

# MINUTES

Prepared at the 2024 Annual General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives.

- **Meeting venue:** Ádám villa, VII. district, Budapest, Városligeti fasor 35a.
- **Start date:** 9 May 2024 at 11.00
- **The following were present at the meeting:** according to the attendance list annexed to the minutes

Participants were identified between 10.45 a.m. and 11.00 a.m.

Dr Zsuzsanna Fejes, Chairperson (hereinafter: Chair) opened the meeting at 11.00 and welcomed the members present, the invited guests and the representatives of the CESCO working organisation. She established that the number of members (represented in person and by proxy) is **41, and the general assembly has a quorum** (minimum quorum: 30 people).

The president then invited the members of the assembly to watch two short films (Figure 1). #ACCESS project campaign video, 2. B-solutions briefing). The short films were **followed by the usual questions and information on the agenda and votes:**

- the agenda items and submissions have been received in advance by all members, together with the official invitation, and everyone is aware of their content?
- resolutions of the General Assembly shall be adopted by open ballot by a simple majority of votes, except for the amendment of the Statutes and the election of the officers (1 Board member, 1 Supervisory Board member), where a majority of at least three-quarters of the members entitled to vote present shall be required;
- the election of the Supervisory Board member shall be by secret ballot, which shall require the election of two tellers at the time of the discussion of the relevant agenda item;
- the votes will take place after the discussion of each agenda item, merging two sub-items in the case of the Statutes;
- information on pre-meetings and related meetings:
  - a) the SB meeting examining the proposals of the General Assembly took place on 29 April and the relevant SB report is available on the CESCO website in the General Assembly materials;
  - b) the Board meeting took place before the General Assembly, from 9.30 a.m.; the report of the Board on the past year shall be presented orally at the general assembly meeting;
- interpretation is provided for foreign members.

Members were aware of the content of the proposals and took note of the information provided. There were no objections or questions.

Subsequently, the Chair proposed that Dr. Norbert Jankai, legal adviser of CESCO would be elected as **the keeper of the minutes**, and Zoltán Szögi, member of the General Assembly, **be elected as the authenticator of the minutes** of the meeting. The nomination was accepted by the nominees and no objections were raised by the General Assembly. The vote took place separately.

Result of the voting:

Unanimity (41 votes)

### **General Assembly Resolution No. 1/2024 (V. 9.)**

**The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives elects Dr. Norbert Jankai as the keeper of the minutes of the meeting.**

**Deadline: immediately**

**Responsible: President**

Result of the vote (Authenticator of the Minutes, Zoltán Szögi, as a member of the General Assembly, did not vote due to his involvement):

Yes: 40

Gender: 0

Residence: 0

### **General Assembly Resolution No. 2/2024 (V. 9.)**

**The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives shall elect Zoltán Szögi as the authenticator of the minutes of the meeting.**

**Deadline: immediately**

**Responsible: President**

The Chair briefly presented the agenda, indicating that with one addition (point 2.1: Election of a new Board member (open vote)), which was made available to members prior to the General Assembly via the link provided, according to the relevant amended proposal.

There were no objections or amendments. The president asked the assembly to vote in favour of the proposed amended agenda.

Result of the vote:

Unanimity (41 votes)

### **General Assembly Resolution No. 3/2024 (V. 9.)**

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

1. **Reports for 2023**
  - 1.1 **Reporting and Public Benefit Reporting**
  - 1.2 **Report from the Board**
  - 1.3 **Supervisory Board Report**
  - 1.4 **Presentation by CESCO Balkans and CESCO Carpathia**
  - 1.5 **Report of the UPS-CESCO Research Group of Cross-border Cooperation**
  - 1.6 **Report on the CESCO Gender Equality Plan**
2. **Office-holder matters**
  - 2.1 **Election of a new member of the Board (open vote)**
  - 2.2 **Interim change in the number of members of the Supervisory Board (History)**
  - 2.3 **Presentation of the SB candidate(s), election of a new SB member (confidential vote)**

- 2.4 Amendment of the Statutes of Association
- 2.5 Adoption of the Consolidated Statutes
- 3. Work and Financial Plan 2024
  - 3.1 Work plan
  - 3.2 Financial plan
- 4. Other

**Deadline: immediately**  
**Responsible: President**

The Chair indicated that before discussing the agendas, the members of the General Assembly should decide on the current two-member Supervisory Board (hereinafter, abbreviated: SB) on its monitoring activities in preparation for this General Meeting: Whether they accept it or not.

