NW6 Network Meeting Minutes — ECER 2026, Tampere

Network 6 met at lunchtime on Thursday, 20 August 2026 in Tampere. The meeting confirmed the co-convenors present, appointed Ulrike Stadler-Altmann (Humboldt University Berlin) as incoming link convenor with a shadowing year starting now, and collected feedback on ECER 2026 for EERA.

Attendance and formalities

The meeting was chaired by Klaus Rummler, link convenor of Network 6 (Switzerland), who introduced himself to those attending for the first time.

Three of the eight co-convenors were present: Valentin Dander, Sandra Langer and Ulrike Stadler-Altmann. Rachel Shanks was at the conference but unable to attend the meeting because of a scheduling conflict; she sent her apologies, conveyed with shortbread. Anne Mette Bjørgen and Yvonne Fritze (Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences) could not travel for funding reasons. Geir Haugsbakk and Theo Hug have both retired in the meantime, and their willingness to continue as co-convenors is not yet known.

The number of participants was not recorded. Several attendees indicated that ECER 2026 was their first ECER.

The chair explained that no participant would take minutes: the session was recorded on two devices and the recording would be transcribed automatically to produce the minutes. He asked the meeting whether this was acceptable and noted no objection.

Welcome and agenda

The chair welcomed participants and encouraged first-time attendees to stay with Network 6 and return next year, noting that the timetable is expected to be similar, with the network meeting again on Thursday at lunchtime.

He announced four items for the hour: news from EERA and the conference, a report on Network 6 activities, the growth of ECER with the relevant figures, and elections — co-convening and who can take on which tasks. He invited questions at any point rather than only at the end.

News: conference growth and future venues

ECER 2026 reached a new record of more than 3,800 participants, of which around 3,600 attended ECER itself and the remainder the Emerging Researchers' Conference. The chair noted that this scale had never been reached before: ECER 2025 in Belgrade drew about 2,600 participants, roughly the same as Hamburg in 2019.

Because of this growth, EERA now negotiates contracts with host universities about five years in advance, in order to find institutions willing and large enough to host a conference of this size.

ECER 2027 will be held in Debrecen, Hungary. The local organisers have confirmed that they have the facilities for this number of participants, as the buildings are larger, and that hotel capacity is sufficient. The chair asked participants to save the date and to start looking at travel options. He recalled that ECER was last held in Hungary in Budapest in 2015. The conference theme will address learning communities.

Network activities and publications

NW6 special call. Ulrike Stadler-Altmann and colleagues launched a special call last year on educational spaces responding to social transformations, addressing learning environments. The chair reported that it accounted for 35 papers, four symposia and one ignite talk, with seven submissions withdrawn and six rejected. After the conference, a call for full-text manuscripts will be sent to the authors of papers actually presented. Publication is planned in MedienPädagogik (medienpaed.com), a Diamond Open Access journal, ideally before Easter. The chair described the call as a clear success that contributes both to the growth of ECER and to the visibility of Network 6.

Joint special call with NW4 and NW16. In 2024 Network 6 launched a joint special call with Network 4 (Inclusive Education) and Network 16 (ICT in Education and Training) on inclusion, media and education. The joint sessions across three networks were held in 2025. The chair noted that coordinating this in the programme was unusually demanding for the EERA administration, but that it worked out. Full-text manuscripts have since been submitted and are currently under review. The results will appear as a special issue published in parallel in two Diamond Open Access journals: the European Journal of Inclusive Education and MedienPädagogik, the latter as the primary venue.

The chair observed that such calls and special issues run over several years — this strand began in 2023 or 2024 — and that substantial work follows after the conference itself.

Submissions and reviewing

Network 6 received 88 submissions for ECER 2026 in total, including those from the special call. The chair reported that no other network in Europe saw a comparable increase: Network 6 had the largest growth, roughly plus 100 per cent, against a previous maximum of around 40 to 45 submissions.

He stressed that this volume has to be reviewed, thanked those present who had reviewed and who had chaired the resulting sessions, and asked them to continue.

As encouragement he pointed out two things. Reviewers receive an invitation from the EERA Council to an invited reception, which he described as a good opportunity to meet the head office — useful when planning the conference week alongside the Tuesday welcome reception and the Thursday social. Returning reviewers are also likely to be asked by programme planning to chair a session, which is much appreciated.

A participant asked how somebody not yet reviewing could take this up. The chair explained that a QR code would follow on a later slide, leading to a list on Google Drive where anyone can enter their name in order to become a reviewer, stand as a candidate for co-convenor, or update an email address or changed affiliation. The list is sent out at the beginning of February. Submissions close on 31 January, and the EERA office in Berlin tries to have the reviewer list in place before that, after which review invitations are issued through the system.

The QR code was circulated during the meeting. The chair acknowledged that sharing this kind of information among people who meet only once a year is not easy, and offered two alternatives: share the link among yourselves, or send him an email, noting that his address is widely available. He also offered to let anybody enter their details directly on his laptop after the session.

