



LIBER ANNUAL MEETING OF PARTICIPANTS: LAUSANNE, 3 JULY 2025

MINUTES OF LIBER ANNUAL MEETING OF PARTICIPANTS

Wednesday 2 July 2025

Papers have been pre-circulated in the June 2025 Mailing via [link](#).

- Formal opening of the Meeting of Participants (Julien Roche, LIBER President)
Attendees at LIBER's Annual Meeting of Participants were welcomed, and the meeting continued with a brief overview of the procedures.
- LIBER Executive Board Membership and appointment of tellers (Anja Smit, LIBER Secretary-General)
An overview of the LIBER Executive Board membership was provided, followed by the voting procedures.
- Voting at the Meeting of Participants (Anja Smit, LIBER Secretary-General)

The nominations for the Executive Board are now officially open. Participants have been informed about the voting process. Closed ballot voting will take place from Wednesday, July 2nd, to Thursday, July 3rd, closing at 9 a.m. The results of the nominations will be announced during the Meeting of Participants on Thursday, July 3rd, 2025.

Thursday 3 July 2025

The total number of registered participants with voting rights present at LIBER's Annual Meeting of Participants on Thursday, July 3, 2025, was 100.

- **Meeting of Participants Opening (Julien Roche, LIBER President)**
Attendees were welcomed to the Meeting of Participants taking place on Thursday, 3 July 2025.
- **Minutes of the July 2024 Meeting of Participants (Anja Smit, LIBER General-Secretary)**

The [Minutes of the 2024 Meeting of Participants](#) were presented for approval. The minutes were approved with 100 votes in favor, 0 against, 0 abstentions.

- **Matters arising**
There were no matters arising.

INTERNAL BUSINESS PROCESSES & STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

- **Introduction (Julien Roche, LIBER President)**

For transparency reasons, the full text of the introductory speech of Julien Roche, LIBER President, is included in the minutes.



“Dear LIBER members and colleagues,

I have an important matter to raise regarding the financial situation of LIBER. You will soon have a view of the annual budget for 2024. You will see we have suffered an important deficit. While LIBER used to have a wealthy budget for years, we faced a difficult situation in 2024.

As you know, LIBER has been successful in many European projects in the past. This time is over. All seven European projects that LIBER was participating in the past years will end in the period from September last year until October this year. Additionally, due to changing European agendas, less and less money is available for European projects connected to our strategy. LIBER has participated in several consortia proposing in European calls in the past eighteen months, however all those proposals have not been granted. This lack of success, in a context where upcoming opportunities for LIBER in the European research and higher education agendas remain uncertain, is by far the most significant reason for the substantial deficit in 2024. The other reasons are :

- 1st. The high level cost of salaries in the Netherlands, and growing every year, while we have a financial model that is a balanced mix between members in the high-level GPD tier and others in a lower level GPD-tier ;*
- 2nd. Some costs for the annual conference and other events that are not fully covered in our budget. 2025 will be a transition year where again a deficit will occur.*

The situation was alarming, and we took it seriously. It was my responsibility to propose and implement strong measures to guarantee a sustainable future for our association, using the reserves to cover the deficit on one hand and reducing the expenses on the other.

What did we do?

Immediately, when the situation became clear in mid-2024, we took action. We assessed the situation to fully understand how far we had to go in the efforts we had to make to go back to a balanced budget.

We hired an accountant with extended missions compared to the former one, to have a thorough audit and to get a precise picture of the situation.

Then we elaborated an action plan, which was approved unanimously in November 2024 by the LIBER Board.

Four actions were taken:

- Action 1. In reviewing options, the LIBER Executive Board was unanimous in maintaining a strong focus on serving the European research library community, including continued advocacy efforts within Europe, representing the interests of our members. The current services portfolio will be maintained, with its flagship events and programmes: the LIBER Annual Conference, the Architecture Seminar, the LIBER Journées and the Emerging Leaders Programme, and including successful and highly rated new activities such as the Winter Event. LIBER maintains its efforts to facilitate the LIBER community through its working groups and other member initiatives. Our open-access journal, the LIBER Quarterly, will also be maintained.*
- Action 2. As the project income will end, the most impactful decision concerning our staff was to resize the office. This measure, which couldn't*



happen immediately after the decision, will take place gradually in 2025 and will be fully effective in 2026. That's the main reason for the deficit in 2025.

- *Action 3. Limit day-to-day expenses as much as possible.*
- *Action 4. Reduce some structural expenses to limit the deficit, for instance, by postponing the 2025 Winter event to a later year. We are currently discussing the 2026 Winter event with a revised economic model.*

Our treasurer will present the full financial situation.

Reducing our activity and letting staff members go were not easy decisions, but it was our ultimate responsibility.

You will see that the situation is now under control, though the reserves will of course be much lower than in the past by the end of the process. My goal, as LIBER President, altogether with the board and the executive director, is to make sure we keep LIBER sustainable for the coming years. Some lessons have been learnt from this situation: we will do everything we can to prevent a similar situation from happening again in the future.

I am sure I can count on your full support in the coming months and years.

And now I'm handing over to our treasurer. The board and I will be happy to answer any questions and receive any comments from you after the presentation of treasurer."

- **Finances (Hilde van Wijngaarden, LIBER Treasurer)**

- Annual Accounts 2024 and Auditor's report for approval

The financial figures for 2024 were presented, noting a deficit of €282,033. 2024 and 2025 are transition years. The measures taken by the board will be implemented in 2025, and the result will be visible in 2026.

