



Minutes of the meeting of the International Council of the English-Speaking Union 28 and 29 October 2022, hosted by ESU Pakistan in Karachi, and on Zoom

Meeting chaired by Mr Jonathan Callund, President of the ESU International Council

Attendees:

ESU Albania	Silvana	Xhaferi	online
ESU Australia	Chris	Perriam	online
ESU Bermuda	Rebecca	Brady	online
ESU Bulgaria	Dr Sava	Dragunchev	in person
ESU Chile/President, ESU International Council	Jonathan	Callund	in person
ESU Chile	Ana-Maria	Tomassini	online
ESU Denmark	Birte	Pallesen	online
ESU France	Patricia	Curd	online
ESU France	Lucia	Dumont	online
ESU France	Therese	Hogan	online
ESU France	Catherine	Gaudin	online
ESU Georgia	Marina	Tsitsishvili	online
ESU Germany	Howard	Kroch	online
ESU Hong Kong	Margaret	Leung	online
ESU Japan	Yoshi	Makiko	online
ESU Japan	Sadaaki	Numata	online
ESU Lithuania	Birute	Paloviene	online
ESU Malaysia	Iris	Tan	online
ESU Malaysia	Jagdish	Bhain	in person
ESU Malaysia	Shakila	Meraslam	In person
ESU Mauritius	Deepak	Maunthrooa	online
ESU Moldova	Elisaveta	Onofreiciuc	online
ESU Moldova	Marcela	Calchei	online
ESU of the Commonwealth	Jane	Easton	in person
ESU of the Commonwealth	Barbara	Firth	in person
ESU of the Commonwealth	Philip	Maunder	online/day 1
ESU of the Commonwealth	James	Raven	online/day 1
ESU of the Commonwealth	Sophia	Taylor	in person
ESU Ukraine	Nadiya	Ivanenko	online
ESU of the United States	Karen	Blair	online
ESU Pakistan/VP, International Council	Aziz	Memon	in person
ESU Pakistan	Kalim	Farooqui	in person
ESU Pakistan	Irfan	Qureshi	in person
ESU Pakistan	Majyd	Aziz	In person
ESU Pakistan	Pervez Haroon	Madraswala	In person
ESU Pakistan	Afshan	Lalani	in person

ESU Poland	Alina	Maciąg	online
ESU Serbia	Branka	Panic	online
ESU St Petersburg	Tatiana	Emelianova	online
ESU St Petersburg	Margarita	Mudrak	in person
ESU Ukraine	Nadiya	Ivanenko	online
Netherlands (partner)	Ingrid	de Beer	online

1. Introductions and Welcomes

Jonathan Callund, President of the International Council, welcomed all ESU delegates to the meeting - whether they were attending online or in person. Due to the chairs of the ESU of the Commonwealth and the ESU of the United States being unable to attend the meeting, Jonathan Callund would be chairing the meeting in their stead.

Aziz Memon, Patron of ESU Pakistan and Vice President of the International Council welcomed all delegates to Karachi and to the meeting.

2. Minutes of the ESU International Council Meeting 2021

The minutes of the International Council held on 9 December 2021 were proposed by Jonathan Callund and seconded by Barbara Firth and approved by the Council as an accurate record.

3. Matters arising

Professor James Raven thanked colleagues for joining the Friendly International Forums (FIFs) which have been successful in bringing back face-to-face discussion across the globe during and since the Covid restrictions. Young people, in particular, have been very proactive, with young hosts from the UK, Chile, Poland and USA. The FIFs covered a wide range of topics connected to the ESU's mission.

The International WhatsApp group had also been a success in facilitating international communication, sharing news, events and mutual support.

4. Annual Accounts 2021/22

The Secretary-General introduced the Annual Accounts, thanking those who had paid in 2021/22. It was noted that ESU Romania and ESU Serbia had been added to the list of countries which had paid their annual subscription. As in-person events resume, the international balance will help to fund these opportunities. The accounts were formally received, proposed by Jonathan Callund and seconded by Barbara Firth.

5. ESU International Constitution and Guidelines for review

Members of the Council discussed potential amendments and updates to the International Guidelines, which were circulated in advance of the meeting.

Jonathan Callund and Aziz Memon have, over the past three years, trialled a leadership model where the President of the International Council is supported by a Vice President. Jonathan remarked on the success of this model, saying that the collaborative structure not only brought additional energy to the leadership of the International Council, but also allowed the Vice President to gain first-hand experience prior to taking on the role of President.

