

Managing the Largest European Statistical Collection: Traditions, Missions and Modernity in the Life and the Future of the Hungarian Statistical Office Library

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The study provides a brief overview and description of the establishment and operation of the Hungarian statistical library from the 19th century to the present day, covering the composition and use of the collection, as well as the institution's major achievements, completed projects, and milestones in recent years. The author also outlines the relationship between the library and its parent institution, the statistical office, describes the current state of affairs, and at the same time formulates numerous suggestions and ideas regarding the most effective possible cooperation between the two organizations in the future, primarily in the areas of statistical information services and research support. As a former member of the library staff, the author held various positions (reference librarian, cultural representative, researcher, team leader, head of department) between 2015 and 2025.¹

statistical library, statistical office, statistics, library and information services, history of statistics, Hungary, 19–21th century

1. Introduction

Several factors played a decisive role in the creation of this study. Perhaps the most important of these is that very little has been written about the operations of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office Library in recent years, even though it is, after all, a national specialized library. On the other hand, I believed that in connection with the 2024 survey on European statistical libraries – initiated by the library of the French statistical office and described in this journal² – it might be worthwhile to present the Hungarian institution in detail in an article, for both the Hungarian and international professional audiences. This idea, however, was met with the reality that no foreign-language material was available about the library, so the study was published in English.³

However, this article aims not only to describe what has been, but also to illustrate what might be. The ways in which we use data and information today are changing significantly, just as libraries themselves are. Statistical libraries will be no exception. Libraries and statistical offices alike must adapt to these changes – to digitization and the phenomenon of datafication – in order to meet the demands placed on them by both the government and users. The study also formulates recommendations in this area and, using the example of the Hungarian statistical library, proposes information-providing, research-supporting, and socially oriented collaborations that can be established between statistical offices and their libraries, offering mutual benefits to both parties.

2. A Brief History of the Library and an Overview of its Operations from the Beginnings to the Present

The establishment of the statistical library coincides with the foundation of the ministerial department set up on May 25, 1867, which served as the predecessor to the main body of official statistics in Hungary – the statistical office. This department, which was granted official status and greater independence in 1871, operated under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry and Trade.

Its first head was Károly Keleti (1833–1892), a renowned economic writer of the era, who directed the institution for 25 years. Keleti considered it of utmost importance that the staff of the statistical office had access to contemporary Hungarian and international literature in economics, statistics, law, and political science. To this end, he strongly advocated for the establishment of a statistical library to support official functions.

Realizing this goal, he even donated books from his own library to the new collection and aimed to secure – through legislation – that the office's library would receive a copy of every publication issued in Hungary falling within its scope (statistics, demography, economics, law and political science, political history, history, sociology, and geography) (Horváth, 2022, p. 121).

This objective was only realized after Keleti's death, through Act No. XXXV of 1897,⁴ which granted the library of the statistical office legal deposit rights. As a result, the library expanded its role from serving solely internal institutional purposes and became accessible to the public. The library still holds legal deposit rights to this day, and it remains open not only to Hungarian, but also to foreign citizens.

In 1871, Keleti appointed Imre Findura (1844–1930), a geographical writer and local historian from Vác, as the first head of the library. Findura directed the institution for more than 30 years (Lencsés, Rózsa, 2014, p. 210). Thanks to his work, the initial collection of barely two thousand volumes had grown to over 60 000 volumes by 1895, making the organization the second-largest official library in the country.

In 1885, Findura compiled the library's first printed catalogue⁵ and established an international exchange system⁶ – which still functions to a lesser extent nowadays – with foreign national statistical offices, as well as other organizations and research institutes. As a result, the library gained access to all major international statistical publications.

Following the previously mentioned Act of 1897, the library began receiving not only professional publications but also literary works and other types of publications. Additionally, it collected numerous periodicals, journals, annual reports, school bulletins, directories, and maps. Over time, fiction and popular literature also became an increasingly significant part of the collection, which rapidly expanded. The institution – originally located within the statistical office's building – established and operated three central storage depots and one external repository over the course of the 20th century, just as it does today. Currently, the library's holdings exceed 1,1 million documents. The collection grows by approximately 12 000 to 15 000 volumes annually, although professional literature now represents only a negligible portion of this growth.

