

**35th CENL Annual General Meeting
29-30 November 2021 – Brussels, Belgium**

Minutes

Executive Committee Present:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1) Roly Keating | Chair (UK) |
| 2) Sara Lammens | Treasurer (BEL) |
| 3) Hans Petschar
representing Johanna Rachinger) | Executive Committee Member (Austria) – (Proxy) |
| 4) Marcie Hopkins | Executive Committee Member (UK) |

Members Present:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 5) Kerim Tahirov | Azerbaijan |
| 6) Ismet Ovcina | Bosnia and Herzegovina |
| 7) Ivanka Stričević | Croatia |
| 8) Tomas Foltyn | Czech Republic |
| 9) Tonny Skovgård Jensen | Denmark (Proxy – representing Svend Larsen) |
| 10) Janne Andresoo | Estonia |
| 11) Laurence Engel | France |
| 12) Frank Scholze | Germany |
| 13) Judit Gerencsér | Hungary (Proxy – representing Dávid Rózsa) |
| 14) Renaldas Gudauskas | Lithuania |
| 15) Claude D. Conter | Luxembourg |
| 16) Elena Pintelei | Moldova |
| 17) Jelisaveta Kostadinova | North Macedonia |
| 18) Adrian Mihai Cioroianu | Romania |
| 19) Beba Stankovic | Serbia (Proxy – representing Vladimir Pištalo) |
| 20) Jose Luis Bueren | Spain (Proxy – representing Ana Santos Aramburo) |
| 21) Karin Grönvall | Sweden |
| 22) Ali Odabaş | Turkey |
| 23) Timothy Janz | Vatican (Proxy – representing Cesare Pasini) |

Proxy Voting Forms Received In Absentia:

- 24) Albania
- 25) Malta
- 26) Ireland
- 27) Liechtenstein
- 28) Netherlands
- 29) Russia
- 30) Slovakia
- 31) Ukraine

In attendance:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| Frédéric Lemmers | Belgium |
| Ophélie Ramonatxo | France |
| Carlo Blum | Luxembourg |
| Kim Krier | Luxembourg |
| Maja Micevska Rizova | North Macedonia |

Taner Beyoglu
Asuman Akdemir
Ebru Tokay
Liz Jolly

Turkey
Turkey
Turkey
UK

Apologies:

Piro Misha
Anna Chulyan
Johanna Rachinger
Krasimira Aleksandrova
Svend Larsen
Filippos Tsimpoglou
Dávid Rózsa
Ingibjörg Steinunn Sverrisdóttir
Sandra Collins
Andris Vilks
Wilfried Oehry
Cheryl Falzon
Dragica Lompar
Lily Knibbeler
Aslak Sira Myhre
Tomasz Makowski
Vadim Duda

Albania (Proxy Laurence Engel)
Armenia
Austria (Proxy Hans Petschar)
Bulgaria
Denmark (Proxy Tonny Skovgård Jensen)
Greece
Hungary (Proxy Judit Gerencsér)
Iceland
Ireland (Proxy Roly Keating)
Latvia
Liechtenstein (Proxy Roly Keating)
Malta (Proxy Roly Keating)
Montenegro
Netherlands (Proxy Ali Odabaş)
Norway
Poland
Russia (Russian State Library) – (Proxy Sara Lammens)
Russia (Boris Yeltsin Presidential Library) – (Proxy Sara Lammens)
Russia (National Library of Russia) – (Proxy Sara Lammens)
Serbia (Proxy Beba Stankovic)
Scotland
Slovakia (Proxy Sara Lammens)
Slovenia
Spain (Proxy Jose Luis Bueren)
Switzerland
Ukraine (Proxy Kerim Tahirov)
Vatican (Proxy Timothy Janz)

Pavel Tereschenko

Vladimir Gronsky

Vladimir Pištalo
Amina Shah
Katarina Krištofová
Viljem Leban
Ana Santos Aramburo
Damian Elsig
Lyubov A. Dubrovina
Cesare Pasini

CENL Secretariat in attendance:

Cecile Communal

CENL Secretariat (minutes)

Invited external speakers:

Anthony Agotha
Lorena Aldana
Sally Chambers
Ann Van Camp

European Commission
Climate Heritage Network
Royal Library of Belgium
Royal Library of Belgium

Observers from the Royal Library of Belgium Organising Committee:

Carolien Mertens

DAY 1 – MONDAY, 29 NOVEMBER

1. Arrival and registration

CENL members arrived in the Skyroom of the Royal Library of Belgium at 8.45am.

2. Welcome from CENL Chair - Roly Keating

Sara Lammens (SL) welcomed the delegates and thanked the KBR team for their outstanding work to make everyone safe.

Roly Keating (RK) thanked SL for her warm welcome. He explained that it's been a long journey to this meeting as it was delayed twice. RK thanked the whole KBR team: Sandra Godfroid, Christine Piessens, Carolien Mertens and Koen Magerman, as well as the British Library team. The EC received apologies from Katarina Krištofová and Sandra Collins.

RK encouraged members to tweet about the conference.

All members introduced themselves to the group.

3. Approval of Minutes 2020

Paper 02

RK referred members to the minutes of the 2020 AGM held online, which had been circulated as Paper 2 in advance of this AGM.

RK called for a vote for approval of the minutes by show of hands. 28 members voted in favour of the approval of the minutes, with no corrections or comments, and these were formally adopted as an accurate record of proceedings.

4. Matters arising from Minutes

RK explained that despite careful planning, the EC's hopes of meeting in person for the 2020 Annual General Meeting were disappointed by the ongoing pandemic, but the EC was thrilled to see so many members at the virtual conference.

While this format can never fully replace the pleasures and benefits of physical meetings, it nonetheless delivered on a rich programme of speakers and provided for some much needed exchange.

5. CENL Executive Committee elections – Ratification

Paper 03

Between April – June 2021, the CENL Board of Directors voted for the future CENL Executive Committee members for the term 2021 - 2024. The election was undertaken online and the process was successful with 8 nominations and 37 members taking part in the vote.

Although the larger number of Executive Committee members might pose some administrative challenges, a larger geographical representation is a very positive step.

The British Library will be stepping down from the Secretariat as a result of this vote. RK congratulated in particular Frank Scholze (FS), the new Chair, Janne Andresoo (JA) elected as Vice Chair and Karin Grönvall (KG) as Treasurer. RK mentioned that he was also delighted that Hans Petschar (HP) and Sara Lammens (SL) have been elected for an additional term ensuring continuity with the current Executive Committee. RK congratulated all the other elected Executive Committee members. FS and the new Executive Committee will start their duties on Tuesday 01st December 2021.

The Board of Directors officially ratified the election.

FS said he was very honoured to be part of such a long history of CENL and was looking forward to learning from all members and continuing the great work that the BL has done. FS thanked the BL team for all their work on the transition.

6. Revised fee model

Paper 04

RK explained that in 2016, CENL developed a new methodology to calculate and structure the membership fees, which has been in place ever since. Five years later the Executive Committee advised that it would be best practice to undertake a review of the fee levels ahead of the transition of the Secretariat to another library at the end of 2021. The Executive Committee further argued that a regular review of membership fees was in the spirit of fairness to all national libraries, taking into account changes in individual circumstances.

The review of fee bands was carried out by the same British Library Finance team which devised the 2016 review, using the same models and formulae as in 2016. The model divides member libraries into six fee bands based on the Gross National Income per capita using the Purchasing Power Parity method (GNI PPP) of each country and the operational budget of each library. The team updated information on national libraries' operational budgets as well as GNI PPP per capita information for each country.

The changes mean that 23 libraries will pay less, 14 libraries will pay the same as before, and 11 libraries will have their fees increased. In consideration of the financial difficulties experienced by many libraries during the coronavirus pandemic, the EC proposed to delay membership fee increases only by one year, introducing fee increases from 1 January 2023. Fee reductions would be applied from 1 January 2022.

In the event of a successful vote, CENL members would have a time window of 3 weeks to contact the CENL Secretariat in case they wish to discuss the data used for the calculation of their fees.

This motion proposed to:

- Adopt the revised fee structure, based on the current fee calculating model. Changes will come into effect from 1 January 2022 and will be in place until the next review.
- Delay any fee increase by one calendar year, i.e. fee increases will come into effect on 1 January 2023.

RK called for a vote, by secret bulletin, to approve the proposed revised fee model. 27 members voted in favour of approving the revised fee model, 1 against and 2 abstained.