The International Guidelines, it was decided, should be examined and discussed prior to any amendments being made to the Constitution. The Constitution was last amended in 2014 by a sub-group of the IC, including Sadaaki Numata and Chris Perriam. It was considered that the Constitution in its current state refers to a potentially outdated model of operation, reliant on British Council and Embassies, whilst neglecting digital advancements that permit online meetings, and partnerships with educational bodies.

It will be a priority to ensure that the Guidelines and Constitution do not contradict one another - though any actions arising from proposed amendments to International Council practices will take time and trialling before they are considered as potential amendments to be formally ratified. Jonathan Callund invited Sadaaki Numata and Chris Perriam to take an informal advisory role on constitutional projects should they wish.

Jane Easton discussed partnerships (be they commercial or not), and the benefits of building connections to develop the ESU into a bigger and better organisation. Countries who cannot have charitable organisations, such as China, have been involved in the IPSC for a number of years. Other countries find it difficult to develop the ESU-style infrastructure and have millions of young people who will benefit from the ESU's activities. A Memorandum of Understanding to which these countries can sign would allow this to happen. IPSC entry was discussed, with Ingrid de Beer's involvement in the Netherlands, for example, demonstrating the partnership concept. There was a minimum expectation of International ESUs that they run public speaking competitions and enter the IPSC, and also attend the ICM. Jane Easton asked Ingrid to consider what she feels are the barriers to becoming an International ESU, and to pass the answer to the Secretariat consequently. This feedback, amongst other things, can help inform how non-ESU partnerships can be formalised within the Guidelines.

As partnerships and corporate sponsorships become more important, it was discussed how International ESUs may be supported with guidance to assist them. Delegates expressed an interest in knowing the practical ways in which partnerships and sponsorship agreements (for example) can be developed, with valuable information that can be shared between International ESUs. James Raven agreed, saying that whilst flexibility must be accommodated, it will be important for International ESUs to share how they safeguard against opportunism when developing partnerships. The ESU brand was strong and needed to be protected. This was suggested as a topic for a future FIF.

Aziz Memon recalled the ICM in St Petersburg discussing the ESU brand across the globe. The media is also an important tool for International ESUs to utilise.

The need for growth of international ESUs was considered within the framework of the Guidelines. Aziz Memon used ESU India as an example - since 1997, they have shrunk from having five branches to only one. Once again, it was thought that better channels of communication and formalised knowledge sharing between International ESUs could help encourage growth within countries struggling to expand. This was also suggested as a topic for a future FIF. Jane Easton commented that sharing of experience is a strength of the ESU, and good practice from which we can build.

With regards to programmes, as detailed within the Guidelines, Sadaaki Numata had suggested that debating be specifically mentioned as a focus for International ESU's aims and objectives. ESU Japan uses debate programmes to foster and encourage young people and adults alike to listen to, and engage with, the opinions of others across the globe. Whilst the principles and immense benefits of debate as a tool to further the ESU's mission were agreed by all, it was best to keep a more general, flexible wording in place. It was agreed that a clear definition of 'oracy' (such as that on the ESU's website) within the Guidelines would help International ESUs in the creation and development of their educational work, especially when adjusting for local needs and skillsets.

Sava Dragunchev suggested a more flexible approach, wherein central ESU can approach other countries (who cannot generate initiative themselves). Jonathan Callund approached Peru from ESU Chile in this way. It was suggested that the ability to reach out to potential ESUs in different countries be highlighted within the Guidelines. Jane Easton and Jonathan Callund emphasised that the Guidelines are an internal document, and it is only the Constitution that may be shared externally to potential ESUs.

Jane Easton asked Ingrid de Beer, as a long-time partner in The Netherlands, what she has seen as barriers to ESU membership. It was agreed that this response would be useful when strategising how to formalise non-ESU partnership within the Guidelines, and provide support to countries in similar situations across the globe.

6. Technological Developments

Following its announcement at the 2021 ICM, the ESU Activity App was discussed, with Ana-Maria Tomassini leading a report on behalf of ESU Chile. ESUs in Chile, Pakistan and Bangladesh had collaborated on the development of this app, contributing funds amounting to \$20,000 so far. Users would include students, teachers, volunteers, judges and administrators, and all types of ESU activities could be co-ordinated. All aspects of event organisation could be covered, and badges awarded to participants at all stages through their Smart Phone.

