concerning research and researchers in the fields that are at the heart of ECSPM endeavours, and to take part in projects and events that coincide with their expertise. The scholars proposed are recognised internationally for their research and publications, they are from well-recognised universities or research institutions, they have worked in different linguistic and cultural contexts, and they have somewhat different areas of expertise. The scholars from the European context already contacted:

- 1) [Ingrid Gogolin](#), Professor of General, Intercultural-International Comparative Education, Department of General, Intercultural-International Comparative Education as well as Educational Psychology, Universität Hamburg (Accepted)
- 2) [Anne Claude Berthoud](#), Professor Emerita, Center of Linguistics and Language Sciences, Université de Lausanne
- 3) [Joana Duarte](#), Educational Linguistics, NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences University of Groningen & University of Amsterdam
- 4) [Michele Gazzola](#), Lecturer in Public Policy and Administration at the School of Applied Social and Policy Sciences at University of Ulster
- 5) [Francois Grin](#) Professor, Observatoire ÉLF, Faculty of translation and interpreting, Université de Genève
- 6) [Aneta Pavlenko](#), Professor of Applied Linguistics, Center for Multilingualism across the Lifespan, University of Oslo
- 7) [Fernando Ramallo](#), Professor of Linguistics, Dept of Translation and Linguistics, University of Vigo, Spain
- 8) [Eva Vetter](#), Professor of didactics for language teaching and learning the University of Vienna, Austria, Center for Teacher Training / Institute for Linguistics, co-editor of the International Journal of Multilingualism, ex-executive chair of the Austrian Association of Applied Linguistics (Accepted)

The colleagues from the international context already contacted:

- 9) [Enrica Piccardo](#), Professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, co-author of the CEFR-CV
- 10) [Jo Lo Bianco](#), Honorary Professor of Language and Literacy Education, Melbourne Graduate School of Education
- 11) [Ajit Muhanti](#), Professor of Psychology (and former Chairperson) in Zakir Husain Centre for Educational Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India. Retired in 2011. He has been recognised for his eminent contributions to the field of Applied Educational Linguistics

- 12) [Leketi Makalela](#), Professor of Languages and Literacies, Chair at University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, with research interest in reading literacy, multilingualism, translanguaging, World Englishes, language policy and planning.
4. The next couple of items on the agenda were:
 - a) The greater involvement and cross-fertilisation between ECSPM members. A first step in this direction is that the Bilingualism Matters network collaborate with our CURUM member, Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning, hosted by the Fryske Akademy, which researches multilingual education and language learning in Europe.
 - b) To make sure that all ECSPM organisations, networks and institutions inform and invite their members to our events, projects, and actions by appointing a communications officer who will undertake this very task.
 5. The promotion and dissemination of the ECSPM “Declaration for Multilingualism in HE” before presenting it to the addressees in Brussels and Council of Europe was discussed and it is hoped that everyone will take action in this direction, as we are aiming at having the Declaration signed by at least 2,000 academics, researchers, educators
 6. The 2024 events to be organised were the next item on the agenda, and the following two proposals put forth by the ExCom were approved.
 - a) The first one was about the annual ECSPM symposium to be hosted by the Centre for Diversity and Learning (CDL) of Ghent University, which is also part of the MULTIPLES - Research Centre for Multilingual Practices and Language Learning in Society. It is to be noted that one of the reasons that Ghent was selected as the most suitable site for the symposium is so that we would combine it with meetings in Brussels to discuss issues of mutual concern and specifically with the European Commission people at DG EAC; i.e. the B.2 Section to discuss our work with schools and multilingualism and the Higher Education unit, to whom we can present the ECSPM Declaration for Multilingualism and our work with CoARA. It has therefore been agreed, with CDL’s supervisor Professor Piet Van Avermaet, to hold the symposium on one-two of the following days: 22, 23, 24 and 25 of May 2024. On the basis of the President’s proposal, it has been decided that this symposium focus on “PLURILANGUAGING IN MULTILINGUAL (EDUCATIONAL) SPACES” and to investigate whether it is ‘acceptable’ – and to what degree – it is tolerated for language users, school, and university students to language reality and knowledge in hybrid forms of language, discourse, and mixed modes of semiosis. Concern on this theme stems from the shift of attention from linguistic fixity to linguistic fluidity, and the fervent preoccupation in recent years with translanguaging and plurilingual pedagogical approaches to language use, which remove the “ideal native speaker” from the communication scene and aim for “effective pluralistic communicators who draw on their varied repertoire of linguistic and cultural knowledge in a flexible, creative and individual way” (cf. CEFR, p. 4). While we are hoping to develop students plurilingual competence so that they learn to use all their linguistic resources and the full gear of their semiotic repertoire to communicate, do we permit the languaging of reality and knowledge in non-standard language and discourse? What does such languaging look like, and how does it resonate in schools and universities?

