

2026 CEL/ELC ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan, Italy
10TH-11TH December 2026

**Communicating Knowledge Across Languages: Multilingualism, Science
Communication and Professional Engagement in Higher Education**

Call for Papers

Higher Education is undergoing profound transformations driven by technological disruption, demographic change, evolving labour market expectations, increasing international mobility, and the growing impact of artificial intelligence. At the same time, universities are increasingly called upon to contribute to social inclusion, sustainable development, democratic participation, and the circulation of knowledge across linguistic, cultural, and geographical boundaries.

As highlighted in UNESCO's *Higher Education Global Trends Report 2026: Towards Inclusive, Equitable and Quality Higher Education in an Internationally Mobile Landscape*, Higher Education institutions today face interconnected challenges relating to access, equity, quality assurance, internationalization, digital transformation, academic freedom, and knowledge dissemination. In this rapidly evolving environment, multilingualism emerges as a critical dimension for ensuring equitable access to knowledge, fostering epistemic diversity, and strengthening connections between universities, professions, and society.

A growing dissatisfaction among researchers and HE stakeholders with the phenomenon of language hierarchies has prompted renewed reflection on the epistemic, cultural, and social inequalities that continue to shape research, education, and professional communication. While the choice of language is never neutral, English still largely functions as the default language through which information and knowledge are structured, disseminated, and evaluated within academic communities.

Within the European Higher Education Area, the rhetoric of institutional performance and international competitiveness is increasingly being complemented - and sometimes challenged - by more context-sensitive approaches that seek to address linguistic and epistemic exclusion. The internationalisation agenda has often been accompanied by standardized research and educational practices, publication norms, and evaluation systems that privilege English-language output. As universities, research alliances, and funding agencies increasingly engage with open science, open access, and responsible research assessment, questions of linguistic diversity, multilingual knowledge

circulation, and linguistic justice are once again moving to the forefront of academic

debate.

In their efforts to resist the pressures of exclusively market-driven models of performance, HE institutions are increasingly engaging with issues such as the revitalization of regional and minority languages, the promotion of sustainable multilingualism, the recognition of national-language scholarship, the development of multilingual publishing platforms, the diversification of research evaluation systems, and the safeguarding of epistemic plurality.

At the same time, the growing importance of science communication, professional communication, and public engagement places language at the centre of knowledge exchange. Universities are no longer expected merely to produce knowledge, but also to communicate it effectively to diverse audiences, both locally and globally. The challenge of ensuring equitable access to information and knowledge extends far beyond the academic sphere and directly concerns healthcare communication, public administration, social services, technological innovation, environmental action, and civic participation.

The rapid development of digital technologies and artificial intelligence further amplifies these challenges. While AI and language technologies offer unprecedented opportunities for multilingual access to information, research dissemination, and international collaboration, they also raise important questions regarding linguistic diversity, inclusion, quality assurance, ethics, and the future of academic and professional communication.

Against this backdrop, the 2026 CEL/ELC Annual Conference seeks to explore how multilingualism can contribute to more inclusive, equitable, resilient, and future-oriented higher education systems. The conference aims to examine the role of languages in teaching, research, professional communication, science communication, knowledge exchange, and societal engagement, while fostering dialogue between researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and institutional leaders.

The conference organizers invite proposals for 15-20 minutes presentations, in English or French, addressing one or more of the following themes:

- Multilingualism, linguistic justice and epistemic diversity in HE;
- Language policies, institutional strategies and multilingual university governance;
- Research evaluation, multilingual publishing, open science and knowledge dissemination;
- Science communication, public engagement and knowledge exchange in multilingual contexts;
- Professional communication and languages for specific purposes in academic and professional settings;

- Academic freedom, inclusion, equitable access to knowledge and

democratic participation;

- Regional, minority and heritage languages in research, education and society;
- International student mobility, multilingual learning environments and recognition of qualifications;
- Digital transformation, artificial intelligence, language technologies and multilingual higher education;
- Multilingual communication for sustainability, social responsibility, healthcare, public services and community engagement.

The conference particularly welcomes contributions combining theoretical reflection, empirical research, policy analysis, case studies, and innovative institutional practices. Interdisciplinary perspectives and contributions addressing both local and global dimensions of multilingual higher education are especially encouraged.

Title, abstracts (max. 300 words) and a short bionote should be sent to celelc@unicatt.it by **1st September 2026**

Notification of acceptance/rejection: 1st October 2026

Registration deadline: 15th November 2026

Please register using the following link:

<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/Wq8NKpqMsi>

Registration fee:

All registration fees are waived for CEL/ELC institutional or individual members with up-to-date membership fees.

For non-members, or members who have failed to pay this year's membership, attendance fees are as follows:

- Conference fee for **presenters: € 100**
- Conference fee for **attendants: € 50**
- Conference fee for **PhD students: € 30**

Payment must be made by bank transfer into the ELC account below, **no later than 20 November 2026:**

KBC Bank Belgium (Antwerp)
IBAN: BE91 7340 4873 9576
BIC: KREDBEBB
SWIFT: KREDBEBB022

We kindly ask you to **send a copy of the payment receipt at celelc@unicatt.it** once the payment has been made.

Upon request, **certificates of attendance** will be sent soon after the event.

Scientific Committee

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