

# CENL Annual Report 2024-2025

Draft as of 12 May 2025

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# 1. Foreword by the Chair of CENL

Dear CENL Members,

Europe's cultural and written heritage is more than the sum of our national collections - it is a shared resource that thrives through collective care and responsibility. This is the spirit that makes the Conference of European National Librarians (CENL) such an important and vibrant network.

In 2024, CENL continued to foster collaboration among national libraries across Europe, united in our commitment to preserving our continent's diverse cultural heritage and providing access to it. At a time when cultural memory is both increasingly digital and increasingly vulnerable, cooperation between our institutions is more essential than ever.

This spirit of cooperation was clearly visible during our Annual General Meeting, held in Warsaw in June. Hosted by the National Library of Poland, the meeting brought together CENL members and delegates from across Europe to discuss legal deposit issues of digital publications. The insights from this meeting are now available on the CENL website. A particular highlight was the pre-conference charity event in support of Ukrainian cultural institutions and professionals – an inspiring demonstration of cross-border solidarity and the vital role (national) libraries can play in safeguarding cultural identity in times of crisis.

As leaders of Europe's national libraries, we face many similar questions: How can we ensure the long-term accessibility of our digital collections? How can we make the cultural heritage accessible to a wider and more diverse audience? And how can we do this in a sustainable way, both environmentally and institutionally? Through bilateral partnerships, the CENL Network Groups and Dialogue Forums, and our funds and grants programme, CENL has helped members explore these challenges and develop shared strategies.

Our strength lies in mutual learning and in the relationships we build with one another. Whether through the Annual General Meetings, professional exchange programmes, or with the support of the Erland Kolding Nielsen Grants or Skills and Knowledge Funds, CENL members continue to share valuable insights that strengthen their own institutions and the wider network.

As in previous years, this annual report provides an overview of our activities since the last AGM. On behalf of the CENL Executive Committee, I would like to thank all the members - and especially our AGM host in Warsaw – for their dedication and contributions in 2024. The preservation of cultural heritage is a long-term responsibility. By working together, we strengthen not only our individual institutions but also build a more resilient and inclusive cultural infrastructure for Europe. With this in mind, I look forward to continuing this work with you at our next AGM in Edinburgh in June.

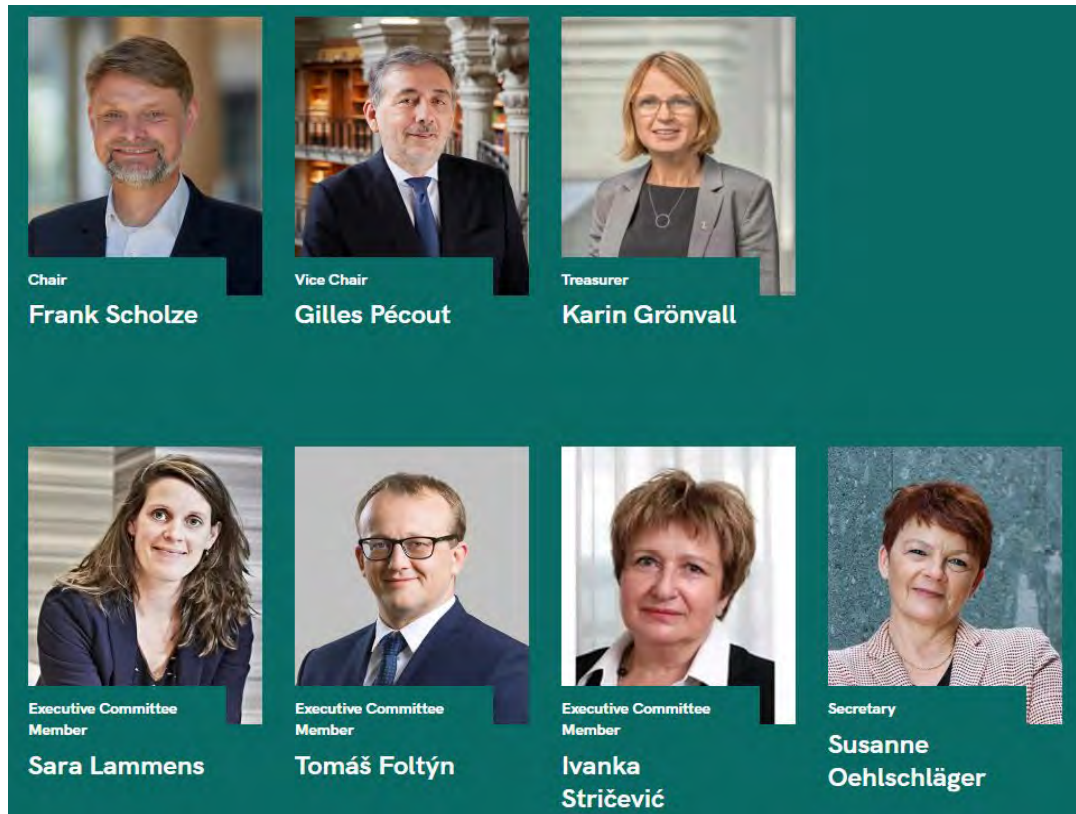
Let this report be both a record of achievement and a call to action. Together, we can ensure that Europe's cultural heritage remains meaningful and accessible – now and for generations to come.

With best wishes,

Frank Scholze, CENL Chair, April 2025

## 2. Activities June 2024 – May 2025

### 2.1. CENL Executive Committee



Following the Annual General Meeting in Warsaw in June 2024, the Executive Committee met on three occasions:

- 14 October 2024 at Österreichische Nationalbibliothek / National Library of Austria, Vienna
- 27 February 2025 (Zoom)
- 19 May 2025 (Zoom)

The meeting in October 2024 was the first for the EC in its new composition. During this and the following meetings, the EC discussed a number of issues: The ever-important issue of finances, as well as the Funds and Grants Programme and the possible themes and programme for the 2025 Annual General Meeting were major items on the agenda.



Hybrid meeting of the Executive Committee at the National Library of Austria in Vienna, 14 October 2024

Another impressive item on the agenda of the hybrid meeting in Vienna was of course the visit of the State Hall of the Austrian National Library.

The EC would like to thank the ÖNB for their hospitality. During the meeting in Vienna, the Executive Committee bid farewell to Hans Petschar, who has served CENL for many years as deputy to Johanna Rachinger, Director of the Austrian National Library. We would like to thank Hans Petschar for his professional friendship, continued cooperation and constructive contributions.



Credits: National Library of Austria



Credits: Susanne Oehlschläger

## 2.2. CENL Secretariat



Photo: DNB, Josephine Kreuzer / Left to right, top to bottom: Sabina Henn, Sabine Schrimpf, Lisa Zehner, Stefanie Schust, Kerstin Meinel, Annika Wenzel, Susanne Oehlschläger

The Secretariat manages the day-to-day business of CENL. This means organising the meetings of the Executive Committee and the Annual General Meetings and preparing the papers, including taking the minutes, as well as managing the finances and keeping in touch with members; answering questions and providing information on various topics.

The current team consists of the following colleagues from the German National Library, who focus on specific topics:

Secretary: Susanne Oehlschläger

Finances: Sabina Henn

Funds and grants: Sabine Schrimpf

Organisation, minutes and papers: Stefanie Schust and Annika Wenzel

Social media: Annika Wenzel

Website, News and Newsletter: Kerstin Meinel, Annika Wenzel and Lisa Zehner

## 2.3. CENL Annual General Meetings

### **AGM 2024**

The Annual General Meeting 2024 took place from 16– 18 June in Warsaw, Poland.



