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CHAPTER 4

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION BETWEEN LIBRARIES: THE CASE OF AZERBAIJAN-TÜRKIYE LIBRARIES

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Abstract

The strategic partnership between Azerbaijan and Türkiye, rooted in deep historical, cultural, and linguistic ties, is not limited solely to political and economic spheres. These relations also develop dynamically in the fields of science, education, and culture. Libraries are among the key institutions that serve as a bridge in this context. They carry an important mission in preserving, disseminating, and transmitting the shared cultural heritage of the two brotherly nations to future generations. Document exchange, joint exhibitions, and conferences between the national, university, and scientific libraries of Azerbaijan and Türkiye are just some of the steps taken in this direction. In recent years, the acceleration of digitalization processes has led to the sharing of online resources and the emergence of new opportunities for cooperation between Azerbaijani and Turkish libraries. In this regard, projects such as the *Common Digital Library of Turkic-Speaking Countries* enable Turkological research to reach a broader audience. Libraries function not only as sources of information, but also as important platforms for fostering closer mutual understanding between peoples and for preserving and promoting shared cultural values. The roots of library cooperation between the two countries date back to the early twentieth century, and this cooperation has expanded both in scope and quality. In particular, the first book exchange programs were implemented in the 1920s–1930s; in the 1990s, Turkish libraries provided Azerbaijan with books and technical support; and since the early 2000s, joint digital library projects have been launched. Examples of such cooperation include providing access to university scientific journals through library websites within the framework of scientific collaboration between the Central Scientific Library of ANAS and Istanbul University Library, as well as between the Central Scientific Library of ANAS and Sinop University; the signing of the *Sister Libraries Memorandum of Understanding* between the Central Scientific Library and the Rami Library; the exchange of books for readers in both countries; and the provision of remote library services through electronic platforms. In Azerbaijan–Türkiye relations, libraries act not only as guardians of national memory and literary heritage, but also as social institutions and agents of cultural diplomacy, contributing to the integration of Turkic cultures and the formation of a unified Turkic cultural space. In particular, digital library platforms ensure that this cooperation becomes more reliable and sustainable.

Keywords

Azerbaijan, Türkiye, Central Scientific Library, Library, International Relations

Introduction

Relations between Azerbaijan and Türkiye are not limited solely to political and economic spheres; cultural and humanitarian ties also occupy a significant place between the two brotherly countries. In this regard, cooperation in the library sector represents one of the important yet still insufficiently studied aspects of Azerbaijan–Türkiye relations. Since the late twentieth century, structural reforms in library systems in both countries, the introduction of information technologies, and digitalization processes have brought new opportunities for cooperation to the forefront.

Joint projects carried out within the framework of bilateral cultural cooperation—including shared exhibitions, the exchange of digital collections, internship and training programs, and knowledge exchange among librarians—have contributed to the mutual development of libraries in Azerbaijan and Türkiye.

The role of libraries in preserving and transmitting the shared Turkic cultural, linguistic, and historical heritage of Azerbaijan and Türkiye to future generations is undeniable. In this context, libraries should be regarded not only as providers of information, but also as strategic cultural bridges. For this reason, interlibrary cooperation deserves special attention as an independent subject of research in the analysis of Azerbaijan–Türkiye relations.

1. Discussion

In the modern information society, libraries function not only as guardians of knowledge and culture, but also as active participants in the global exchange of information. In an era marked by the globalization of access to information resources and the rapid development of technologies, libraries can no longer remain confined to a purely local environment. International relations are therefore of strategic importance for libraries, both in terms of professional development and in the provision of higher-quality services to users.

Through international cooperation, libraries are able to implement joint projects, share digital resources, exchange rare publications, and gain new opportunities for staff training and professional development. Such cooperation also contributes to the promotion of intercultural dialogue, the borderless dissemination of scientific knowledge, and the preservation of universal values. Programs initiated by international organizations such as UNESCO and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) are among the key driving forces behind these processes.

In a globalized world, the geographical boundaries of information resources have virtually disappeared. Libraries are no longer merely institutions that provide resources to users; they have become active participants in the international circulation of scientific, cultural, and technological information. Through international cooperation, libraries gain access to the digital archives of other countries while simultaneously sharing their own unique collections with the global scholarly community.

International cooperation also creates significant opportunities for enhancing the knowledge and skills of librarians. Training programs, international conferences, and exchange initiatives facilitate the sharing of experience in modern library management, innovative technologies, and user-oriented services. This, in turn, has a direct impact on the overall development dynamics of libraries.

Joint international projects implemented among libraries—particularly in the areas of digitization and database creation—serve the global preservation of cultural and scientific heritage. For example, initiatives such as the World Digital Library and Europeana connect libraries from different parts of the world and provide open digital platforms accessible to a wide public audience.

Libraries also play an important role in fostering intercultural understanding and an environment of tolerance. International cooperation enables this function to be carried out on a broader scale. Relations among libraries from different countries contribute to the recognition of cultural diversity and to the promotion of mutual understanding and universal human values among peoples.

In recent years, the integration of Azerbaijani scientific libraries into international scholarly resources and their cooperation potential have developed noticeably. This progress is closely linked to strategic steps aimed at integrating Azerbaijan's research environment into the global scientific community. In particular, the libraries of higher education institutions play a crucial role in ensuring access to international academic databases and electronic resources, forming one of the fundamental pillars of this process.

Currently, Azerbaijani university libraries and research institutes have access-through subscriptions and cooperation frameworks-to prestigious international scholarly platforms such as EBSCO, JSTOR, SpringerLink, Wiley, Scopus, and ScienceDirect. These electronic databases are not limited to journal articles; they also include monographs, dissertations, conference proceedings, and other academic sources. Access to such resources ensures that researchers remain informed about the latest developments in global science and enables them to structure their research in a methodologically sound manner consistent with international standards. This also facilitates more active participation by the Azerbaijani scholarly community in international scientific discourse, increases publications in high-impact journals, and improves citation indicators.

In addition, a number of Azerbaijani scientific libraries are active members of international library networks and consortia. For instance, within the framework of cooperation with reputable organizations such as IFLA and the American Library Association (ALA), Azerbaijani libraries become acquainted with advanced practices in global library management, innovative service models, and digitization. By participating in international conferences, seminars, and projects, they engage in professional experience exchange. Such cooperation has a positive impact on the institutional development of Azerbaijani libraries and on the enhancement of human capital in the library and information sector.

2. The Role of the Central Scientific Library in Expanding Cooperation

In the context of digital transformation, the role of Azerbaijan's scientific libraries has become even more prominent. In particular, the National Library of Azerbaijan and the country's leading university libraries play a leading role in implementing national and regional digital library initiatives. Within the framework of these projects, rare and early publications, manuscripts, archival documents, and other unique sources are digitized and made available to researchers. Making such resources openly and freely accessible facilitates their integration into the international academic environment and helps incorporate Azerbaijan's scholarly heritage into global cultural memory.

The participation of scientific libraries in international research projects is also increasing. Libraries of higher education institutions take part-as partners or resource supporters-in projects implemented under European Union programs such as Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, and Creative Europe. In this framework, libraries do not limit themselves to providing information; they also contribute to shaping the scientific and theoretical basis of projects, promoting open science initiatives, managing research data, and organizing scholarly communication activities.

In this regard, the activities of the Central Scientific Library of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (ANAS) deserve special attention. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Central Scientific Library. Considering the century-long path of this remarkable "temple of science," which has operated under different historical conditions, it is appropriate to briefly review its historical development.

Established to support the organization and development of scientific research in Azerbaijan, ensure the collection and preservation of national scientific and cultural heritage, and promote the dissemination of scientific knowledge, the foundations of the Central Scientific Library of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences were laid by a group of Azerbaijani intellectuals in 1923, when the Bibliographic Bureau of the Society for the Study and Investigation of Azerbaijan began its activities (Khalafov, 2007, p. 320–322).

On August 19, 1925, at a meeting of the Presidium of the Central Council of the Society for the Study and Investigation of Azerbaijan, the activities of the Bibliographic Bureau were reconsidered and a report by A. R. Zifeld was heard. The report emphasized that, since the society's library carried out cataloging—a purely bibliographic task—parallelism had emerged in the work; therefore, the activities of the library and the Bibliographic Bureau should be merged.

Thus, the claim that the ANAS Central Scientific Library was founded on November 4, 1923, on the basis of the Bibliographic Bureau created under the Society for the Study and Investigation of Azerbaijan does not fully hold. The Bibliographic Bureau was not tasked with fulfilling library functions; rather, it was primarily engaged in compiling Azerbaijan's national bibliography. Although a decision to establish a library was adopted on November 18 of the same year, it was not possible to create the library in the full sense at that time, and this work began to be realized only after August 19, 1925 (Tahirqizi, 2024, p. 3–9).

In 1929, the Azerbaijan Scientific Research Institute was established on the basis of the Society for the Study and Investigation of Azerbaijan. The creation of the institute and the establishment of several scientific divisions within it became a major event in the life of the republic. During that period, the Society's library was significantly enriched: funds were allocated to develop its material and technical base, staff positions were increased, the readership grew, and circulation expanded (Khalafov, 2007, p. 319–320).

In 1932, on the basis of the Azerbaijan State Scientific Research Institute, the Azerbaijan branch (filial) of the Transcaucasian branch of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR was established, which significantly expanded the library's activities. By 1934, the library's collection included 46.5 thousand copies of books and journals. In those years, the library established broad connections with major libraries of the USSR and abroad, especially with research institutions.

In 1935, the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR decided to establish the Azerbaijan branch of the Academy. From 1935 onward, alongside the branch's central library, 18 specialized scientific libraries were also created within its institutes and departments. During that period, the library's holdings reached 180 thousand copies, and international book exchange expanded (Khalafov, 2007, p. 410–413).

With the establishment of an independent Academy of Sciences in Azerbaijan in 1945, a new stage began in the library's history. The library was granted the right to obtain the compulsory paid copy of literature published across the former Soviet Union, and efforts were undertaken to improve reference and bibliographic services.

An analysis of international exchange operations conducted in 1955–1958 shows that during that period the Library sent abroad three to four times more publications than it received from overseas.

In 1959, the Library's "Foreign Literature" department and the "Acquisitions" department were merged, and the "Acquisitions and International Book Exchange" department was established. The main aim was to centralize and improve domestic, union-wide, and international exchange processes. Although UNESCO's 1958 decision stipulated that international book exchanges should be conducted free of charge on a reciprocal basis, because the document was not ratified by the USSR, the Central Scientific Library continued to receive allocations in convertible currency (ruble reserves exchangeable for foreign currency) to obtain foreign publications. In 1959, 45,000 rubles-equivalent to 40,500 US dollars at the exchange rate of that time—were allocated to the Library for this purpose. That same year, 240 foreign scientific and educational institutions cooperating with the Central Scientific Library received 9,275 printed items from the Library, while sending back 2,356 foreign books and journals (Archive of the ANAS Central Scientific Library, 1930–1956).

In 1960, the Central Scientific Library cooperated with 256 organizations from 50 countries. Over the year, 12,233 printed items were sent to these organizations, including 5,160 copies of books and 7,073 copies of journals. The number of publications acquired through the Library's foreign-currency funds reached 2,986 items, including 2,118 copies of books (444 titles), 846 copies of journals (517 titles), and newspapers

(22 titles). For this reason, in 1960 the Library was able to carry out book exchange not with all 250 organizations in 50 countries, but with 137 organizations in 37 countries. International scientific relations and exchanges with India, Japan, Iran, Türkiye, Lebanon, Brazil, and Argentina weakened considerably, while book barter with Indonesia, Burma, Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), and the UAR (United Arab Republic-present-day Egypt and Syria) was discontinued (Rzayeva, 2024, p. 3783–3791).

Today, the international relations of the Central Scientific Library constitute one of its key strategic directions, serving to strengthen its academic reputation, integrate it into the global library and information community, and expand access to knowledge in the modern era of the globalization of science and information exchange. At present, the Central Scientific Library has established ties and cooperation with around 130 organizations in 46 countries, including a number of embassies in Azerbaijan and Azerbaijan's embassies abroad.

After moving into a new building to meet the scientific and information requirements of the modern era, the ANAS Central Scientific Library took strategic steps to rebuild and expand its international relations. The main rationale of this process is integration into the international scientific and information space, learning and applying global library practices, and building partnership relations with leading library and information institutions in different countries. At this stage, the CSL set objectives not only to restore ties but also to develop them on qualitatively new criteria. In this respect, cooperation with various libraries and scientific and cultural institutions of the Republic of Türkiye is of special importance.

Especially since 2016, relations between the CSL and Turkish organizations active in culture, education, and science have deepened, forming a multifaceted cooperation format. Within this framework, cooperation with the Yunus Emre Institute – Baku Turkish Cultural Center gained new momentum, and joint cultural and humanitarian projects were launched. The aim of developing these relations has been the joint study, promotion, and transmission to future generations of the rich spiritual and cultural heritage of the Turkic world.

The areas of cooperation cover a wide spectrum. Scientific-practical conferences, literary and artistic events, book exhibitions, and other cultural activities have been organized and dedicated to classical figures who embody the literary and philosophical heritage of the Turkic world, such as Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi, Yunus Emre, and Haji Bektash Veli. These events strengthened the CSL's position in the information and educational sphere and contributed to reinforcing cultural bridges between Azerbaijan and Türkiye.

In addition, activities such as exchanging book collections related to classical and modern Turkish literature, preparing joint publications, and implementing research projects have also been prioritized. Important steps have been taken to enrich the CSL's collections and, through the application of modern technologies, digitize this heritage. All of this shows that the CSL's platform of scientific and cultural cooperation with Türkiye is of strategic importance not only for the exchange of scholarly information but also for the preservation and development of shared spiritual and cultural memory.

As a result, the cooperation model formed between the CSL and relevant institutions of the Republic of Türkiye can be regarded as an exemplary practice for strengthening scientific and cultural dialogue at regional and international levels, systematically promoting the cultural heritage of the Turkic world, and building sustainable links between academic communities.

Within the framework of the CSL's international cooperation, its relations with the Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye in the Republic of Azerbaijan are also of particular significance. This partnership with the Embassy is a clear example of building diplomatic relations on a cultural and moral foundation, beyond the fields of culture and librarianship alone. It is especially valuable for sustaining the strategic alliance between the two countries in the spheres of culture, science, and education.

In this context, the Turkish Embassy has made significant contributions to the Diplomatic Corner operating under the CSL's Academicians' Hall. The Embassy provided various symbolic and artistic items reflecting

the national and cultural identity of the Republic of Türkiye. These include a collection of Turkish literature consisting of approximately 60 items, the national flag of the Republic of Türkiye, a framed piece containing the text of the “İstiklal Marşı” (the Turkish National Anthem), and a memorial plaque dedicated to the July 15, 2016 coup attempt.

This initiative has contributed, on the one hand, to increasing the number of Turkish-culture-related works in the CSL’s holdings and, on the other hand, to shaping a historically and spiritually rich space for academic and diplomatic visitors. The plaque is not merely a commemorative element; it also conveys a strategic message as a symbol of Türkiye’s statehood traditions, democratic resilience, and national unity.

Overall, this initiative has strengthened the CSL’s function not only as a scientific-information platform but also as a cultural space where national and international symbolism is preserved and represented. Such cooperation with the Turkish Embassy may serve as a model for other diplomatic missions in the future, and the establishment of such corners further enhances the role of libraries in cultural diplomacy (Archive of the ANAS Central Scientific Library, 2016).

Another important partner with which the ANAS Central Scientific Library has established cooperation is the Istanbul Azerbaijan Culture House (a public organization operating in Istanbul, Republic of Türkiye). This cooperation is significant not only in the field of information and librarianship but also in promoting and strengthening shared national and cultural identity. The core purpose of the partnership is to introduce the rich cultural heritage of Azerbaijani Turks to Anatolian Turks and to deepen cultural rapprochement by emphasizing common roots and shared historical and cultural foundations.

The Istanbul Azerbaijan Culture House undertakes numerous initiatives aimed at promoting and preserving Azerbaijani culture. One of its main activity areas is the preparation and publication of popular-scientific and journalistic works. Under the label “Azerbaijan Culture House Publications,” a number of important works have been published. Among them, research-oriented books such as *Revan Turks* and *Human Rights Violations in Karabakh and UN Security Council Resolutions* are particularly noteworthy. These publications were donated to the Central Scientific Library’s collection and made available for open use by readers.

These books are important sources not only for documenting Azerbaijan’s history and contemporary political realities but also for promoting information integration and shared memory among Turkic-speaking peoples. Through these works, the CSL has been able to provide researchers with substantial information on human rights violations in Azerbaijan’s history, regional conflicts, and the application of international law in this context.

As a result, the cooperation model formed between the CSL and the Istanbul Azerbaijan Culture House may be considered an exemplary practice for creating joint platforms between diaspora organizations and national scientific and cultural institutions. Such initiatives not only strengthen historical and cultural ties but also make a tangible contribution to elevating science, education, and information exchange to a qualitatively new level.

The CSL’s relations with the Republic of Türkiye are not limited to culture and librarianship; they also encompass diverse fields such as science, education, and healthcare. This multidimensional cooperation has further reinforced the library’s international status and strategic partnership platforms. In recent years, contacts between the CSL and well-known Turkish academic and medical institutions have intensified. In this context, the official visit of representatives of Istinye University and Liv Hospital to the Central Scientific Library should be noted as one of the important events. During the visit, guests received detailed information about the library’s founding history, stages of development, projects implemented in the modern period, and strategic goals.

The delegation became acquainted with the CSL’s rich collections and highly appreciated the work carried out in preserving and using rare and unique sources. Within the framework of cooperation, access formats,

digitization possibilities, and prospects for implementing joint research-oriented projects were discussed. The guests emphasized the CSL's function not only as a scientific-information resource but also as a venue for scientific diplomacy and intercultural dialogue.

This visit was also important for identifying potential directions of cooperation between the library and reputable Turkish institutions operating in healthcare and higher education. Such contacts promote the use of library resources in medical science, healthcare management, and research activities and expand opportunities to broaden the library's functional scope.

Thus, the CSL's relations with Istinye University and Liv Hospital can be viewed as part of the broader process of scientific, academic, and humanitarian integration between Azerbaijan and Türkiye, and they have the potential to lay the groundwork for broader joint initiatives in the future.

The cooperation ties established by the ANAS Central Scientific Library with higher education institutions are among the key factors strengthening the library's position as a regional and international partner in the scientific and educational environment. In this context, relations developed with various universities of the Republic of Türkiye are of particular importance and serve mutual scientific and cultural integration.

Within this framework, the CSL has established relations with Kastamonu University. As part of these relations, a group of Kastamonu University students visited the Central Scientific Library, familiarized themselves with the organization of the library and information system, and received detailed information about the collections. During the visit, students were provided with extensive guidance on electronic and traditional mechanisms of library use, search systems, effective use of holdings, reading rooms, and the rare books department.

Such visits contribute to students' professional preparation on the one hand and, on the other, ensure that the CSL becomes an open space for teaching and research processes at an international level. In addition, Turkish students' familiarity with Azerbaijan's scientific-information infrastructure creates a foundation for potential future research cooperation.

It should be noted that this initiative was implemented in line with the CSL's strategic goals such as regional academic mobility, experience exchange, and the creation of joint educational platforms. Thus, the visit of Kastamonu University students to the CSL represents another practical example of deepening cooperation between the higher education and scientific institutions of the two brotherly countries.

One of the important directions of the CSL's international cooperation policy is the organization of business trips based on on-site analysis and experience exchange to study and apply advanced practices in the library and information field. In this regard, the business trip to Ankara (Republic of Türkiye) carried out in 2018 by a group of CSL employees holds particular significance.

The main purpose of the trip was to become acquainted with the activities, organizational structure, technical equipment, and achievements in information provision of various libraries in Ankara; to examine innovations applied in modern librarianship on site; and to discuss prospects for mutual cooperation. This trip also served as an important platform for strengthening professional knowledge and for exchanging experience between library specialists of the two countries.

Within the scope of the trip, the CSL delegation held meetings at a number of reputable Turkish library and archival institutions, including the Turkish Language Association Library, the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye Library and Archive, the Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University Library, and the National Library of Türkiye (Ankara). During these meetings, CSL staff became closely familiar with the historical development, areas of activity, collection composition, digitization processes, user services, technological innovations, and organizational management models of these institutions.

At the same time, prospects for future cooperation were discussed, including implementing joint projects, exchanging scholarly publications and information resources, organizing professional development programs, and initiating mobility opportunities among specialists. Studying the rich experience of Ankara libraries proved beneficial in identifying new development vectors for the CSL's operations, and the results contributed to modernizing library management and services in subsequent years.

Overall, this trip once again demonstrated that Azerbaijan–Türkiye scientific and cultural relations are developing systematically and purposefully in the library and information sphere.

Among the CSL's collaborations with scientific institutions of the Republic of Türkiye, the establishment of relations with the Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University Library is of special importance. This cooperation aims not only at information and resource exchange between the two libraries but also at strengthening institutional cooperation in the preservation and promotion of scientific and cultural heritage.

As a result of the meetings, an important document defining the legal basis of cooperation—a Memorandum of Understanding—was signed. The memorandum envisages mutual exchange of experience, sharing information resources, and implementing joint scientific projects in the collection, preservation, and transmission to future generations of the national scientific and cultural heritage of both countries.

In addition, the memorandum highlights the strategic role of libraries against the backdrop of deepening political, diplomatic, and cultural relations between the two countries, emphasizing the need to share and promote scientific and cultural heritage internationally. