

MINUTES

prepared at the General Assembly meeting of the **Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives** (CESCI).

Venue of the Assembly: online, agenda proposals initiated from the CESCI-office (Újpesti rakpart 5. III/12.)

Date of the Assembly: 31 May, 2021. 10.30 a.m.

Participants of the online Assembly: see list of attendees attached at the end of the minutes.

Online identification of attendees for the meeting took place between 10.00 and 10.30.

The Chairman dr. Tamás Tóth opened the meeting at 10.30 a.m., welcomed the participants, and stated that the number of Assembly members present online and duly represented was 29, thus the General Assembly has a quorum (minimum required number of members: 26). The Chairman then outlined the main rules of the online meeting, in particular the rules on voting.

Note by the presiding Chairman of the Assembly, the editor of the minutes, on the votes that had taken place:

- 1.) *There were only “Yes” votes cast, however, in two cases members mistakenly voted for themselves in the election of office-holders, so I have disregarded these votes in my capacity as presiding Chairman.*
- 2.) *Some of our members, by mistake, voted “Yes” twice on the same issue. In such cases, in my capacity as residing Chairman, I disregarded the last of the two votes cast.*
- 3.) *Due to technical difficulties, some members were not always able to vote, so the total number of voters varies for each agenda item.*

Points 1) to 3) did not affect the validity of the votes.

Afterwards, the Chairman outlined the proposed agenda items, and as there were no amendments or comments, he asked the members to vote.

Result of voting:

Yes: 25
No: 0
Abstention: 0

General Assembly Resolution No. 1/2021 (V. 31.)

The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives approves the following agenda:

1. Annual reports

- 1.1 2020 report of CESCI
- 1.2 2020 report of the Board
- 1.3 2020 report of the Supervisory Board

2. Office-holder matters

- 2.1 Election of new office-holders (term of office expires: President, Vice-President, two ordinary members of the Board)
- 2.2 Modification of the Statutes (the annex with the list of office-holders is amended due to the elections in point 2.1)

3. Approval of the work plan and budget for 2021

- 3.1 Work plan
- 3.2 Budget

4. Joining international organisations (ISOCARP, EuRegha, RSA, TG-WeB)

5. Retroactive approval of the SB Agenda of 26 November 2020

6. AOB

Deadline: effective immediately

Responsible: Chairman

Agenda Item No. 1.: Annual reports

1.1 Annual reports (CESCI), (proposal by: Gyula Ocskay, Secretary General)

The Chairman asked the Secretary General to put forward the proposal.

The Secretary General welcomed the members and gave a detailed overview of the past year's work with a PPT presentation. Among other things:

- last year was largely dominated by the pandemic, but it was also further complicated by nation-state governments closing their borders and the generally unfavourable atmosphere surrounding border regions, which meant that only two of our member visits planned for last year actually could take place, and the member study tour had to be cancelled;
- the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) has taken the initiative of setting up a task force to help improve the situation of cross-border cooperation at EU level; in addition to the CoR, the task force includes representatives from the European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional Policy, the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), and our French sister organisation, the MOT, as well as CESCI, which is a great honour for us;
- the European Cross-Border Citizens' Alliance was set up last year as part of the task force team, with nearly 200 members joining from within and outside the EU;
- one of the priority activities of our association is the cooperation with the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine and the Uzhhorod National University's Faculty of Law, about which an agreement was signed in February last year. Since then, a joint guide on cross-border cooperation has been prepared for the Council of Europe, and the Tisza EGTC published a comprehensive legal analysis. As part of a successful Visegrad Group tender, we are working with our professional partners (the Polish Academy of Sciences, the University of Prešov in Slovakia, and the Technical University of Liberec) to align Ukrainian legislation with EU legislation on cross-border cooperation, and to prepare border region operators for closer cooperation through a training course;
- The Cross-Border Review, CESCI's Yearbook was published in 2020 as well, with James Scott as editor-in-chief; together with the leading European researchers in the field. A volume of studies on the last 15 years of using the EGTC tool and its future development was published, while our staff members have published a total of 24 publications last year;
- in terms of planning, on behalf of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, we prepared plans for cities across the borders of Hungary with a significant Hungarian minority aiming to assist them in thriving at their regions of origin; at the request of the Ministry, we also prepared plans for three Hungarian cities;
- in addition to our urban plans, we also developed regional strategies, such as the revision of the RDV EGTC strategy (in preparation for the 2021-27 funding cycle), the regional development and institution building strategy of the Via Carpatia EGTC, or the situation assessment underpinning the development of the Ister-Granum EGTC focusing on water-related cultural heritage;
- programming has an increasing role in the work of our association (regional analysis of the Hungarian-Slovak, Hungarian-Serbian, and the four-country NEXT CBC programme, development of the Danube Transnational Programme's regional strategy as a continuation of the regional analysis);
- project development has been much less prominent, we provided such assistance mainly in the Hungarian-Slovak border region;
- we have had/are having a lot of problems with ECR EGTC in terms of institutional development, members have not been able to organise their meetings because of the pandemic, and the UK has left the cooperation because of BREXIT, all of which has led to the other members feeling discouraged. The ECR EGTC is about to be formed with only 7 members, we will, of course, continue to help their work; we will participate in the EGTC workshops organised by the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade; we launched the EGTC-monitor, which

