



3<sup>rd</sup> July 2023 – Budapest, Hungary

Dear hosts, dear colleagues, dear LIBER friends and attendees,

It is a pleasure and a privilege for me to welcome you to the fifty-second LIBER conference, here, in Budapest.

I am very thankful to our hosts, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, dear Professor Freund, and more specifically the Library and Information Centre, Dear Professor Monok, as well as the Central European University, with the support of the university library.

We are fully aware how lucky we are to gather, meet and network in the beautiful city of Budapest, thanks to the commitment of our Hungarian colleagues, who dedicated time and energy during the past year and months to prepare the best possible experience for us all, as participants.

Budapest means a lot for our community. All across Europe, research libraries have been early adopters and ambassadors, not to say initiators of Open Access initiatives and policies. The first institutional repositories, often developed and managed by libraries, date back to more than twenty years.

Open Science is being seen nowadays as a standard component of research strategies. Very few young researchers and librarians know that it has been a long and tricky road, starting small, in activists circles trying to change rules and practices to create a world where science would be really open and shared, to achieve the ultimate goal: turning science into a global and public good.

One of the earliest and most important milestone on that road to Open Science is definitely the Budapest Open Access Initiative in 2002. Though followed and sustained by many other Declarations, the Initiative is still vivid, and celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in February 2022.

The Budapest Declaration is indeed tightly connected to the theme of our 2023 conference, “Open and trusted – Reassessing research library values”. Research libraries are gateways to scientific and scholarly information. They are facilitating flows of scientific information for all – not only the research community - and they are encouraging people and groups to make their own way through data and publications.

2023 is also a very important year for LIBER, when we launch our new strategic plan. We will of course come back to that later during the conference. We indeed have a vision for the future of research libraries for the coming years.

I would like to share it with you:

- By 2027, research libraries will be engaged and trusted hubs of their user communities. They will collaborate with each other and with local, national and

international stakeholders in their role as change agents and facilitators, and take up task in public engagement in research.

- By 2027, research libraries will provide forward-looking, state-of-the-art services for collections, publishing, and curation of information and (meta-)data. These services will be relevant to and tailored for user groups inside and outside academia.
- By 2027, in collaboration with researchers, research libraries will stimulate, facilitate, co-develop and manage infrastructures and practices designed to take Open Science to the next level, in order to fully achieve an ambition that was born some 20 years ago ... here in Budapest.

To do that, we have also identified two fundamental preconditions.

The first one has to do with skills and competencies. This is indeed a fantastic challenge for us librarians.

Our environment is moving incredibly fast:

- The data deluge is happening now in Higher Education and Research, and libraries are heavily involved;
- Artificial Intelligence is already a reality, and the impact on libraries, librarians and patrons will be huge soon;
- Training and Learning are becoming more and more important for libraries and there is an increasing need to support the development of critical thinking, to fight against misinformation and misuse of information, and to promote the use of scientific methods as a standard through society.

Libraries are among the most important players there, but to fully play this role, we need a continuing effort to upskill our workforce, so that the staff of research libraries will have the necessary knowledge, confidence and skills to take on the organisational and technological changes enabling the new roles and tasks of research libraries.

The Central European University here in Budapest is a perfect location to elaborate on the second fundamental precondition we have identified in our new strategic plan.

I am very thankful to our hosts to have chosen this venue for the conference, here, in our alma mater, in a university.

LIBER defends and supports values that are consubstantial to universities and more broadly to Higher Education and Research, that we consider as public goods:

- Diversity, Equality, Inclusivity and solidarity
- Integrity and transparency
- Academic freedom and sovereignty
- Users' rights.

Universities would be at threat without those underpinning values, providing guidance and safeguards for our research community and beyond, for the society in general. We, as a European Higher Education and Research community, altogether with our members and partners, will keep promoting those values. These topics will indeed be part of our roadmap in the coming months and years.

We still have a lot of work to do, but when I see how engaged and supportive you are, I am confident we will be able to take research libraries to the next level, for the benefits of our communities and users, and more generally speaking, for the benefits of the whole society.

Coming to the end of my speech, I would like to warmly thank you, Professor Freund, and more broadly the whole Academy of Sciences. Not only for hosting the conference, but also for the engagement and generosity of your team, that has been truly impressive during the past months and weeks. We are immensely grateful to you for that.

Dear colleagues, dear LIBER friends and attendees, have a nice, fruitful and exciting conference.

*Julien Roche - LIBER President*