The year 2010 marked a milestone in the library's operation, as its previously public services were expanded to allow residents of Budapest's 2nd district to borrow documents. In preparation for this, a former storage area was completely renovated and transformed into an open-shelf reading room between 2009 and 2010. With a lending collection of 10 000–12 000 volumes, this space – named after István Bibó⁷ – became the most prominent expression of the institution's public library function.

In addition to this reading room, users can also access the Imre Findura reading room – named after the founding librarian – offers specialized reference collections. Visitors can consult Hungarian and select foreign non-circulating literature in fields such as statistics, economics, and history.

In 2012, the institution further strengthened its public library role by allowing not only all Hungarian citizens but also foreign citizens to borrow documents under certain conditions. Besides on-site lending, the library increasingly participated in the national document supply system (*Országos Dokumentum-ellátási Rendszer*, ODR) and provided a significant number of documents through interlibrary loan services.

Overall, lending usage statistics showed a rising trend until 2018 (87 238 transactions),⁸ but in 2019 there was already a decline (79 314 transactions),⁹ which was further compounded by the widespread outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020 in Hungary. Due to the pandemic, the library was closed from mid-March 2020 with some minor interruptions until July 2021. One of the most important steps since then, from the public library perspective, was the introduction of a new integrated library system called LibMate¹⁰ in November 2022, replacing the previously used OLIB system.

Summarizing the results of the past 4,5 years since the so-called "end" of the Covid-19 (from July 2021, when the library opened its doors again), it can be concluded that the pandemic had an impact from which the library has still not recovered. At the same time, it is certainly worth asking to what extent the library has been able to introduce new digital services (remote access, e-book lending, extensive database access, modern research support services, etc.), which must increasingly become

a part of the modern library's portfolio. Since the purpose of this study is not to provide a detailed description of the library's service system (readers can find this information on the library's website), I do not intend to go beyond raising this issue in this regard.

However, as for the results, I'll include some figures here from the usage statistics of the recent years: in terms of peak years by usage, the library had 5 292 active users (2018) and 6 399 (2019), by 2023 this number dropped to 3 219 and it rose to 7 264 in 2024.¹¹ Although the number of active users has more than doubled within a year, this growth is not reflected in the library's usage statistics. Both document circulation and on-site usage data show only stagnation or minimal growth; there were 48 321 document loans in 2023 and 50 383 in 2024. These figures do not even reach the borrowing levels seen during the Covid-19 pandemic. Following the high numbers of the past decade, on-site usage figures have dropped dramatically, as did the various forms of remote access in general (OPAC, telephone, email) and the on-site internet usage too. It is noteworthy that attendance has not decreased at all across the wide spectrum of free events at the library – including exhibitions, book launches, library usage sessions, library tours, professional discussions, conferences, etc. In fact, participation increased from 2 040 attendees in 2019 to 2 401 in 2023 and 2 766 in 2024.¹² While this study does not aim to analyse these data – since I am seeking to provide a comprehensive overview of the institution –, I felt it was necessary to address this area as well. Although the data presented here are noteworthy, they should be compared with similar data from other specialized libraries in order to identify trends or pinpoint local challenges.

Although the majority of the library's users do not come from a professional or academic background, the institution maintains connections with the academic and scientific communities as well. In 2017, the library signed a professional cooperation agreement with the Faculty of Humanities at Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary; in 2018, with the Ludovika University of Public Service; and in 2023, with the Institute of History at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Pécs.

Similarly, partnerships have been established with the Committee of National Remembrance (2018), the Foundation for Discovering Hungary (2021), and the National Heritage Institute (2022).