7. CENL Annual Report – Highlights

Paper 05

It has been another busy year for the CENL Secretariat based at the British Library and led by Marcie Hopkins (CENL Secretary). The team worked closely with the Executive Committee this year and RK went through some of the highlights of their achievements. 2021 will mark the end of the current Executive Committee's term and the Secretariat successfully ran elections for the new Executive Committee members online with eight CENL member nominations. This strong interest in actively engaging with CENL demonstrated the ongoing regard CENL members have for the organisation.

The Executive Committee met on five occasions over the course of the year: August 2020 via Zoom; December 2020 via Zoom; March 2021 via Zoom; June 2021 via Zoom and September 2021 via Zoom. The meetings covered a number of topics to further the strategic priorities of CENL, including CENL's focus on supporting its members during the Covid-19 pandemic.

RK talked about the Erland Kolding Nielsen grant. CENL introduced the grant in January 2017 to celebrate the enormous contribution Erland Kolding Nielsen 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. One grant was awarded to the British Library in 2020. Two grants were awarded in 2021 to the National Library of Estonia and the National Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The reports of all the grants can be found on the CENL website. The next call for EKN grants applications will be in January 2022.

The CENL's Skills and Knowledge Exchange Bursary programme was launched for members in 2017 for individual bursaries up to the value of €1,000 per application. The bursaries can be used for:

- Visiting a national library for face-to-face mentoring and shadowing to learn new skills and share experiences;
- Attending a training event run by other members;
- Running a workshop for members to attend and share best practice;
- Preparing a webinar or online event for members.

Unfortunately, due to travel restrictions caused by Covid-19, the activities of two bursaries awarded in 2019 were postponed. A recent successful bursary [not included in the Annual Report], was received by the National Library of Bosnia & Herzegovina. Ismet Ovcina (IO) visited the National Library of Montenegro in October, to meet with the new Director to exchange publications and to discuss possible projects between the two libraries. There is currently an underspend on the bursary

budget, so RK encouraged all CENL members to apply for these bursaries now that travelling is becoming possible again. The full reports of the bursaries are available on the CENL website.

In the Spring and Summer of 2020, national libraries partially re-opened their doors to a different world. Covid-19 and lockdowns had a huge impact on the financial stability of many national libraries and created many new challenges in how they welcome their readers and make collections available digitally. Drawing on underspent funds from the 2020 budget, the CENL Executive Committee decided to launch a new temporary fund called 'Covid-19 Support Fund' to help CENL members respond to immediate challenges connected to the Covid-19 crisis, and offer support to adapt and reimagine ways of working together for the longer-term future.

Five grants of €2,500 were awarded to the national libraries of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Latvia, Moldova and Romania to purchase equipment such as sterilisation equipment or digital equipment to make their services and information available online to their users. RK also announced that the EC decided to extend the grant for another year and two grants have been awarded to the National Library of Malta and the National Library of Moldova.

In the Summer of 2020, the killing of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement also challenged to the ways in which library institutions have been collecting, researching and telling stories. Drawing on underspent funds from the 2020 budget, the CENL Executive Committee decided to launch a new fund called 'Hidden Stories' to support projects designed to collect, preserve, research and highlight stories by, and related to, communities underrepresented in our national collections, ensuring that their stories are preserved for future generations.

A grant of €2,500 was awarded to the National and University Library in Zagreb to create a virtual multilingual exhibition that will take visitors on a journey through the history of the Roma minority, their culture and tradition. RK also announced that the EC recently awarded two more Hidden Stories grants of €5,000 to the National Library of North Macedonia for a project to enrich its LGBTQ+ publications and to the National Library of Serbia to record and preserve women's experiences of the pandemic.

RK gave an update on webinars. In 2020, CENL launched its first webinar series, with webinars taking place exclusively for CENL members. These webinars provided an opportunity to hear directly from CENL members and learn about the challenges they are facing and how they are addressing them, as well as from external speakers who bring new ideas and experiences.

The first webinar took place in December 2020 and focused on 'Diversity and inclusion in national libraries' with a keynote by playwright and author Bonnie Greer followed by a panel with Sandra Collins, Karin Grönvall and Cecile Communal. The recording of the webinar can be watched on the CENL Youtube page.

The second CENL webinar took place in February 2021 and focused on 'The Role of Libraries in Engaging Users of Regional and Minority Languages' and was hosted in collaboration with NAPLE's Minority Languages Working Group. The recording of the webinar is also available on the CENL Youtube page.

The most recent webinar, in November 2021, was on 'Cultural Programming: Recent Case Studies from National Libraries' with Adiba Imash Ismayilova from the Azerbaijan National Library, Dragan

Purešić from the National Library of Serbia and Dragana Koljenik from the National and University Library in Zagreb.

RK suggested to the new Executive Committee that webinars should perhaps continue as they are a really helpful initiative for members to share ideas and bring case studies together. RK thanked all members involved in the webinars.

The Secretariat continued to work closely and support the three CENL Network Groups: Books and Audiences Network Group; Artificial Intelligence Application Network Group and Copyright Network Group. Throughout the year the CENL Secretariat continued on the delivery of the CENL Communications and Strategy Plan for 2020-21 with a focus on the website, Twitter and the newsletter.

CENL welcomed 10 new members this year. RK mentioned the directors who couldn't join the AGM:

- Mr Vladimir Pištalo, Director of the National Library of Serbia
- Ms Amina Shah, Director of the National Library of Scotland
- Mr. Vladimir Gronskii, Director of the National Library of Russia
- Ms Anna Chulyan, Director of the National Library of Armenia
- Mr Stefano Campagnolo, Director of the National Central Library of Rome
- Mr Dávid Rózsa, Director of the National Library of Hungary

RK reflected on the six years of Secretariat by the British Library: six years of Secretariat meant 26 Executive committees to chair in 11 different countries. RK took this opportunity to thank all the members of the Executive Committee over the past 6 years for all their work and extremely valuable contributions. The team is really proud to have organised 6 AGMs, which represents 64 papers and 129 pages of minutes so far.

Supporting CENL members has been at the heart of the Secretariat's work. Three new grants were created: the Erland Kolding Nielsen grant in 2017 and more recently the Hidden Stories grant and the Covid-19 Support grant. In addition, over the past 6 years, the Executive Committee also distributed over €17,000 in bursaries to members for skills & knowledge exchanges.

CENL welcomed a new member last year, the National Library of Scotland. Three new network groups were also created to encourage CENL members to collaborate, exchange and learn from each other on artificial intelligence, book exhibitions and copyright.

The Secretariat launched the new CENL website in November 2019. Since the launch, over 60,000 users have visited the website and it has generated over 173,000 page views. The Secretariat was very active with the website by publishing over 200 news items in two years. It has become a journal for the library community and creates an overview of activities on the continent. The Secretariat was also active on Twitter publishing over 350 tweets to promote the activities of the CENL members.

RK thanked everyone who has contributed to the CENL activities.

8. Treasurer’s report

Paper 06

SL introduced the treasurer’s report by explaining that in October 2020, the CENL Secretariat was notified that, due to the lack of an agreement between the United Kingdom and the European Union in relation to the UK’s exit from the EU, Lloyds Bank would close the bank account. After extensive research into alternatives, the CENL Secretariat found a solution and opened a new bank account with ING in the Netherlands. As a result, CENL had to close the CENL 2 account and transfer the remaining funds into the CENL 1 account before closing the Lloyds bank account, resulting in a major transfer of funds to the CENL 1 account.

SL started with an update on the 2020 budget. SL showed the funds in the CENL 1 membership account.

2020 Budget 

Cash Balance – Account 1

CENL account 1	Bank Balance
Opening bank balance as at 01.01.2020	674 712 €
Total Income	209 634 €
Less Expenses	108 340 €
Bank balance as at 31.12.2020	776 006 €

The income on the CENL 1 account comes from the membership fees and transfers from the CENL 2 account.

SL showed:

2020 Budget 

Income – Account 1

CENL budget 2020	Budget	Actual Income	Balance remaining as of end of Dec 20
Membership fees	116 500 €	112 750 €	- 3 750 €
Transfer from CENL account 2	23 390 €	96 884 €	+ 73 494 €
Total Income		209 634 €	

Income on Account 1 comes mainly from the membership fees. One member settled their 2019 fee in early 2020. Two members did not pay their 2020 fees but they were settled in 2021. The remainder of the income comes from a first transfer of €23 390 from the CENL 2 reserve account and another transfer of €73 494 in December when the account got closed.

