

# ANNUAL REPORT TO CENL 2025

**Name of Country:** Austria

**Name of Library:** Austrian National Library (ANL) /

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (ÖNB)

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## **New Attendance Record in 2025**

The attendance at the Austrian National Library's reading rooms and museum facilities exceeded one million visitors for the first time in 2024. In the reporting year of 2025, a new record was reached with more than 1.3 million visitors. The State Hall, one of the most beautiful Baroque reading rooms in the world, was in the focus of public interest, with an increase by 33 per cent.

## **László Krasznahorkai Awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature**

That the 2025 Nobel Prize in Literature went to László Krasznahorkai gave rise to great joy at the Austrian National Library, since the Hungarian-born writer's extensive pre-bequest has been conserved at the Austrian National Library's Literary Archive since 2024. In addition to manuscripts of his literary works, it also comprises a lively exchange of letters with over 700 correspondents, as well as research materials, travel documents, diaries, audio and video recordings, and photographs. An exhibition in the foyer presented selected items from the archive and provided insights into the world-renowned author's roots, career, and writing practice.

## **Interim Evaluation of Strategic Goals 2023–2027**

The strategic goals for the period 2023–2027 had been set in 2022, their implementation beginning in 2023. Halfway into 2025, an interim evaluation was carried out during a one-day retreat, bringing to light positive results for all twelve work groups. The focus of implementation efforts in 2025 was on improving the presentation and accessibility of our collections by launching a comprehensive portal strategy, including a modern IIIF viewer and transparent rights labelling. Other priorities included setting up new workflows for the digital collection, proceeding with our successful ÖNB Labs and Digital Editions programmes, and offering a training programme at the Centre for Information and Media Literacy with a focus on AI.

## **Cultural Pool of 660,000 Digitised Objects**

With more than 1.6 million digital objects, Kulturpool is the central search portal for digitised cultural heritage in Austria, more than 40 per cent of which comes from the holdings of the Austrian National Library. Its approximately 660,000 digitised items, which will subsequently also be made available via Europeana, Europe's digital library, mainly comprise uncopyrighted books and prints from the sixteenth century onwards, but they also include around 500 manuscripts on the Jesuits' history.

## **Exhibitions & Museums**

### **Temporary Exhibition 'A Century in Pictures. Austria 1925–2025' (March 2025 – November 2025)**

The end of the Second World War eighty years ago, going in hand with the liberation from National Socialism, the signing of the Austrian State Treaty seventy years ago, and Austria's joining the European Union thirty years ago were decisive turning points that continue to shape our country to this day. In the anniversary year of 2025, the Austrian National Library invited visitors to look back on the eventful history of the past one hundred years and, at the same time, reflect upon a nation's roots and identity.

Iconic images by outstanding Austrian artists from our Picture Archive's holdings, all of which are deeply imprinted in the collective memory, transported both the people's attitude towards life and the radical political and social upheavals. This 'Centennial Show' was complemented by posters, newspapers, magazines, and insights into seventies years of television history, compiled in cooperation with the archive of the Austrian Broadcasting Company ORF.

### **Temporary Exhibition 'Where We Come From. Literature and Origins' (April 2025 – February 2026)**

The exhibition at the Literature Museum addressed a similar topic from a different angle. Complemented by international perspectives, the show focused on narratives of origin from twentieth- and twenty-first-century Austrian literature. Among other things, it inquired into how social background, economic inequality, and class affiliation are reflected in literature and what role migration, multilingualism, and family situations play in these texts. Numerous private photographic finds, including examples contributed by Arno Geiger and Peter Handke, film recordings by French writer Annie Ernaux, and photo collages by Canadian artist Sandy Middleton, clearly illustrated to what extent family photographs shape our memories of where we come from.

### **Temporary Exhibition 'The Power of Words. Domination and Cultural Diversity in Ancient Egypt' (June 2025 – May 2026)**

The exhibition at the Papyrus Museum also dealt with the theme of origin, this time in the context of power, diversity, and language. Over ninety exhibits highlighted the various linguistic traditions in Egypt from around 1500 BC to 1000 AD in terms of their historical and social transformation, thus demonstrating how various languages overlapped and coexisted simultaneously. This reveals a phenomenon highly interesting in terms of cultural history of how a lingo of rule (Greek and

subsequently Arabic) and a vernacular (Egyptian in its various historical forms) occurred at the same time over the centuries.