The app, having been in development for two years, had been expected to be ready for launch in January 2023. It was confirmed that the company originally responsible for its development, based in New Delhi, were no longer working on the project. It was emphasised that this did not mean that the project itself had been abandoned, but rather that ESU Chile, ESU Pakistan, and ESU Bangladesh would look for alternative companies to pick up the project to continue its development. Meetings to achieve this were ongoing at the time of the ICM.

Data protection and safeguarding issues were highlighted as essential aspects of the app that would need attention. The exact resources to meet this responsibility were yet to be confirmed, but it has been a guiding principle during the app's development.

7. International Public Speaking Competition 2023

It was confirmed that the 2023 International Public Speaking Competition would be taking place in-person once again in London, after two years of online participation from International ESUs. The IPSC programme in London will run from Monday, 8 May 2023 to the evening of Friday, 12 May 2023. The grand final will be taking place at the prestigious Royal Institute in the heart of London.

Registrations for the 2023 competition will be made as usual through the ESU website: https://www.esu.org/ipsc_organisers/ where organisers can also find all the information they need about deadline dates and the competition rules. The deadline for submitting preliminary registration forms and IPSC subscription fee payments is Tuesday, 28 February 2023. The deadline for submitting participant registration forms is Friday, 31 March 2023. Information forms should be completed by participants. This year's theme for national competitions is '*Relations between nations are too important to be left to governments alone*' and will be used for national public speaking competitions. The theme for the prepared speech heats of the international competition would be '*You don't get a second chance to make a first impression*'. Those advancing to the IPSC final will be asked to give their speech on '*We expect too much from our heroes*'.

Some delegates raised questions regarding the arrangement whereby two participants from both Hong Kong and China have historically been permitted entry to the IPSC each year. The Secretary General noted that there is no information written down to explain this arrangement, and it has largely been operated on the basis of custom and practice. It was confirmed that the competition is organised in a way which ensures that neither Hong Kong nor China will face better chances at progressing through to the final, as both participants from each country will face one another in semi-final heats. The Grand Final would not ever feature two participants from the same country.

One factor which contributes to there being two contestants from both China and Hong Kong is that each country respectively runs two national competitions, from which each winner progresses to the IPSC. In China, the national competition is run by partner organisation The China Daily, who have two national competitions split by age range. In Hong Kong, the two national competitions are run by two separate

partner organisations; HKFYG and the Hong Kong School Music & Speech Association. A benefit of this situation is that the reach of the ESU is substantially broadened in each country. Margaret Leung confirmed that ESU branding is made visible throughout national competitions in both China and Hong Kong. The Secretary General will, following comments from the International Council, examine the situation further to gain a better understanding of the arrangements on behalf of the Council.

On the topic of ambassadorial support for the competition, it was clarified that the ESU generates invitations to ambassadors and councils of all countries, not just those with International ESUs. The IPSC was highlighted as an opportunity to promote the ESU's mission, and to demonstrate the ESU's reach across the globe. Those countries with educational attachés and wider cultural missions are typically more engaged with the IPSC, but around half to two thirds of those invited will attend.

Representatives from Pakistan, Australia, Chile, and more also raised concerns regarding the timing of the IPSC, as the traditional date of the competition being the second week of May clashes with examinations in many countries. The second week of May had been decided as the standard date for the competition following a majority vote of the International Council in years prior. Many students, however, who participate in national competitions and who wish to attend the IPSC are also very ambitious scholars, and the disruption of examinations for these students has been an ongoing issue that organisers have noticed. The Dutch partner organisation who had been running the competition cited the timing as one of the reasons for which they no longer wish to organise a national competition. It was decided that the IPSC would run from 8th - 12th as planned, but the situation will be considered further by the Secretariat in light of these comments. A survey will be circulated to the International Council in advance of the 2024 competition to gauge the preference of the majority.

Sadaaki advocated that the merits be considered as well as the setbacks of the organisation of the IPSC being online. Travelling alone is not allowed by all high schools - and this will limit the age range for students. Speakers under the age of 18 have been accommodated with parental or teacher chaperoning in the past, with additional safeguarding responsibilities in place. Online skills are indeed important in the current climate, but Jane Easton emphasised the effectiveness of in-person participation, with additional tools in place to accommodate any countries who cannot travel to attend in London (due to health concerns, perhaps).

Birute from ESU Lithuania proposed a hybrid model to host the competition, which would accommodate both online and in-person participation. The ESU has always avoided restricting access to the IPSC, and financial hardship, alongside other barriers, may present additional considerations for some countries for the coming year. The Financial stability of ESUs across the world are important to monitor. If the IPSC was hosted in a hybrid format, it may lower the value of the competition - sponsorship of students to travel to London is a good way to fund this. Barbara Firth pointed out that the parity of the competition couldn't be replicated online, and a hybrid model would change the competition and experience. Sava suggested a substitute system wherein if one candidate could not attend, someone else could take their place. Zohra mentioned that a backup could be unprepared - with visas, flights, etc - wasting money and time.

Aziz Memon advised that visas often come on time, with the association of the ESU being a helping hand in the visa process. Jane Easton emphasised that there will be an open view on the matter. Margarita Mudrak of Russia framed the point as 'an exception, not a rule', and is partially in favour of the hybrid model. Alternate methods of judging, for example, is suggested by Jonathan Callund as something to open up as a conversation. It will be something to discuss after the 2023 competition. Aziz promoted the importance of the in-person experience of the competition, being perhaps the most essential aspect.

Jonathan Callund opened the discussion surrounding who has access to what, regarding fees. Fees are the lifeblood of the organisation, with all members across the globe encouraged to consider if they are paying their way - an economic support structure is necessary to support the work and growth of the organisation.

On that point, Aziz Memon listed the sponsors of the meeting, organised by ESU Pakistan. Jane Easton reiterated the cultural exchange and friendship of the ESU as a core mission exemplified by our meetings, and gives thanks to ESU Pakistan.

8. Elections

Aziz Memon was formally elected President of the International Council, having been nominated by Mr Asif Chowdhury, Chairman, ESU Bangladesh and seconded by Maj. Gen. Jiban Kanai Das (Rtd.) Secretary General of ESU Bangladesh, and voted in unanimously by the Council.

Letters of support for the nomination had been received from Margarita Mudrak and Tatiana Emelianova of ESU St Petersburg.

Following the discussion under agenda item 5, the International Council agreed to consider nominations for a Vice-President for the period 2022-2024, to support the President.

Chris Perriam raised concerns regarding the Vice-President position not being codified within the Constitution. Jonathan Callund clarified that that the Vice Presidential roles are more of a proposed idea than a formal amendment to the Constitution. The support network facilitated by Vice President roles provides ongoing support to the President and encourages teamwork, whilst enabling legacy planning. Sadaaki Numata mentioned that when the time comes for the Vice Presidential role to be formalised within the Constitution, it could be adopted through a partial modification rather than wholesale revision.

Within his acceptance speech, Aziz Memon remarked that he was humbled to accept the position of President of the International Council of the ESU, and will do his best by the role. He committed to strengthening the ESU, and an aim for countries to expand their membership, and ensure funds are available to support the IPSC. He assured all ESUs that he will be available to them and support them as needed.

Jonathan Callund wished Aziz Memon all the best, and thanked Philip Maunder for his support whilst he had been in post as Vice president of the International Council.

9. Presentations from Country Delegates A-Z

ESU Albania report provided by Silvana Xhaferi

Despite the effects of the pandemic, ESU Albania still managed to run their public speaking competition, with an aim to engage more state schools in the programme. They were able to expand their reach using social media, and had been able to foster or maintain relationships with partner organisations to promote and deliver the ESU's mission. Some key partners include the Albanian Ministry of Justice, the Association of English Language Teachers, and an Albanian committee who promote human rights and communication skills. ESU Albania does not generate much income by way of events and membership, but rather support from companies and individuals who see value in the ESU's mission. Their staff is comprised of volunteers, but local laws dictate that one person is legally responsible for activities and pays appropriate taxes.

ESU Australia report provided by Chris Perriam

There are five branches of ESU Australia: Adelaide, Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, and Brisbane. Membership numbers have fallen across Australia in recent years, though Melbourne and Brisbane remain the strongest branches. In Adelaide, there are 13 members, most of whom are retired. They sponsor a local poetry competition, Best Country School Poet, and support public speaking competitions run by other organisations. This doesn't increase membership but provides publicity. It will be a goal to recruit new members at such events in the next year.