To explain the background, the President asked Gyula Ocskay, Secretary-General (history: the SB may formally operate with three members, but according to the Statutes two of the three members may meet; in the meantime, one of the three members resigned because he was employed by CESCO and this created a conflict of interest; in order for this general meeting to be held, the general meeting must accept the preparatory work of the two-member SB, but of course objections may also be raised against this; with the election of the new SB member scheduled for this General Assembly, the SB will again have three members).

No questions or objections were raised. The Chair asked members to vote.

Result of the vote:

Unanimity (41 votes)

#### **General Assembly Resolution No. 4/2024 (V. 9.)**

**The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives does not object to the monitoring activities of the two-member Supervisory Board in preparation for this meeting.**

**Deadline: immediately**

**Responsible: President**

## **1. Agenda item 5: Annual reports**

Following the adoption of the agenda, discussions on the annual reports started. The Chair indicated that the different reports would be dealt with in 6 sub-items of the agenda, with the vote taking place at the end of each sub-item. No objections were raised.

### **1.1 2023 report of CESCO Budapest**

Regarding the 2023 report of CESCO Budapest, the President gave the floor to Gyula Ocskay, Secretary-General.

As an introduction, **the Secretary-General stressed that the conditions attached to the public benefit status were fulfilled in 2023 and that the financing of the association's**

**activities was stable**, which was essentially due to the work of Directors Kitti Dubniczki and Mátyás Jaschitz.

In his follow-up briefing, the Secretary-General indicated that the Association's annual activity report for 2023 in Hungarian and English, prepared in a publication format, was available to all members at the venue of the general meeting. Then, with the help of a powerpoint presentation, the Secretary-General reviewed the main activities of the Association in 2023. In particular, the following projects and some of their activities were highlighted from the professional work:

- \* a 6-year project of #ACCESS with CESCO Carpathia (e.g. identification and analysis of obstacles, kick-off event in Košice, questionnaires);
- \* the establishment of the European Cross-Border Platform, the inaugural meeting of which will be organised by CESCO and AEBC during the Hungarian EU Presidency;
- \* participation of the research workshop set up by NUPS and CESCO in the work of the TEIN network;
- \* activities related to Ukraine (V4 Conference on EU Cross-Border Integration of Ukraine in Košice, collection of medical equipment for hospitals in Transcarpathia County, final tasks of the REVITAL I project, compilation of a resource map with EU tender opportunities available to applicants from Ukraine, excavation project in the Uzhhorod Castle);
- \* support for EGTCs;

After the presentation, a **video was screened about the social work of the members of the work organisation in Gagyvendégi**.

The President indicated that the adoption of the report was supported by the SB and the Board. As no questions or comments were received, the President asked the members of the General Assembly to vote.

Result of the vote:

Unanimity (41 votes)

#### **General Assembly Resolution No. 5/2024 (V. 9.)**

**The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives approves the Association's report for 2023 and the Public Benefit Annex.**

**Deadline: Immediately or according to the deadline for publication/submission of the accounts**

**Responsible: President**

### **1.2 2023 Board report**

The president presented the Board report for 2023.

There were no questions or comments on the report, so the President asked the members of the General Assembly to vote.

Result of the vote:

Unanimity (41 votes)

### **General Assembly Resolution No. 6/2024 (V. 9.)**

**The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives adopted the 2023 report of the Board.**

**Deadline: immediately**

**Responsible: President**

#### **1.3 Annual report of the Supervisory Board for 2023**

The Chair informed members that due to the announced inability of the SB Chair to attend the General Assembly. She therefore asked the Secretary-General to provide a summary of the SB report.