- provides a broad overview of the Hungarian EGTCs and includes a regional database, both in Hungarian and English, one of our most significant developments in recent years;
- in connection with our policy, we have already mentioned our participation in the activities of the Brussels task force (we meet every 2-3 weeks), which has so far resulted in: an extensive European consultation and a resolution currently being prepared by the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) regarding the future of CBC, as well as the launch of the mentioned alliance;
 - at macro-regional level, we will play a role in the Danube Strategy, in Priority Area 10 (PA 10); and we will continue to promote the development of a permanent mechanism for legal accessibility between the V4 countries;
 - the *Legal Accessibility* project, supported by the Ministry of Justice, has been very successful and the EGTC volume has been published with the same support; and there is encouraging progress in ambulance cooperation between Slovakia and Austria, with services expected to be launched in the near future;
 - as part of the B-Solutions project initiated by the Commission, we analysed the conditions for the joint operation of municipalities and the mutual provision of agricultural machinery in a cross-border framework for the Arrabona EGTC;
 - in terms of knowledge sharing, we are pleased that the cross-border development desk officer training at Edutus University has been relaunched, with 50 people starting the training last year and the vast majority of them is going to complete their studies; this training is important because it will bring competent professionals into cross-border work; we also plan to offer the training in English;
 - the French Ambassador (Pascale Andréani) supports our work: she took part in the organising of the online conference on the anniversary of the treaty of Trianon, which aimed to look ahead to how cross-border cooperation can overcome the adverse effect caused by the treaty, and to assist the so-called Oradea process which supports the Hungarian-Romanian rapprochement;
 - the state of the association's finances was stable in 2020, and last year the association switched to dual management, which allowed the separation of strategic and operational management;
 - the association wishes to continue its activities with the same élan this year as last year and to be at the disposal of its members as efficiently as possible.

No questions were raised on the report. **The Chairman indicated that the passing of the annual report and the annex of public-benefit activity was supported by the Supervisory Board and the Board as well.**

1.2 Annual report (Board), (proposal by: dr. Tamás Tóth Chairman)

The Chairman presented the Board report for 2020, highlighting that despite the pandemic, the association's financial situation is stable. There were no questions or comments.

1.3 Annual report (SB) (presenter: Kálmán Nagy SB President)

As Kálmán Nagy, President of the Supervisory Board, was unable to attend the meeting for technical reasons, the Chairman invited the Secretary General to present the annual report of the Supervisory Board.

There were no questions or comments. The Chairman asked the members to vote.

Result of voting (CESCI report):

Yes:	25
No:	0
Abstention:	0

General Assembly Resolution No. 2/2021 (V. 31.)

The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives approves the non-profit association's annual report for 2020 and the annex of public-benefit activity.

Deadline: effective immediately

Responsible: Chairman

Result of voting (report of the Board):

Yes: 25
No: 0
Abstention: 0

General Assembly Resolution No. 3/2021 (V. 31.)

The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives approves the 2020 report of the Board.

Deadline: effective immediately

Responsible: Chairman

Result of voting (SB report):

Yes: 25
No: 0
Abstention: 0

General Assembly Resolution No. 4/2021 (V. 31.)