ESU Bermuda report from Rebecca Brady

A series of lectures and dinner events has increased membership numbers in ESU Bermuda after a period of crisis pre-Covid. They now have 45 members, who enjoy monthly dinners and after-dinner lectures from

reputable speakers. ESU Bermuda previously owned a building which was sold for a sum of \$2 million, which can be invested and saved very carefully to create an endowment fund for scholarships and other ESU activities. A committee has been established to help find a candidate to represent Bermuda at the IPSC. With regards to governance and structure of the organisation, the Charities Act in Bermuda would preclude the ESU, so ESU Bermuda has adopted a more corporate structure - this is seen in several other international ESUs across the globe. A key focus for ESU Bermuda is reaching less privileged groups, especially those for whom violence and gang issues are prevalent. The promotion of oracy through ESU activities can improve communication skills and aims to avoid conflict and violence.

ESU Bulgaria report from Sava Dragunchev

Since its founding, ESU Bulgaria has aimed to promote excellence of the English language, and prior to the pandemic they saw great success with several activities. The public speaking competition took place in 2019, alongside the newly launched Shakespeare competition which involved partnership with the National Theatre of Bulgaria and the Sofia Theatre. With Shakespeare appearing on the Bulgarian curriculum, there was a healthy turnout of 34 and 36 students participating in this competition - prizes for students were provided by publishing houses and awarded on the stage at the Sofia Theatre. The pandemic caused multiple issues for ESU Bulgaria, with challenges preventing activities taking place online and a suspension of nearly all ESU programmes within the country during the peak of the pandemic. Members also struggled to pay annual fees, and regular events hosted alongside embassies have not yet resumed since the pandemic. ESU Bulgaria has managed to host local rounds of the public speaking competition in 2021 and 2022, and it was highlighted that the in-person experience of this competition is a key factor to its success. A national round will only be possible once circumstances within Bulgaria allow it to take place in person. Sava called for international ESUs to encourage a 'taste for English' in their respective countries, and work collaboratively with national neighbours to increase resources and reduce the need for travel. The idea of continental and sub-continental hubs was suggested by Sava and the Secretariat, which could support nearby ESUs.

ESU Chile report provided by Ana María Tomassini

ESU Chile operates with a small core team of three volunteers who organise and deliver the country's activities. Funds are primarily generated by schools who pay a yearly fee to subscribe to ESU activities. There are a variety of programmes which ESU Chile run, including a public speaking competition (in which 24 schools participate, and the winner of which represents Chile at the IPSC); a poetry recital competition (which involved 169 participants most recently); a duologue competition for younger students (most recently reaching 42 students across 9 schools); and an English debate tournament which uses the World Schools Debating Competition format (and over 60 debaters) - this is one of only two debate tournaments in Chile; a global issues competition; and a creative writing competition which has just been relaunched. During the pandemic, only public speaking and debating competitions were possible to run online, but activities are slowly starting to resume. In 2023, there are plans to further engage with public schools with a spelling bee and dialogue competition. With plans for expansion, ESU Chile now has 40 volunteers who assist with organising competitions. Due to increased streams of revenue, ESU Chile is also now looking to accommodate a paid employee.

ESU Denmark report provided by Birte Pallesen

Memberships from individuals and schools provide funding for ESU Denmark's activities, which are enabled through the efforts of volunteers. Since the pandemic, fewer social and cultural events had been possible. The effects of Covid have diminished support from embassies and venues - the Confederation of Cultural Societies and various diplomatic corps have acted as partners to ESU Denmark for events. Along with the AGM, Denmark's domestic public speaking competition was possible to host online. Two mentors from a US debating squad led training for teachers and students in North and South Copenhagen, with two days of coaching culminating in a competitive debate at the American Women's Club. This generated around £2,000 of income. New schools have demonstrated great interest in ESU Denmark's debating activities, and there has been interest in a similar programme for younger students. IPSC alumni from Denmark provide judging and voluntary support to these programmes.

ESU France report provided by Catherine Gaudin

There are four active branches in ESU France, who all promote English as a language in cultural and educational activities. Paris host events including dinners with guest speakers; Loire Valley has been the national organiser for the IPSC since 2013, working with students in Loire Valley and the South of France - they also subsidised a French student's place at Debate Academy for the first time this year, and host fundraising events; Bordeaux attend English cafes and encourages students to attend these gatherings; and Aix-Marseilles, founded in May 2022, works in partnership with Moovida theatre and film school, with hopes to stage an English language production in 2023. Aix-Marseilles are also planning to host cultural visits and forge connections with diplomats and embassies, and participate in the IPSC feeder competition with Loire Valley. Each branch is unique in how it operates, and fees differ between branches, as do numbers of members. Patricia Curd of Loire Valley commented on how the French education system does not provide much time for extracurricular activities, and that this has caused challenges when trying to engage with state schools. Support from teachers and the department of education is vital.