- b) The second proposal concerns an event, which was unanimously accepted by the GA – a Workshop on “MULTILINGUALISM IN RESEARCH AND HEIs’ ASSESSMENT” – put forth by Professor Marinis, who is representing ECSPM in the CoARA prospective Multilingualism WG. Within the CoARA initiative, the ECSPM has joined a Working Group (WG) on ‘Multilingualism and language biases in research assessment’ that aims at raising awareness about the value of multilingualism in research, education, and engagement, and providing CoARA members and other institutions with language policy advice, a toolbox, and an implementation proposal for recognizing the scientific and social value of diverse research outputs irrespective of the language of communication. To this end, an 1-day workshop is to be organised, aiming to bring together ECSPM members together with the other members of the CoARA WG to discuss the issue criteria of assessment for multilingualism in education, research and publishing and to contribute to the landscape analysis on the current state of affairs across assessment practices and best practices and the development of tools, guidelines, and models for recognizing, monitoring and supporting multilingual work. The Workshop will be hosted by the University of Konstanz, possibly in April 2024. Exact dates to be announced.
- c) An event to organised by ECSPM members on “CREATIVITY & MULTILINGUALISM” will take place in the Spring of 2024. More information will be shared when it becomes available.
7. The next issue on the agenda had to do with membership and the proposals were approved unanimously:
- 1) The institution formerly known as Babylon at Uni of Tilburg is now [DCU](#) Department of Culture Studies, Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Management Working Group. Among others, their research activities are:
 - Digital Literacies and the impact of digitalisation and platformization on L2 learning
 - Multilingual management of students from monolingual teachers
Linguistic ethnographic work in the setting of power saturated institutions like law court, asylum seek centres - - Influences of globalisation on vernaculars
 - NNew forms of multilingual and multimodal literacy artefacts production
 - 2) The Centre of Excellence on Multilingualism ([CEM](#)) at the University in Athens has now developed into a Research Institute. “Research Institute Multilingualism and Language Policy”. [CEM](#) is concerned with social action and research on languages (including sign languages) in Greece. It conducts research using innovative experimental methods on the relationship between language and cognitive abilities in multilingual populations. Also, as an umbrella organisation, it supports, multilingualism related projects and academic research units of the NKUA and other Greek and European universities, and it promotes and sponsors ongoing projects of other academic units and organisations, serving in an advisory or a consulting capacity.
 - 3) The first of three new members is The Language Council of Saarland / [Sprachenrat Saar](#) . The institution:
 - Deals with relevant aspects of language policy, language acquisition and language teaching

- Ensures cooperation among the Council's member organisations with regards to foreign languages
 - Promotes the teaching and learning of foreign languages in Greater Saarland-Lorraine-Luxembourg
 - Organises public talks on language policy and multilingualism
 - Wants to increase public awareness about foreign languages, their teaching and learning, multilingualism and plurilingualism
 - Builds a regional network including institutions in France, Luxemburg and Belgium
- 4) The second new member is [LEND](#) Lingua e nuova didattica
- 5) And the third new member is [SeDyL](#) Structure et Dynamique des Langues, which is a joint research unit of [CNRS](#) (Le Centre national de la recherche scientifique), [IRD](#) (Institut de recherche pour le développement France), and [INALCO](#) (Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales). SeDyl's area of expertise is Multilingualism, language policy, multilingualism in health and education, and migration.