Requests for data related to the history of statistics and historical statistical data from both domestic and foreign sources are regularly handled by the library's Reference Information Group. Every year, several university groups (BA, MA, PhD) visit the library to learn about the history of official statistics in Hungary, the statistical office, its most important data collections, and publications. Besides library user programs, the library also offers courses specifically for PhD students through which they learn about the types of statistical sources of the 19th and 20th century Hungary, and also about the means to consult these documents for research. However, a significant shortcoming in scientific relations is that the institution is not involved in Hungarian or international scientific research programs, despite the suitability of its information base for such participation.

Although after 2012 the library clearly shifted its focus to public library operations, it also continued to fulfil its specialized library duties, primarily the library services related to providing users with professional statistical information. Among its specialized library activities, the annual conference series called *Szakkönyvtári Seregszemle* (Hungarian Annual Conference of Specialized Libraries), launched first in 2016, is particularly noteworthy. This event is still jointly organized by the library and the Social Sciences Section of the Hungarian Librarians' Association (*Magyar Könyvtárosok Egyesülete*, MKE). This free conference aims to provide participants with an overview of the Hungarian specialized library system, its members, their operations, and achievements.

Additionally, in 2014 the library published the first volume of the still ongoing series *A statisztika története* (Stories of Statistics), titled *Portrét a magyar statisztika és népszégtudomány történetéből. Életrajzi lexikon a XVI. századtól napjainkig* (Portraits from the History of Hungarian Statistics and Demography: A Biographical Lexicon from the 16th Century to the Present). Between 2014 and 2020, five volumes in the series were published; the sixth volume was published in December 2025 after a long hiatus.

Besides providing reference and statistical information services and publishing specialized literature, the library has also developed several digital collections freely accessible on its website. These include volumes of the *Magyar statisztikai évkönyv* (Statistical Yearbook of Hungary) published between 1872 and 1950, thematic volumes from the series *Hivatalos statisztikai közlemények* (Official Statistical Bulletins) (1868–1891) and its successor, the *Magyar statisztikai közlemények* (Hungarian Statistical Bulletins) (1893–1942).

Previously, the library's website also hosted the *Népszámlálási Digitális Adattár* called NÉDA (Digital Population Census Database), a digital library which contains the collection of volumes compiled from the data of population censuses conducted in Hungary between 1784 and 1990. Today, this database is available on the Hungaricana portal of public collections,¹³ with a direct link provided on the library's website to guide users there.

In addition to its collection of official statistical documents or publications and the mandatory legal deposit copies, the library also holds several special collections. These include the MÉD collection (*muzeális értékű dokumentumok*, which means documents of museum value), comprising nearly 5 000 items published before 1867; a similarly sized collection of historical maps; and a manuscript archive, primarily consisting of the legacies of former statisticians (Kovács, 2013, p. 429–435). Unfortunately, in all three cases, the library has not actively managed these collections, has treated them only sporadically and has failed to recognize them as strategically important areas. This is clearly reflected in the unprocessed state of the MÉD and the historical map holdings, as well as the longstanding underfunding – both in terms of personnel and infrastructure – of the manuscript archive. Given the completeness, breadth, and international position of the library's statistical holdings, this situation appears ambivalent.

There are, however, some positive developments regarding scientific research. While the scope and organization of historical-statistical research today fall short of the level achieved between 1954 and 1985 by the Historical Statistical Research Group,¹⁴ the continuity and persistence of research efforts are noteworthy. The use of the special collections is also exemplified by several scientifically significant projects. In June 2020, the library – in cooperation with the HCSO – published a map album titled *A számontartott nemzet* (Mapping the Nation), which includes over 200 statistical maps and 13 thematic studies.¹⁵ The volume offers a statistical overview of Hungary's history from 1867 to 1945, with chapters covering the country's demographic, agricultural, industrial, and commercial conditions, among others.

In addition, the library – particularly its manuscript archive – played a key role in the compilation of the commemorative volume jointly published by the HCSO and the Hungarian Statistical Association (HSA) in June 2023, marking the Association's centenary. The library also contributed to the processing and preparation for scholarly research of the HSA's documents housed within the manuscript archive. Also, in 2023, the library, the HCSO, and the National Széchényi Library signed a trilateral agreement aimed at the full digitization of all statistical publications ever printed by the HCSO. As a result, these materials will hopefully be available soon via an online repository.

It is also worth mentioning that the library – uniquely among specialized libraries – operates its own restoration and book-binding workshop, one of whose primary tasks is the maintenance and reparation of the library's collection. In addition to preservation activities, the workshop also fulfils external orders (such as restoration, book and thesis binding), and is responsible for compiling and producing birthday publications,¹⁶ which have become one of the library's most popular services today.

3. The Relationship between the Library and the HCSO

When the library was established, it was an integral part of the office's organizational structure, as is still the case for most statistical libraries in Europe today. According to Act XX of 1896,¹⁷ the building planned for the office originally included library workrooms and a reading room in the basement. To this day, the library continues to operate in the main building of the office, in its original location.

The institution was granted national special library status in the 1950s, which contributed to its separation from the office's organizational structure. Since then, it has operated as an independent professional body under the authority of the President of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office. From the beginning, the library's financial support has been provided by the statistical office, while professional oversight – since its organizational independence – has been exercised by the competent ministry, which was the Ministry of Culture and Innovation until May 2026.

In addition to cataloguing, preserving, and providing access to statistical publications, the library maintains numerous other ties to the office. The institution plays a significant role in the provision of statistical data and information, with the library staff responding to several thousand such inquiries each year. In this field, close cooperation has developed with the HCSO Information Service, which has led to regular contact between library and office staff to support user enquiries.

In addition to the volume *A számontartott nemzet* (Mapping the Nation) mentioned in the previous chapter, the library and the office have jointly produced several other publications. Notable among these are *Századok statisztikája: statisztikai érdekességek a magyar történelemből* (2017) and its English edition *Statistics of Centuries: Statistical Curios in Hungarian History* (2018). It is clear that when it comes to historical statistical and statistics-related publications, the office frequently relies on the library as a resource for statistical information.

The guided building tours held in the Statistical Palace¹⁸ – now with a history of over 10 years – aim to enhance users' statistical literacy and bring them closer to the science of statistics. During these tours, visitors not only explore the main building of the office but also gain detailed insights into the history and operations of official statistics in Hungary, with a particular focus on the office itself. In the first part of the guided tour, visitors are introduced to the office and its premises; in the second part, they move to the library's reading areas, where they attend presentations enriched with interesting facts from the history of statistics. These tours, which typically last around 1,5 hours, attract considerable interest from the public in Budapest. Another joint initiative of the two institutions – albeit with a different focus – is their participation in the *Ünnepi Könyvhét* (Budapest Festive Book Week), where the office and the library share a booth to showcase and present their own publications. Although this collaboration did not continue in 2025, due to the small number of printed publications issued by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office.

The above examples clearly illustrate the ongoing, close professional and public relationship between the two institutions, a relationship that both parties actively shape and develop. At the same time, it is also evident that the library does not have a clearly defined position within the office's information chain, nor does it have a specific, designated role or function within the office's communication policy. This gap – present in the operations of both institutions – deserves closer examination. As Lencsés demonstrated in his 2020 study, such a structural arrangement is detrimental, or at the very least disadvantageous, to both the office and the library (Lencsés, 2020, p. 145–147, 175–188). Perhaps the most significant of these disadvantages is the split in the provision of statistical data: while the office offers data from recent decades via its official website, historical statistical data is only accessible through the library. Nevertheless, the library also provides access to current statistical data.

It is therefore important to examine how statistical libraries can become active participants in the statistical information chain of statistical offices, in order to ensure that their role does not become limited to providing historical data – which currently represents a significant portion of user requests. In some European statistical libraries, this risk has already become a reality (Lencsés, 2020, p. 181–182).¹⁹ What can statistical libraries offer to statistical offices in this area that could serve as a foundation for long-term, mutually beneficial cooperation? In which areas could statistical libraries strengthen their relevance and impact?

4. The Potential Roles of the Library in Statistical Information Services and in Supporting Research and Science as a Partner of the HCSO

Based on the findings presented and discussed in the previous chapters regarding the history, operation, and responsibilities of the statistical library, this chapter aims to focus on practical aspects. Moving forward with the case of the Hungarian statistical library, I will examine living examples, ongoing development initiatives, and potential future tasks, objectives, and services that could enable this type of specialized library to sustainably ensure its long-term operation. In this context, the relationship with the statistical office is of particular importance and will therefore be given special emphasis in the analysis. The activities outlined here could, in principle, be applied to any statistical library and some of them could be useful for other types of specialized libraries as well.

If we take a closer look at the statistical office's website and social media channels, we can conclude that, particularly in recent years, the Hungarian Office's Communication Department has identified as a key objective the launch of initiatives aimed at strengthening the institution's social engagement. This can definitely be seen as a positive development, as official statistics are still – at least for now – based on data provided by the members of the society. Consequently, the public perception of statistics and the resulting level of trust among data providers play a crucial role in the quality of data reporting. Since the statistical office lacks sufficient resources to adequately develop user relations, this is an area where the statistical library could also take on a role.

On the one hand, compared to the office, the library presents itself as a more open and approachable institution, making it easier to establish connections with the general public. On the other hand, if librarian competencies were to be expanded with specialized knowledge – in this case, specifically in the field of statistics –, the office would gain a dedicated professional partner in the library, one it could confidently rely on in implementing its socially focused projects.

A strong example of such cooperation can be found in the events of the past: during the 2011 population census, the 2016 microcensus and also during the 2022 census, the public had the opportunity to complete the questionnaires online in public libraries. This was made possible through a four-party cooperation agreement between the HCSO, the HCSO Library, the Hungarian Librarians' Association, and the Alliance of Libraries and Information Institutes (*Informatikai és Könyvtári Szövetség, IKSZ*).

Nonetheless, it is important to emphasize that activities going beyond basic subject-specific information services (such as those related to statistical methodology) and the provision of higher-level support to the statistical office can only be performed by a team of librarians (or information professionals) with extensive specialized knowledge.²⁰ This is a particularly important factor, as a significant portion of the library staff hold degrees in library science and have experience in library work; in other words, they have no direct connection to statistics. If the statistical library is capable of renewal and is willing to acquire and apply these competencies in practice, the institute could become an extremely valuable partner to the office in the area of developing social engagement.

As mentioned earlier in this study, a selection of official statistical publications and series has been available on the HCSO Library's website for over a decade. However, these represent only a small fraction of the total official output. Following international practices (Bonn, Furlough, 2015, p. 236–240; Lencsés, 2020, p. 178–180),²¹ the idea of establishing online repositories has been under consideration at the library for several years, but their implementation is still pending. Currently, two repositories are in the planning and development phase: one based on the ePrints platform,²² which would include digitized HCSO publications and statistical maps, and another based on the AtoM platform,²³ which would contain archival and manuscript materials managed by the HCSO Library. Many questions remain unanswered regarding access and usage levels, and the necessary infrastructure has not yet been established. Still, it is clear – and should be emphasized – that statistical libraries could play a crucial role in promoting and supporting open access to statistical data and publications, thereby contributing to the principles of open science.

It is also important to note that if libraries do not take on this role, other actors – including private sector entities – may step in to fill the gap. A prime example of this is *Arcanum Adatbázis Kiadó* (Arcanum Database Publisher),²⁴ a Hungarian online publisher and content provider that has digitized more than 80 million pages to date, including numerous statistical publications too. Arcanum offers access to these digitized materials through a subscription-based online platform. From this perspective, developing a competitive advantage is vital for statistical libraries. As specialized institutions, their greatest potential lies in the effective management of the statistical resources under their care. If they fail to capitalize on this opportunity, it is only a matter of time before other public or private players take their place in this domain. This is why the previously mentioned joint digitization project of the HCSO, OSZK, and the HCSO Library is of considerable importance, within the framework of which the digitization of several earlier periodical publications of the office has begun.