### Temporary Exhibition 'Medicine Through the Ages. From Antiquity to Modernism'

(November 2025 – March 2026)

The second exhibition held at the State Hall in 2025 displayed historical documents on the history of medicine. The spectrum ranged from the so-called Tacuina sanitatis, a universal health guide in tabular form that goes back to an eleventh-century Arabic original, to the history of devastating epidemics and the dawn of modern medicine, in which Vienna played a prominent role with names like Gerhard van Swieten, Ignaz Semmelweis, and Theodor Billroth.

### Sustainable Library

The Austrian National Library also seeks to be a role model in the library sector in terms of sustainability. By 2030 greenhouse gas emissions are to be reduced by at least 59 per cent compared to 2019. The 2024 greenhouse gas balance shows that emissions have already been reduced by 46 per cent compared to 2019: this corresponds to a reduction by 1,188 tons to a total of 1,371 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2024.

For 2025, the Competence Centre for Climate Neutrality at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, in collaboration with the Federal Museums and the Austrian National Library, is developing a new greenhouse-gas balancing tool with updated emission factors, which is expected to provide new insights into the process of reduction.

### Research and Digital Humanities

2025 marked the launch of a project looking into the accessibility of image materials through artificial intelligence. Using twentieth-century photographic holdings from the Picture Archive and Graphic Department, the image recognition of existing models for object recognition was tested while new models were trained as well. In the future, the resulting data will be made available to our users for research purposes.

In the field of digital humanities, the edition projects on Erich Fried's 'Intimus' broadcasting programmes and the follow-up project on Peter Handke's notebooks were launched in collaboration with the Literary Archive. In the E-LAUTE project on historical lute tablatures, the interface was adapted to requirements in the field of musicology. Last year, the ÖNB Labs pushed ahead with the publication and updating of data sets (e.g. Austria from Above, ANNO).

## **Digitisation and Digital Preservation**

By the end of 2025, the ANNO (AustriaN Newspapers Online) online portal had grown to more than 28.4 million pages. The digital newspaper reading room now offers more than 1,600 newspaper and magazine titles, and more than 2 million newspaper issues.

The public-private partnership with Google continued in 2025, with around 52,000 copyright-free works from the Austrian National Library's holdings digitised and made available free of charge on the Austrian National Library's website. Since this digitisation cooperation began in 2011, a total of more than 730,000 volumes have been made available to the public online.

We also kept up the protective digitisation of objects from the Department of Music, the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, the Department of Planned Languages, the Department of Papyri, the Picture Archive and Graphic Department, and the Portrait Collection.

Furthermore, regular web crawls continued to be conducted in 2025: in addition to the annual domain crawl and ongoing collections on the topics of media, politics, women/gender, and literature, the provincial government elections in Vienna and Burgenland were documented. The compilations were expanded by the themes of art and culture. Based on the strategic goal of enhancing the integration of these collections into the activities of the Web Archive, efforts have been made to develop a process for registering and cataloguing websites.

### **Dr. Johanna Rachinger**

Dr. Johanna Rachinger, one of the country's most renowned cultural managers, headed the Austrian National Library with great success for twenty-four years. Having taken over as the Austrian National Library's director in June 2001, she officially resigned from her position in November 2025 due to injuries inflicted by a fall. With great commitment and a keen sense for landmark topics in the library and museum sector, she initiated numerous changes. The Austrian National Library's present position as a modern educational and cultural centre, as a service-oriented information and research centre, and as the nation's most outstanding memory institution bears her signature to a major extent. Under Rachinger's leadership, the Austrian National Library underwent a fundamental transformation from an analogue-based library to a pioneering institution in terms of digitisation and the use of artificial intelligence.

## Key facts and figures

	2025	2024
<b>holdings (as of 31 December)</b>	<b>11 793 812</b>	<b>12 135 373</b>
- analog	8 601 317	9 135 137
- Born-digitalDigital	3 192 495	3 000 236
<b>total acquisitions</b>	<b>296 472</b>	<b>162 056</b>
- analog	91 082	43 050
- Born-Digital	205 390	119 006
<b>digitized objects</b>	<b>3 792 111</b>	<b>3 669 629</b>
<b>mewspapers and magazines (analog)</b>	<b>9 305</b>	<b>9 252</b>
<b>users of reading rooms</b>	<b>192 324</b>	<b>197 708</b>
<b>total of documents used</b>	<b>230 204</b>	<b>257 841</b>
<b>visitors to museums and exhibitions</b>	<b>1 113 543</b>	<b>872 233</b>
<b>Staff (FTE)</b>	<b>343,38</b>	<b>331,54</b>