Credits: Susanne Oehlschläger



Group photo of the participants of the AGM 2024 in Warsaw

The meeting was dedicated to the legal deposit of digital publications (e-legal deposit). A publication containing some of the contributions to the meeting has been published on the CENL website in April 2025.



#### AGM 2025

Each AGM is unique in its focus on special topics and its individual cultural perspective. Preparations for this year's AGM to be held 15 – 17 June 2025 at the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh are in full swing.



Credits: National Library of Scotland

This year's programme will focus on a topic that the world is talking about as it touches every aspect of work and life - including CENL members: **Artificial Intelligence meets Cultural Heritage** - The Transformative Power of AI for and through National Libraries.

We are very much looking forward to being guests in Edinburgh and to discussing different aspects of this topic with our members and hearing of best practices and lessons learned so far.

## AGM 2026

Even before we meet this year, we have already started planning for 2026. Next year we will meet at the National Library of Luxembourg from 14 to 16 June 2026. Please save the date!



Credits: National Library of Luxembourg / Marcel Strainchamps

## 2.4. Grants and Funds

### 2.4.1. Erland Kolding Nielsen Grant

In January 2017, CENL introduced a grant to celebrate the valuable contribution Erland Kolding Nielsen (EKN) made to the development of European libraries throughout his long and distinguished career as Director General of the Royal Library in Denmark from 1986-2017.

The annual Erland Kolding Nielsen Grant awards funds of up to 5,000 EUR to national library projects which promote international collaboration and thus strengthen bonds between CENL member libraries.

The scheme was intended to run for 5 years initially and in 2022, the Executive Committee agreed that EKN be prolonged for four years (2022-2025).

The grant applications can focus on any aspect of international library collaboration including:

- development of collections (physical and digital)
- improving research
- educational or cultural services including
- exhibitions
- promoting interlibrary staff
- communications
- infrastructure development

- staff development

#### **EKN Grants 2024**

In 2024, three grants were awarded:

Bulgaria – Cross-Border Collaboration for European Cultural Heritage Preservation and Sustainable Development of Library Services: Hosted by the National and University Library in Zagreb, this exchange program accommodated five delegates from the National Library of Bulgaria, fostering the mission of heritage preservation and professional development.

See report on website: <https://www.cenl.org/grantrecipient/cross-border-collaboration-for-european-cultural-heritage-preservation-and-sustainable-development-of-library-services/>

Georgia– A two day working conference with the National Library of Estonia, and one day for cultural activities around libraries. Initial matters of the conference include: the circulation process in the library system, how to work in various models of SIERRA, how to implement a support base which helps to run an electronic catalog. The project has been postponed to 2025.

Moldova – The project consists on organizing a study visit of 4 specialists from the National Library of Moldova to the National Library of Lithuania, focussing on international relations, project management, developing new services, using informational resources and innovations of the National Library of Lithuania and others. The project has been postponed to 2025.

#### **EKN Grants 2025**

In 2025, the call was open from 8 January 2025 to 7 February 2025. On 27 February 2025, the Executive Committee reviewed all of the received submissions and awarded three grants. All projects are still ongoing:

Bulgaria – “Heritage and Memory beyond Borders”: The project aims to organise a joint exhibition on documentary heritage included in the UNESCO’s “Memory of the World” Register in Sofia, Bulgaria. There will also be a professional exchange between the participating libraries (National Library of Bulgaria, National Library of Serbia and Slovak National Library) on how to preserve and promote their cultural heritage.

Hungary – The aim of the cooperation between the National Széchényi Library (Hungary) and the National Library of Scotland is to exchange knowledge on digital philological methods, e.g. on data visualisation and the usability of archived web content for research purposes. The project includes the exchange of knowledge on digital philological methods in four areas: 1) the creation of geo-referenced and pin-marked maps, 2) the handling of minor languages such as Gaelic and Hungarian in digitisation and HTR modelling, 3) data visualisation, 4) the usability of archived web content for research purposes and the development of data mining and data visualisation of this content.

Romania – The project is about “Saving Books. Treatment, Prevention, Preservation. Professional Training Workshop for Librarians and Conservators”. It includes the organisation of four conservation workshops led by the conservation team of the National Library of France at the National Library of Romania for about 30 participants. Additionally, French specialists will assess the condition of the National Library of Romania’s “Deconstructed Collections” and discuss their treatment and conservation procedures. The goal is: “Saving Books. Treatment, Prevention, Preservation. Professional Training Workshop for Librarians and Conservators”.

<Add information on the future of EKN after the EC meeting>

## **2.4.2. Skills and Knowledge Exchange Bursaries**

CENL's Skills and Knowledge Exchange Bursary programme for members was launched in 2017. Bursaries are available for CENL members to share skills and knowledge. They are up to the value of 1,000 EUR per application.

Applications can be made for any skills and knowledge exchange activity, such as:

- Visiting a national library for face-to-face mentoring and shadowing to learn new skills and share experiences
- Attending a training event (e.g. tutorial, workshop, seminar, conference) run by other members
- Running a workshop for members to attend and share best practice

#### **Skills and Knowledge Exchange Bursaries 2024**

In 2024, four Skills and Knowledge Exchange Bursaries were awarded:

Romania – Study visit of the National Library of Italy in Firenze for 5 days in Summer 2024. See report on website: <https://www.cenl.org/bursaryreport/2024-professional-visit-to-central-national-library-of-florence/>

Latvia – Visit of the Martynas Mazvydas National Library of Lithuania in Vilnius, Lithuania, for an experience exchange with colleagues at the Music and Visual Arts Unit. See report on website: <https://www.cenl.org/bursaryreport/2024-national-library-of-latvia-exchange-visit-to-the-martynas-mazvydas-national-library-of-lithuania/>

Romania – Study visit of the Département de la Conservation within the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in November 2024. See report on website: <https://www.cenl.org/bursaryreport/2024-professional-visit-to-central-national-library-of-florence/>

Bosnia and Herzegovina – Visit of the National Library of Hungary and signing of Memorandum of Understanding. Due to the retirement of the Director of the National Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina in September 2024, the bursary could not yet be used.

#### **Skills and Knowledge Exchange Bursaries 2025**

In 2025, five Skills and Knowledge Exchange Bursaries were awarded, so far:

Serbia – Study visit to the National Library of Ireland and the Museum of Literature Ireland in March 2025. See report on website: <https://www.cenl.org/bursaryreport/2025-visit-from-the-director-of-the-national-library-of-serbia-to-the-national-library-of-ireland/>

Latvia – Study visit to the Royal Library of Belgium in March 2025. See report on website: <https://www.cenl.org/bursaryreport/2025-enhancing-metadata-workflows-knowledge-exchange-between-the-kbr-and-the-national-library-of-latvia/>

Moldova – Study visit to the National Library of Bulgaria in May 2025, scheduled for May 2025

Estonia – 2x Study Visit to the Royal Danish Library and to Aarhus, scheduled for May 2025

### **2.4.3. Hidden Stories Fund**

The Hidden Stories Fund aimed to support projects that collect, preserve, research and highlight the stories of, by and about underrepresented communities in our national collections.