The HCSO Library is responsible for uploading the publications of researchers affiliated with the HCSO, as well as for verifying and monitoring their citations in the Hungarian Scientific Bibliography (*Magyar Tudományos Művek Tára, MTMT*). In parallel, the institute may also play a role in managing research data and publications produced by the statistical office, or it could expand its existing responsibilities in this area.

Closely related to this task is the library's potential role as an intermediary between the scientific community (including universities, research institutes, and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences) and the statistical office (Lencsés, 2020, p. 145–146). It should be noted, however, that the HCSO is already highly active in this area, with professional cooperation agreements in place with several higher education institutions – meaning that the library may not necessarily be able to claim this intermediary role for itself. Since every year numerous researchers turn to the library with inquiries related to historical statistical data, the background and methodology of 19th- and 20th-century data collections, as well as questions concerning the existence and accessibility of the original datasets, a close collaboration between the two institutions would be essential in this area as well. In the research room located in the main building of the HCSO, researchers primarily have access to data collections from the 21st century, while the HCSO Information Service mostly handles statistical questions related to the present day.

It would be advisable to integrate this dual, two-source data provision in some form and subsequently formalize it. Nevertheless, developing scientific partnerships – whether with the office, other institutions or individual researchers – can only be beneficial for the library.

Modelled after the previously mentioned Historical Statistical Research Group, which operated from the 1950s to the mid-1980s, the library must once again become an active participant in research on Hungary's social and economic history, as it holds the most comprehensive collection of statistical data necessary for such research on a national level. One prerequisite for this is that the library must take on a much more active role in higher education, through which it can build the professional connections essential for participating in research programs. A more advanced level of specialized library activity also entails engaging in scientific publishing, as well as organizing professional lectures and conferences. It is no exaggeration to say – as Dávid Rózsa, former director general of the library between 2018 and 2020, also emphasized – that a decisive factor in the future of specialized libraries will be their ability to produce value-added, high-quality knowledge products, and their capacity to become key players in the research processes of their respective fields (Rózsa, 2018, p. 23–27). In addition to supporting research and science, it is evident that to this day, the Hungarian statistical office relies significantly on the library in compiling such publications. At the same time, the Hungarian example also demonstrates that the office recognizes the importance of the history of statistical science and institutions.

But these questions regarding scientific research are also highly relevant to the current situation of the HCSO Library. The institution currently does not employ any researchers,²⁵ a clear regression compared to earlier periods – for example, in 2019, there were seven staff members engaged in scientific research.²⁶ As a result of this decline, the number of published scientific works has also decreased: while between 2010 and 2020 the library published at least one volume almost every year, only one new scientific publication has been released since 2020. Examining this issue falls beyond the scope of the present study, as it involves the broader challenge of aligning public library and special library functions.

In addition to participating in national research and academic programs, involvement in international – primarily European – library collaborations should also be emphasized (Hormia- Poutanen, Forsström 2016, p. 3–12; Ayris, 2017, p. 246–248). These initiatives may yield numerous benefits: conducting joint historical statistical research, publishing co-authored papers, and even deploying pan-European online databases that contain historical statistical data could be envisioned – thus significantly supporting researchers working in the field of European economic and social history.

In the Hungarian context, it is also worth mentioning the archival material of the former HCSO Archive, which is currently held by the National Archives of Hungary. The collection, comprising approximately 4 000 linear meters of records, is freely accessible for research. In addition to the archivists, the library staff also assist researchers; however, closer cooperation between the library and the archive is needed in this area as well. Due to the lack of detailed processing – similar to the manuscript collections housed in the library – the archival documents may contain a wealth of statistical data and information that could provide further insights into the history of official statistics in Hungary.