No questions or comments were received for the report. The Chair indicated that the adoption of the report was supported by the Board and asked the members of the General Assembly to vote.

Result of the vote:

Unanimity (41 votes)

### **General Assembly Resolution No. 7/2024 (V. 9.)**

**The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives adopted the report of the Supervisory Board for 2023.**

**Deadline: immediately**

**Responsible: President**

#### **1.4 2023 accounts of CESCO Carpathia and CESCO Balkans**

The Chair asked Rudolf Bauer, Director of CESCO Carpathia, to present the report. The Director presented the organisation's activities in 2023 along the following main themes:

- implementation of the #ACCESS project to be carried out jointly with CESCO Budapest;
- co-organisation of the Conference on Ukraine's accession to the EU;
- cooperation with other organisations (e.g. the Faculty of Law of the Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice and the Via Carpatia EGTC);
- organisation of the AEBR annual event in Košice;
- participation in urban development tasks in Košice;
- development of two additional projects for external actors.

The Chair then gave the floor to Ervin Erős, Director of CESCO Balkans, to present the activities of his organisation in 2022. The main activities mentioned by the Director are:

- The organisation has developed two concepts over the past period: the concept of the Balkan expansion of the Pannon EGTC; the Western Balkans Centre of the University of Pécs
- strengthened the strategic partnership with the HELICAS EGTC based in Greece;
- activities started with the Council of Europe were carried out in the Serbian-Bulgarian border area;

- a number of projects have been submitted in recent months, one of which has already been successful and CESCO Balkans will participate in an agricultural innovation project under the ADRION programme.

The President indicated that the adoption of the accounts was supported by both the SB and the Board.

As no questions or comments were received, the President asked the members of the General Assembly to vote, who voted separately to take note of the reports.

Result of the vote (Carpathia):

Unanimity (41 votes)

#### **General Assembly Resolution No. 8/2024 (V. 9.)**

**The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives took note of the CESCO Carpathia report for 2023.**

**Deadline: immediately**

**Responsible: President**

Result of the vote (Balkans):

Unanimity (41 votes)

#### **General Assembly Resolution No. 9/2024 (V. 9.)**

**The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives took note of the CESCO Balkans report for 2023.**

**Deadline: immediately**

**Responsible: President**

### **1.5 2023 report of the UPS-CESCO Research Group of Cross-border Cooperation**

The results were reported by the President.

The Research Group held its annual ordinary meeting on 2 March 2023. The main activities of the Research Group in the previous year were:

- a) significant steps towards launching an independent international journal;
- b) Submission of a Horizon proposal (Empowering Citizens and Communities to Prepare for and Respond to Disaster (OMG)) with a high score but without success;
- c) networking: active participation in the European Network of Cross-border Euro-Institutions (TEIN), participation in the work of the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI);
- d) events (e.g. EU integration of Ukraine across borders (Kosice), Frontiers facing a political crisis in the 21st century (Wroclaw-Opole), 5th International Conference on Territorial and Inter-Organisational Cooperation (Brenna));

- e) publication activity, with research workshop affiliation (published: 8 publications in progress: 4 publications);
- f) educational activities (e.g. participation in the teaching of 2 courses, invitation of foreign lecturers for a research trip to Hungary (within the framework of the Ludovika Scholars programme).

The President indicated that the adoption of the report was supported by the SB and the Board. As no questions or comments were received, the President asked the members of the General Assembly to vote.

Result of the vote:

Unanimity (41 votes)

#### **General Assembly Resolution No. 10/2024 (V. 9.)**

**The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives approves the 2023 report of the UPS-CESCI Research Group of Cross-border Cooperation.**

**Deadline: immediately**

**Responsible: President**

#### **1.6 Report on the CESCI Gender Equality Plan**

The Chair invited Director Kitti Dubniczki to present the report.

The director said that ensuring gender equality is an important aspect for the work organisation, several objectives have been achieved in the past two years, and it remains an important task to fully achieve the objectives set. It then presented the evolution of the indicators in 2023, grouped into 5 groups (1. clear improvement, 2. improving trend, but further action still needed; 3. a shortfall influenced by professional considerations; 4. lack of expected results, 5. incomprehensibility due to low number of elements). The 2023 report also included a proposal to revise the indicators.

The President indicated that the adoption of the report was supported by the SB and the Board.

As no questions or comments were received, the Chair asked the members of the General Assembly to vote.

Result of the vote:

Unanimity (41 votes)

#### **General Assembly Resolution No. 11/2024 (V. 9.)**

**The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives approves the 2023 report on the implementation of the Association's Gender Equality Plan.**

**Deadline: immediately**

**Responsible: President**

## 2. agenda: Office-holders matters

The President asked the Secretary-General to present the proposals for agenda 2.

### 2.1 Election of a new member of the Board (open vote)

The Secretary-General said that the **term of office of a member of the Board, István Szabó**, would expire on 31 May 2024. Since CESCI will not hold any more general meetings this year, it is proposed to decide on its re-election at this general meeting. István Szabó resigned from his mandate in a declaration, effective after the Bureau meeting of 9 May, and at the same time indicated in writing that he would re-start his position as a candidate if supported by the Board. In response to a question from the President, he confirmed verbally his intention to be re-elected.

The Presidency supported the re-election of István Szabó.

Before the votes, the Chair indicated that no **other candidate** had been proposed to the General Assembly and asked the members of the General Assembly if they wished to propose another candidate. No such nomination has been received.

As no questions or comments were received, the President asked the members of the General Assembly to vote.

Result of the vote (Szabó István, member of the General Assembly, did not vote due to his involvement):

Unanimous yes (40 votes)

#### **General Assembly Resolution No. 12/2024 (V. 9.)**

**The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives elects István Szabó as a full member of the Presidium for three years.**

**Deadline: immediately**

**Responsible: President**

### 2.2 Interim change in the number of members of the Supervisory Board (History)

At the President's request, the Secretary-General summarised the history of **István Oláh's departure from the SB**. The Secretary-General informed the members about the conflict of interest of the SB member due to his employment with CESCI and the follow-up in the framework of the Supervisory Committee, the Board and the working organisation.

### 2.3 Presentation of the SB candidate(s), election of a new SB member (confidential vote)

At the request of the president, **the candidate Judit Árvai-Füleki** briefly presented her professional career, who is currently the CEO of EDUTUS.



The Chair indicated that no proposals for **other candidates** had been received in writing from members to the General Assembly and asked if anyone wished to make an oral statement to that effect. No other nominations were received.

Subsequently, for the secret election of the SB member, in accordance with the Statutes, the President proposed the election of **2 ballot counters** (candidates: Judit Csókás, Miklós Kószó) who accepted the nomination. No objections or proposals for new candidates were received from the members of the General Assembly.

At the request of the President, the members of the Assembly voted on the two tellers at the same time.

Results of the vote (Judit Csókás and Miklós Kószó, members of the General Assembly, did not vote due to their involvement):

Unanimous yes (39 votes)

#### **General Assembly Resolution No. 13/2024 (V. 9.)**

**The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives elects Judit Csókás and Miklós Kószó as ballot counters for the duration of the secret election of the new SB member.**

**Deadline: immediately**

**Responsible: President**

The two elected tellers then distributed the ballot papers to the members present or to their representatives. The secret ballot took place (*the voting rights of the members of the ballot counters were not suspended by the Statutes of Association of the Association, so they could vote themselves*). The ballot counters collected the completed ballot papers, counted them and communicated the results to the President. The President then presented the results of the vote to the members of the General Assembly in the form of a resolution. He stated that 2 votes had to be invalidated because the voters had violated the rules concerning the secrecy of the vote (names were written on the ballot papers).