SL showed:

2020 Budget



Expenses – Account 1

CENL budget 2020	CENL budget 2020 (agreed at 2019 AGM)	Revised CENL budget 2020 (agreed via Email by EC)	Actual Expenses	Balance
Financial support AGM	9 000 €	9000 €	0 €	9 000 €
Travel costs speakers	4 000 €	4 000 €	1693 €	2 307 €
Skills & knowledge exchange				
• Bursary Programme	20 000 €	10 000 €	801 €	9 199 €
• Covid-19 Support Fund	- €	10 000 €	8 949 €	1 051 €
• CENL Working Groups	15 000 €	15 000 €	3 238 €	11 762 €
Erlend Kolding Nielsen grant	25 000 €	15 000 €	9 000 €	6 000 €
Hidden Stories Fund		10 000 €	2 000 €	8 000 €
CENL website				
• Maintenance costs	5 000 €	5 000 €	5 785 €	- 785 €
• Content	9 500 €	9 500 €	12 973 €	- 3 473 €
Banking costs	1 290 €	1 290 €	363 €	927 €
Audit and legal costs	6 600 €	6 600 €	9 489 €	- 2 889 €
CENL Secretariat	52 000 €	52 000 €	52 000 €	0 €
Other office costs	2 500 €	2 500 €	2 049€	451 €
Total Expenses	149 890 €	149 890 €	108 340 €	41 550 €

SL presented the details of some of the expenses for the CENL 1 Account:

- Because of the pandemic, several budget lines were showing an underspend. For example, there was a very low take-up of the bursaries. Therefore, the Executive Committee agreed in July 2020 to re-allocate €10,000 of the €20,000 budget to create a new 'Covid-19 Support Fund' to support CENL members badly affected by the virus. And €8,949 was spent on five Covid-19 grants.
- Only one EKN grant was awarded by the Executive Committee in 2020 to the British Library. Therefore, there was an underspend of €10,000 on that budget line. The EC agreed in July 2020 to re-allocate the €10,000 to create a new 'Hidden Stories Fund' to support projects to collect, preserve, research and celebrate the untold stories from and by underrepresented communities in the CENL libraries' national collections.
- The website costs were higher than expected as the contract of the agency worker was extended for the whole year, as well as the technical support for the website by Brother.
- Total planned budget was €149 890. Actual expenses came to €108 340. So there was a final positive balance of €41 550.

SL showed cash balance on Account CENL 2:

2020 Budget



Cash Balance – Account 2

CENL account 2	Bank Balance
Opening bank balance as at 01.01.2020	96 924 €
Total Income	28 €
Less Expenses	96 952 €
Bank balance as at 31.12.2020	0 €

Due to the closure of the CENL bank account with Lloyds, the funds held in the CENL 2 account were transferred to the CENL 1 account ahead of the closure of both accounts. An amount of €73,493.65 was transferred on 01 December 2020. The €28.05 income relates to a refund of charges to close the accounts. The CENL 2 account was closed on 01 December 2020.

The Audit was prepared remotely by RSM auditors including the financial statements for 2020. The audit was finalised on 14 April and signed off by the EC on 09 June.

SL gave an update on the 2021 budget up to late October 2021.

SL showed the cash in the CENL account:

2021 Budget



Cash Balance

CENL account 1 - LLOYDS	Bank Balance
Opening bank balance as at 01.01.2021	776 006€
Total Income	0 €
Less Expenses	776 006 €
Bank balance as at 31.10.2021	776 006 €

CENL - ING	Bank Balance
Opening bank balance as at 01.01.2021	0 €
Total Income	898 540 €
Less Expenses	93 693 €
Bank balance as at 31.10.2021	804 847 €

CENL now holds all the funds in the CENL ING account.

SL showed:

2021 Budget



Income – Account 1

CENL budget 2020	Budget	Actual Income	Balance remaining as of mid-Sept 2020
Membership fees	119 500 €	122 500 €	+ 3 000 €
Transfer from reserves	23 390 €	23 390 €	- €
EKN 2019 Funds carried over	5 000 €	5 000 €	- €
CENL network groups 2020 budget carried over	11 762 €	11 762 €	- €
Total Income	159 652 €	€162 652	+ 3 000 €

Income comes mainly from the membership fees – 48 members had paid their fee by late October and two members settled their 2020 fees.

SL showed:

2021 Budget



Expenses – Account 1

CENL budget 2021	Budget agreed at 2020 AGM	Actual Expenses at 31.10.21	Balance at 31.10.21
Financial support AGM	9 000 €	0 €	9 000 €
Travel costs speakers	4 000 €	0 €	4 000 €
Skills & knowledge exchange			
• Bursary Programme	10 000 €	4 453 €	5 547 €
• Hidden Stories Fund	10 000 €	7 840 €	2 160 €
• CENL working groups 2020 carried over budget	11 762 €	0 €	11 762 €
• CENL working group 2021 budget	15 000 €	600 €	14 400 €
Erlang Kolding Nielsen Grant 2021	15 000 €	4 628 €	10 372 €
EKN 2019 x 1 grant carried over	5 000 €	0 €	5 000 €
CENL website			
• Maintenance costs	6 000 €	3 116 €	2 884 €
• Content	9 500 €	9 977 €	- 477 €
Banking costs	1 190 €	2 464 €	- 1 274 €
Audit and legal costs	8 000 €	7 696 €	304 €
CENL Secretariat	52 000 €	52 000 €	0 €
Other office costs	3 200 €	918 €	2 282 €
Total Expenses	159 652 €	93 693 €	65 959 €

SL detailed some of the expenses:

- Skills & Knowledge Exchange: there was one bursary application this year. The rest of the expenses on that line correspond to the balances of the Covid-19 grants of 2020. Due to travel restrictions continuing in 2021, the Skills and Knowledge Exchange Bursary has been under-used. The Executive Committee discussed options to use the funds in other ways, and decided in June 2021 to offer two more Covid-19 Support Grants in 2021 using the unspent bursary budget.

Two EKN grants were awarded in 2021. The €4,628 correspond to the payment of the grant of the National Library of Estonia.

Finally, the EC allocated two Hidden Stories grants in 2021 and have made some upfront payments to the grantees.

- SL also agreed to carry over, into the 2021 budget, the 2020 unspent budgets of the network groups as they were unable to organise their activities as planned due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

- Website costs consists of the support package, the renewal of website plug-ins and of the agency worker fees from December 2020 to June 2021. With the extension of the agency worker’s contract until November 2021, SL is expecting a small overspent on that budget line.

- Audit & Legal costs: the audit was once again undertaken remotely for a cost of €7,695.

SL presented her proposed 2022 budget. SL showed:

Proposed 2022 budget



Income	Amount	Expenses	Amount
CENL membership	111 350 €	Financial support AGM	13 000 €
Reserves	33 650 €	Travel costs speakers	4 000 €
		Skills & knowledge Exchanges • Bursary programme (€10k) • CENL network groups 2021 budget (€5k x 3 groups - €15,000)	25 000 €
		Erland Kolding Nielsen Grant • 1 x €5k grant	5 000 €
		CENL website maintenance	8 000 €
		Banking costs	1 500 €
		Audit and legal costs	8 000 €
		CENL Secretariat	78 000 €
		Other office costs	2 500 €
TOTAL INCOME	145 000 €	TOTAL EXPENSES	145 000 €

This budget is based on the new fee model proposal in Paper 04. This proposal recommended to raise the annual base budget to €145k per annum, whilst maintaining the current total membership fee contribution of €120k. The Executive Committee proposed to fund the funding shortfall of the transitional fee model, with members whose fees are increasing only paying the new amount in 2023, by using funds from the reserves. CENL has important reserves and the EC felt confident to use them for that purpose.

Other proposals in the new budget include:

- To raise financial support for the attendance of the AGM from €9k to €13k. This will enable libraries in the two lowest fee categories to attend the AGM.
- To level down the bursary programme to €10k, more in line with actual usage.

- To maintain the €5k per annum fund for all three network groups.
- To provide €5k per annum to award one Erland Kolding Nielsen Grant.
- To provide an increase in budget to run the CENL website, €8k per annum, which will include budget to create content such as the refresher of the CENL video.
- To maintain banking costs.
- To increase the annual grant to the library hosting the CENL Secretariat by 50%, to €78k per annum; this is to enable the host to recruit a small team of staff to run the various functions of the Secretariat.
- To maintain a small budget line of €2.5k to be used by the Secretariat to cover additional office costs.

SL called for a vote, by show of hands, to approve the proposed 2022 budget. 28 members voted in favour of approving the revised budget.

SL thanked the CENL Secretariat for all their work on the CENL finances.

9. CENL Action plan and communications

Marcie Hopkins explained that the CENL website (www.cenl.org) was launched in November 2019. The website was built by British company Brother, which is also providing technical support to the CENL Secretariat until December 2022.

The website is aimed first at the public and library professionals to promote the activities of CENL and CENL libraries, as well as giving a better understanding of the role that CENL libraries play in collecting and preserving the written, published and recorded output of their nations. The website is also aimed at CENL members and provides a space for them to network with each other via a members' area, accessible only to CENL members.