The fund closed at the end of 2023. Any projects still in progress at that time could be completed in 2024:

Romania: „The woman and her professional avatars. Representations in the communist press.“ The research and exhibition presents a selection of images and articles from the press of the 1950s–1970s, curated in an attempt to answer the following question: What are the typical professional representations of women in the periodicals of the time, and how do they shape established gender roles?

See report on website: <https://www.cenl.org/hiddenstoriesfund/2023-the-woman-and-her-professional-avatars-representations-in-the-communist-press/>

UK/British Library: „Through Youth’s Eyes“: The project provided an opportunity for young people to creatively design and propose an immersive experience that uncovered hidden stories within the British Library. Participants explored careers in immersive storytelling, including digital design, gaming, and interactive experiences, while learning how to bring their ideas to life through technology.

See report on website: <https://www.cenl.org/hiddenstoriesfund/2024-through-youths-eyes/>

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## 3. CENL Network Groups

For the term 2023-2025, CENL has three Network Groups:

The Artificial Intelligence in Libraries Network Group, the Books and Audiences Network Group (BANG), and the Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Network Group (EEDI).

### 3.1. Artificial Intelligence in Libraries Network Group

**Chair** Jean-Philippe Moreux, Gallica Scientific Advisor, National Library of France

**Treasurer & Secretary** Svein Arne Brygfjeld, Head of AI-lab, National Library of Norway

#### Members

Austria, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek / Austrian National Library: Christoph Steindl, Marc-Paul Ibitz, Kerstin Katzlberger

Belgium, Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België / Royal Library of Belgium: Tan Lu, lead of the KBR Data Science Lab

Czech Republic, Národní knihovna České republiky / National Library of the Czech Republic: Petr Kukac, Lead of AI Research and Development

Danmark, Det Kongelige Bibliotek / Royal Danish Library: Bjarne Andersen, Head of Data Department, Claus Jensen, Ditte Laursen, Lasse Rogers Nielsen

Estonia, Eesti Rahvusraamatukogu / National Library of Estonia: Greete Veessalu

Finland, Kansalliskirjasto / The National Library of Finland: Mona Lehtinen (new)

France, Bibliothèque nationale de France / National Library of France: Jean-Philippe Moreux, Gallica Scientific Advisor

Germany, Deutsche Nationalbibliothek / German National Library: Maximilian Kähler

Latvia, Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka / National Library of Latvia: Matīss Bolšteins (new), Uldis Bojārs (new)

Luxembourg, Bibliothèque nationale du Luxembourg/National Library of Luxembourg: Yves Maurer, Lead on Webarchiving program, Ralph Marschall, Digitalisation Project Manager

Netherlands, KB nationale bibliotheek / KB national library: Steven Claeysens

Norway, Nasjonalbiblioteket / National Library of Norway: Svein Arne Brygfjeld, Head of AI-lab

Spain, Biblioteca Nacional de España / National Library of Spain: Elena Sánchez Nogales, Gloria Expósito Álvarez

Sweden, Kungliga Biblioteket / National Library of Sweden: Love Börjeson, Director of KBLab

Switzerland, Schweizerische Nationalbibliothek / Swiss National Library: Oliver Sievi, Innovation und Informationsmanagement

UK, England, British Library: Neil Fitzgerald, Head of Digital Research

UK, Scotland, Leabharlann Nàiseanta na h-Alba / National Library of Scotland: Sarah Ames (new)

Ines Vodopivec, the new Secretary General at AI4LAM.org, has been invited to follow the group work.

#### AI Survey on AI

Early 2024, the network group decided to update the AI CENL [survey](#), published in 2021. The report on this updated survey has been [released](#) and it includes a specific section on generative AI activity in European national libraries.

### **AI European project**

On September 2024, the work related to the submission of a proposal to an European call for projects (*A European Collaborative Cloud for Cultural Heritage – Innovative tools for digitisation and analysis of dynamic processes, objects and complex combined data*), concerning the creation of a multimodal model trained on European iconographic corpora (library and museum collections) was abandoned because of the difficulty of finding a leader and the overheads of all the participants.

### **Webinars program**

The first webinar of the 2024 serie took place in September. This [new webinar serie](#) (4 presentations from September to October) has emphasised on Generative AI (LLM use cases, speech2text...). In January 2025, an entire webinar was devoted to the topic of [assisted or automated cataloguing](#), due to the great interest shown by members in this subject. Presentations were given by 4 of the most advanced libraries on this domain, and the webinar was a great success (35 participants).

### **Annual Workshop**

National Library of Spain, who joined the network group in March 2024, has hosted our [annual in person meeting](#) on November 21th and 22th. 9 members attended, and the workshop was a good opportunity to discuss these issues:

- Relationship with the AI private sector, particularly on the issue of data access and data reuse, which are heavily related to ethics and strategic considerations.
- AI strategy in Libraries regarding Generative AI.

During this workshop,

- A recap of The Fantastic futures 2024 conference (Canberra) was also made. On the second day, a joint presentation by the group members took place as part of a public [workshop](#) organised by the BNE.
- The decision was taken to set up a sub-working group on ethics with a view to issuing a joint statement under the umbrella of the CENL.



Credits: Jean-Philippe Moreux

### **Ethical Ethic in Libraries**

The Madrid workshop led to the organisation of 2 webinars devoted to this subject (March and April). During the first webinar, the British Library team presented its ongoing work on an ethical charter, which is currently being published. The second webinar will be an opportunity to present other charters.

### **LIBER and CENL: collaboration on AI?**

The network group has been contacted by the LIBER task force on AI currently being set up to explore opportunities for collaboration. The activity of the CENL group, insofar as it focuses on the impact of AI on the missions of libraries, and relies on institutions that are also members of LIBER, naturally invites discussion.

### **Upcoming activity**

- Continuing the 2025 webinars season
- Working on the Ethical AI Statement
- Preparing the 2025 AGM
- Meeting the LIBER AI Task Force to envision a collaboration
- Preparing the organisation of the group's meeting during the Fantastic Futures conference in London (December)

## 3.2. Books and Audiences Network Group



**Chair** Vanessa Braekeveld, Royal Library of Belgium

**Treasurer & Secretary** Ineta Vaivode, National Library of Latvia

### Members

Belgium, Royal Library of Belgium (KBR)/Vanessa Braekeveld; University Leuven/Tjamke Snijders

Latvia, National Library of Latvia/Anete Krumina, Ineta Vaivode

Moldova, National Library of Moldova/Veronica Cosovan, Victoria Lacobciuc

The Netherlands, National Library of the Netherlands/Loes Van Eijk

Poland, National Library of Poland/Maciej Szablewski

UK/England, British Library/Helen Richardson; University of Leicester/Simon Dixon, Armand de Filippo, Peter Lester; UCL Special Collections/Erika Delbecque; University Manchester/Susana Sanchez-Gonzalez; The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge/Suzanne Reynolds

UK/Scotland, National Library of Scotland/Martha Findlay

Independent book publishers/Flemming Ove Bech, Johan Rosenmunthe

UNESCO/Inga Surgunte

**Mission** To provide a dynamic environment for discussion, dialogue and exchange of ideas and practices for bringing books and audiences together in exhibition settings, with an ambition to bring our findings to fruition.

Important values of the group are: innovation, curiosity, openness, inclusivity, generosity and diversity.