The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives approves the 2020 report of the Supervisory Board.

Deadline: effective immediately

Responsible: Chairman

Agenda Item No. 2.: Office-holder matters

2.1 Election of new office-holders

The Chairman, due to his own involvement, asked the Secretary General to give the presentation. The Secretary General indicated that the terms of office of several office-holders were due to expire this year:

- dr. Tamás Tóth President,
- dr. Zsuzsanna Fejes Vice-President,
- two ordinary members of the Board (Dr. Peter Kubičko (SK), István Szabó (HU))

In terms of nominations, dr. Tamás Tóth, dr. Zsuzsanna Fejes, and István Szabó intend to run again for the same position, and they confirmed their intention verbally at the board meeting.

Dr. Peter Kubičko had previously indicated that he would not run again. In his place, the Board proposes to elect dr. János Rechnitzer (professor emeritus of economics at Széchenyi István University, Győr), who has gratefully accepted the nomination. The Secretary General gave a brief presentation of the candidate's career and indicated that the candidate had presented himself online at the Board meeting prior to the General Assembly, but was unable to attend this Assembly due to a PhD thesis defence he had to attend.

Other than those standing for re-election and the newly proposed candidate, no nominations have been received so far. So the Secretary General asked members to indicate if they had any nominations.

There was no initiative for any other candidate.

There were no other questions or comments. The Secretary General noted that the proposals had the support of the Supervisory Board and (for the new candidate) the Board (the Board members did not vote on their own nominations), and then asked the members to vote (no separate vote on the list of candidates was taken due to the minimal number of candidates). The Secretary General reminded the members that

- a) open voting shall take place for the President, the Vice-President, and the ordinary

- members of the Board;
- b) for a valid vote, three quarters of those present and eligible to vote must vote “yes” (this means at least 22 members).

Result of voting (election of dr. Tamás Tóth as Chairman, open vote):

Yes: 28
No: 0
Abstention: 0

General Assembly Resolution No. 5/2021 (V. 31.)

The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives appoints dr. Tamás Tóth as President for the next three years.

Deadline: effective immediately

Responsible: Chairman

Result of voting (election of dr. Zsuzsanna Fejes as Vice-President, open vote):

Yes: 27
No: 0
Abstention: 0

General Assembly Resolution No. 6/2021 (V. 31.)

The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives appoints dr. Zsuzsanna Fejes as Vice-President for the next three years.

Deadline: effective immediately

Responsible: Chairman

Result of voting (election of István Szabó as ordinary member of the Board, open vote):

Yes: 27
No: 0
Abstention: 0

General Assembly Resolution No. 7/2021 (V. 31.)

The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives elects István Szabó as ordinary member of the Board for the next three years.

Deadline: effective immediately

Responsible: Chairman

Result of voting (election of dr. János Rechnitzer , as ordinary member of the Board, open vote):

Yes: 28
No: 0
Abstention: 0

General Assembly Resolution No. 8/2021 (V. 31.)

The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives elects dr. János Rechnitzer as ordinary member of the Board for the next three years.

Deadline: effective immediately

Responsible: Chairman

2.2 Modification of the Statutes

The Chairman asked the Secretary General to put forward the proposal.

The Secretary General stated that this was a formal amendment to the Statutes, as the annex to the Statutes containing the list of office-holders would also be amended as a result of the election.

There were no questions or comments. The Chairman indicated that both the Board and the Supervisory

Board supported the proposal, and then asked the members to vote.

Result of voting (modification of the Statutes):

Yes: 28
No: 0
Abstention: 0

General Assembly Resolution No. 9/2021 (V. 31.)

The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives approves the amendment of Annex 1 of the Statutes, listing the office-holders of the association, and the new consolidated text of the Statutes.

Deadline: effective immediately

Responsible: Chairman

Agenda Item No. 3.: Approval of the work plan and budget for 2021

The Chairman asked Mátyás Jaschitz, Director of CESCO, to put forward the proposal.

