Report of the Steering Committee for Monitoring the Implementation of the European Charter for Researchers

Dates: 26 May 2026 and 25 June 2026

Participants: Anna Rolczak, UL Chancellor, Chairperson of the Working Group for HR Excellence; Anna Orchowska, Director of the Employee Affairs Centre; prof. dr hab. Rafał Zarębski, Dean of the Faculty of Philology; prof. dr hab. Marcin Wójcik, Dean of the Faculty of Geographical Sciences; prof. dr hab. Rafał Matera, Rector of the UL, Chairperson of the Steering Committee for HR Excellence.
An additional meeting with prof. dr hab. Agnieszka Marczak, Dean of the Faculty of Biology and Environmental Protection took place on 25 June 2026.

Aim of the Meeting

The meeting focused on discussing the progress report on the implementation of the HR Excellence in Research strategy at the University of Lodz, in particular the sections related to the Action Plan and the OTM-R policy, i.e. open, transparent and merit-based recruitment.

The purpose of the meeting was not to carry out a detailed review of the report's wording, but rather to discuss the direction of further work, priorities and implementation risks from the faculties' perspective. It was emphasised that the report should describe actual activities based on existing practices at the UL rather than an ideal model detached from the University's organisational capabilities.

An important premise of the discussion was also that further actions should not be perceived as limiting the autonomy of faculties but as harmonising those elements of the process that should be clear and transparent for candidates, recruitment committees, deans and the administrative units supporting the recruitment process.

Main Areas of Discussion

Action Plan and HR Excellence

The participants expressed their general support for the proposed Action Plan and for further work on implementing the principles of HR Excellence at the UL. It was noted that some activities should be linked to initiatives already being implemented, including the Gender Equality Plan, activities related to inclusiveness, organisational culture, onboarding and staff development support.

It was emphasised that the activities should be implemented gradually and in an organisationally feasible manner. The report must demonstrate that the UL is not starting from scratch but is building on solutions that are already in place at both University-wide and faculty levels.

OTM-R Policy and Recruitment Processes

The discussion confirmed the importance of further developing the OTM-R policy as a tool for improving the quality, transparency and clarity of recruitment processes.

The following issues were considered particularly important:

- alignment of recruitment advertisements and recruitment documentation;
- clear criteria for the assessment of candidates;
- ensuring that an interview with the candidate forms part of the recruitment process;
- improved communication with candidates;
- increased digitalisation of recruitment and administrative processes.,

The participants did not raise any significant objections to introducing a standard requiring a meeting or interview with the candidate. However, it was noted that the implementation of changes should take account of the specific characteristics of individual faculties and the differences between disciplines.

Faculty Staffing Policy and Workforce Planning

A significant part of the discussion concerned the relationship between recruitment and the broader staffing policies of faculties.

It was pointed out that, historically, staffing policy had often been based primarily on covering teaching hours. At present, this model is no longer sufficient. Deans will increasingly need to make decisions not only based on current teaching needs but also considering:

- the development of disciplines;
- generational succession and workforce renewal;
- opportunities for employing early-career researchers;
- the number and structure of posts;
- teaching workloads;
- research achievements and evaluation requirements;
- the long-term financial position of the faculty.

It was emphasised that one of the greatest challenges will be moving away from the automatic replacement of posts within the same unit from which an employee has departed. A post should be regarded as a faculty resource, and decisions concerning its allocation should be based on the actual needs of the faculty as a whole.

It was also noted that a time is approaching when not all vacant posts will be able to be refilled. Consequently, faculties need to be prepared in advance for discussions concerning staffing priorities.

Internal Structure of Faculties

An important topic of discussion concerned the internal structure of faculties, including institutes, departments, sub-departments and the various organisational models operating at the UL.

Attention was drawn to the fact that an excessively fragmented or highly diversified structure may hinder staffing policy, teaching planning, post management and the development of disciplines. It was noted that some faculties contain very small units performing similar functions, whereas others have large chairs comprising several dozen staff members.

The discussion highlighted the need to review the internal structures of faculties and to rationalise the types of organisational units. It was emphasised that changes of this kind require consultation with faculties, a cautious approach and due consideration of the specific nature of individual disciplines.

A key prerequisite for more far-reaching organisational changes was identified as the need to analyse the Statute of the UL, particularly the provisions governing the establishment and modification of internal structures. It was noted that the current regulations may hinder the efficient adaptation of organisational structures to actual operational needs.

Role of Heads of Organisational Units in Recruitment

The role of heads of departments and other internal organisational units in recruitment processes was also discussed.

On the one hand, the head of a unit is often responsible for the subsequent development of the person appointed, the organisation of their work and their integration into the team. On the other hand, the question was raised as to whether the head of a unit should always be a member of the recruitment committee, particularly where the objective is to strengthen transparency, impartiality and minimise the risk of conflicts of interest.

It was noted that the current provisions of the Statute may require analysis as regards the extent to which they prescribe a particular composition of recruitment committees and whether it is possible to introduce greater flexibility.

Digitalisation of Processes

Accelerating the digitalisation of recruitment and administrative processes was identified as one of the key priorities.

It was noted that digitalisation is needed from the perspective of candidates, faculties and administrative units alike. It should support:

- the publication of vacancy announcements;
- the submission of documents;
- communication with candidates;
- the documentation of recruitment committee activities;
- the monitoring of recruitment data;
- the analysis of staffing needs.