The public sections of the website include:

- 'About CENL': providing information about the organisation – its history, mission, 2018-2022 strategic plan and an interactive map of its members.
- 'Members libraries': a directory of the 49 CENL member libraries with pictures, information and contact details for each library.
- 'News & events': listing events, exhibitions, and conferences organised by CENL members and any news regarding their institutions.
- 'Reports & publications': providing access to over 500 annual reports, dating back to 1993, for all the CENL member libraries and over 30 surveys run by the CENL Secretariat. The previous CENL working groups all have a section on this page with information and documents available to download on their work. And similarly, the new CENL network groups all have a dedicated section on this page with information on the work and membership of each group.

The members' area includes information on the upcoming AGM, information on the bursary scheme including the application forms, information on the EKN Grant scheme including the application forms, forum to discuss themes and topics shared by the CENL community, and access to CENL archive documents.

The website has shown steady traffic from 2020 through to 2021. The top channels by which users come to the CENL website are via organic and social routes. This year, a large percentage of CENL users derived from social channels such as twitter and Mailchimp.

There are noticeable improvements in numbers concerning members, website traffic, page views, including a stabilized bounce rate, which stipulates that around 50% of users are spending more time on the platform.

The CENL website has currently exceeded 173,752 total page views and 60,446 website hits. 326 CENL members are now signed up to the members area.

The CENL first newsletter was published on January 2020, and thus far there have been 23 editions. The newsletter continued to successfully improve the referral rate from outsourced applications directly to the website. Out of our 326 members, 299 members have signed up to the newsletter. The Secretariat sends one newsletter monthly, which has an opening rate between 30-40%, which is very positive.

The Secretariat also launched a new CENL Twitter account (@CENL_EUROPE) to promote CENL's image as an inclusive and international body that builds community for its members, embraces innovative technologies and values user engagement. Since Nov 2019, the Secretariat has tweeted 374 times, over 169,000 tweet impressions and the account now has 275 followers.

MH showed a geographical analysis of CENL's twitter followers, showing how far CENL's message regarding community and national library awareness travels.

Twitter geographic



The majority of CENL's followers are within Europe; however, CENL is connected to many throughout the Americas as well as the Middle East.

MH thanked George Ofori (GO) for all his work on the website.

The Secretariat created an interactive CENL Library map that contains information on the present status and previous reopening plans of each library member. Alongside the map, there is a Covid-19 page on the website to measure the impact on national libraries. The map is available on the website and is accessible to all.

MH then introduced the CENL Action Plan. The new CENL email address will be cenl@dnb.de

The Action Plan 2021/2022 consisted of:

- CENL Secretariat Transition
- CENL Annual General Meeting 2021
- CENL Financial Audit of Accounts 2021
- Bursary and Grants Scheme
- Webinar: Cultural Programming
- News via Website and Social Media

The Action plan until June 2022 will focus on:

- Set-Up of new CENL Secretariat @DNB
- Financial administration of CENL
- Convene new Executive Committee
- Formulate next CENL Strategy
- Plan 2022 CENL AGM with National Library of Turkey
- Run Erland Kolding Nielsen and other bursary and grant programmes
- Support of network groups
- Resume work on stakeholder engagement (FEP, NAPLE, Europeana)
- Continue webinar programme (if capacity permits)

These actions support the current strategies priorities:

- Priority 1 - Support national libraries to increase their impact and to be strong organisations
- Priority 2 - Develop national library services
- Priority 3 - Develop as memory institutions
- Priority 4 - Strengthen CENL as a community

The CENL Executive Committee decided to extend the CENL Strategy by one year, as it was difficult to workshop strategic priorities during the pandemic. The current strategy will therefore be in place until mid-2023. The new Executive Committee hopes to formulate the next CENL Strategy during 2022 and 2023. This strategy would cover a 4-year period and run from mid-2023 – mid-2027. It is envisaged that draft themes will be brought to the AGM in Turkey in 2022 for further development with the members.

10. National Libraries and sustainability

HP introduced this session covering national libraries and sustainability with external speakers. HP introduced the first speaker Tony Agotha (TA) from the European Commission.

TA explained that this was his first conference in person since the start of the pandemic and shared a greeting from Frans Timmermans, Vice President of the European Commission, who was sorry he

was not able to attend the AGM. TA explained that he would address the CENL members as librarians but also as citizens.

TA mentioned the 'four freedoms': capital, goods, employers, services, which are important for markets and consumers. He also mentioned Roosevelt's four freedoms: freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear, which are crucial for citizens.

Customers maximize their opportunities for themselves whereas citizens are members of the society and will be fighting for something larger than themselves. In the EU, we cannot forget to prioritise democracy and the rule of Law and libraries have an important role to play to support this work.

TA wanted to highlight that climate change is linked to democracy. Our democratic societies are under attack, facts are being replaced by 'alternative facts'. Our judicial systems are also being attacked. We need to stand up for them. We have been too silent as we take these things for granted. As the previous generation who experienced wars are leaving us, these old demons of xenophobia and intolerance are coming back. This is not a political stand. This is about right and wrong. If we don't have 'shared truth', we can't create solidarity within our societies and without solidarity, we cannot have a green transition. Without this green transition, we cannot have democracy in the future. These elements are all closely linked together.

The EU is trying to stand up for the rule of Law and democracy, science and facts. Science is not absolute, it's proving a theory and it should be at the basis of our work. As John Adams famously said '*Facts are stubborn things*' but in the digital world, the situation is different. Someone says a lie and it gets repeated louder and we cannot absorb them. Some people are abusing the system.

Why green transition? Science tells us in the IPCC reports that the situation is even more dire than anticipated. It is a matter of years before we reach the tipping point. Some people are complaining about the costs but the EU points out the cost of not acting. The EU has to offer a positive proposition. More than 300,000 people died prematurely due to exposure to fine particulate matter pollution in the European Union in 2019. We could have better air and less pollution. We can act before getting to the tipping point. Water is a geopolitical issue for some countries. The Turkish minister recently said that they suffer from wild fires, which is incredibly expensive and citizens are no longer accepting this. This issue transcends politics even with China, Russia, or Saudi Arabia. We have technology and the skills but we need courage.

Recently at the COP26, the target was 1.5 degree and more and more countries came up with new net zero commitments. The conference didn't achieve enough but there are three achievements:

1. We now have a good momentum.
2. We need a commitment of 100 billion per year to help vulnerable countries and we're getting there
3. The raw book of Paris included future verifiable accounting and transparency – we got a deal on that.

Glasgow was a clear progress and TA's team is already working towards the 2022 COP.

What is the Libraries' role in this fight? When TA studied in the US for his thesis, they had 10 million titles of books in the university's library and it would have taken years to reach everything. What is different from how his kids search for books is that he saw books that he wouldn't have found if he

just googled them. The role that librarians can play include guidance on research. Algorithms send people to echo chambers – that’s radicalisation. Libraries can provide guidance. Library professionals can help with research skills. We need to make it appealing to children to learn about critical thinking and libraries have an essential role in this.

Recently, in Texas, the Governor requested for some books to be banned from libraries. It shows that libraries are a vessel of Culture, Art and tolerance. People want to be inspired but at the moment, the only inspiring people are playing with our inner demons, and we need libraries to inspire positively.

Jonathan Sacks wrote in *Morality*, “in a society where the ‘I’ trumps, the ‘we’ cannot survive”. The green transition is necessary, we’re not doing it to save the planet as the planet will be fine without humans, we are doing it for the wellbeing of our people and our children. We need to harness those things that make us who we are to do a green transition.

HP thanked TA for his presentation and introduced Lorena Aldana (LA) from the Climate Heritage Network.

LA explained that her organisation, Europa Nostra, has been recently appointed as the Chair of the Climate Heritage Network. This is a voluntary network of organisations committed to achieving the targets of the Paris Agreement. There is a wide range of members: governmental agencies like the city of Krakow, heritage organisations like English Heritage, universities, cultural institutions etc. Organisations need to sign up to the Climate Heritage Network MoU to join. There is no legal constraint but members commit to support the work of the network. Some library organisations are also members, including IFLA.

Strength is in numbers as all members don’t have the capacity to tackle climate change challenges on their own and the network helps creating connections between members to support each other. The network also runs social media campaigns, policy briefings, and had multiple ways to share ideas.

The Climate Heritage Network was created in 2018 at the Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco. The official launch was in 2019 in Edinburgh and at the COP25 in Madrid, the network released its first action plan.