Discussion: managing growth

The chair reported on discussions at EERA management level and named four open problems, none of which has been resolved.

- **Venue capacity.** How to find universities able to host the conference, and what to do on approaching a threshold of around 4,000 participants — whether participant numbers would have to be limited.
- **Unequal network sizes.** How to handle the very different sizes of the networks. The chair described the situation as unclear and said the coming year would have to be observed.
- **AI-generated submissions.** Many of the new submissions are produced with AI. This is a challenge not only for reviewers but also for the relationship between submissions, actual presentations and attending participants.
- **Uneven geographical distribution.** Submissions from some countries are disproportionate to their population; the chair gave Kazakhstan as an example of a share much higher than its number of inhabitants would suggest, spread across the programme in ways that can be confusing.

He also referred to political challenges within ECER in recent years, observing that education is political in essence, and said he did not know how EERA would continue to deal with this. He summarised the item as challenges and work to be done.

Membership and eligibility

The chair clarified the structure, as individuals cannot become members of EERA. EERA's members are the national associations for educational sciences, and these form the Council. ECER, by contrast, is made by its participants, who need not belong to any of those national associations. Participants are also the reviewers who sign up to the list. He noted that he knows several people who have attended ECER for twenty years without being a member of any such association, and underlined that this is what makes ECER persist as ECER from year to year.

A participant asked whether somebody belonging to a national educational research association outside Europe, and therefore not part of EERA, could still become a co-convenor. The chair answered yes, and said this is not restricted in any way. He added that the list of EERA member states corresponds roughly to the European Higher Education Area, which extends as far as Kazakhstan, and referred to WERA, the World Education Research Association.

Elections: co-convenors

The chair set out the rules, quoting the EERA General Regulations, page 13: the election of convenors, in the sense of co-convenors, is done by the participants in the network during the ECER network meeting — that is, by those present, here and now. Link convenors, by contrast, are appointed by the network convenors, either by consensus in the sense of an appointment, by unanimous decision, or by election; they have to settle this among themselves. A mandate lasts four years with one possible re-election, so eight years in total.

On his own term, the chair explained that he was elected link convenor in 2019 and then shadowed for one year. It has since turned out that the shadowing year does not count, so his actual term began

in 2020. He was reconfirmed in 2023 in Glasgow, because the treatment of the shadowing year was unclear at the time; this was clarified with EERA officials shortly before this meeting. His term should therefore end next year.

Decision. The chair proposed confirming the co-convenors present, including Rachel Shanks with her apologies, and postponing the full election of co-convenors to a later meeting. The meeting agreed; the chair noted the nodding and declared the co-convenors confirmed.

He asked participants to update their data on the list and to stand as candidates for co-convening, noting that co-convenors are needed and that an election should follow, but that candidates must be present at a network meeting to be elected. He added that regional distribution and gender distribution should be taken into account.

Asked from the floor whether he would invite participants directly, the chair called for volunteers. Two questions followed.

What do co-convenors do? Reviewing and chairing first of all, then helping with session planning and taking decisions, and taking on specific tasks within the network. He gave examples: rewriting or helping to rewrite the network description, launching special calls, and developing a network communication system beyond ECER itself. On the last point he recalled that a mailing list had been discussed in earlier years but was refused every time, which is why the network has none. He described these as development opportunities to be taken up or invented.

What experience is required? Some experience of ECER and a sense of what ECER is about — which he characterised as being spontaneous and accepting a constant state of preliminarity. He added that ECER does not work without physical presence, which is why the pandemic and hybrid editions did not succeed, and that one has to like conferences and dancing.

One participant said they were eager to learn more. No further candidate came forward during the session, and the chair said this could be settled afterwards at his laptop.

Appointment of the incoming link convenor

Decision. Following discussion among the co-convenors, the chair proposed that Ulrike Stadler-Altmann be appointed link convenor of Network 6, beginning her shadowing year now and taking up the role at the start of ECER 2027. The meeting raised no objection. Klaus Rummler stated that he would like to remain a co-convenor after handing over.

The chair explained that this avoids an abrupt step-down and makes the handover a continuous process. Shadowing means sharing the tasks: he will copy her into emails and introduce her to the procedures over the coming year.

Ulrike Stadler-Altmann accepted, saying that in her experience the opportunity to shadow and to think through the work before taking it on is valuable, and that she was glad to be part of these conversations.

A participant asked whether the years had been counted correctly. The chair confirmed that 2019 plus eight years would run to 2027, so the shadowing year does not have to be counted, and that it will likewise not be counted for his successor for the time being. He noted that the regulations leave room for communicative consensus within the networks.

On the workload, the chair described the role as a considerable amount of work with peak times across the year, including meetings in Berlin with the other link convenors. At this conference there was a link convenors' meeting on Tuesday at 9:00 and a second one on Friday at lunchtime. Although attendance is formally limited to one person per network, he expected that Ulrike Stadler-Altmann would be admitted as well.

