

ANNUAL REPORT TO CENL 2024

Name of Country: Austria

Name of Library: Austrian National Library (ANL) /

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (ÖNB)

Name of Chief Executive: Director General Dr. Johanna Rachinger

Contact International Matters: Irmgard Harrer

Address: Josefsplatz 1, A-1015 Vienna

Telephone: +43 1 534 10 201

Fax: +43 1 534 10 / 280

Web address: <https://www.onb.ac.at/>

E-mail: onb@onb.ac.at

New visitor record

After a visitor record in 2023, the total number of museum, exhibition and library visits exceeded the one million mark for the first time in 2024 (1,069,941 visits). The Great Hall, which is one of the most beautiful baroque library halls in the world, was particularly popular with its diverse exhibition program.

Exhibitions & Museums

Anton Bruckner Year 2024: Exhibition – Symposium – Gala Concert

The Austrian National Library seized Anton Bruckner's 200th birthday as a welcome opportunity to commemorate this great Austrian composer. Entitled 'Anton Bruckner. The Pious Revolutionary' and held at the State Hall, the exhibition presented highlights from our unique Bruckner collection (March 2024 – January 2025). Displaying original full scores and numerous biographic documents, the show highlighted his pioneering musical accomplishments, contrasting them with his conservative, austere, religious, and difficult personality that was frequently plagued with self-doubt. The exhibition traced Bruckner's arduous road to public recognition and elucidated his social environment. It was accompanied by an international musicological symposium and a performance of the composer's marvellous Mass No. 1 in D minor at the Augustinian Church.

**Exhibition: “I think in slow thunderbolts.” Friederike Mayröcker. Poet of the Century’
(April 2024 – February 2025)**

The Literature Museum celebrated the 100th birthday of the grande dame of contemporary Austrian literature, who had died in 2021, with an homage to Friederike Mayröcker”. The starting point of the exhibition was her legendary writing studio in Vienna, a poetic universe of hundreds of notes, manuscripts, books, correspondences, and works of art, behind which her furniture disappeared almost completely. The comprehensive show was the first to offer insights into Mayeröcker’s estate of overwhelming dimensions, which had already been entrusted to the Austrian National Library during the poet’s lifetime.

Exhibition: ‘Divine and Eaten. The Ambivalent Relationship between Humans and Animals in the Land on the Nile’ (June 2024 – May 2025)

This temporary exhibition at the Austrian National Library’s Papyrus Museum was devoted to the multifaceted relationship between human and animal in ancient Egypt. Numerous surviving documents attest to the central importance of livestock such as cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, camels, etc. for nutrition and as working animals. Wild beasts like crocodiles and snakes posed a constant threat. People tried to protect themselves from poisonous scorpions with magic amulets. Animal symbolism played an important role in the religious ideas of Egyptians, as is attested to by countless deities in the guise of animals. The symbolic function of these creatures is also reflected in the hieroglyphic script.

The *Dagulf Psalter*: Successful Addition to the UNESCO Memory of the World Register

The Austrian National Library was able to successfully present another submission to the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme in the form of the *Dagulf Psalter* (Cod. 1861). The codex is part of a transnational submission concerning the so-called Court School of Charlemagne, which was initiated by the Trier City Research Library and comprises ten manuscripts from five countries. The manuscript, named after its scribe and written in gold ink, dates from the late eighth century and was intended as a gift from Charlemagne to Pope Hadrian I, although it did not reach the latter because he died before it arrived. The Psalter is considered the most important example of early Carolingian minuscule script.

Strategic Goals 2023–2027

In the second year of the strategic period 2023–2027, we consistently worked on numerous projects for which it is possible to present first outcomes.

Collection Guidelines

Based on our ‘Vision 2035 – Opening Spaces’, the Austrian National Library’s collection guidelines were reassessed and reviewed. Social transformation, including above all digital change and a growing awareness of cultural diversity, prompted us to update the existing collection guidelines. The revised version takes into account the digital prerequisites and technological innovations resulting from

the increasing digitisation of large parts of social life in both the public and private spheres. Digital content is now also a central aspect of the collection guidelines, including electronic media, content generated as a result of web crawls, or parts of advance bequests and estates.

Online Exhibitions

Online exhibitions increasingly complement the Austrian National Library's analogue museum activities, as they offer attractive and modern possibilities to convey and present topical themes. For implementing online exhibitions, a new tool was selected and adapted to our institution's requirements. Exhibition curators were introduced to this new tool in 2024 and could already realize two projects applying it.