**Vision:** BANG! is synonymous with excellence and creativity in bringing books and audiences together in a diverse range of exhibition contexts.

### Aims of BANG!

- Create a thriving network of expertise in the field of 'book exhibitions and their audiences'
- Sharing knowledge, experiences and creating opportunities to learn
- Organizing seminars and creating a shared online platform

**2024 is the 5th year of BANG's existence within CENL.**

**Meetings in 2024**

**2024 is the 5th year of BANG's existence within CENL.**

BANG organised several online meetings with the members or preparatory meetings with the Chair and Treasurer:

04/03 – online member meeting

19/03 – online chair & treasurer meeting

03/04 – website meeting

16/04 – online member meeting

30/05 – online chair & treasurer meeting

23/09 – update meeting chair & treasurer

07/10 – update meeting

14/10 – online member meeting

22/11 – online meeting chair & treasurer

03/12 – online member meeting

10/12 – BANG Webinar

The most important **topics** discussed:

- Diversity of content formats BANG! provides
- Members: how to grow
- BANG webinar:
  - Topic
  - Call for papers
  - Preparation
  - Search for speakers
  - Moderation and technical aspects
  - Visuals
  - Budget
  - Communication
- In person conference 2025
- A mentorship program will be explored as one of the potential expansion directions, to be further elaborated during the in-person event in Riga.

#### **BANG webinar – 10.12.2024**

Every year BANG organises a webinar with an actual topic. The theme for BANG's webinar of 2024: Library exhibitions – Embracing Technology and Innovation.

Program



A series of case studies introduced a diversity of approaches when it comes to library exhibitions, technology and different collections, combining theoretical and practical aspects:

- **KEYNOTE TALK** between Dr Diana Walters (UK) - the facilitator of the webinar, consultant and project manager in the fields of museology and cultural heritage – and Benny Kerkhof (BE) the business director of the scenography agency Madoc in Ghent, Belgium.
- **Exhibiting the Written Word in the Museum: A Research Study about Visitor Experience in Museum Plantin-Moretus** - Noor de Fooz, University of Antwerp
- **Digital stories that connect: Lessons from Vilnius University Library** – Nijolė Klingaitė-Dasevičienė, Vilnius University Library
- **Recorded. Replayed. From a phonograph to a music centre. What with the audiovisual documents in Libraries?** – Anete Skuja, National Library of Latvia
- **Comic Art Museum Brussels - A century of Belgian Comic Art. With or without technology?** – Tine Anthoni, Deputy director Comic Art Museum.
- Audience motivation and the balance between digital and analog approaches. Zhi Ye, King's College London

Program can be seen [HERE](#)

### Participants and outcome

BANG launched a call for applications through the CENL website and the network of its members. Finally they accepted two proposals: the presentations of Noor de Fooz and Zhi Ye.

102 subscriptions were received, half of the registrants were present during the webinar. The overall reactions were very positive.

The recordings of the webinar are published on the network's [Youtube channel](#)

### Conclusion

BANG is meeting a real need in the library and exhibition field. There is still a lot of potential for network members to get more involved and make a difference. To stay in touch and support each other, they plan to hold monthly online meetings. These meetings will help them understand what is needed in the sector, share ideas, and prepare together for the in-person conference in Riga in early May 2025.

As the field continues to change and more partners join the network, BANG has started to think about how the activities could grow. One clear trend is the difference between libraries that already have a lot of experience with exhibitions and those that are just starting out. Because of this, BANG is considering new formats like training sessions or a mentorship program to help everyone learn and grow.

### Preparing for BANG's First In-Person Conference (2025)

The year 2024 marks a significant milestone for BANG, as preparations began for the first-ever BANG in-person conference. This event is designed specifically for BANG members and professionals engaged in book exhibitions within national libraries and related institutions. To ensure wide participation and diverse content, BANG launched an open call for papers.

The conference is planned as a two-day event, to be held on **8–9 May 2025** at the **National Library of Latvia**, with more than **50 participants** expected. It will offer a balanced programme of **theoretical discussions and practical workshops**, aiming to equip library professionals with new skills and methods relevant to their daily work in the book exhibition field.

An essential feature of the event is the **video documentation of all sessions**, which will be made openly accessible after the conference. This ensures that colleagues unable to attend in person can still benefit from the shared knowledge.

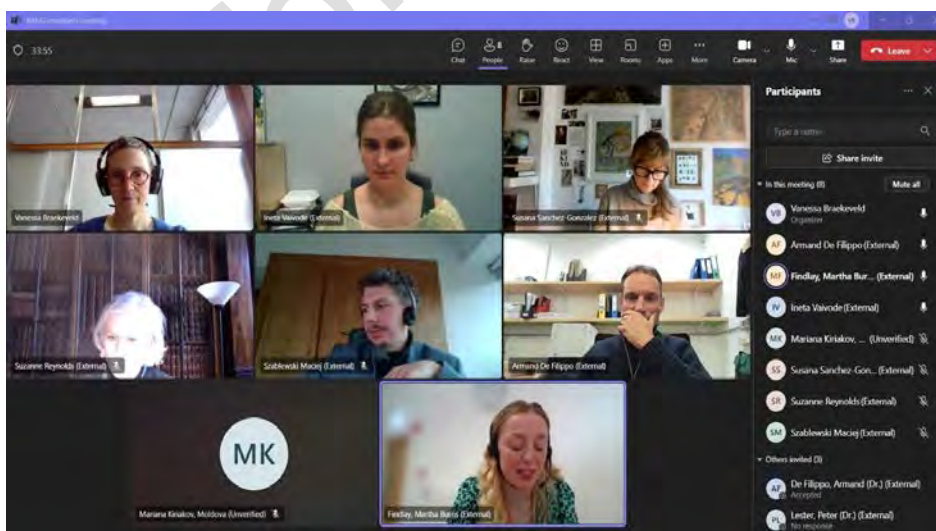
Key **themes** of the conference include:

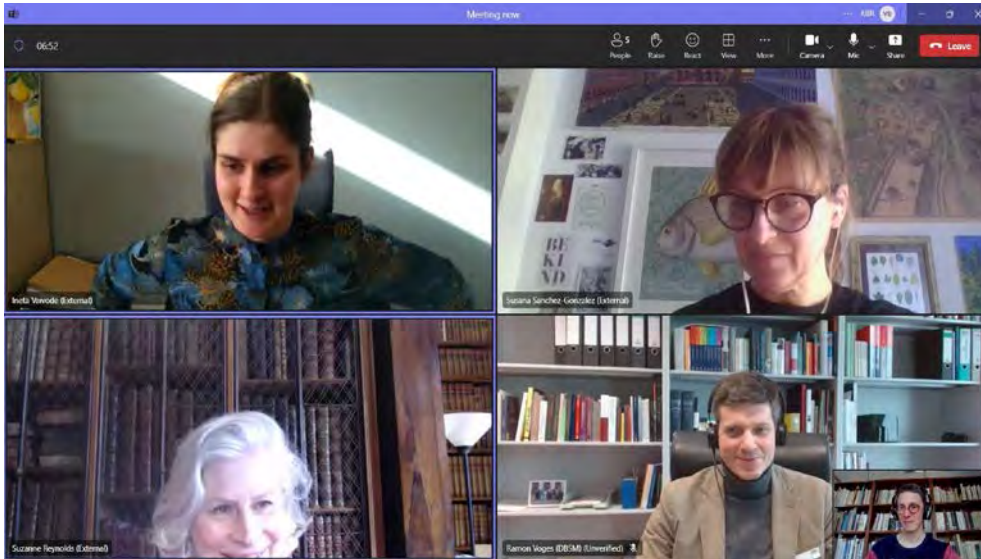
- The value and impact of library exhibitions
- Balancing roles and responsibilities in curating exhibitions
- Innovative approaches to exhibition design and content
- Peer-to-peer knowledge exchange
- Network development sessions, facilitated by professional coaches

Content will be contributed both by BANG network members and external experts, including invited keynote speakers and partner institutions.