In addition to the written proposal, the Director pointed out the following:

- we will publish the Cross-border Review, edited by James Scott, in 2021 as well, and staff publications will continue to be supported;
- discussions on the establishment of a new border studies institute started last year, and the University of Public Service (NKE) is open to continuing these studies after the pandemic;
- in the new planning cycle the projects in process are expected to continue, there probably will not be new cities and areas, we will rather continue previous projects;
- there will be more emphasis on drawing up own applications, but the association will also offer professional advice;
- in terms of our policy, continuing our work for legal accessibility is a key matter;
- our project with Uzhhorod National University will continue under the previously mentioned grant from the Visegrad Fund;
- continuation and relaunch of our work in Oradea and Szentgotthárd;
- participation in the AEBR Annual General Assembly;
- the association is looking forward to a financially stable year, the main elements of this (grants, commercial income, and the main expenditure line) were presented by the Director.

There were no questions or comments. The Chairman indicated that both the Board and the Supervisory Board supported the proposal, and then asked the members to vote.

Result of voting (work plan):

Yes: 28
No: 0
Abstention: 0

General Assembly Resolution No. 10/2021 (V. 31.)

The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives approves the non-profit association's 2021 work plan.

Deadline: effective immediately

Responsible: Chairman

Result of voting (budget):

Yes: 28
No: 0
Abstention: 0

General Assembly Resolution No. 11/2021 (V. 31.)

The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives approves the non-profit association's 2021 budget.

Deadline: effective immediately
Responsible: Chairman

Agenda Item No. 4.: Joining international organisations (ISOCARP, EuRegha, RSA, TG-WeB)

The Chairman asked the Secretary General to put forward the proposal.

The Secretary General stated that the association has built an extensive network of international contacts over the years, which would be favourable to further expand. The most important criteria for further memberships were the opportunity for professional development, to get into professional circles, and cost-effectiveness (membership fees are not a financial hardship and membership is only linked to fees in 3 cases: EuRegha - €1000, RSA -£189, ISOCARP - €500).

Then, he gave a brief overview of the activities of each organisation.

There were no questions or comments. The Chairman indicated that both the Board and the Supervisory Board supported the proposal, and then asked members to vote on each organisation separately.

Result of voting (Regional Studies Association membership):

Yes: 28
No: 0
Abstention: 0

General Assembly Resolution No. 12/2021 (V. 31.)

The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives declares its intention to become a member of the *Regional Studies Association* and authorises the Chairman and the Secretary General to carry out the necessary accession procedures and to fulfil the obligations of membership.

Deadline: effective immediately or according to the administrative conditions of accession
Responsible: Chairman

Result of voting (EUREGHA membership):

Yes: 28
No: 0
Abstention: 0

General Assembly Resolution No. 13/2021 (V. 31.)

The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives declares its intention to become a member of *EUREGHA* and authorises the Chairman and the Secretary General to carry out the necessary accession procedures and to fulfil the obligations of membership.

Deadline: effective immediately or according to the administrative conditions of accession
Responsible: Chairman

Result of voting (ISOCARP membership):

Yes: 28
No: 0
Abstention: 0

General Assembly Resolution No. 14/2021 (V. 31.)

The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives declares its intention to become a member of *ISOCARP* and authorises the Chairman and the Secretary General to carry out the necessary accession procedures and to fulfil the obligations of membership.

Deadline: effective immediately or according to the administrative conditions of accession
Responsible: Chairman

Result of voting (Western Balkan Network on Territorial Governance membership):

Yes: 28
No: 0
Abstention: 0

General Assembly Resolution No. 15/2021 (V. 31.)

The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives declares its intention to become a member of the *Western Balkan Network on Territorial Governance* and authorises the Chairman and the Secretary General to carry out the necessary accession procedures and to fulfil the obligations of membership.

Deadline: effective immediately or according to the administrative conditions of accession

Responsible: Chairman

Agenda Item No. 5.: Retroactive approval of the SB Agenda of 26 November 2020

The Chairman asked the Secretary General to put forward the proposal.

The restructured Supervisory Board of CESCO held its first meeting on 26 November 2020. During this meeting, the SB approved, among other things, the attached Agenda, which will have to be approved retroactively at the next General Assembly, i.e. on 31 May.

There were no questions or comments. The Chairman indicated that both the Board and the Supervisory Board supported the proposal, and then asked the members to vote.

Result of voting (approval of SB Agenda):

Yes: 28
No: 0
Abstention: 0

General Assembly Resolution No. 16/2021 (V. 31.)

