

# Libraries as institutions in international cooperations

## Greetings along the Danube from Vienna to Budapest

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It is well known that libraries can be differentiated in many ways. In German-speaking countries, for example, a fundamental distinction is made between public and academic libraries, even though academic libraries are generally open to the public. A more helpful classification, however, seems to be one based on the supporting institutions of libraries, because this reveals their respective functions. State, regional and national libraries fulfil regional or national mandates, university libraries are primarily geared towards university members, and libraries of scientific academies primarily support their academies' projects. We could cite numerous other examples here and outline a library typology that illustrates the functional differentiation of the library system. But let us leave the textbook behind and turn to what actually matters, which lies in what libraries have in common. Obviously, what they have in common is their focus on data, information, knowledge and, in material terms, on media and infrastructure. At second glance, what they have in common is also their self-image and their working methods, and here we are referring above all to the principles of internationality and cooperation.

Data, information and knowledge know no boundaries; they are global phenomena, just as research is fundamentally international in nature. And, so, libraries (and librarians) think and act in ways that are fundamentally international. We are interested in the practice and development of libraries from a global perspective, so that, ideally, we can observe and follow remarkable trends in our industry across continents. However, it is not only the careful observation of such trends that characterises librarianship, but also a willing-

ness to exchange ideas and cooperate. Indeed, it is this internationality and our willingness to cooperate that makes being a librarian so special and interesting in the long term. However, for this to succeed we need colleagues who share this self-image and live it.

With István Monok, I have met a colleague who embodies this self-image. A cultural researcher who has been researching the early modern period for decades, István has already been approaching his academic subject with a supranational horizon as. He applies the same principles that his research practice requires to the library sector. I would like to mention and briefly explain two examples that I am very familiar with: the cooperation between his library and mine, i.e. between the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Vienna University Library, and our joint involvement in LIBER.

We prepared the cooperation between Budapest and Vienna in 2024, decided on it in January 2025 and sealed it with a written agreement at a joint meeting in Vienna. Dóra Kalydy, István's deputy, played a major role in bringing about this agreement and was also present at the meeting. The agreement covers joint projects, mutual support and staff exchanges. My second example also connects us: István's commitment to the Association of European Research Libraries (LIBER). For scientific libraries in Europe, LIBER is a wonderful platform for exchange, learning and cooperation. The 420 member libraries include the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Vienna University Library. Through LIBER, we have also found a special form of cooperation, which is expressed, for example, in the joint planning and implementation of citizen science projects.

From not too far away, I send you my warmest regards, dear István, and thank you for the excellent cooperation and your always exceptional hospitality. I hope that our cooperation will continue, and I am convinced that we will bring at least one or two more joint projects to a successful conclusion.