With regard to the possible operational directions and alternatives outlined in this chapter, it must be emphasized that their realization presupposes the existence of a well-designed strategic concept on the part of the institution. The library can only perform effectively in these areas – and support the statistical office's dissemination, data services, and public engagement work – if it is capable of aligning these workflows with its own operational system at a high level. Among European statistical libraries, many obstacles may hinder this (e.g. financial resources, staffing, infrastructure, institutional expectations). The Library of the HCSO – possibly the largest of its kind in Europe in terms of staff and collection size – may be in a somewhat more favourable position, yet it too must find its role within the HCSO's broader information network while simultaneously fulfilling both public and special library functions. Given the direction of global developments, this alignment is in the interest of both parties.

5. Conclusion

The 21st century is the century of data science; we live in an age where we quantify everything so that we can analyse it properly. This process is described by the concept of datafication. It is important to recognise that this goes far beyond the mere digitization of data; it requires a far more complex approach from data producers and offers much broader possibilities for data users.

Statistical offices have also recognised this shift and are working to meet the demands of the new era and adapt to changing conditions by leveraging various opportunities (e.g. AI). Statistical libraries, including the Hungarian institution, must identify the areas where they can interface with the statistical office's various work processes, particularly with regard to data and information provision, public outreach, and research support. It is important that these areas not only relate to historical context, but that libraries also acquire new competencies to effectively support the statistical office's day-to-day, current work.

I believe that, in the case of these libraries, the focus of their operations must definitely be placed on this aspect; otherwise, their complete exclusion from the office's information chain and a growing divergence between the work of these two types of institutions will be inevitable. Just as it was in Károly Keleti's time, the statistical library can still play an active, useful, and effective role in supporting the work of the statistical office today; it simply needs to find the right ways to do so.

Notes

¹ The article was written in the summer of 2025.

² The mentioned article: Horváth, B., Beaurepaire, C. (2025): *Statistical Libraries in Transition A 2024 European Survey on Future Directions and Opportunities*. Central European Library and Information Science Review (CeLISr), 2(4), p, 394–404. <https://doi.org/10.3311/celistr.41554>

³ Not to mention the numerous smaller studies, over the past 20 years, only two articles have been published (in Hungarian) that have sought to provide a comprehensive overview of the library; these are as follows: Nemes, E. (2005) *A KSH Könyvtár és Dokumentációs Szolgálat*. Könyvtári Figyelő, 51(3), p. 519–526. Available at: <https://epa.oszk.hu/00100/00143/00056/pdf/> (Accessed: 2025. 06. 06.); Rózsa, D. (2018) *Szakkönyvtár a holnap határán. 4. rész, A százötven éves KSH Könyvtár szerepváltozásai*. Könyvtári Figyelő, 64(1), p. 18–31. Available at: <https://epa.oszk.hu/00100/00143/00350/pdf/> (Accessed: 2025. 06. 06.). However, even these studies have only touched briefly on the potential for cooperation between the HCSO Library and the HCSO in the areas of data and information provision and research support. In addition to these two studies, the book written by Lencsés and published in 2020 examines the HCSO Library from a variety of perspectives.

⁴ Act XXXV of 1897 on the Hungarian Royal Central Statistical Office. Available at: <https://net.jogtar.hu/ezer-ev-torveny?docid=89700035.TV> (Accessed: 2025. 06. 06.).

⁵ Findura, I. (ed.) (1885) *Catalogue of the Library and Map Collection of the Hungarian Royal Central Statistical Office, 1867–1884*. Athenaeum, Budapest.

⁶ As part of the international exchange program, the HCSO Library distributes statistical publications printed by the HCSO to foreign statistical offices and international organizations, and in exchange, it receives volumes published by these institutions. Although there was a period in the 20th century when the library had more than 400 exchange partners, that number now hovers around 100.

