

January 2026

Guidelines for the Chair of the International Search Committee

The role of Chair of the International Search Committee is both strategic and relational. It requires careful coordination, transparency, and a sustained commitment to building trust across the Committee, the Secretariat, and the wider PEN network. The following guidelines are intended to support Chairs in carrying out this role effectively:

• **Foster a cohesive and respectful Committee environment**

Establish a warm, sincere, and professional relationship with all Committee members. Ensure that all contributions and perspectives are respected, and work towards articulating a collective voice. The role operates on two interconnected levels: managing processes (internally and externally) and cultivating trust and shared purpose. The Committee members are the driving force of its work; the Chair represents them in all relevant PEN activities.

• **Plan and coordinate meetings effectively**

Schedule meetings well in advance, taking into account different time zones to maximise participation. Anticipate an increased workload in the lead-up to elections, with more frequent meetings likely required in the second half of the year.

• **Engage constructively with the Board**

Participate in Board meetings with awareness of ongoing developments, while remaining open to diverse perspectives. Seek to create constructive synergies between the Search Committee, the Board, and the companies secretaries, while safeguarding the independence of the Committee.

• **Maintain strong collaboration with the Secretariat**

Develop and sustain a cordial, responsive, and supportive working relationship with the Secretariat. Their cooperation is essential throughout the process and particularly critical during the elections period.

• **Coordinate outreach to Centres**

In collaboration with Committee members, design and implement effective communication strategies to engage Centres. This may include letters, explanatory materials, and other outreach tools, ideally developed in coordination with the Secretariat. Where possible, explore the creation of interactive online tools to facilitate engagement.

• **Engage in key PEN events to identify candidates**

When feasible, attend events of PEN International Committees and PEN World Congresses. These gatherings provide valuable opportunities to identify potential candidates through both formal discussions and informal interactions. Observations made during World Congresses are particularly useful for future election cycles.

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International / Secretario
Arne Svingen

Treasurer / Trésorier / Tesorero
Eric Lax

Executive Director / Directrice Exécutive
/ Directora Ejecutiva
Romana Cacchioli

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Emérites / Presidentes Eméritos
**Jennifer Clement, Homero Aridjis, John
Ralston Saul, Per Wästberg**

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Niels Barford, Terry Carlbom, J.M.
Coetzee, Lucina Kathmann, Kata
Kulavkova, Eric Lax, Joanne Leedom-
Ackerman, Perumal Murugan, Boris A.
Novak, Vida Ognjenović, Elizabeth
Norgren, William Nygaard,
Orhan Pamuk, Elena Poniatowska,
Nayantara Sahgal, Michael Scammell,
Eugene Schougin, Hori Takeaki, Franca
Tiberto, Olga Tokarczuk, Carles Torner**

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El Consejo
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International Secretary / Secrétaire
International / Secretario Internacional
Treasurer / Trésorier / Tesorero
Ege Dündar, Kim Echlin, Mads Julius
Elf, Beatrice Lamwaka, Gabriel
Seisdedos, Salil Tripathi, Tanja Tuma**

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- **Prepare thoroughly for the elections process**

Develop a comprehensive understanding of all election-related materials provided by the Secretariat, including terms of office, timelines, and procedural rules. Familiarity with these elements is essential for ensuring a smooth and compliant process.

- **Manage candidate information systematically**

Maintain and regularly update the shared tracking document (e.g. Excel sheet) provided by the Secretariat, including candidate details, supporting Centres, submitted materials, and nomination status. To avoid inconsistencies, it is recommended that the Chair leads on updating this document, with the Secretariat reviewing as needed.

- **Ensure clear and consistent communication with candidates**

Maintain efficient and responsive communication with all candidates, clearly outlining requirements, deadlines, and procedural rules. Ensure all submitted materials meet the agreed format and length, and request revisions where necessary to guarantee consistency and fairness.

Election Materials Requirements

For the elections process, candidates are required to submit the following materials:

- Nomination forms (including two nominating Centres in addition to their own)
- Signed letter of acceptance
- Statement of intent
- Biography for PEN and website use (maximum 1500 words)
- Short biography for introduction at the General Assembly (maximum 1 minute 20 seconds)
- Summary text (maximum 800 words / approximately 3 minutes), to be delivered at the General Assembly

All materials must adhere strictly to the specified length and format. If submissions exceed the limits, candidates should be asked to revise accordingly to ensure fairness and a smooth electoral process. Clear guidance at the outset significantly reduces the need for later edits and additional correspondence.

Thank you for your collaboration as always.

With solidarity,

Angela Christofidou
Chair, Search Committee