Attention was drawn to the fact that smaller faculties may provide a suitable environment for piloting selected digital and organisational solutions before their wider implementation.

Staff Support and Challenging Situations

The discussion also addressed the need to extend the work to include practical tools supporting managers and those involved in recruitment processes.

Alongside the Inclusive Recruitment Guide, it was considered worthwhile to prepare additional materials describing difficult or problematic situations together with possible courses of action. Such materials could cover, among other things:

- communication with candidates and employees;
- conflicts;
- excessive workload;
- exclusion;
- adaptation difficulties experienced by new employees;
- signs of burnout or prolonged stress;
- opportunities for obtaining psychological support.
-

It was recognised that tools of this kind could provide practical support to deans, heads of organisational units and administrative staff in their day-to-day work.

Supplement Following 25.06.2026

On 25 June 2026, Anna Rolczak held an additional consultation meeting concerning the report, the Action Plan and the directions for implementing the OTM-R policy with prof. dr hab. Agnieszka Marczak.
The main conclusions of the meeting were as follows:

- further alignment of recruitment and information processes, considering the specific characteristics of different staff groups and project-based recruitment;
- greater availability of key information in English, including the Employee Portal, documents and University-wide communications, as well as the translation of currently unavailable materials, such as the Work Regulations;
- clear rules for inviting candidates to recruitment interviews and for selecting candidates to proceed to subsequent stages;
- easy access for recruitment committees to procedural information and the possibility of obtaining prompt guidance where doubts arise;
- participation of a faculty administrative staff member in recruitment committees, without voting rights, in the role of procedural support or committee secretary;
- clarification of communication channels between the Employee Affairs Centre, deans, heads of units and recruitment committees, particularly in matters related to remuneration and employment conditions;;
- webinars on the organisational culture of the UL and onboarding covering values, communication standards and principles of cooperation;
- a practical orientation package for new employees;
- monitoring of recruitment and employment outcomes after the first year of employment and the provision of periodic feedback to deans;
- a clear description of the specific nature of recruitment for research projects, including funding arrangements, timelines, formal requirements and areas requiring adaptation;
- a single source of information for international candidates regarding diplomas, recognition procedures and required formalities, preferably also available in English;
- individual development plans for early-career staff, covering research objectives, publications, funding, mobility, projects and future academic career;

- analysis of the employment model involving an initial one-year contract, followed by a subsequent contract within the permissible period, together with an assessment of development by a promotion or advisory committee, with the possibility of observer participation.

The comments provided during the consultation with prof. dr hab. Agnieszka Marczak complement the Steering Committee's earlier discussion, particularly in the areas of the availability of information in English, practical support for recruitment committees, the role of faculty administration, communication with the Employee Affairs Centre, project-based recruitment, onboarding and the development planning of early-career staff.

Conclusions and Further Actions

Following the discussion, the following general conclusions were adopted:

1. The Committee supports the continuation of work on the Action Plan and the OTM-R policy.
2. The report should emphasise that the UL is building on activities and good practices that are already in place.
3. The objective of further work is to align selected elements of the process rather than to limit the autonomy of faculties.
4. The key OTM-R priorities were identified as:
    - alignment of recruitment advertisements and documentation;
    - further development of the Inclusive Recruitment Guide;
    - preparation of a practical catalogue of challenging situations;
    - improvement of the Careers webpage and English-language materials;
    - digitalisation of the recruitment process;
    - basic monitoring of recruitment data and staffing needs.
5. Further work should more closely link OTM-R with faculty staffing policies, including workforce planning, promotions, generational succession and the development of early-career researchers.
6. An analysis is needed of the statutory framework governing changes to the internal structures of faculties and the composition of recruitment committees.
7. Examples of good faculty-level staffing practices should be collected and treated as sources of inspiration rather than as a single rigid model for all units.
8. Further analysis should also address the issue of assistants who do not intend to undertake, or do not pursue doctoral studies, and possible approaches in such situations.
9. Future work should place greater emphasis on the availability of key information and documents in English, including information available through the Employee Portal, University-wide communications and materials for international candidates.
10. OTM-R materials should provide more detailed practical guidance on conducting recruitment interviews, selecting candidates for subsequent stages and communicating with candidates.
11. Consideration should be given to involving a faculty administrative staff member in recruitment committees in a procedural support role, without voting rights, particularly where the participation of the Employee Affairs Centre representative is not feasible for organisational reasons.

12. The communication between the Employee Affairs Centre, deans, heads of units and recruitment committees should be clarified, particularly in matters related to employment conditions and remuneration.
13. OTM-R documents and materials should clearly describe the specific nature of project-based recruitment and provide clear guidance for international candidates regarding diploma recognition and required formalities.
14. Further consideration should be given to good practices related to individual development plans for early-career staff, particularly after the first year of employment and before decisions concerning continued employment or promotion are taken.

Issues for Further Consideration

The following matters were identified for further work:

- analysis of possible amendments to the Statute of the UL on internal structures;
- review of organisational models for departments, sub-departments and institutes;
- analysis of faculty staffing policies;
- development of a minimum standard for the recruitment process;
- preparation of practical guidance materials for recruitment committees;
- development of digital tools supporting recruitment;
- collection of examples of good practice related to research leave;
- analysis of possible mechanisms for supporting faculties in the planning of long-term staffing policies.