The network has been working in different areas:

- The network has been gathering a lot of evidence and case studies to help members.
- The network published a [Manifesto](#) in which institutions commit themselves to activate their networks through communication / inspire their audiences to engage in climate action / acknowledge that we need to have a change of behaviour in our own heritage institutions / engage actors to engage and cooperate. The manifesto was launched for COP26 as an advocacy tool.

Europa Nostra in partnership with the Culture heritage network published a [European Cultural Green Paper](#). The paper argues that the green transition is a cultural transition. Cultural heritage is threatened by climate change but we are also part of the solution. The paper is proposing a series of recommendations and includes case studies in the paper. The hope is that this will become a

landmark study for the sector. The cultural sector should focus on understanding / inclusion / education / information.

Libraries can lead by example. Libraries are source of knowledge and have an important role to play on climate information.

HP thanked LA for her presentation and started the panel discussion by asking how can libraries support young people who are active in the fight against climate change?

Ivanka Stričević (IS) from the National Library of Croatia explained that her background was working with young people in public libraries and introducing new services when she was the IFLA Chair of that section. After that, she moved to the university library sector as advisor for scientific affairs – it strengthened her thinking that public libraries have a key role to play to support scientific information in countries in addition to national libraries and academic libraries.

Last year, IS became Director of the National Library of Croatia on February 1st, the first Covid case in Croatia was in late February and by March 15th, Croatia was in full lockdown. On 22nd March, a huge earthquake hit Croatia followed by lots of smaller earthquakes. The role of the national library shifted overnight. Users needed assistance. Thousands of librarians were affected by the earthquake, so the national library produced some guidelines on how to protect collections. The national library also stored some collections in their building for libraries that were badly damaged. One of the main lessons learnt was that the national library needs to have a very clear role. Planning is difficult in a changing environment but we need a clear goal and a set of scenarios to reach the goal. Still today, the national library has 3-5 scenarios for each situation. IS's team tried to shift from reactive to pro-active action. It's not about adaptation but about contextualising in your local situation.

In 2019, IS's team worked on an international conference on solidarity in the cultural sector and protecting cultural heritage in challenging times. What they learnt was that we should strengthen people's skills in 'risk leadership'. They also learnt that young people sometimes have very different views and her team has now started talking to them. The library is creating a new group to listen to young people. In April last year, during the lockdown, a group of 15 people were working constantly in the library and working on the idea of sustainable libraries for the future and created a recovery programme.

Money is always an issue but this shouldn't define us. Flexibility is important. We need to be more confident in our people. We need more leadership training for our leaders to be able to face risks. We need to re-shape our workplace.

HP mentioned the example when there was a fire a few years ago at the National Library of Austria and the library nearly burnt down. This led to a new re-evaluation of the risk management plans. Leadership skills are important but staff must also have an awareness of what the risks are. The National Library of Austria did an exercise of what would happen in case of a total blackout involving all staff.

HP asked the panel what libraries can do internationally?

LA highlighted that networks are important because we all share the same challenges. Making information available and learning from each other is key and this can now be done with very little budget. We no longer need to travel to exchange.

HP asked how can libraries help navigate the vast amount of information?

TA explained that as a repository of information with professionals who know how to navigate this information, libraries have a role to play. We take it for granted that we have a 'shared truth'. If we accept our judicial system, then we accept the outcome of a justice decision but if people start to question it, then democracy can crumble. Libraries are guardians of information and democracy.

TA gave the example of when the Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 was shut down in 2014. Immediately after the crash, nine narratives were published online and the aim was to confuse and disrupt. This disruption is hard to tackle. Libraries must have the courage to stand up as citizens. If you ignore the lies and the hatred, it becomes part of the narrative. Libraries, as citizens, must stand for the basic paradigms of democracy.

FS thanked the panel and asked how active should libraries be? We haven't defined what we mean by 'active' in the long-run. How far does this role go?

TA replied that the assets that libraries have is trust. Politicians don't have this anymore. Libraries are still considered as objective. This is an important asset to use to stand on the side of facts and truth.

Liz Jolly (LJ) mentioned that libraries are not 'neutral'. Our key role could be in thinking about our role in digital information literacy: how can we help our citizens to questions facts and information? Libraries can play that role without telling people what to think. Libraries can encourage them to think critically. LJ thanked TA for helping CENL members clearly think about the link between what librarians do and the climate transition.

RK talked about adaptation: if we imagine ourselves in 10 years' time, how different would a library look in post-climate world?

IS replied that for many years, libraries have traditionally been seen as sources of reliable information but we sometimes focus too much on developing and maintaining the collections and forget that the collections are there because of the output from users. The key role of libraries is to support our users in their usage of knowledge and information.

LA also highlighted that the cultural sector needs to stay relevant when it comes to climate change. Adapting our buildings is important but we need to do more than that.

TA said he hopes that libraries will avoid the Amazon model of algorithms. By accessing information online only, you miss the connections with people to create solidarity. Digitisation is great but libraries must have events, exhibitions, music, free coffee etc, to get people inside their buildings. By being together physically, you get to come across things that you were not expecting and that's really enriching. This can only happen physically.

FS asked how can libraries create an environment where you find the unexpected? How can we provide opportunity for serendipity for large groups in society?

Karin Grönvall (KG) mentioned that finding a community online is a great challenge for libraries. How can we build trust online?

TA agreed and mentioned that teenagers love being online and communicate with their friends online. You have to adapt to get in touch with this community, which is digital but we mustn't lose the communal part of having people together. Random epiphanies cannot happen online if there is an algorithm pushing you in one direction only.

Laurence Engel (LE) thanked TA for understanding what libraries can do and asked if other politicians are aware of what libraries can do for democracy?

TA replied that our democracies' values are under threat and libraries have a role to play to teach critical thinking. However, it is difficult in the current context because when there is an economic crisis, cultural budgets get cut first. Humans need other humans, it's important for libraries to share this message and not just focus on collections.

HP thanked the panellists and highlighted that people love libraries. What we should be asking ourselves is not what politicians can do for us but what we can do for politicians.

11. Strategic breakout sessions

In this session, CENL members split into small groups to look at different themes: Life after Covid; Contested histories and inclusive voices; How FAIR is your National Library data? After exchanging, the groups came back together and the chairs reported to the group.

HP's group was looking at life after Covid and more specifically what does it mean for collections, as well as for directors as leaders. HP mentioned some libraries lacked financial support from their government but users were very supportive and adapted to the new digital services. The pandemic has had a huge impact on our work and services. It is more important than ever to speak to each other about new services and learn from each other.

Beba Stankovic (BS) was chairing the group looking at contested histories and inclusive voices. BS and her colleagues at the National Library of Serbia have been working on a project called 'Women in the pandemic' supported by a CENL Hidden Stories grant. There is a shift in the role of libraries, which historically were not involved in topics like diversity. Libraries are starting to talk about changes in traditional societies like Serbia. It is important to discuss gender violence during a crisis such as the pandemic as women have been on the front line. BS reported that the group highlighted that if we want a society of citizens, not consumers, we should pay attention to our libraries. We must change our approach in libraries when discussing diversity. Maja Micevska Rizova (MMR) from the National Library of North Macedonia talked about their Hidden Stories project on LGBTQ+ collections. As library leaders, we have to pay attention to our staff being familiar with these topics. Equity, diversity and belonging are key words. We should be in contact with library colleagues, so we can learn from each other and become more confident to talk about these topics.

Sally Chambers (SC) and Ann Van Camp (AVC) from the National Library of Belgium were looking at how FAIR is your National Library data. The group did a vote on which principles came first: accessible, findable, and interoperable. Accessibility challenges include copyright, GDPR. Digital literacy is very important: how can we support users to make sense of the data? It's important to

share best practise between CENL members to inform our work. We have a lot of sources for our data but they are not used as well as they could. We need to think about the inter-relationship between the national libraries and their users and how national libraries can work together with universities on data and digital literacy.

RK thanked all chairs.

12. Keynote: Dr. Carla Hayden, Librarian of Congress (via video) - Library Engagement in a Digital and Virtual Pandemic & Post Pandemic World

Roly Keating introduced Dr Carla Hayden (CH) who joined the CENL AGM via Zoom to give a keynote on *Library Engagement in a Digital and Virtual Pandemic & Post Pandemic World*.

CH recently went to Sharjah Book Fair on national libraries, which was a unifying summit of national libraries and it really helped inform what CH wanted to share in her presentation for CENL. CH explained that our collective mission has historically been to conserve and engage. Our ultimate goal was to get the user into the library's front door, and national libraries had a special role in this information ecosystem. During the pandemic, our work became even more national with our efforts to reach everyone across the country.

