

EUniverCities Network Meeting | Strasbourg |

22 – 24 October 2024

Libraries: a link between universities and cities?



Context

A Strasbourg study into the cultural practices of local residents showed that libraries were the city's most popular cultural venues. They ranked ahead of cinemas and theatres. The library of the 21st century is no longer the closed place reserved for scholars that it was for centuries. Today, libraries provide their readers with a wide range of documents (books, video and audio media, sometimes even works of art). Consulting them no longer requires any particular erudition. What's more, children's libraries are also open to families. However, many municipal libraries have preserved their old collections, which continue to attract researchers and students. Today's libraries are places where different sections of the public come together, particularly students and citizens.

In medium size cities, municipal libraries often co-exist with university libraries. The uses to which the latter are put have also changed considerably in recent decades. They have opened up to a wider public, giving access to citizens who want to do research or learn something new. In addition, more and more libraries are becoming "learning centres", places where people can work, study, get trained and have access to different facilities. Students often come to libraries to work rather than to borrow books.



If we add to this the fact that libraries, whether municipal or university, are also cultural venues, hosting conferences and exhibitions or organising screenings, we can see that libraries play a central role in the life of the city and the university, and that they are places where these two populations (academics and the civil society) meet.

Aims

The overall aims of our meeting in Strasbourg are:

- 1) To assess the role of libraries as meeting places for students and citizens;
- 2) To discuss, both retrospectively and prospectively, the ways in which we can strengthen the cross-fertilisation of audiences within libraries;
- 3) More broadly, to ask questions about the common spaces in the city where the academic world and citizens meet;
- 4) To question the place of libraries in a world where the media for disseminating knowledge have multiplied and where books no longer have the hegemonic position they had until the end of the 20th century.

The meeting will take place in a very special context. From April 2024 to April 2025, Strasbourg is the World Book Capital (UNESCO label). Along with Mainz, it is the city where Gutenberg invented the printing press. Strasbourg has the distinction of having the only national university library outside Paris. Its municipal library, which contained precious incunabula and manuscripts, including the Hortus Deliciarum (ca. 1160), burnt down in 1870. Its collections were restored and enriched by the Germans, who turned it into one of the largest libraries of the Second Empire. Recently, the university and municipal libraries have undergone modern construction with strong architectural gestures, confirming the transformation of the spaces and their use. The meeting will include a tour of the city's main libraries.

Programme

Day 1 – Tuesday 22 October 2024

16:00 – 17:00	Registration and welcome	Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire (BNU) , 6 place de la République 67000 Strasbourg
17:00 – 17:45	Plenary lecture - “Will there still be libraries in 100 years?” Guest speaker - Dagnija Baltiņa , Director of the National Library of Latvia (NLL)	
18:00 – 19:00	Welcome speeches by the Mayor, the President of the University and the President of the Board of the BNU	City Hall (Hôtel de ville) , 9 rue Brûlée 67000 Strasbourg
19:00	Cocktails	

Day 2 – Wednesday 23 October 2024

Morning Session

8:30 – 9:00	Welcome coffee	Studium , 2 rue Blaise Pascal 67000 Strasbourg
9:00 – 9:30	Introduction (Willem van Winden) and presentations by the University of Strasbourg and its libraries (Mathieu Schneider)	
9:30 – 11:00	Libraries coping with new challenges	Parallel Workshops 1 and 2

Day 2 – Wednesday 23 October 2024

Parallel Workshops 1 and 2

Workshop 1

What role can libraries play in educating citizens and students in a context of infobesity (information overload), and fake news? How to promote access to information, and the selection and deciphering of reliable information.

Moderation: Willem van Winden

City/Organisation (Speaker)	Topic
Strasbourg/City (Frédéric Derouard and Maud Lehodey)	What Strasbourg does for the public in the field of media and information literacy
Exeter/University (Caroline Walter)	Ethical use of AI

Workshop 2

How can science be made more accessible to the general public? What role can libraries play in developing the link between science and society?