This event provides a unique opportunity to both reflect on BANG's journey and to look ahead

### BANG members in action





### 3.3. Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Network Group (EEDI)

**Chair** Rosemarie van der Veen-Oei (KB, National Library of the Netherlands)

**Treasurer & Secretary** Lauren Turner (British Library)

**Members** Rosemarie van der Veen-Oei (KB, National Library of the Netherlands), Lauren Turner (British Library), Dunja Marija Gabriel (Nacionalna i sveučilišna knjižnica u Zagrebu / National and University Library in Zagreb), Florian Forestier (Bibliothèque nationale de France / National Library of France), Maja Micevska (Национална и универзитетска библиотека „Св. Климент Охридски“ / National and University Library “St Clement of Ohrid”), Beba Stankovic (Народна библиотека Србије / National Library of Serbia), Jackie Cromarty (Leabharlann Nàiseanta na h-Alba / National Library of Scotland), Lola Sanaia (საქართველოს პარლამენტის ეროვნული ბიბლიოთეკა / National Parliamentary Library of Georgia), Raffaella Vincenti (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana / Vatican Apostolic Library), Elisabet Rundqvist (Kungliga Biblioteket / National Library of Sweden), Linda Fennessy (National Library of Ireland) and Bojidara Ilieva (St. Cyril and Methodius National Library of Bulgaria)

#### Introduction

The formation of the CENL Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EEDI) Networking Group was agreed by the CENL Executive Committee on 23 January 2023. The chair of the network group was Elizabeth M. Kirwan (National Library of Ireland) and supported by Lauren Turner (British Library) as secretary. The role of Treasurer was connected to the organisation of the in person meeting to facilitate ease of financial planning and reporting. For 2024, this role was assigned to Dunja Marija Gabriel (National and University Library of Croatia). The EEDI Group Sponsor is Karin Grönvall (National Library of Sweden).

Due to the impact of a cyber-attack on the British Library (October 2023), and the ensuing challenges to our group’s functionality, we have since appointed Rosemarie van der Veen-Oei (KB

National Library of the Netherlands) as Deputy Chair, Jackie Cromarty (National Library of Scotland) as Deputy Secretary. On September 6 the Chair has submitted a formal written request to transfer her role to the Deputy Chair due to her retirement in December 2024. The request follows the CENL Articles for Networking Groups permitting the Chair to transfer their role to another group member by a formal request to the CENL Executive Committee. The request of change was confirmed by the CENL Executive Committee on October 18. The transition of chairmanship from Elizabeth Kirwan (National Library of Ireland) to Rosemarie van der Veen-Oei (KB National Library of the Netherlands) was conducted at the in person meeting in Zagreb (October 30, 2024)

The membership was at the start (2023) limited to six national libraries from Ireland, UK, France, Croatia, North Macedonia, and the Netherlands. After the 2023 questionnaire to all CENL members (see 2023 annual report 2023) the membership was expanded to five other national libraries, e.g. Scotland, Vatican City, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Sweden. The National Library of Georgia has expressed their interest to participate. In December 2024, the network group consisted of 12 CENL members (see above).

### **Activities**

The network group meetings were held online, and our in person meeting was held in person.

- a. 7 March (online): follow up actions and themes (see 1. list of themes) as discussed at the in person meeting in North Macedonia in 2023 as well as location for upcoming in person meeting in October 2024. Decided to work on the themes in sub-groups in three separate meetings.
  - 17 April (online): analyses of SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) (see 2. Analyses SWOT CENL EEDI) of our network group
  - 25 April (online): timetabling into short-, medium-, and long-term actions
  - 8 May (online): discussing and assigning of actions/priorities (see 3. list of priorities and actions) to members, either individually or as small teams, consulting with the Chair and Secretary, and of course Treasurer for the financial aspects.
- b. 6 June (online): preparation of network group presentation to AGM of CENL Directors, discussing initial idea to find extra funding for more in person meetings based on Dorjan (North Macedonia) conference and finalisation of three years strategy on three themes: (a) visibility, (b) communication and (c) learning from one another. The last one became the key theme for the in person meeting in Croatia.
- c. 30 October (in person, see figure 1): key theme 'Learning from one another'
  - Discussion on means for communication and possibilities including prioritization and planning of activities.
  - Focusing on development an Erasmus+ proposal to find extra funding for implementing our activities. In three breakouts (see 4. Notes break-outs) we had discussions about: (a) Engaging diverse communities, (b) awareness among NL collection staff about diversity of your collections/issues and (c) Exchange best practices. The results of the breakouts will be further developed in activities for the Erasmus+ application to be submitted with NL of the Netherlands as main applicant. (see Future Plans)

- Formal transfer of chairmanship from Elizabeth Kirwan (National Library of Ireland) to Rosemarie van der Veen-Oei (KB National Library of the Netherlands). The role of Chair position is for the remaining period until the end of 2025.

Figure 1. Group picture with Dr Ivanka Stričević, Director General of National Library of Croatia



- d. 5 December (online): Discussion on plan of podcasting. Sweden will take the initiative to have the first podcast. Podcast will focus on challenges and future of EEDI topics. First action is to draft the interview questions, which will be developed Q1 2025.
- e. 19 December (online): we held our informal holiday seasons coffee/tea for those who wish to attend.

### Visibility

- On 16 May, Elizabeth Kirwan (Chair) presented a pre-recorded keynote message about the CENL EEDI Networking Group and the EEDI topics in Ireland for the Macedonian Library Association's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference in Dojran. Additionally, Rosemarie van der Veen-Oei (Deputy Chair), Dunja Marija Gabriel (member) and Maja Micevska (Treasurer) talked about EEDI in the National Libraries of the Netherlands, Croatia and North Macedonia, respectively.
- From 16-18 June Jackie Cromarty (Deputy Secretary) and Maja Micevska (Treasurer) presented on the CENL EEDI Networking Group to the AGM of the CENL Directors in Warsaw
- On 8 October 2024, Jackie Cromarty (Deputy Secretary) addressed online the National Library of Ukraine's scientific conference on CENL EEDI Networking Group's mission, strategy and activities.

### Communication

- We developed an information sheet for new members (see 5. 2024 information sheet new members)
- Soon after our in person meeting 2024 in Croatia Maja Micevska (National Library of North Macedonia) drafted an [article](#) about our findings to be published on the CENL website.
- To strengthen our network groups' communication an informal WhatsApp group was set up for sharing short messages including pictures from in person meetings, while email remains the main tool for distributing meeting documents and invites.