Portal Strategy

An overarching portal strategy is to take into account mobile use, user experience, and accessibility and facilitate a standardised, more usable, and visually appealing design of the Austrian National Library's portals. In terms of content, the concept was developed together with an agency specialising in user experience. In the course of the project, numerous interviews were conducted with users, and the results were integrated in the final solution. The planning, analysis, and conceptual development of the technical implementation of the portal strategy have begun.

An important element of the portal strategy, a state-of-the-art viewer for browsing digital holdings, was presented as a rudimentary version and will be further developed after obtaining feedback from experts and a subsequent evaluation. It will be integrated into the Austrian National Library's current portals in 2025.

AI Policy

In 2024, the Austrian National Library developed an AI policy in order to ensure that ethical, legal, and social aspects will be fully taken into account when using AI technologies in the future. The potentials of AI for various fields of activity have been analysed, and concrete possibilities for its practical application have been developed. A comprehensive training offensive for both employees and users has been scheduled for 2025 in order to cultivate and strengthen their skills in dealing with AI. A special future focus of measures planned will be on media indexing, which is to be optimised through AI-supported automation.

Research

In 2024, three scientific symposia took place at the Austrian National Library: "200 Years of Bruckner - 100 Years of Bruckner Research" accompanying the Bruckner exhibition in the Great Hall, "Pahlavi Papyri in context and Manuscript collections" and "Newspapers as Datasets".

In addition, the following research projects started in 2024:

- *Viele Stimmen (Many Voices)*. Permanently making archives of democratization and public knowledge of the Austrian National Library and the House of Austrian History accessible and visible. Funded project as part of the BMKÖS's Digital Cultural Heritage program (duration 2024-2025)

- *Disability History Project*. Cooperation project with the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection (duration 2024-2025)
- *Cultural participation through historical museums*. Cooperation project with the Department of German as a Foreign and Second Language at the Institute of German Studies at the University of Vienna, funded by: Cultural Department of the City of Vienna/MA 7 (duration 2024–2026)
- *The Vienna Basilica Palimpsests*, in cooperation with the Institute for Byzantine Research at the ÖAW, funded by the FWF (duration 2024-2027)
- *ECHOES – European Cloud for Heritage Open Science*, funded by EU Commission Horizon Europe (duration 2024–2029).

Reading Rooms and Depositories

In 2014, two major technology-related projects were dedicated to the continuous improvement and modern development of our user services: In February, a new ticket and access recording system was implemented, which includes a new ticket shop and the replacement of all physical cash desks and ticket scanners. This highly challenging project could be completed on schedule.

Another extensive project involved the refurbishment and digitisation of the technically outdated “Telelift” book conveyor system, which transports books from the 16,000-square-metre book storage area to the issue point. The refurbished system also features new conveyor containers furnished with swivel-mounted inserts, so that books are protected from falling out along the route.

Sustainability Management

Roadmap for Climate Protection – Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets for 2019–2030

The Austrian National Library is committed to making a significant contribution to combating climate change and has set itself the goal of reducing GHG emissions by at least 59% compared to 2019 by the year 2030. Our ambitious objectives include a variety of measures and partial-reduction targets that take into account not only technological progress but also growing numbers of visitors and an increase in floor space.

An initial overview of the previous development and of the forecast up to 2030 shows that the Austrian National Library is heading in the right direction. Compared to the reference year 2019, emissions have already been successfully reduced by 50%. This corresponds to a reduction from 2,559 to 1,272 tonnes of CO₂¹. GHG emissions are to be further reduced to 1,043 tonnes of CO₂ by 2030.

Outstanding New Acquisitions

In 2024, the Literary Archive was able to acquire, among other things, the estate of the award-winning Hungarian writer László Krasznahorkai, who lives in Vienna, a partial estate of Peter Altenberg, and additions to Peter Handke and Ödön von Horvath. The slide archive of the important Austrian press

photographer Heinz-Stephan Tesarek was an important addition to the holdings of contemporary documentary photography.

Key facts and figures

	2024	2023
holdings (as of 31 December)	12 135 373	11 913 726
- analog	9 135 137	9 041 300
- Born-digital/Digital	3 000 236	2 872 426
total acquisitions	162 056	246 335
- analog	43 050	47 955
- Born-Digital	119 006	198 380
digitized objects	3 669 629	3 416 015
mewspapers and magazines (analog)	9 252	9 399
users of reading rooms	197 708	185 047
total of documents used	257 841	288 908
visitors to museums and exhibitions	872 233	722 300
visits to website (page views)	199 650 740	198 795 282
Staff (FTE)	331,54	329,71