ESU Georgia report provided by Marina Tsitsishvili

Established in 1998 with just ten speakers, the public speaking competition in Georgia now involves more than 100 young speakers and features high profile judges such as the British ambassador and American cultural attaché. Alumni from previous competitions remain involved and return to provide the next generation of speakers with workshops and speech training. ESU Georgia organises free English lessons for disadvantaged children, and provides sponsorship to students; gifted musicians and children of soldiers killed in conflict. Several annual events take place in ESU Georgia's calendar, such as a reception with young speakers on Shakespeare's birthday, celebrations of the Queen's birthday, and a Christmas event. ESU Georgia is looking to found a performing Shakespeare competition, and have received support from Karen Blair in doing so. They hope to establish two branches over the next year, with leadership from a teacher who was shortlisted in the ESU's International Oracy Teacher award. Membership is free, and sponsorship from the Bank of Georgia enables activities such as the public speaking competition.

ESU Germany report provided by Howard Kroch

There are around 120 members of ESU Germany, but there is also a sense of uncertainty around attending events in-person after the pandemic. A few events have been hosted since the pandemic, including a visit to the theatre and a museum. Public speaking is not a priority in Germany, so activities are mostly cultural. Succession planning was highlighted, and a council of former and current chairs would be formed to help enact an organised succession plan.

ESU Hong Kong report provided by Margaret Leung

Despite lingering restrictions in Hong Kong, ESU Hong Kong managed to deliver an online teacher training programme, and sponsor sixteen lessons with English teachers at the alma mater of an alumnus. There has also been collaboration with the Education Bureau of Hong Kong and the Reader's Theatre at secondary schools, wherein students received four books. ESU HK continues to partner with the China Daily 21st Century Cup to run a national public speaking competition. ESU Hong Kong has provided support to this competition through advising on judging metrics and training. The ESU logo does feature within this competition, but there are larger sponsors who pay large sums to feature more heavily. ESU HK also ran drama coaching sessions with students in Thailand for a small fee. The staff is comprised of one paid administrator, an advisory board featuring a legal advisor and accountant, and Margaret who works on a voluntary basis and also makes donations.

ESU Japan report provided by Sadaaki Numata

ESU Japan actively promote public speaking and parliamentary debate, and are aware that the Japanese education lacks support for oracy skills. Hosting university debate competitions since 1998, ESU Japan now have an active base of alumni who are now able to help bring debate into high schools, as well as organise university competitions. ESU Japan have co-hosted national debate competitions since 2019, and provide training for practitioners on how to teach and run debates, as well as to businesspeople, students, and

more. Annual visits from ESU mentors organised with Dartmouth House continues to be an important activity for ESU-J. Funds are generated through membership, both individual and corporate, though membership fell from 400 to 220 and the pandemic has caused pressure. There are two current paid members of staff at ESU-J, and Sadaaki is preparing for succession planning.

ESU Lithuania report provided by Birute Paloviene

ESU Lithuania was established in 1996 and has been running a national public speaking competition since 1997. James Raven visited Lithuania and gave lectures for Birute's students at their university, and Lucia Dumont has sat on a judging panel for the public speaking competition. Winners and participants of this competition are more confident in their ability to get into their chosen university. There is also an interfaculty debate competition at Birute's university. Due to rising costs, usual sponsors are more wary about spending money. ESU Lithuania doesn't charge any membership fees, as it primarily targets people from schools and laws prevent charging membership for extra-curricular activities. The US embassy is supportive, and ESU Lithuania are able to hold events with sponsorship and fundraising.

ESU Malaysia report provided by Jagdish Bhain

ESU Malaysia have an objective to improve oracy skills, and run twelve week long public speaking workshops for children aged seven to ten, and a three day bootcamp for students aged nine to twelve. ESU Malaysia have reached out to rural schools and less privileged communities where the pandemic disrupted learning more severely. The winner of the 2021 IPSC was Malaysia representative Pavit Coran, who was recently presented with his certificate at a dinner for public speaking winners. He also participated in a joint lecture between ESU Malaysia and ESU Hong Kong on the topic, 'What can the young generation do to have a sustainable future?'. ESU Malaysia are currently running an essay writing and story telling competition, as well as continuing to participate in the IPSC.

