ecrea | European Communication Research
and Education Association

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR ORGANISING ECREA'S 11TH EUROPEAN COMMUNICATION CONFERENCE 2026

1. OBJECTIVE

The European Communication Conference aims to become the major European conference for communication scholars. It is also a major opportunity for members to meet, gather and socialise. The conference is to combine three crucial qualities:

- Top-level scholarly work
- Impeccable organisation, facilities and logistics
- Memorable events and occasions within and around the conference
- The conference is a moment of prestige and conviviality combined with scholarly excellence.

The conference is a key benefit for ECREA members. It is also a major driver for many other activities of the association (publications, thematic sections, networks, working groups).

2. FORMAT

The ECC is expected to be a 4-day event, where the first day is reserved to the registration of participants and welcome plenary session. The conference will thus start with a prestigious keynote speaker or panel during first plenary session. Other plenary sessions are organised during the second or third day of the conference.

The rest of the conference is organised in simultaneous parallel thematic panels in the break-up rooms (see article 4). Sufficient time should be provided between sessions for proper coffee breaks as well as for lunch in order to facilitate contacts and exchange among participants.

While the thematic panels and keynotes should take place at the conference site, a limited number of sessions and events can be organised in another site or location if absolutely necessary or if relevant. The conference should nevertheless include on- and off-site "side events" (a social and cultural programme). These activities are to emphasise the host institution and the host region, the civil society, and the region's culture. They are also designed to foster social contacts and exchange among attendees.

3. LOCATION

The institution hosting the Conference has to be active in the field of communication research and/or education and have sufficient experience and sufficient capacity (staff and support) to prepare and run the event.

The conference will be held in a city with suitable access (easy access from various parts of Europe at a reasonable price) and accommodation (hotels and conference site).

The conference site will be a university, a congress centre or other similar facility with sufficient capacity. The venue requirements are as follows:

- a large plenary room for at least 900 participants
- at least 27 break-out rooms with a minimum capacity of 40 people each
- 1 room (suitable space) for upload centre
- 1 room with a minimum capacity of 20 people as ECREA office, (LOC is strongly advised to include one more room of appropriate size as LOC office as well),
- catering area(s)

The level of comfort and equipment will meet the expected standards for such an event (e.g. data-projection in all rooms, free Wi-Fi for all participants, air-conditioning where necessary).

The conference site will be located near the city centre and close to a varied choice of accommodation (hotels) with sufficient capacity for all participants and accompanying parties. The area will also be easy to reach by public transport (including air travel). Special attention will be given to environmental sustainability of the event.

4. PROGRAMME

The programme is composed of four components:

- Pleanary sessions, consisting of keynote presentations or panels by prestigious personalities and alternative pleanary formats such as ECREA Interventions
- Thematic parallel sessions of ECREA Sections, Networks and Temporary Working Groups and special panels proposed by ECREA and local host
- ECREA General Assembly
- Special events on or off the main conference site

The Organising Committee will deal with the selection of keynote speakers and/or keynote panels, the organisation of special invited panels and additional events (such as civil society panels or a film program), and the final structuring of the programme.

The selection of programme for Thematic parallel sessions will be undertaken by the ECREA Sections, Networks and Temporary Working Groups, which will each appoint one programme chair (SPC). The ECREA Sections, Networks and Temporary Working Groups programme chairs (SPC) will recruit the necessary number of reviewers and supervise the review process. All proposals will be anonymised and the evaluation will be done using scores on a predefined set of criteria. The allocation of the number of slots to Sections, Networks and Temporary Working Groups will be done by ECREA S/N/TWG co-ordinator while allocation of presentations into the

final programme is the task of Sections, Networks and Temporary Working Group programme chairs.

The programme will be scheduled in a way that ensures sufficient time for each presentation, for discussion and for transition from one session to the next. Within the parallel sessions, at least 15 minutes will be allocated to each presentation (presentation and Q/A), on the basis of 5 presentations per 90-minute session.