Feedback to EERA on ECER 2026

The chair explained that link convenors have to complete a feedback form covering whether ECER met its goals, whether the network met its goals, what participants disliked, and any further suggestions. He invited comments on the venue and the conference, and noted that comments were being recorded.

Lunch hours. A first-time participant asked that lunch hours be respected, as there was no time to reach the organised lunches on a day with the network meeting at lunchtime. The chair accepted the point and added that at least two people had approached him beforehand expecting the network meeting to be a lunch meeting, so there is a communication problem as much as a scheduling one. He proposed labelling the slot in the programme as a lunch meeting with an invitation to bring lunch bags, or to buy lunch beforehand and bring it along. A participant suggested distributing some of the catering to the network meeting rooms. The chair replied that providing lunch through the organisation is extremely complicated and expensive, as conference catering costs have risen sharply, and that it is easier for participants to organise themselves and bring brown bags. He encouraged this option.

Sessions on physical learning environments. A participant researching the design and use of physical learning environments praised the conference and the track. In previous years these sessions had been hard to find and often ran in parallel, meaning constant moving around and missed papers; this year the theme had been taken up within the track. The chair said he had been glad to assemble sessions of three or four papers on physical learning spaces and even architecture, and noted that the participant had chaired one of them.

Rooms. The same participant noted that rooms were sometimes hard to find and some were too small for the number of people attending, while acknowledging that attendance is hard to predict. The chair explained that EERA tries to keep each network in the same rooms for the whole week; Network 6 had two parallel tracks this year and therefore needed two constant rooms, which worked out, whereas other networks were less fortunate. In earlier years the network had better rooms — more central, more light, better Wi-Fi — while this year it was in the basement, where the air had been heavy in the last session of the previous day.

Coffee breaks. A participant reported that nothing was left at the coffee breaks if one arrived five minutes late, in contrast to earlier conferences. The chair said he had heard the same comment on Tuesday and observed that Finnish coffee is sometimes finished early, adding that catering is always a matter for the local organisers.

Conference app. Participants found the app a good setup, well updated, and particularly valued being able to see other attendees and follow them. One feature available in earlier years was missed: seeing how many people had bookmarked a session. Another participant noted that some attendees struggled with the app and asked that a traditional printed timetable remain available as an alternative, and that signposting at the venue be improved. The chair welcomed the feedback and

explained that EERA had searched for a suitable app for years and is now working with the developers of Flock to adapt it to ECER's needs, including the connection to ConfTool, which is why participants have to confirm the data transfer.

Other comments. A spatial design researcher said they had never felt more welcome at a conference whose starting point lies outside architecture. Participants praised the weather and the wine at the reception, and thanked the student helpers for their assistance in finding the way around. The chair recounted the Finnish tradition of coloured student overalls with traded patches and the associated student events known as sitsit, and suggested that Network 6 might exchange stitched patches rather than stickers next year.

Network goals. The chair recorded that Network 6 had met its goals in terms of planned activities and the number of submissions, and that the network is on track with the tasks carried over from previous years.

Closing the item, he distinguished between what EERA, ECER or the network can change and what falls to the local organisation, and undertook to pass the relevant points back to the local organisers.

Close of the meeting

The chair thanked participants for their feedback and closed the session, noting that the room had to be vacated for the next session within 15 minutes. He invited anyone who still wanted to join the list to stay and enter their details on his laptop.

He pointed to the Network 6 sessions following that day: a session on learning opportunities in schools, and two parallel symposia at 14:30, one convened with Sandra Langer and one with Michaela Kramer. He closed by asking participants to stay with Network 6.

Actions and deadlines

Action	Who	When
Send the call for full-text manuscripts to authors of papers presented in the NW6 special call	Link convenor with the special call editors	After ECER 2026
Publish the resulting special issue in MedienPädagogik	Journal editors	Ideally before Easter 2027
Complete the review of full-text manuscripts for the joint NW4 / NW6 / NW16 special issue	Reviewers and editors	In progress
Complete the EERA feedback form and pass local points back to the local organisers	Klaus Rummler	After ECER 2026
Attend the link convenors' meeting	Klaus Rummler, with Ulrike Stadler-Altmann if admitted	Friday of the conference week, lunchtime
Begin the shadowing handover, copying the incoming link convenor into correspondence	Klaus Rummler, Ulrike Stadler-Altmann	From now until ECER 2027
Add names to the Network 6	All participants	Before the reviewer list goes

Action	Who	When
list as reviewer, co-convenor candidate, or with updated contact data		out in early February
Hold the postponed election of co-convenors; candidates must attend in person	Network meeting	ECER 2027, Debrecen
Submissions for ECER 2027 close	All	Jan 31, 2027

Open development tasks named for co-convenors: rewriting the network description, launching further special calls, and establishing a form of network communication beyond ECER.