Moderation: Frédéric Blin

City/Organisation (Speaker)	Topic
Strasbourg/BNU (Jérôme Schweitzer)	A cultural policy to make the BNU more attractive for a broader audience.
Linköping/University (Kajsa Gustafsson Åman)	A programme of exhibitions and lectures.
Innsbruck/City (Christina Krenmayr)	Inspiration - Provocation – Science and Practice in Dialogue
Ghent/University (Dries Moreels)	A layered approach to Advancing Open Knowledge Creation

Day 2 – Wednesday 23 October 2024

- 11:00 – 11:15 Coffee break
- 11:15 – 11:45 Summary of workshops and discussion (Willem van Winden)
- 11:45 – 12:30 Tour of the Studium

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch

Quarto-hall (Studium)

Afternoon Session

14:00 – 14:15 Presentation by the Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire de Strasbourg (Alain Colas)

Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire, 6 place de la République 67000 Strasbourg

14:15 – 15:45 **Libraries as places of transformation**

Parallel Workshops 3 and 4

Parallel Workshops 3 and 4

Workshop 3

How can universities and cities transform their libraries into learning centres? What are the challenges and expectations?

Moderation: Guillaume Gast

City/Organisation (Speaker)	Topic
Parma/City (Fiorenza Bernardi and Filippo Ziveri)	A Shared Vision: Building Inclusive Communities through Libraries
Aarhus/City (Lisbeth Mærkedahl)	Libraries as venues for informal learning/supporting life-long learning
Helsinki/City (Niina Holm)	Oodi – a living learning space open to all

Workshop 4

How can universities and cities transform libraries to attract an ever-wider audience?

Moderation: Florence Amsbeck

City/Organisation (Speaker)	Topic
Strasbourg/BNU (Christophe Didier)	The BNU as a tourist attraction
Strasbourg/City and University (Flora Gousset)	Examples of Strasbourg's public development strategy
Innsbruck/University (Julia Neier)	Open to all: Digital services of the University and State Library of Tyrol
Ghent/Artevelde (Mui-Ling Verbist)	Educational Games – engaging a wide audience

15:45 – 16:00 Summary of workshops and discussion
(Willem van Winden)

16:00 – 16:15 Coffee break

16:15 – 17:15 Market Place

- OVGU, Magdeburg
(Zuhar Aljundi)
 - University of Exeter
(Dom Jinks/Alice Foulkes)
(Ruth Stansfield/Jess Hurrell)
- transSCAPE: Cultural Spaces of Knowledge
Creative Arc
Knowledge Exchange Awards/
Law Clinic

17:15 – 18:30 EUniverCities Network Coordinators' Meeting

18:30 Tour of the BNU

20:00 Dinner in a typical Alsatian restaurant
Chez Yvonne S'BURJERSTUEWEL,
10 Rue du Sanglier,

Day 3 – Thursday 24 October 2024

Morning

9:00– 9:15	Welcome coffee	Médiathèque André Malraux, 1 presqu'île André Malraux 67100 Strasbourg
9:15 – 9:30	Presentation of the network of the “médiathèques” in Strasbourg (Bertille Detrie)	
9:30 – 11:00	Work and meet. Places of living together in 21st century cities	Parallel Workshops 5 and 6

Parallel Workshops 5 and 6

Workshop 5

What is the added social value of libraries in cities? Can universities and cities be associated in libraries?

Moderation: Adeline Régé

City/Organisation (Speaker)	Topic
Lausanne/BCU (Jeanette Frey)	A single public/university library service
Ghent/City (Tom Van Nieuwenhove)	Library De Krook: business as unusual

Workshop 6 – Student Workshop

How does the way students work and study impact on the way they meet? How should we conceive or adapt new places of meeting between students and citizens.

Moderation: Willem van Winden



Day 3 – Thursday 24 October 2024

- 11:00 – 11:15 Coffee break
- 11:15 – 11:45 Summary of workshops and final discussion (Willem van Winden)
- 11:45 – 12:30 Tour of the Médiathèque Malraux
- 12:30 – 13:30 Buffet lunch Médiathèque Malraux

Afternoon - Optional Visits

- 14:00 – 16:00 Visit 1: Médiathèque Frieda Kahlo (Schiltigheim)
Visit 2: Artothèque (Neudorf)
- 16:00 **End of the meeting**