The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives approves the Agenda of the Supervisory Board dated 26 November 2020 with retroactive effect and authorises the Chairman to sign it.

Deadline: effective immediately or within 30 days

Responsible: Chairman

Agenda Item No. 6.: AOB

Under “Any other business”, the Secretary General requested to speak.

The network cooperation initiated by the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) had been mentioned earlier. A resolution is currently being prepared within the Committee of Regions with the aim of drawing up a long-term vision of cross-border cooperation in the EU with a 2050 target date.

Firstly, as there are members of CESCO who participate in the work of the Committee of Regions, either personally or as representatives of their organisations, CESCO asks them to support the adoption of said resolution.

Secondly, though MOT, AEBR, and CESCO played an important role in preparing the draft resolution (the association is grateful for this opportunity), some of their proposals were cut by the preparatory committees. The three organisations are now jointly trying to incorporate these into the text as amendments, and they are asking for the support of CoR members in this issue as well.

Question to Mr Jean Peyrony: Is there any possibility that the draft resolution could include the proposals that have been deleted?

Reply from Jean Peyrony: Yes, I believe it is possible to include the proposals that have been deleted, and we will support it.

There were no other questions or comments. The members voted.

In the absence of any other comments or proposals, the Chairman thanked the participants for their presence online and adjourned the General Assembly at 13.10.

Annexes:

1. list of participants of the online General Assembly
2. technical guide for the online General Assembly

dated as above

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dr. Tamás Tóth
Chairman of the General
Assembly

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS OF THE ONLINE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

I. <u>On behalf of CESCO, in person in the office</u>		
1.	dr. Tamás Tóth	President
2.	Gyula Ocskay	Secretary General
3.	Mátyás Jaschitz	Director
II. <u>Members of the General Assembly, online</u>		
Sorsz.	Member	Representative
1.	Arrabona EGTC	Tamás Németh, Director
2.	Bács-Kiskun County Council	dr. Kornél Mák, rep.
3.	Banat -Triplex Confinium EGTC	dr. Ágnes Tóthné Gróf, rep.
4.	Békés County Council	Anikó Nagy-Szöllősi, rep.
5.	Gate to Europe EGTC	Apor Kovács, Director
6.	Government of Fehérgyarmat	Dr. Csaba Péter, mayor
7.	dr. Zsuzsanna Fejes	dr. Zsuzsanna Fejes
8.	Gričar, Jože dr.	dr. Gričar, Jože
9.	Government of Győr, city with county rights	Tamás Németh, rep.
10.	Győr - Moson - Sopron County Council	Ferenc Ivanics, rep.
11.	Ister Granum EGTC	Péter Nagy, Director
12.	Komárom - Esztergom County Council	Balázs Steindl, rep.
13.	Government of Mátészalka	Dr. Mónika Vizler, rep.
14.	MOT	Jean Peyrony, igazgató
15.	Government of Mórahalom	dr. Ágnes Tóthné Gróf, rep.
16.	Mura Region EGTC	László Preksen, rep.
17.	Gabriella Nagy-Gröschl	Gabriella Nagy-Gröschl
18.	Nógrád County Council	Lilla Körmendy, rep.
19.	Government of Nyíradony	Apor Kovács, rep.
20.	Pannon EGTC	Lívía Tóth, rep.
21.	Pons Danubii EGTC	Zoltán Bara, Director
22.	Government of Püspökladány	Ferenc Vadász, rep.
23.	Rába-Duna-Vág EGTC	Ema Vasiová, Director
24.	Hungarian Regional Science Association	András Ricz, President
25.	István Szabó	István Szabó
26.	Szabolcs - Szatmár - Bereg County Council	István Szabó, rep.
27.	dr. Péter Szegvári	dr. Péter Szegvári
28.	Zoltán Szögi	Zoltán Szögi
29.	Vas County Council	László Majthényi, President
III. <u>Honorary member of the General Assembly</u>		
	Szilveszter E. Vizi	

TECHNICAL GUIDE

for the Annual General Assembly Meeting of the CESCO

Connecting to the online videoconference

The General Assembly Meeting will be held with Zoom platform. Technical requirements for connecting to the online videoconference:

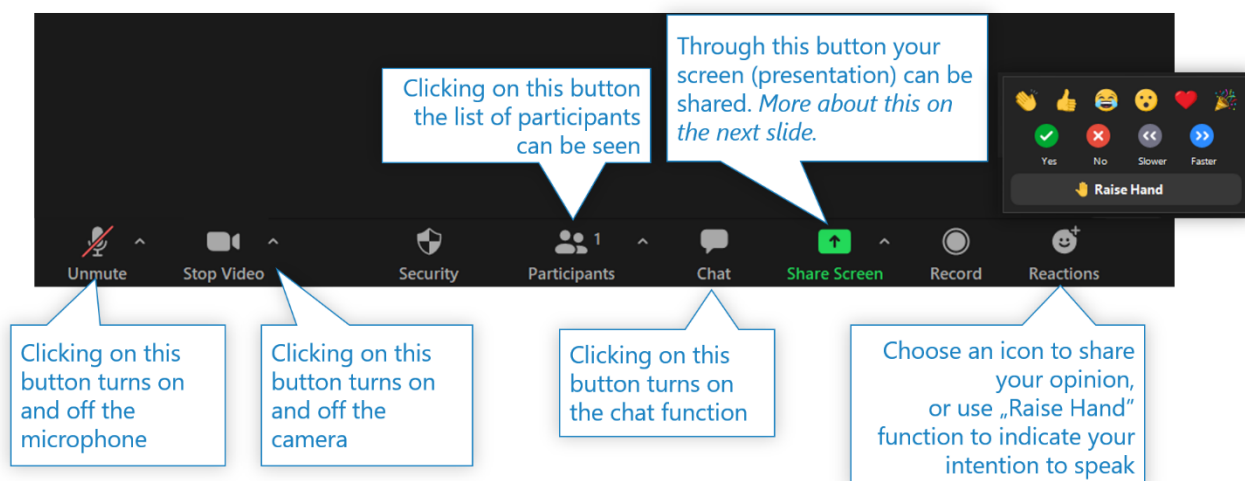
- For all necessary features (e.g. interpretation), please, use desktop version of Zoom instead of opening the meeting in browser!
- The latest desktop version (at least 5.6) of the Zoom. It can be downloaded from the following link: https://zoom.us/download#client_4meeting
- Solid internet connection (2.0 Mbps up 6.0 Mbps down) and working microphone and camera.

To launch the videoconference click on the next link and follow the appearing instructions:

<https://zoom.us/j/94032202584?pwd=bmZKS3MyQndNTGluMUN6eXlyN3RHQT09>

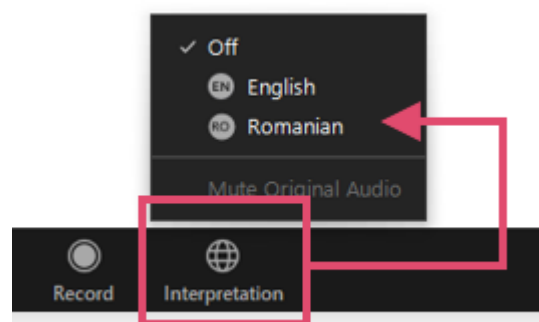
If your browser asks, click on the “Open Zoom Meetings” button.

The most important features of the Zoom app are summarized on the next figure:



During the General Assembly Meeting, we are providing a Hungarian-English simultaneous interpretation, that is available in the following way:

1. In your zoom meeting controls (bottom of your screen), click Interpretation, and click the language that you would like to hear.
2. After you have selected the language, you will hear the interpretation channel. Sometimes the interpretation will follow the original language with a small delay.
3. To hear the interpreted language only, click “Mute Original Audio”. Do not forget, in this case, you will not hear the original audio channel.



Online voting

Members' votes, which are an integral part of the General Assembly, will be conducted through the Google Forms system. Keep Zoom app open during the voting!

General steps of online voting:

1. When asked by the Chair of the General Assembly, go to the voting links tab in your browser (<https://budapest.cesci-net.eu/en/general-assembly-meetings/the-general-assembly-meeting-of-the-cesci-in-2021/>) and open the appropriate voting link.
2. On the form choose the Member's name, and fill out your ID-number, then vote and click on the "Send" (or any equal expression) button!
3. After the appearing responsive window, go back to the Zoom app to follow the General Assembly!
4. Do not close the voting links tab! It will be necessary in the future!