ESU Mauritius report provided by Deepak Maunthrooa

ESU Mauritius will be celebrating 30 years since its founding in 1993. They have an executive committee of 19 members, including individuals from the British Council and government ministries. There are around 150 members, including individual, corporate, volunteers, and school members - rates are £5 to £10 each year. Sponsorship for activities is received from the likes of local embassies, and a Mauritian bank who have been regular sponsors of the public speaking competition, and sponsored the virtual competition in 2021/2022. Despite being held online, there were a record number of entries to this competition. A spelling bee competition will relaunch for twelve to fifteen year-olds in 2023, and the Mauritius undergraduate business case competition sponsored by HSBC will also run. For Black History Month, ESU Mauritius and the Nelson Mandela Centre for Culture encouraged students to submit videos of speeches, with a prize-giving event at the residence of the US ambassador. ESU Mauritius also runs a ten-week online course to train teachers from the English Educators Forum. There is one full-time member of staff at ESU Mauritius, and the ESU is represented in various councils, programmes, and more in Mauritius but sponsorship and raising funds is a challenge at the moment.

ESU Moldova report provided by Elizaveta Onofreiciuc

The public speaking competition run by ESU Moldova is very popular in high schools and universities. ESU Moldova is volunteer-led only, and there are no membership fees or participation charges - anti-corruption rules in the country precludes charging money for activities. Educational institutes and ministries have provided grants and support, and Oxford University Press have helped to provide books. ESU US have also sent books to award as prizes. The public speaking competition was suspended in 2021/2022 due to the war in Ukraine. ESU Moldova has a mutual judging arrangement with the Translator's Association.

The Netherlands report provided by Ingrid de Beer

Whilst the Netherlands had previously been a partner of the ESU through the Netherlands-England Society, they shut down in 2020 and Ingrid found another organisation to run the national public speaking competition. Quinten Jakobs was a finalist at the IPSC 2022, and write a report of his time in the competition. All semi-finalists of the national competition met with the English ambassador to the

Netherlands, who is a big supporter of the ESU's mission. The organisation who had run the national competition, however, will not be running it anymore, and Ingrid is looking for alternative organisations, including debating societies.

ESU Pakistan report provided by Aziz Memon

ESU Pakistan runs a national public speaking competition across all three branches; Lahore, Karachi, and Islamabad. The national winner receives a trophy, and fully sponsored travel to London for the IPSC final. Zohra Ashraf, who coordinates the national competition, is keen to engage more schools in the competition. The Lahore branch, working alongside the Association of English Language Teachers, brings a wider reach to students, and they are keen to engage younger members. In Islamabad, membership is increasing and they enjoy visits from local government officials and diplomats. They are also involved with a local school and contribute funds, and have been asked to build a local hospital dispensary. The secretariat reminded all ESUs that it is important to consider that the ESUs message of clear communication skills and spoken language must be central to all activities. In Karachi, there is an executive committee with fifteen members, and there are at least two events a month, as well as an annual dinner.

ESU Poland report provided by Alina Maciag

There are four strong branches in ESU Poland, but additional cities and areas are encouraged to get involved. In 2022, the national public speaking competition moved back to being in-person at a university, with 30 semi-finalists and 6 finalists from each region. Previous winners of the competition and IPSC participants helped to organise this competition, as well as Poland's FIF. ESU Poland are building links with the city council, and collect contributions from schools and individual members. The technical university at which Alina works also provides support. ESU Poland promote cultural understanding and collaborative conversations with other countries.

ESU Russia report provided by Margarita Mudrak

Online activities, including the FIF, have been a good way to stay engaged during the pandemic, and ESU St Petersburg have recently launched a website. Russia did not compete in the 2022 IPSC, but organised a national final. They work with a number of other organisations, including the Lions, Rotary, St Petersburg English Language Teachers Association, China Daily newspaper, and the UK embassy. They recently had an article published in an English language newspaper and the St Petersburg Economic Forum. There are around 300 constant members, and membership is a condition of participation for young people. Around 50 schools are associated with the ESU, and membership is £70. ESU Russia runs an English in Action project modelled after that run by ESU US, providing support to orphanages in St Petersburg.