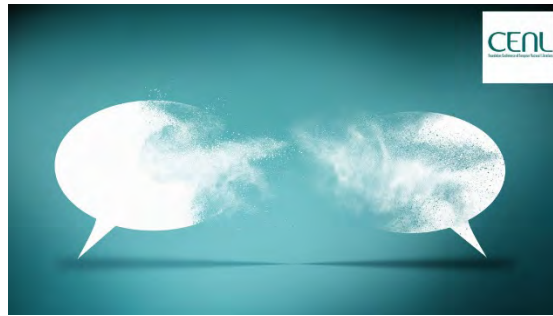
### Finances

The annual funding from CENL of 5000 Euro for the networking group has been used totally for the organization of the in person meeting in Zagreb, Croatia. All reports and reimbursement claims were sent by January 13 to the CENL secretariat.

## Future Plans

- We informed the CENL Executive Committee on our plans to submit an Erasmus+ initiative. On October 18 the CENL Executive Committee agreed that only the participating national libraries can apply for the Erasmus+ program. CENL can support their application(s), but the network group itself cannot apply. It was also confirmed that the term of all network groups will end on 31 December 2025 and that no premature statement should be made now about the future of any of the network groups.
- Following the in person meeting in Croatia the members decided to form a consortium for applying an Erasmus+ initiative and led by the KB National Library of the Netherlands. This initiative will support the activities, e.g. podcasts, as discussed at the 2024 in person meeting. The project proposal 'Opportunities for People through Equity and Networking - OPEN' with the duration of three years is currently taking shape and supported by eight CENL members. Deadline of submission is March 4.
- Three CENL member, e.g. UK, Scotland and Vatican City, unfortunately are not eligible for Erasmus+ funding. For these members the network group will consider in advance that funding for participation of these members in the planned activities under Erasmus+ initiative will depend on CENL annual funding in 2025.
- The membership of Georgia has not been confirmed by attendance or any other communication by the respective National Library in 2024. This will be followed up in Q1 2025.
- Preparations will be made to present our activities at the AGM of the CENL Directors' meeting (June 2025).
- Next in person meeting for the network group will be organised in September/October in The Hague.

## 4. CENL Dialogue Forums



Launched in 2022, the CENL Dialogue Forums are designed as an informal format where CENL members can meet with representatives of other stakeholders or organisations to discuss issues of mutual interest.

### 4.1. FEP CENL Dialogue Forum

The Dialogue Forum between representatives of the Conference of European National Librarians and the Federation of European Publishers (FEP) discusses common issues between national libraries and publishers such as legal deposit, copyright, European framework regulations, digitization etc.

In the period under review the group consisted of the following persons..



**Chair** Ute Schwens, German National Library

Picture: DNB, Stephan Jockel CC-BY-SA 3.0DE

**Representatives of FEP** Anne Bergman (FEP), Catherine Blache (SNE), Barbara Kalumenos (STM), Giulia Marangoni (AIE), Jessica Sanger (Borsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels)

**Representatives of CENL** Linda Arnold-Stratford (British Library, Head of Liaison and Governance for the Legal Deposit Libraries, since January 2025), Ian Cooke (British Library, Interim Head of Contemporary British Collections, since January 2025), Richard Price (British Library, until December 2024), Emmanuel Jaslier (National Library of France), Jasper Faase (National Library of the Netherlands), Ute Schwens (German National Library)

Until last year Jonny Edvardsen from the National Library of Norway was a further participant of the group. He has to be replaced by another person in the course of 2025.

Between March last year and March this year we met twice – personally in Brussels on September 16, 2024 and virtually on March 20, 2025.

The main issues on the agenda have been

- Digitization of Out-of-Commerce Works

Agreements with publishers, experiences and practical procedures in the digitization and accessibility of non-available publications

- E-Lending

Agreements with publishers and practical procedures in the lending of ebooks through public libraries

- Cybersecurity

Sharing of information on cyberattacks, their aims or purposes, and how to handle consequences

- Artificial intelligence (AI) in libraries

How do national libraries use AI in their daily work – automatic processes, TDM, training of learning language models, replacement of FAQ and information desk, collection of publications written by AI etc.

- European Language Data Space

Sharing information on the aim of the EC to create a trustworthy place where high-quality language data and models as well as tools can be archived and exchanged

- Current activities on legal (e-)deposit

Development of (e-)deposit activities within the different countries, currently on music among other things

- Other national developments and best practices

Minutes of the meetings are shared with the members, but not publicly available. They can be made available to either CENL or FEP members if required.

## 4.2. National Libraries as Data Infrastructures Dialogue Forum

2024 has been a year of transitions for the CENL Dialogue Forum National Libraries as Data Infrastructures. Firstly, in February 2024, the dialogue forum participated in the [Collections as Data: Collaborating across Data Spaces for Cultural Heritage and Open Science](#) which was held at KBR, Royal Library of Belgium in Brussels. The event, [co-organised with Europeana](#), and the final event for the [DATA-KBR-BE project](#), welcomed over 50 participants including digital humanities researchers, computer and data scientists, European national libraries and related cultural heritage institutions in Belgium and beyond to discuss how Collections as Data can be used to open up digital collections within the context of the [European Data Space for Cultural Heritage](#) and Open Science.

KBR



Europeana



**Collections as Data: Collaborating across  
Data Spaces for Cultural Heritage and Open Science  
KBR | Royal Library of Belgium, 19th - 20th February 2024**

On the second day of the conference, the focus turned to **National Libraries as Data Infrastructures**. In the session, chaired by Chris De Loof from the Belgian Science Policy Office (BELSPO) and Chair of the DARIAH General Assembly, Peter Leinen from the German National Library introduced the CENL Dialogue Forum, highlighting how Digital cultural heritage is crucial for the (digital) humanities. He noted the pioneering role of National Libraries in the development of data infrastructures and emphasising their essential role in facilitating (digital) humanities research. Introducing the CENL Dialogue Forum, Peter outlined how the forum facilitates structural and strategic collaboration between Europe's National Libraries and research Infrastructures, especially [DARIAH](#) and [CLARIN](#) with the aim of developing a deeper understanding of existing and planned collaboration between national libraries and research infrastructures particularly in the areas of digital scholarship and digital data curation.

To complement Peter's presentation, Tom Miles from The British Library and member of Europeana Aggregators Forum Steering Group introduced the Europeana Aggregators' Forum and the role that National and Domain Aggregators play in the Europeana ecosystem. He particularly highlighted the seven National Libraries (Finland, France, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Serbia and Slovenia) that take on the role of Europeana National Aggregator for their countries.

In a final presentation in the session, Henning Scholz from Europeana Foundation outlined the development of **New Aggregation Models for National Libraries** - introducing the new opportunities within the common European Data Space for Cultural Heritage to expand the frameworks and standards developed by Europeana over the last 15 years to build stronger bridges between European and National Libraries through data services and labs, such as the National Library Labs in Austria, Germany and The Netherlands, the Open Data Platform at the National Library of Luxembourg and the National Library of Finland's Data Services.

In the following session, **Collections as Data as a bridge between collections and infrastructures**, it was the turn of the national libraries to present the key challenges to data sharing they are facing and to explore how initiatives such as the [common European Data Space for Cultural Heritage](#), Research Infrastructures such as [DARIAH](#) and [CLARIN](#) and the [European Open Science Cloud](#) (EOSC) can facilitate this process.