Result of the vote:

Yes: 39

Invalid (broken): 2

#### **General Assembly Resolution No. 14/2024 (V. 9.)**

**The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives elects Judit Árvai-Fülöp as a member of the Supervisory Board for a period of three years.**

**Deadline: immediately**

**Responsible: President**

Following the vote, the President congratulated the elected SB member and thanked the tellers for their work, as their mandate had ended with the announcement of the results.

## 2.4 Amendment of the Statutes of Association

The Secretary-General indicated that it was necessary to amend the **Annex to the Statutes** due to the modification of the list of officials. At the same time, the **basic text of the Statutes of Association** would also be amended: the submission proposed some clarifications and amendments to certain rules on the election of office-holders, which internal regulatory shortcomings were highlighted by the resignation of the SB member.

The president proposed that the Assembly adopt a decision on subsections 2.4 to 2.5. No questions, comments or objections were received.

## 2.5 Adoption of the Consolidated Statutes

The President informed about the adoption of the consolidated Statutes (technical).

As no questions or comments were received, the President asked the members of the General Assembly for a joint vote.

Result of the vote:

Yes: 41

### **General Assembly Resolution No. 15/2024 (V. 9.)**

**The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives shall adopt the proposed amendments to the Statutes, together with the new consolidated text of the Statutes.**

**Deadline: Immediately or within 30 days for transfer to the registration authority**

**Responsible: President**

## 3. agenda: Work plan and financial plan

### 3.1 Work plan

### 3.2 Financial plan

The Chair asked Mátyás Jaschitz, Director, to introduce the presentation related to agenda 3. He suggested that the two sub-items be presented together but voted on separately. No objections were raised.

The director first presented the **work plan** of the association for 2024, with the content as proposed. Among the tasks, he discussed the following in more detail:

- a) the implementation of the #ACCESS project will again commit a lot of capacity this year, where there will be a number of tasks on schedule;
- b) the Association, as a member of a consortium of 9 members, won funding for the implementation of the Borderlabs CE project aimed at strengthening the internal integration of the Central European region, where CESCO will also coordinate professional and communication activities;

- c) a project was submitted for the ESPON programme on cross-border governance, where CESCO participated in the preparation of the proposal at the invitation of the University of Erlangen; the outcome of the tender is not yet known;
- d) the above activities could be supported by the evolving cooperation that CESCO intends to establish with the Central Statistical Office in order to continuously measure and analyse cross-border flows;
- e) actively participate in the organisation of a series of events by the Hungarian Presidency focusing on the border region;
- f) the evaluation of Interreg programmes will continue in 2024 and several tourism action plans are expected to be prepared by CESCO.

Subsequently, the Director presented the main elements of the **Financial Plan**. He stressed that personnel costs remain the main costs. Revenues are stable, mainly consisting of operating grants from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and payments for international projects. The planned revenue is HUF 232.73 million and the planned expenditure is HUF 220.38 million.

As no questions or comments were received, the President asked the members of the General Assembly to vote separately.

Result of the vote (work plan):

Unanimity (41 votes)

#### **General Assembly Resolution No. 16/2024 (V. 9.)**

**The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives adopts the work plan of the Association for 2024.**

**Deadline: immediately**

**Responsible: President**

Result of the vote (financial plan):

Unanimity (41 votes)

#### **General Assembly Resolution No. 17/2024 (V. 9.)**

**The General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives adopts the Association's financial plan for 2024.**

**Deadline: immediately**

**Responsible: President**

## **4. agenda: Other**

No other comments, questions or suggestions were received from members in response to the President's question.

In view of the above, the Chair thanked the participants for their contribution and closed the meeting **at 12:47** and invited the participants to a buffet lunch on the spot.

Note: The list of attendance of the General Assembly shall be deemed to be an annex to these minutes.

Powers of attorney relating to the general meeting shall be retained at the work organisation.

kmf

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Dr Zsuzsanna Fejes  
President

.....  
Dr Norbert Jankai  
recorder of the minutes

.....  
Zoltán Szögi (footballer)  
authenticator of the minutes