⁷ István Bibó (1911–1979) was the Minister of State in the third government of Imre Nagy in 1956. Following the suppression of the Hungarian revolution, he was prosecuted and convicted in a political trial. After his release, he worked as an employee of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office Library between 1963 and 1971. He is internationally recognized as an outstanding thinker and regarded as one of the greatest political philosophers in Hungary in the 20th century.

⁸ Source: Hungarian Library Institute (National Széchényi Library). Available at: <https://ki.oszk.hu/adatvizualizacio-hasznalat> (Accessed: 2025. 06. 06.)

⁹ Source: Hungarian Library Institute (National Széchényi Library). Available at: <https://ki.oszk.hu/adatvizualizacio-hasznalat> (Accessed: 2025. 06. 06.)

¹⁰ A brief description of the system on the National Széchényi Library's website: <https://oszk.hu/LibMate> (accessed: 2025. 06. 06.). The system's online catalogue is available through the HCSO Library's website: <https://www.kshkonyvtar.hu/> (accessed: 2025. 06. 06.).

¹¹ The statistics for active users include not only library users but also participants of library events. Source: Hungarian Library Institute (National Széchényi Library). Available at: <https://ki.oszk.hu/adatvizualizacio-hasznalok> (Accessed: 2025. 06. 06.)

¹² Source: Hungarian Library Institute (National Széchényi Library). Available at: <https://ki.oszk.hu/adatvizualizacio-rendezvenyek> (Accessed: 2025. 06. 06.)

¹³ The website of Hungaricana: <https://www.hungaricana.hu/en/>, NÉDA is available on this webpage: https://library.hungaricana.hu/en/collection/kozponti_statistikai_hivatal_nepszamlalasi_digitalis_adattar/ (Accessed: 2025. 06. 06.)

¹⁴ The history of the research group was documented by Tamás Faragó in his volume published in 2015: Faragó, Tamás (2015) *Three Decades. The History of the Historical Statistical Research Group of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office Library (1954–1985)*. Stories of Statistics, Vol. 2. Hungarian Central Statistical Office Library. Budapest.

¹⁵ The volume was also published in English under the title *Mapping the Nation*.

¹⁶ This is a unique publication service of some Hungarian libraries. It is a special and unique birthday gift made from vintage newspapers—a special edition compiled from pages of daily newspapers and magazines featuring notable events (such as birthdays or weddings), designed to surprise and delight family members, friends, or colleagues.

¹⁷ Act XX of 1896 on the construction of a building for the accommodation of the Hungarian Royal Statistical Office. Available at: <https://net.jogtar.hu/ezer-ev-torveny?docid=89600020.TV&searchUrl=/ezer-ev-torvenyei?keyword%3D1896> (Accessed: 2025. 06. 16.)

¹⁸ The Statistical Palace refers to the original, main building of the HCSO. The Office has 3 other buildings in the surrounding streets.

¹⁹ For instance, the statistical libraries of Romania and Slovakia appear to function primarily as historical collections, based on the nature of their operations. Similarly, in several other cases, it can be observed that the respective institutions provide only conventional library services and do not play an active role in the operations of the statistical office.

²⁰ For more information on expanding librarians' competencies, see: Federer (2013), Daland (2016), Monok (2020).

²¹ Among the most noteworthy are the Finnish (Doria database: <https://www.doria.fi/handle/10024/67150>), the French (Quelet-Progedo Diffusion: <https://data.progedo.fr/>), and the Bibliothèque Numérique de la Statistique Publique (BNSP): <https://www.bnsp.insee.fr/bnsp/en/content/accueil-en>), and the German (Statistische Bibliothek: <https://www.statistischebibliothek.de/mir/content/index.xml>).

²² Available at: <https://www.eprints.org/> (Accessed: 2025. 06. 16.)

²³ AtoM = Access to Memory. Available at: <https://www.accesstomemory.org/en/>.

²⁴ The website of Arcanum: <https://www.arcanum.com/>.

²⁵ Source: The website of the library. (Accessed: 20. 05. 2026.)

²⁶ Source: Library data provision in accordance with ministerial decree, 2019.

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