

## Minutes of the 1st Governing Committee Meeting World English Language Olympics (WELO)

**Date:** April 16, 2025

**Time:** 15:00 – 17:25 (UK time)

**Location:** Virtual

**Chair:** Slavas Palkevicius

### Participants:

1. Berenice Oliva [Italy]
2. Jorge Alberto Otero [Colombia]
3. Kamal H. W. Hijazi [Jordan]
4. Sorina Enachiuc [Romania]
5. Diana Mondria [Mexico]
6. Melanie Milanes [Panama]
7. Juan M. Elizande Sanchez [Spain]
8. Damián Ruiz Tierraseca [Spain]
9. Maria Luniak [Ukraine]
10. Alexandre Argenta [Brazil]
11. Nargiza Makatsaria [Georgia]
12. Monica Bekko Casey [Kenya]
13. Claudiu Damian [Romania]
14. Gerardo Carranza [Mexico]
15. Gabriela Ardito [Argentina]
16. Kaan Armağan [Turkey]
17. Simen Fan [China]
18. Seth Rutrakool [Thailand]
19. Magdalena Jugovic [Serbia]
20. Slavas Palkevicius [SUL, International]

### Agenda:

Time	Topic
15:00–15:20	Welcome & Introductions
15:20–15:35	Election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen (closed vote)
15:35–15:45	Appointment of Committee Roles
15:45–16:00	Review and Approval of the Main Governing Document
16:00–16:10	Final Decision on the Official Name of the Event
16:10–16:15	Vision and Purpose Presentation
16:15–16:30	Launch of the Public Tender for National Representatives & Committees
16:30–16:40	Proposed Competition Structure (National & World Levels)
16:40–16:50	Key Milestones and Timeline (2025–2029)
16:50–17:00	Age Categories, Creative Tracks, Themes & Open Q&A

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## 1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting commenced with introductions of each representative of the board and organizations from over a dozen countries, including Argentina, China, Colombia, Georgia, Kenya, Turkey, Romania, Spain, Serbia, Panama, Ukraine, Brazil, Mexico, Morocco, Italy, Jordan, and Colombia. Each representative shared their background and role in international education.

**Note:** The meeting was recorded.

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## 2. Election of Governing Committee Chair and Vice-Chairs

Following candidate presentations and multiple voting rounds, the following appointments were confirmed:

- **Chair:** Juan M. Elizande Sanchez

### Vice-Chairs:

- **Jorge Alberto Otero** – *Vice-Chairman for Academic and Assessment Affairs*  
Responsible for overseeing the development of academic standards, evaluation frameworks, testing structures, and judging criteria for WELO. Jorge will lead efforts to ensure fairness, quality, and pedagogical integrity across all assessments and competitions.  
👉 *He will lead the **Academic and Assessment Affairs Subcommittee**.*
- **Damián Ruiz Tierraseca** – *Vice-Chairman for National English Language Olympics*  
Leads the operational planning and execution of the national-level competitions, working closely with country representatives to implement timelines, formats, rules, and logistical support to ensure alignment with global WELO standards.  
👉 *He will lead the **National English Language Olympics Subcommittee**.*
- **Diana Mondria** – *Vice-Chairwoman for Membership, Partnerships, and Outreach*  
Oversees member engagement, strategic partnerships, sponsor relationships, and promotional activities. Diana will drive student and school outreach, develop collaborations with institutions and sponsors, and support WELO's visibility and international growth.  
👉 *She will lead the **Membership, Partnerships, and Outreach Subcommittee**.*

These Vice-Chair roles were created to provide focused leadership in WELO's three foundational areas: academic rigor, operational delivery, and strategic development. Each Vice-Chair will chair a corresponding **subcommittee**, composed of selected Governing Committee members and collaborators, to support execution and reporting in their area of responsibility.

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### 3. Review of Charter Document

Slavas Palkevicius presented the draft charter, covering:

- Organizational purpose and structure
- Roles and responsibilities
- Election procedures
- Meeting frequency

The committee agreed to review the document in detail before the next meeting and provide feedback. The possibility of partnering with an assessment organization was discussed, with three candidates shortlisted.

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### 4. Discussion on Naming the Competition

Naming options for the international competition were reviewed. Suggestions included:

- **With "Olympics":** *Global English Olympics, World English Olympics*
  - **Without "Olympics":** *World Speak Championship, Global English League*
- Further input will be gathered, including feedback from students. The need to consult the **International Olympic Committee** regarding name usage was highlighted.
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### 5. Review of Vision and Scope

The vision, mission, and purpose statements were discussed. Slavas Palkevicius will explore expanding the scope to include **languages beyond English** in the vision statement.

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### 6. Public Tender for National English Language Competitions

Key points:

- Eligibility for national representatives set at **3 years of operation** (previously 1 year).
  - Representatives may **form partnerships or delegate tasks**.
  - Quota discussions: whether to base national representative limits on **total population** or **student population**.
  - Competition launch expected in **2025 for some countries**, expanding in 2026.
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### 7. National Entry Test Structure

Slavas Palkevicius introduced the structure:

- High school students will be the only eligible participants.
- Schools must **commit to funding winners' travel**, to prevent inequities.
- The debate continued on whether funding should come from **schools or parents**.
- The format includes **three phases**, two at the national level.
- Judging, awards, and participation fees were also discussed.

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## 8. Next Steps & Action Items

Task	Responsible	Deadline
Review and comment on Charter document	All Board Members	Before next meeting
Provide feedback on event names (inc. alternatives to "Olympics")	All Board Members	Ongoing
Gather student feedback on name options	All Board Members	Ongoing
Update vision statement to possibly include other languages	Slavas Palkevicius	Before next meeting
Revise eligibility criteria in charter (1→3 years)	Slavas Palkevicius	Before next meeting
Add clause allowing delegation/partnerships	Slavas Palkevicius	Before next meeting
Initiate discussions on national quota system	Governing Committee	Next meeting
One-on-one discussions on naming and open issues	Slavas Palkevicius	Before next meeting
Schedule a meeting with IOC	Slavas Palkevicius	TBD
Develop sponsorship strategies	Sponsorship Committee	Ongoing
Create WhatsApp group for board	Slavas Palkevicius	Immediate
Arrange informal meetups at education fairs	Attending Members	As applicable
Explore in-person board meeting/fam trip	Slavas Palkevicius	TBD

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**Meeting Adjourned.**

**Next Meeting:** 26 May 2025