Questions from the audience:

Q: How has the Supportive Membership Fees Program (SMF) helped alleviate the effects of the current financial situation?

A: In response, gratitude was expressed to the SMF contributors, acknowledging that although their contributions are not yet sufficient, they provide valuable support, enabling LIBER to continue offering its services.

Q: What is the state of LIBER's reserves?

A: At the beginning of 2024, LIBER found itself in a comfortable financial position, enabling it to absorb both the deficit for 2024 and the expected deficit for 2025. By the end of 2025, LIBER anticipates having approximately €100,000 in reserves, thanks to the measures announced in early 2025. However, LIBER acknowledges the need to increase its reserves to maintain a healthy financial state. By 2026, LIBER expects that the measures implemented will lead to a balanced budget, provided it can sustain its current member base. After achieving this, LIBER will focus on rebuilding its reserves.

LIBER is re-evaluating all its training and events to find ways to achieve a balanced income. Any possible surplus will go towards rebuilding reserves.



Q: Request for clarification and more detailed explanations regarding the posts 'Expenses services' and 'Expenditure operations' presented on the PowerPoint slides.

A: Expense services cover the costs of Projects, Events, and Leadership Programs. Expenditure operations refer to operational costs, including automation, housing, and office expenses.

Q: Given that organisations are legally required to maintain 12 months of reserves, what is the current situation with LIBER reserves?

A: The specific requirement for financial reserves varies depending on the type of organisation. While these requirements may not be the same for all organisations. LIBER recognises the importance of maintaining strong reserves. The goal is to rebuild reserves to a healthy and sustainable level by 2026.

Q: Can the Winter Event run online?:

A: Conducting the Winter Event on-site is crucial, as it represents an opportunity for the core community of LIBER to meet and network. LIBER plan to maintain the on-site format, with expectations of achieving at least a balanced budget by 2026. In conclusion, a LIBER Participant thanked LIBER for the difficult decisions that have been made, stating that LIBER is a network-focused, service-oriented organisation rather than just a project. This is the most valuable part of LIBER, which is most important and in addition, they noted that their library would consider renewing its participation in the SMF based on the criteria provided.

The Annual Accounts for 2024 were approved with 97 votes in favor, 0 against, 3 abstentions.

- Indexing Participant fees 2026 (for information)

The Indexed Participant fees for 2026 were presented; no questions were raised.

- Supportive Membership Fee Programme 2026 (for information)

The Supportive Membership Fee Program for 2026. The program is now open, and participants are encouraged to share the news within their networks.

In response to the 2024 Meeting of Participants, LIBER offers the option to be invoiced in 2025 for the 2026 Supportive Membership Programme. Participants will be informed at short notice

- **Annual Report 2024 – 2025 (Martine Pronk, LIBER Executive Director)**

- Annual Report 2024 – 2025 for approval

An overview of the Annual Report was presented. Gratitude was expressed to the main contributors.

Thanks were given to all incoming and outgoing (co-)Chairs of the Working Groups (WGs), the managing editor of LIBER Quarterly, and the consultant and programme director of ELP for their commitment to LIBER.

The Annual Report 2024 – 2025 was approved with 100 votes in favor, 0 against, 0 abstentions.



LIBER EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERSHIP

- **LIBER Executive Board Membership July 2025 (Anja Smit, LIBER Secretary-General)**
 - Meeting of Participants Elections (for information)

Thanks were extended to the tellers and the outgoing members of the Board for their outstanding service. In 2025, there will be four vacancies on the Board: three seats will be open for election, while the LIBER Board will exercise its right to appoint a member to fill the fourth vacancy. Appreciation was expressed to all candidates who have shown interest in these available LIBER Executive Board positions.

In accordance with LIBER's statutes, rules, and regulations, voting was conducted using closed ballots. The results of the ballot were announced, and the following individuals were declared the winners of the election.

- Ann-Sofie Axelsson, Head of Department and Library Director from the Chalmers University of Technology in Sweden
- Alicia Gomez, Library Director, IE University Director in Spain
- David Tréfás, Head of Modern Collections, University of Basel from Switzerland.

They were invited to the LIBER Executive Board Meeting on Friday.

- Meeting of Participants Appointments & Reappointments (for ratification)

In accordance with LIBER's statutes, rules, and regulations, the following candidates have been presented to the LIBER Participant for reappointment and appointment through ratification:

- Appointment: Jonathan White, Director of Library and Cultural Services and University Librarian, Library and Cultural Services, University of Essex, in the role of Treasurer (2025 – 2027).
- Reappointment: [Anja Smit](#), LIBER Secretary-General, Director at DANS. (2025 – 2027)

The appointment of Jonathan White (in the role of LIBER Treasurer) and reappointment of Anja Smit (in the role of LIBER Secretary General) were ratified with 100 votes in favor, 0 against, 0 abstentions.

- **In Memoriam**

A moment of remembrance was held to honour Andris Vilks (1957 – 2025), long-standing Director of the National Library of Latvia and President of Bibliotheca Baltica. Mr. Vilks was a well-respected and highly appreciated board member from 2013 to 2019.

- **Questions from the floor (Julien Roche, LIBER President)**

There were no questions from the audience.

The Participants were thanked for their support during the challenging time, and the meeting was closed.



Anja Smit, LIBER Secretary-General
August 2025