ESU Serbia report provided by Branka Panic

ESU Serbia has links to theatres, drama, and film and targets forging partnerships with institutions who see English as a need. They have international links and ran biannual conferences which saw visitors such as Stanley Wells. The premises from which ESU Serbia runs is provided by the former British-Yugoslav Library of English, who provided for expenses. ESU Serbia also works with TEFL. Though activity slowed during the pandemic, there are plans to increase membership and find community leads. There are succession plans in place, with 40 members and a Board.

ESU UK report provided by Barbara Firth

After the challenges of lockdown, most competitions, programmes, and scholarships have returned to being held in-person. The delivery of some educational programmes, including Continuing Professional Development courses for practitioners, can be delivered through web-based modules and benefit from being hosted online. The ESU-Churchill Public Speaking Competition has seen a record number of schools getting involved, and an increased number of state schools. The Schools' Mace debating competition and Performing Shakespeare competition have also seen record numbers of schools involved. In the UK, there is an increasingly strong cross-party movement in government, to put oracy firmly on the national curriculum, and colleagues at the ESU contribute to that lobby. The UK's traditional scholarship programmes, including the Secondary School Exchange and Walter Hines Page Scholarship, run in

partnership with colleagues at ESU US are increasingly popular and continue to bring an international perspective to young peoples' and teachers' development. Debate Tours, including those to Japan and Denmark, also provide an opportunity for international partnership. The FIF meetings have seen many young members getting involved with the ESU on an international level, and young membership has been encouraged through the efforts of ESU staff and volunteers. Miles Contreras-Brown of London branch provided a presentation on young membership to the Council, with advice regarding affordable pricing of events, playing to the ESU's strengths, and utilising the 1 million strong alumni of the IPSC.

ESU Ukraine report provided by Nadiya Ivanenko

Established in 2008, ESU Ukraine has been competing in the IPSC since 2009 - they had been planning to continue to participate in 2022 but activity was disrupted due to the breakout of war. During the pandemic, ESU Ukraine was able to host competitions such as an essay writing competition and a Shakespeare competition which was a great success and had two winners. In the future, the aim will be to have activities take place on stage. Nadiya, in her role at university, developed new courses focussed on oracy skills for masters students, and had been keen to develop a similar course for bachelors students. While being outside of the capital city makes it harder to get to embassies, they have been very supportive and provided free venues. The support of ESU US and Dartmouth House was also acknowledged, and Jane Easton paid tribute to Nadiya for her fortitude in very difficult circumstances, and reiterated that the bonds of friendship are with her.

ESU US report provided by Karen Blair

There are more than 60 branches in ESU US, and many activities took place over Zoom during the pandemic. ESU US recently hosted a FIF with Luard Morse scholar, George Pratt. The Princess Royal also recently visited ESU US in New York for a gala event. ESU US continues to run many programmes, including the Shakespeare Competition, ARNIC programme for immigrants in New York, debates at branches, English in Action across states, the Secondary School Exchange, the TLab programme, and Luard Morse scholarship. Karen Karpowich has been working with Marina Tsitsishvili to set up a debating workshop for people in Tbilisi - there is a separate written report with further details. 2023 will see the 40th anniversary of the Shakespeare competition, held at the Lincoln Centre. ESU US is also looking forward to a trip to the UK on Queen Mary, with a reception at Dartmouth House - an invitation was extended to members of the international council to join them.

Jane Easton asked all ESUs which work with other organisations to provide a short, half-page memorandum to the Secretariat with further details on these partnerships, including key points to share amongst the international community. It was also discussed that partnerships with organisations, working with practitioners and teachers, and other topics that have been raised during country presentations could be useful topics for FIFs. Pending discussions and receipt of these memoranda, it may be appropriate to establish a working group to determine guidelines for partnerships.

10. International Council Meeting 2023

Jane Easton opened the floor for expressions of interest (even tentative) from countries to host the ICM 2023. Patricia Curd, on behalf of ESU France and Loire Valley, offered a bid for Paris to host the ICM in 2023. Plans to celebrate the ESU USA centenary in 2020, disrupted by Covid, have resulted in a number of venue bookings, embassy connections, and more that could be utilised to host the ICM. Loire Valley clarified that they would be happy to manage organisation and logistics for this event.

ESU Islamabad also offered a tentative bid to host in 2024.

The Secretariat agreed to consider and clarify these offers in due course.

The Chair remarked on the enormous opportunity of the ICM to bring ESUs across the world closer together to work on solutions.

11. Chairman's closing remarks

Jonathan Callund formally handed over the Presidency of the International Council to Mr Aziz Memon, and closed the meeting.

October 2022