CH mentioned a few things which helped the LOC to increase its outreach, impact and relevance to the people in the USA. In 2019, the LoC had 2 million in person visitors, with people coming from all over the world. The LoC is directly connected to the US Capitol and visitors were attracted by the beautiful building and architecture but didn't necessarily connected with what the library had to offer to them apart from that. Whenthe pandemic came, the LOC had to lean on and depend on its website, and during that time the LoC attracted nearly 171 million visits, an increase of 50% compared to the previous year. In a manner of weeks, the LoC had to change its national book festival to a virtual format. They were able to make that switch with 125 authors. The important thing was that they were able to reach people in all 50 states. They never had that reach before. Talks and teacher workshops etc, moved to an online environment and the LoC team learnt many lessons. But this also raised many questions.

The LC Labs is a programme to encourage innovations by using the LOC's vast digital collection. With the LoC Labs, the organisation also included an innovator in residence programme, which enables initiatives that allow users to interact with the Library in a different way. For example, "By The People" Project encourages people to transcribe items, presidential papers, suffragettes documents etc. During the pandemic, many people were at home, so the LoC released more than 600k documents for transcription and more than 200k have been transcribed.

The 'Innovators in Residence Programmes' are very innovative programmes. For example, one that took off during the pandemic was an application called 'Citizen DJ' which allows the user to make hip-hop music from the Library's collections. The listeners will discover what is in the library's collection that people may not have known existed. CH played a video showcasing the work of one Citizen DJ.

Another project was 'Speculative Annotation' which is an annotation project. Having fun with the primary sources of the collections is helpful. Digital collections are at your fingertips: parents become de facto teachers, they were able to engage with the library even more.

CH mentioned the LoC Digital Collecting and Content Management 2017 – 2021 strategy. The LoC is collecting stories related to the pandemic and around social justice. Digital transformations is helping institutions, especially national libraries. There is no turning back, this opportunity allowed us to find how we can be a truly national libraries, moving down a path we were already going; and examine where we are going in the future especially relating to inequities. Digital inequities are difficult, even within the same country; there is need for high quality broadband, connectivity. We also need to think about how we can connect to public libraries.

RK thanked CH for her keynote and started the discussion. Prompted by Covid, but also other crises such as climate change, how will libraries have to change, and what has changed for good?

CH replied that the national libraries' roles and responsibilities have changed. Our outreach is not closed or dumbing down. In time of need, national libraries must take a lead as a resource, connecting with the local libraries as well. Expanding our thinking about what we can and should do in a national library is a real opportunity to go beyond what we think we are there for.

RK asked if the LoC reached truly new audiences?

CH replied that they did. What is the purpose of having a collection if you are not trying to recreate and foster assimilation? We are not beautiful mausoleums.

RK asked how CH brought the staff with her, what was easy and what was hard?

CH replied that she was brought along in many ways and everyone had been not only switched on professionally but also personally. Everyone had to re-think the balance between work and family. The concert programme with loyal attendees had to switch to the virtual and CH was not pushing for it but agreed to try. The multimedia group started collaborating in other ways and the department is now asking all other departments what their technical needs will be in the future to be ready to adapt. Finding the right balance was very hard. The staff safety was the priority. The leadership team engaged more actively with daily emails and videos. The most difficult part was the human part. We are now down to weekly emails (during pandemic it was daily); phasing on bringing the public back in and re-introducing personal interaction.

RK explained that at the British Library, the pandemic has changed the relationship with the staff, it is now more emotional. CH agreed and said that recognising that staff also might have children who are also doing virtual learning is important. During lockdown, we saw more pets and that was really helpful in a way because you learn more about the person you work with. That is going to carry over.

RK mentioned that CH talked about the Members of Congress she worked with during the crisis period. RK asked if she thought that their awareness became stronger as to what libraries can do?

CH replied that the sense of what local libraries can do was already there but the Members of Congress weren't aware of what the LoC could offer to the people in their communities as the national library – e.g. LoC taking part in virtual meetings talking about resources for constituents. That has been very helpful because they became more aware of what LoC can do for citizens.

RK mentioned that earlier in the day, CENL members were reflecting on the climate crisis, which led to a bigger discussion about national libraries being a place of trust, as actors to help citizens understand digital literacy and misinformation. CH agreed with the idea of libraries being a trusted source and being institutions collecting history and providing information. Librarians are not in it for fame and glory. We have a responsibility to be the caretakers and collectors, and to supplement and be part of a broader library landscape – being partners. We are not trying to be the ultimate public library, but we are connecting to get together. We need to think about national librarians as a force to counter misinformation – we can be very helpful.

RK mentioned that CH described new additional things that the LoC started doing – how do we balance that with limited resources? Do we need to do less of something?

CH replied that because of the statute of a national library and the experience of our staff and professionalism, sometimes presenting something that is not perfect is ok. By being able to take some of the materials and process them in a different way, the LoC team was able to get through quite a lot. The question is now much of the work needs to be done physically in our building? For example, CH was more productive at home. Some people have to be on site to do their work, which can lead to unfairness – what are we doing about that?

RK opened questions to the room.

Frédéric Lemmers (FL) mentioned the example of ‘Citizen DJ’ to engage a new audience by stimulating creativity and offering an immersive experience. How should we work with these new audiences? Is there a way to lead them to discover other kinds of collections?

CH replied that the LoC received a significant grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to connect with people in communities all over the country, to make sure that there are stories that might not have been covered or that are being worked on. It’s called “Of the People: Widening the Path.” The initiative will invest in community-based documentarians who will expand the library’s collections with new perspectives; fund paid internships and fellowships to engage the next generation of diverse librarians, archivists and knowledge workers; and create a range of digital engagements with library collections with underserved communities and institutions. We need to be thinking about librarianship and the profession, to think about themselves as collectors of information and connecting with communities. Different stories need to be told. We need to think about how national libraries can help with questions around social justice and how we can be facilitators.

Jose Luis Bueren (JLB) asked how can we address gaps in digital literacy?

CH replied that there are two elements: the digital strategy connecting people with libraries and collections; and then there is the digital collecting (born digital). We need to think about how to ingest and make digital collections discoverable. Looking at our long-term physical needs is more and more a part of what we do but advancement in technology is never going to stop, we need to stay relevant. What is our role in advocacy on digital equity? We have to advocate for the basic access to digital. We must also not be afraid to be outspoken about the fact that what we collect and what we can share depends on that equity aspect. There are times when we have to be non-partisan, but we can emphasize that people need to be able to use our information for their lives, to have better

lives. We should be outspoken about broadband access and connectivity – all the national libraries should stand together!

RK thanked CH for reminding us of our mission and for her generosity in sharing with CENL members and answering their questions.

RK thanked all members for an insightful first day and for everyone's participation to the challenges and questions raised in the different sessions.

DAY 2 – TUESDAY, 30 NOVEMBER

13. EKN grant holders reports

RK opened the day thanking all members for joining to hear about the reports of EKN grant holders.

Mercedes Aguirre (MA) and Lucy Rowland (LR) from the British Library joined the session via video to report on their National Libraries Now Conference 2021.

MA explained that she and her colleagues identified a need for curatorial staff to meet each other and share knowledge. The conference was organised by the curatorial staff at the National Library of Jamaica, the Royal Library of Belgium and the British Library. The conference had presenters from national libraries or equivalent institutions from more than 30 countries and five continents and included 60 video presentations and blogs, 19 panel discussions and 6 Intervention speakers. More than 700 attendees from across the world registered.

Some of the panel topics included Decolonising and countering bias; What is national heritage?; Legal deposit; National bibliographies; Literary archives; Born-digital literature; Multilingual collections amongst others.

LR mentioned that the EKN grant was designed to strengthen bonds between libraries. The data shows that 64% of the conference panellists were from Europe and the rest of the panellists were from all over the world. 47% of the attendees were from Europe with representation from all over Europe. The conference team was very happy with the geographic spread.

The aim of the conference was to fill a gap for staff working directly with collections who were not in touch and for them to connect at a less senior level. Most of the attendees worked with collections directly, so this was a success. The second aim of the conference was to create opportunities to learn about other projects. Over half of attendees had the opportunity to meet other library professionals, so MA and LR hope that the conference will result in more collaborations. Several libraries have already expressed an interest in hosting the conference in 2023.

FS thanked MA and LR for organising the conference and said it was the perfect format and content. What is discussed at CENL at management level should also be discussed at all staff levels and this conference is a perfect example of that.

RK thanked LR and MA and mentioned that Erland Kolding Nielsen was keen for the exchanges to be not just at management level but also between all staff, so he would have been delighted to hear about the success of the conference.

Janne Andresoo (JA) from the National Library of Estonia presented her report on 'Tomorrow is T-shaped: Work and competencies in 21st Century Library' conference organised in May 2021.

JA quoted the OSKA study: *"Instead of narrow specialisation, work skills are increasingly becoming cross-sectoral. The competencies of an ideal future employee would thus be T-shaped – with in-depth knowledge in at least one sector and ability to understand and interconnect other disciplines and people working in these disciplines"*. This inspired the conference.

Thanks to the EKN grant, the National Library of Estonia was able to organise the technical side of the conference. The aim of the conference was to hear from librarians but also users.

Sessions included a talk by Dr Juan D. Machin-Mastrometteo on 'Current and Upcoming Perspectives for Libraries and Librarians'; Erik Boekestejin on 'Innovative and Creative Future Library'; Rainer Sternfeld on 'Modalities of Reading, Learning and Creativity in a Digital Society' amongst others.

338 participants from 20 countries registered for the conference.

14. Presentation by CENL Network Groups

Maja Bogataj Jančič (MBJ) gave an overview of the mandate of the Copyright Network Group. The main issue is how to develop a memory institution in the digital age. Covid has been challenging and has fast-forwarded us into the future, which had an impact on copyright. The phase the Network Group currently covers is the development of the sub-website of CENL and tools for more effective sharing of information. MBJ spoke about the activities of the group in 2020: it agreed on the standardised form for the country reports and started to collect them; the group agreed on the structure of the webpage and the group collected initial info about the Covid-19 measures in the light of copyright. Everything couldn't just shift online during the pandemic, there were many copyright restrictions to consider. The Network Group's budget has not been used but the group aims to use it in the first half of 2022. MBJ gave an overview for the plans for the autumn 2021. The group feels that it does important work and it is an important network to exchange information. Single Market Act (EU) and libraries concerned will be focus points next year.

Inga Surgunte (IS) gave an overview of the mandate of the Books and Audiences Network Group. IS introduced the visual identity of the Network Group. IS shared the mission of the group: *"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"*. The group created a new visual identity, has a page on the CENL website and has continued to be active by organising a website on 28 October 2021 on *Unbound: exploring accessibility*. University research professionals joined the network (Leicester and Manchester); and the group has produced 'Talking Heads videos' exploring topics such as accessibility. IS showed an example of a 'Talking Head' short video with the German Museum of Books and Writing. The future plans of the Network Group include organising another webinar on book exhibitions and well-being & health and Season 2 of the BANG! Talking Heads series.

Jean-Philippe Moreux (JPM) gave an overview of the mandate of the "AI in National Libraries" Network Group. Libraries have expertise on data and data is central in modern AI (machine learning). Libraries have done a lot of experimentation and reached some achievements; even large

institutions can't experiment in all areas. Some barriers still exist (access to technical skills, transition from legacy systems to AI driven processes). JPM reminded delegates of the objectives of the group: to leverage the use of AI through better understanding and use; to promote sharing, collaboration and standardisation on AI between institutions and to identify areas of AI with particular significance for libraries. The actions so far include sharing experience on experiments and activities; publication of an AI cookbook for libraries on Github, based on case studies and designed in a way that allows a deep understanding of the core technologies and the test and reproducibility of the technical implementation. In 2021, they added enrichment with new recipes related to the extraction of named entities from textual content (Norway / Luxembourg). The group is currently working on a panel of library presidents and top managers on AI strategy and roadmap as part of the "Fantastic Futures 2021" conference (December 10, Bibliothèque nationale de France) organized by the international initiative ai4lam.org. Finally, the group recently launched an AI survey sent to the CENL Network, about AI projects, initiatives, and roadmaps that are already active. The aim of the survey is to help identifying AI practitioners within libraries.

15. Presentation - AI and national libraries: The BnF as a case study

Laurence Engel (LE) presented the Bibliothèque nationale de France's AI roadmap.

Like any other kind of technology, AI feeds the evolutionary processes of the BnF's tools and services , and of libraries in general. It is clear that AI can do something for libraries. Moreover, libraries have unique and rich resources that can contribute to the development of this technology; thus, libraries can also do something for AI. Because of the many uses of AI which have now been incorporated into daily life and the questions it raises in the realms of ethics and labour economics, not only can libraries do something for AI, they must also get involved.

It is the responsibility of national libraries to fully integrate Artificial Intelligence and its issues simultaneously in their strategy, in their action and in their discourse. There are three key elements at stake:

1. improving efficiency in the carrying of missions involving the management, conservation and dissemination of collections;
2. generally improving research prospects, based on the idea of a close and vital association between the development of new collections, the development of ever-more sophisticated tools and the emergence of new research;
3. citizens' responsibility (personal data, trust in algorithms) and the development of an AI culture at the library based on openness, transparency, and trust

The BnF integrated AI in the conception of its new site in Amiens. The new site has a proposed area of 6.3 hectares, of which 30,000 m² can be built upon offering the BnF very long-term prospects. This should cover a very large surface area for documents available for "building" with AI technology. will enable the BnF to become part of a local and regional cultural network that already has a rich cultural heritage network and infrastructure. The project is based on an ethical, demanding and inclusive approach to issues related to AI which can, in turn, rely on a very rich cultural heritage network and infrastructure. The project for the new site also includes a training plan to help staff

members increase their skills in AI, both for future specialists and for those who wish to learn more about it.

Why do we need AI?

- digitisation and dematerialisation of collections; the increase in data. For example, there are nearly 9 million documents in Gallica, more than 15 million records in the general catalogue and the upcoming arrival of a digital legal deposit.
- development of new types of collections, which pose new challenges: for example, internet archives.
- development of new relationships with users, and of a logic that places them at the centre, with all that this implies: concern for taking into account the traces they leave in order to better adapt the offer to their expectations, concern for interacting directly with them.

Why now?

- the maturity of some types of technology, and especially the maturity in the industry, with the GAFANS (Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple, Netflix) which have all placed AI at the heart of their strategy; development of consumer applications; and experiments or even development in libraries: OCR, IIF, recommendations based on algorithms. LE referred to the "[AI Cookbook for libraries](#)" developed by the AI group of the CENL.
- a period of bibliographic transition (IFLA-LRM model) and of the development of new tools: not risking becoming obsolete as soon as these tools are launched because AI has not been integrated into their design.
- sustainability requirements, problems linked to sustainable development, search for financial savings: if AI can contribute to this, we must seize this opportunity.

Why national libraries?

- because of the size of our holdings (collections, data, etc.) and especially because of their uniqueness (by their diversity, their encyclopaedic nature, their geographical extent, their chronological depth). This uniqueness makes these holdings attractive to AI researchers.
- because of our know-how, which predisposes us to interact with artificial intelligences and to inspire the confidence of partners and citizens alike.
- because we are part of an ecosystem, which includes ICCs.
- because of our privileged links with the world of research: academic research (via our numerous partnerships, hosting of researchers), Research & Development (via internal activities, services, experiments...)

LE explained the process of creating a digital roadmap at the BnF. In September 2020, Emmanuelle Bermès was given a mission to create a roadmap of AI at the BnF. The first version will be delivered in February 2021 and the final version will be released on 7 December. This is a logical outcome built on the BnF's past 15 years engaging with new technology via OCR and Gallica for example.

LE highlighted the need to build a coherent and unifying policy around AI by creating and engaging an AI community within the library. The roadmap is the result of collective work, which involved

several people in thematic workshops and brainstorming meetings. Communicating is also key and here we find the concern for transparency and trust.

The lessons learned from this approach and the major actions to be retained at the BnF:

1. A potential development in all the fields of action of the BnF. AI potentially concerns everyone at the BnF, which will require support and AI must be considered in the development of each new project and each new tool. AI technologies can be used in different fields at the library: to create and enrich catalogue records; manage collections; search and improve access to content; put content into perspective and to make decisions.
2. The key role of the information systems department in infrastructure development: a 'support' department becomes a 'driving force' department.
3. the interest in working in areas that do not directly require the use of AI but are directly related to it, in particular automation and the cultural adaptation to the digital world in general, or even the data mapping work at BnF which has been enabled by the creation of a data architect position in 2018.

The two main challenges of this approach are:

- industrialisation: further developing experimentation and research in order to progressively integrate them into current processes (with all the support for change that this implies)
- the funding of projects. LE suggested a call to create a European project together, to respond collectively to calls for projects. The 2nd version of the roadmap, in the process of being validated, estimates the total budget needed at nearly 7.3 million euros.

In order to meet the challenges of AI, a roadmap of five actions was created for 2021-2026.

1. AI issues and projects have become part of the institution's global strategy. The roadmap echoes several other strategic documents of the BnF. It is not an end in itself. The roadmap is also linked to the [BnF's data quality policy](#) and the [BnF's digital roadmap](#). The scientific policy it defines will be fully integrated into the BnF's 2022-2026 Contract of Objectives and Performance.
2. Improving the organisation and implementation of R&D at the BnF. Over the past ten years, there has been a huge increase of digital collections at the National Library of France (BnF) – Gallica, internet archives, metadata, etc. – which has opened up new research perspectives. To meet new researchers' needs, the BnF has set up a new service: the BnF DataLab, aimed to support research teams in constituting and processing digital corpora. This space, designed for individual and collaborative work, has been open on the BnF's premises since October 2021 and is complemented by a website, [api.bnf.fr](#).
3. Acquiring new skills which are essential to the emergence and management of AI projects. The development of a citizen culture regarding AI has been identified in some countries as an ethical issue for citizens. In an institution like the BnF, where the prospects of automation opened up by AI potentially affect all professions, the need for awareness is even more acute.
4. Adapting infrastructure and data management. Some of the needs identified include the availability of on-demand virtual machines, especially for researchers in the Data Lab, the availability of high-performance hardware (graphics cards, storage and processing space) for

machine learning and data mining, the possibility of extending the infrastructure to the cloud ('overflow') when processing exceeds the BnF's server capacities.

5. Designing a multi-year program focusing on AI with other key players.

This roadmap has set out a series of actions, some of which have already been started.

RK thanked LE for her presentation.

Adrian Mihai Cioroianu (AMC) mentioned that we need to think about the new vulnerabilities for libraries. Libraries have a strong position because of our 'know-how' but we are different from commercial companies. We are aware of the dangers of AI and we can take a positive approach. Twenty years ago, we were afraid Google would kill libraries but these companies don't want to protect heritage and memory, they just want to make money. We have a role to play here.

FS said that AI is here, we have to embrace it. It's a process, it's part of the digital development ahead of us. It's our obligation as cultural memories to understand AI. We already use AI for lots of different things.

LE replied that it's not because we are connected that we will abandon our physical sites. It's important to maintain our physical collections. Funders interested in AI often ask us what we do with AI.

Karin Gronvall asked how can we avoid creating a gap between new systems like labs and traditional services?

LE replied that this is why the BnF created a roadmap and asked the IT department to have a special programme for AI. It's important to reassure staff and remind them that we've always had to deal with different new technologies and skills in libraries.

Frédéric Lemmers (FL) said that AI is an opportunity. People can be afraid of technology but the way we have used technology recently has created new audiences for us.

RK raised the point that there are questions of ethics and values. The British Library hosts the Turing Institute, which has a remit to work on the ethics of AI. National libraries, as civically driven institutions, are to not be passive in the debate and alert our users on the risks that are coming from AI. One application of AI is around the efficiency of processes, is that part of the BnF approach? Are jobs changing?

LE replied that some roles are changing but the BnF is working with its ministry to maintain staff for collections, especially with digital collections, at the same level.

RK confirmed that the British Library team also believes that we need the same amount of people but with different jobs.

16. Interactive session: Strategic priorities for national libraries & CENL for the next 4 years

For this session, CENL members split into five groups to reflect on strategic priorities for national libraries & CENL for the next 4 years. Each group's Chair reported to the main group.

FS' group's first priority was digital collections. Their second priority was the upcoming changes for us as organisations and people. There is a change of mind-set. The third priority was to show the relevance of national libraries to society. To develop engagement with research, service design, connecting with big issues in society like sustainability, AI, diversity.

FS' group agreed that CENL shouldn't do less. AI should not just be a network group but a topic we look at with a more holistic point of view. The legal network group is relevant but we need more dialogue with publishers and authors.

CENL is a forum where you can talk freely about mistakes, unfinished things, you don't feel exposed, that's a great quality that we want to continue.

LE's group had similar priorities: digital collections vs physical and institutional changes. Cloud-based library services, cataloguing, fair data, AI etc. Building a digital infrastructure at top level. Supporting physical projects, increasing the visibility of libraries at national level, not just the capital. Members should share openly on the quality of physical sites and storage. On an institutional level, there is a necessity to simplify organisations, to develop more links with the scientific community, to develop staff skills. All these priorities will help us continue our adaptation.

LE thanked CENL for all the work that the organisation does. Sharing experiences and inspiring each other is key. We should also be speaking about failures and challenges. We should also talk about basic library issues. CENL should do more informal exchanges of papers, not just through the network groups. CENL could facilitate the exchange of contacts, so we can easily contact someone in a member library when we have a question. Perhaps there should be a new working group on a more general subject for example the legal deposit question.

IS's priorities focussed on sustainable financing. Fundraising and developing expertise on this. Another priority was on the changing missions of libraries: how we should balance our current mission while facing changes: regional/local partnerships. Managing transition to the digital age: open access, open publishing. How can we have flexible engagement in society?

CENL should support knowledge sharing, advocacy and promotion of national libraries. CENL could help with strengthening management capacity and help transferring it at other levels. CENL could also strengthen the network groups and make our staff more aware of the groups, so that people can easily reach out to them.

JA's group's priorities were focussed on digitisation / development of technology like AI / marketing strategies / developing digital skills. Open access as a movement: how is it connecting with CENL or is it a LIBER topic?

CENL can facilitate ways for members to learn from each other, facilitate the sharing, help contact and mobility through bursaries. Training would also be helpful. CENL could also connect not just directors but specialists. When something really exciting and new is happening in one of the members' libraries, we could inform CENL members and share the experience.

KG's group's priorities were around research support / green libraries / digital libraries. CENL could help develop best practice on digital libraries. CENL could do more advocacy supporting the voices of national libraries. CENL could have less static information on the website and have more focus on knowledge exchange.

RK thanked all the Chairs for their feedback, which will be very useful for the new EC to start thinking about the next CENL strategy. MH encouraged members to sign up to the website and use the forum for their staff to share and exchange.

17. Presentation by the 2022 host

Taner Beyoglu (TB), Assistant Director General of the National Library of Turkey, thanked the British Library team and the National Library of Belgium team for all their work in organising the 2021 AGM. TB said that his team was looking forward to working with German National Library team to organise the 2022 AGM in Ankara. TB explained that in Turkish culture, presents are a sign of respect and presented RK and SL with gifts from the National Library of Turkey.

Ali Odabaş (AO), Director General of the National Library of Turkey explained that national libraries are really important to contribute to the social development of society. Knowledge must be used.

The National Library of Turkey has been working in its present building since 1983 with 400 staff in three blocks. The library has a user capacity of 1,300 people and serves 700,000 users annually. The National Library has also developed digital services as it aims to serve its users better in the digital world and adapt. The National Library has signed MoUs with 38 organisations.

AO said that his team is looking forward to CENL members joining them in Ankara. AO learnt a lot from all of CENL members in Brussels and hopes to stimulate similar discussions in Turkey.

18. Closing remarks

FS explained that this AGM had been his first physical step in the community of European national libraries and it was an inspiring experience. FS said that he is delighted to take over as Chair, and therewith host the CENL Secretariat, and the BL team has made the transition very easy. The Secretariat and Executive Committee are facilitators and it will be up to us a community to develop ideas, to bring forward our relevance to society. Willy Brandt said that *'the best way to predict the future is to shape it together'*. We can shape the future of national libraries together. National libraries are active memories of the past, present and the future.

RK reiterated how delighted he has been to serve the CENL community. At the British Library the team talks about our mission being focused on opening up our collections for research, inspiration and enjoyment. We have learnt and been inspired so much from and by CENL members and have enjoyed every moment. The British Library will remain dedicated to CENL and RK's team is looking forward to continuing working with all CENL members. RK gave a final thanks to SL and her team as they have prepared this AGM meticulously and showed resilience and attention. The CENL AGM in Brussels has been a fantastic show of love and hospitality.

SL thanked her team for all their work on the AGM. SL enjoyed meeting new CENL members and has learnt a lot over two days. HP and SL thanked Katarina Krištofová & Sandra Collins from the EC and the British Library team. SL mentioned that she learnt a lot from RK and his team over the past few years and the British Library team has professionalised CENL as an organisation.

HP mentioned that it was his 20th anniversary taking part in CENL. HP thanked the British Library team for their work, their professionalism and creativity. The team created new networks, new topics of discussion and a new strategy. Chairing CENL is much more than just administering an organisation. All CENL members have benefited from the British Library's knowledge and skills. CENL now has a new website and is present on social media. When RK started as Chair, CENL was still running The European Library and then supported Europeana. A lot of work was done to guarantee the financial stability of CENL. HP concluded by thanking RK for his friendship.

The AGM concluded. The Royal Library of Belgium offered optional tours of the library to all delegates.

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