Thematic parallel sessions will therefore consist of the following program units:

- presentations of thematic Sections
- presentations of Networks and Temporary Working Groups (at least one session for each of the Networks, one session for each of TWGs in their first term, and two sessions for each of TWGs in their second term)
- special panels, including panels organized by ICA, IAMCR, CSA or other strategic partners (proposed by ECREA and local host)
- roundtables

The host institution might consider organising a pre-conference(s) aimed at a restricted group of participants, possibly participants from that region or country and/or on a specific thematic that could not be covered in the larger conference.

5. LANGUAGE

The working language of the conference is English. ECREA supports language diversity and wants to encourage participation of individuals with little or no proficiency in English. Therefore, the Organising Committee is encouraged to consider activities in languages other than English, but in a way that promotes and values diversity and exchange, not segregation. Therefore, sessions or contributions in languages other than English must always provide means of translation. This necessity does not apply to pre- or post-conferences that the local organisers would like to set up before or after ECC and that are strictly targeted at one language community only.

6. MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

A management team is brought together to compose the "ECC2026 Organising Committee". It is composed of members designated by the host institution (LOC) and ECREA equally and chaired by a member from the host institution. ECREA reserves the right to veto a decision if it sees it as potentially damaging to its image or interests. One representative of ECREA's PCO (C-IN) will be added to the ECC2026 Organising Committee for clearer communication, allocattion and coordination of tasks. LOC and ECREA of the ECC2026 Organising Committee have voting rights while the representative of PCO (C-IN) holds no voting rights. In cases when vote would result in a tie, ECREA President's voice decides.

The ECC2026 Organising Committee draws and updates regularly a timetable of the entire project. LOC in collaboration with ECREA and ECREA's PCO drafts a full budget plan of the conference. The ECC2026 Organising Committee controls the

budget, which will be kept up to date and itemised bills can be provided upon request, within reasonable time. The same transparency and real time updating will also prevail for the actual accounts of the conference.

The host institution will form a Local Organising Committee, consisting of at least Chair, Vice-Chair and General Co-Ordinator of the conference. To facilitate contacts between ECREA and the host institution, most communication will be achieved between the General Co-ordinator of the conference and a contact person designated by ECREA. ECREA will not be involved in day-to-day operations and decisions.

7. DISTRIBUTION OF TASKS

The host institution is entrusted with the organisation of the event and is given sufficient autonomy to give the conference a characteristic tone and focus that reflects the local identity and areas of expertise. Yet, because the conference commits ECREA's image and overall credibility, ECREA has to remain closely associated, in a supervising and supportive role, with the preparation and the carrying out of the conference.

For organisation of ECC conferences, ECREA relies on its selected PCO C-IN and host institution is required to work with C-IN to provide a number of basic services specified below. Services which are not included in this basic package (such as catering, sponsorships, or acommodation booking) must also be provided by a PCO. Although a local PCO can be contracted for these services, host institution is strongly encouraged to use C-IN services.

The tasks required to organise the conference are thus to be distributed into five groupings:

- Tasks taken on by the ECREA PCO
- Tasks taken on by LOC
- Tasks taken on by ECREA
- Tasks taken on jointly by ECREA and LOC
- Tasks taken on by a local PCO (optional)

The tasks will be distributed over the above described categories as follows:

Tasks taken by ECREA PCO:

- Sumbission platform management (see also article 9)
- Abstracts handling (submission, technical coordination of evaluation, notifications)
- Registration and fee payment (off-site and on-site)
- Mobile application provision and management
- Upload centre provision, staffing and management
- AV equipment management

- Venue management (e.g. rooms equipment, catering and refreshments supervision)
- Signage and banners
- Programme book and book of abstracts

Tasks taken on by LOC:

- Call for papers
- Website
- Design
- Communication and event promotion
- Invitation and communication with keynotes
- Pre-conferences
- Finding sponsors
- Social/cultural programme
- Conference merchandising

Tasks taken on jointly by ECREA and LOC

- Pleanary panels (keynotes and other formats)
- Special panels
- Communication and event promotion
- Protocol (off-site and on-site)
- Approving sponsors (ECREA reserves the right to refuse the sponsorship of a particular funder that would be found incompatible with the aims and the image of ECREA)

Tasks taken on by ECREA:

- Communication and event promotion via ECREA channels
- Protocol
- Production of scientific programme of the conference

Tasks taken on by the local PCO (in articulation with the LOC) or ECREA PCO:

- Accomodation management
- Transport management
- Social/cultural programme
- Exhibition and sponshorship
- Food and beverages

8. COMMUNICATION

A line of visual material (posters, website etc.) is designed to reflect the conference and the host institution and region. ECREA will assist in disseminating the promotional material.

Each edition of the conference is named after the following model:

ECREA 2026

11th European Communication Conference

[City], [Country]

Hosted by [the host institution]

ECREA will promote the event among its members, its community and beyond to give the largest possible publicity to the event. The host institution will also their resources to promote the event.

9. ECREA CONFERENCE SYSTEM

The conference is run on the platform of the ECREA conference system. Following tasks must be managed via ECREA conference system:

- submission of abstracts
- evaluation of abstracts
- creation of the scientific programme
- centralised upload and distribution of presentations
- on-line registration
- fee payment
- on-site registration (including production of badges and attendance certificates)
- production of programme book and book of abstracts

10. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Given the magnitude of the conference and the corresponding overall budget, there is a financial risk associated with organising the European Communication Conference. ECREA is an international not-for-profit association with no capital and with no significant treasury. This implies that ECREA has no financial responsibility or liability for the ECC2026.

In order to reduce the risk and keep the financial situation under careful control, a detailed budget plan will be established early in the conference planning based on firm offers and estimates. The budget will be drafted by LOC in collaboration with ECREA and ECREA's PCO. The budget is to be updated as often as necessary to incorporate any changes.

The amounts charged to participants for registration and for the various activities will have to be safely determined by the time of the opening of registration. The registration fee for ECREA members must be substantially lower than that of non-

ECREA members. Discounted fee must also be available for ECREA members who are also students (PhD or otherwise), and also for soft-currency countries. (The conference will use the same list of soft-currency countries that is applied by ECREA to its membership fees). Early registration should be encouraged by offering a discount for participants registering and paying before a set date.

The conference fee structure is shown in Balance Sheet, which is one of the appendixes to the Agreement for the organisation of the 10th European Communication Conference.

The detailed accounts of the conference will be kept up to date (books and documents) and accessible to the Organising Committee. The financial report will be approved by the Organising Committee no later than 90 (ninety) days after the closing of the conference.

If the conference organiser, through the submission of a detailed and convincing financial report, can prove after the conference that there was a loss then NO financial transfer will have to be made to ECREA.

If the final balance of the accounts shows profit of up to EUR 10.000 (in words: ten thousand), ECREA will receive 40% of the profit, and the remaining profit will benefit host institution. If the final balance of the accounts shows profit of more than EUR 10.000 (in words: ten thousand), ECREA will receive 45% of the profit, and the remaining profit will benefit host institution.

If the conference organiser, through the submission of a detailed and convincing financial report, can prove after the conference that there was a loss then no financial transfer will have to be made to ECREA.

Regardless of the financial result of the ECC2026, the host institution will refund travel and accommodation costs of the members of the Organising Committee. Travel and accommodation costs of the members of the Organising Committee during the preparation phase and travel and accommodation costs of the Organising Committee traveling for the Conference will be maximum EUR 10.000,00 (in words: ten thousand) in total. Finally, the registration fee for all ECREA Board members and 10 ECREA Guests will be waived by the organisers.