Representatives of the National Libraries from Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Serbia and Slovenia were asked to share their experience of data

sharing by focussing on a particular dataset and to describe, who is the dataset for? How did they engage with it? How did you share the dataset? What were the challenges? And finally, what were the benefits? In this session we heard about datasets such as Luxembourg newspapers ([www.eluxemburgensia.lu](http://www.eluxemburgensia.lu)), a dataset with 900,000 bibliographic records from Danish printed books 1600-1900, [doiSerbia](#) - the Digital Object Identifier (DOI) Repository contains articles from leading Serbia scientific journals, [Botanical Illustrations](#) from ONB Labs at the National Library of Austria and even [Olfactory and Sensory Data](#) from the National and University Library of Slovenia. Key challenges included legal issues, providing datasets on demand, selection, extraction and cleaning of the data and providing examples of use were among the challenges highlighted.

A final panel focused on *Harnessing AI with Cultural Heritage Collections* including presentations on Datasheets for [Digital Cultural Heritage](#) from Jörg Lehmann, Berlin State Library and the Europeana Network Association (ENA) and Steven Claeysens from the National Library of the Netherlands and ENA, *Improving the searchability of historical newspaper collections with computer vision and machine learning* from Dilawar Ali from the DATA-KBR-BE project and Tan Lu from KBR and VUB's [Data Science Lab](#). Finally, the panel was rounded-up from Neil Fitzgerald from The British Library including [AI4LAM](#) and [CENL AI Network Group](#).

This year, members of the CENL Dialogue Forum have played an active role in the start-up of the [ECHOES project](#), which is leading the development of the European Cultural Heritage Cloud. The [Cultural Heritage Cloud](#) is a flagship programme of the European Commission and [formally kicked-off in June 2024](#), led by French National Centre for Research (CNRS), kicked off. This 5-year project, which aims to create a collaborative cloud and digital infrastructure for cultural heritage professionals and heritage science researchers. Sally Chambers from the CENL Dialogue Forum, argued the important role of (National) Libraries in her keynote presentation, [Interconnecting Knowledge: Cultural Heritage Data from a Digital Humanities perspective](#) at the ECHOES [Public Launch](#) in September 2024. Of particular interest to CENL members may be the [ECHOES Cascading Grants](#), series of open calls organised to stimulate the uptake and use of the European Cultural Heritage Cloud by a diverse range of Cultural Heritage Institutions (CHIs). The first call, focusing on [Data](#), was launched in February 2025.

Additionally, CENL Dialogue Forum members have participated in a number of events related to the 'Collections as Data', including the [ONB Labs Symposium 2024](#), held at the National Library of Austria in November 2024, including a [presentation](#) on sustainable workflows for newspapers as datasets.



Finally, inspired by the [CLARIN Libraries Working Group](#) and the CENL Dialogue Forum, DARIAH's National Coordinator Committee has instigated a DARIAH Libraries Working Group. The first meeting was held in February 2024 and attended by members of the CENL Dialogue Forum, including a presentation by Sally Chambers on [DARIAH & Libraries: projects, initiatives & Collections as Data pilots](#). The DARIAH LibGroup is intended to complement the work of the CENL Dialogue Forum and will enable collaboration with the broader library community.

Due to this transitional nature of this year, work is still underway, in the context of the [Data Space for Cultural Heritage](#) (DS4CH), to work with CENL Dialogue Forum members to develop 2-3 'Collections as Data' pilots using the [workflow to publish Collections as Data: the case of Cultural Heritage data spaces](#). Following further discussions within the Dialogue Forum, we have agreed that this work will focus on three strands of activity:

- a) Curated Datasets using approaches such as Collection as Data and Datasheets for Cultural Heritage Datasets,
- b) Collaborative projects, such as the recently launched CLARIN Flagship project, PressMint and
- c) large-scale corpora in collaboration with High Performance Computing (HPC) centres, such as being developed in the context of the [Text+ project](#). In the coming months, we look forward to collaborating with the wider CENL Dialogue Forum on these Collections as Data pilots.

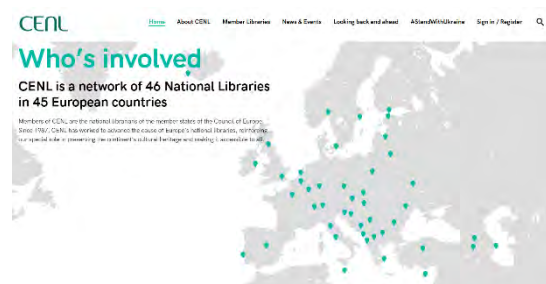
Last, but by no means least, in April 2025, Peter Leinen retired from the German National Library. As Co-founder and one of the core initiators of the CENL Dialogue Forum, we would like to thank Peter for his enthusiasm, expertise and commitment. We very much hope that there will be opportunities to continue our collaboration in the future. With Peter's departure, we are delighted to welcome Philippe Genêt to the CENL Dialogue Forum who will continue the German National Library's participation in dialogue forum activities.

The [CENL Dialogue Forum](#) was organised by Sally Chambers (DARIAH-EU and as of March 2024, The British Library), Andreas Witt (CLARIN), Peter Leinen and Philippe Genêt (German National Library). We would like to thank all National Library colleagues who contributed to our activities in 2024-2025 and especially Patrick Pfeiffer (National Library of Luxembourg), Ditte Laursen (Royal Library of Denmark), Tuula Pääkkönen, Jussi-Pekka Hakkarainen and Maria Virtanen (all National Library of Finland), Tamara Butigan (National Library of Serbia), Steven Claeysens (National Library of the Netherlands), Max Kaiser (National Library of Austria), Marie Carlin (National Library of France), Ines Vodopivec (National and University Library of Slovenia) and Anda Baklāne (National Library of Latvia).

## 5. CENL Communication

### 5.1. CENL website

The website [cenl.org](http://cenl.org) is the central information channel of CENL. The communication team at the Secretariat consisting of Kerstin Meinel, Annika Wenzel and Lisa Zehner regularly publishes news and events of CENL itself and the member libraries there. Throughout the year, all contents are updated and supplemented. As improving the user experience is one of our important goals we plan a revision and refresh of the CENL homepage for summer 2025.



For the Wordpress based website we have several partners: For technical support and design we have a good working relationship with Line Industries. The website is hosted by WP Engine, the domains are obtained by OVH Cloud.

**Key facts on the website**

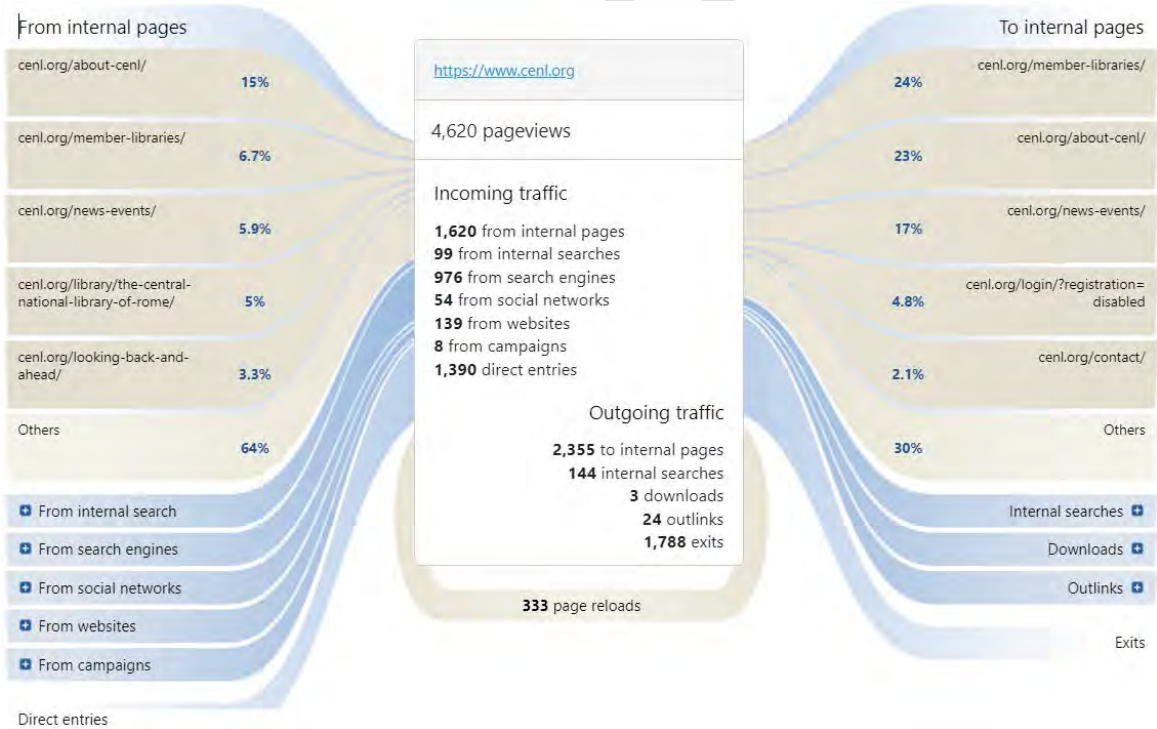
For the period April 2024 to March 2025 the Matomo statistics show an increased number of visitors of the CENL website. Here are the most important **key facts** (compared with the previous year):

- About **41,000** (28,000) **visits** were counted with approximately **86,000** (63,000) **page views**.
- With page views, downloads, outgoing links and internal site searches the average visitor has undertaken **2.4** (2.6) **actions** per visit und stayed on the website for **two minutes** like the year before.
- About **3,000** total searches and just as many downloads on the website

**Transitions**

Transition give us an overview, what visitors did directly before and after viewing a certain Page.

As an example for the period from January to April 2025, the following graphic shows which actions preceded and followed the call on the CENL homepage. One third of visitors had previously visited another page on the CENL homepage or entered the address cenl.com directly. Approximately 20% of visitors found their way via search engines. After visiting the homepage, about one third left, but most of them stayed on the site and took further action.



**Website refresh**

The revised homepage is designed to provide visitors with the most important information about CENL on the very first page. A newly designed slider in the header will show changing images of the member libraries and thus bring more dynamic content to the site. There are also new entrances to CENL activities such as bursaries and publications. A facts and figures section shall

facilitate intuitive access to CENL. The changes are due to go live by summer 2025 - you'll be surprised.

## 5.2. CENL newsletter



The newsletter is very popular and has gained over 100 new subscribers in the past year. Every month, the CENL secretariat compiles a selection of news and events from the member libraries. It also reports on the CENL activities such as the annual meeting and the bursaries and the work of the Executive Committee.

The newsletter is divided into the sections News and Events. Each news or event item consists of a picture with source, short text and a detailed text, possibly with more pictures and further links. As compiling the newsletter takes some time, the secretariat supports the member libraries in providing the material in a suitable form in order to optimise the workflow.

## 5.3. CENL X account

Since 2019, CENL has been communicating to a wider audience via Twitter, now X (@CENL\_EUROPE). The tweets focus on news from member libraries, generated from news on the the CENL website and linked to them.

The account @CENL\_EUROPE has 400 followers as of 5 May 2025, a decrease of 20 followers compared to the previous year. In the years before, the number of followers steadily increased from 271 (2020/21) to 420 (2023/24). At the same time, we noticed that 17 member libraries left X or froze their account, i.e. only 15 member libraries still have accounts, 33 have not. So this first recorded drop could be explained by the new ownership of the platform and the resulting change in discourse.

After a short decrease in activity after takeover of the CENL secretariat, it has grown since then: 114 posts in (2022/23), 154 in (2023/24) and 200 in (2024/25). All in all, there are 909 posts since 2019.

On the other hand, we noticed a constant decline of average impressions. After the peak average impressions of 867 in 2021/22, we went from 363 (2022/23) over 221 (2023/24) to 120 impressions per tweet nowadays (2024/25).

## 5.4. CENL LinkedIn account

As more and more colleagues are using LinkedIn, the Secretariat started a new [CENL profile on LinkedIn](#). The first CENL post was published on 30 April 2025. Although it is too early to judge whether this will be a success, we are proud to say that within the first few days we already have more than 70 followers.

Page posts

**CENL - Conference of Europe...**  
63 followers  
2d •

Legal deposit in the digital realm requires careful balancing - new CENL publication ...more

**E-Legal Deposit in European National Libraries • 68 pages**



1/68

25 • 7 reposts

**CENL - Conference of Europe...**  
63 followers  
1w •

Hello LinkedIn!

We are excited to start our activities here, ...more



6 • 3 reposts

Show all posts →

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## 6. Members

There have been a number of changes at the director level of European national libraries, and therefore among our members.

We thank and say goodbye to:

- Dr Ismet Ovčina, National Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Sir Roly Keating, British Library
- Professor Krasimira Aleksandrova, National Library of Bulgaria
- Svend Larsen, National Library of Denmark
- Ingibjörg Steinunn Sverrisdóttir, National Library of Iceland
- Dr Wilfried Oehry, National Library of Liechtenstein
- Lily Knibbeler, National Library of the Netherlands
- Rahmetula Kuqi, National Library of North Macedonia
- Maria Inês Cordeiro, National Library of Portugal
- Ivana Kostrabová, National Library of Slovakia
- Marijan Rupert, National Library of Slovenia
- Irini Pavlakou, National Library of Greece
- Dr Andris Vilks, National Library of Latvia
- Dr Adrian Mihai Cioroianu, National Library of Romania

We were sad to learn that Andris Vilks passed away on 26 February 2025. He was not only a passionate librarian and advocate for the National Library of Latvia but also a true leader and visionary. And he embraced and lived the spirit of Europe. His legacy of which the building of the National Library of Latvia is only the most visible, will endure for generations to come.

We remember Andris Vilks as a personal and professional friend in the Conference of European National Librarians. When he couldn't travel to our AGM in Paris in 2023, he bid us farewell on the screen after 30 years of CENL membership. Now we see his farewell in a different light.

We welcome as new members:

- Adisa Žero, National Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Rebecca Lawrence, British Library
- Professor Kalina Ivanova, National Library of Bulgaria
- Bente Skovgaard Kristensen, National Library of Denmark
- Dr Elisabetta Sciarra, National Library of Florence
- Chrysa Nikolaou, National Library of Greece
- Örn Hrafnkelsson, National Library of Iceland
- Dagnija Baltina, National Library of Latvia
- Daniel Quaderer, National Library of Liechtenstein
- Wilma van Wezenbeek, National Library of the Netherlands
- Jovica Nikchevski, National Library of North Macedonia
- Diogo Ramada Curto, National Library of Portugal
- Eva Augustínová, National Library of Slovakia
- Jana Kolar, National Library of Slovenia
- Bogdan Gheorghiu, National Library of Romania

A very warm welcome to all of you, we look forward to working with all of you!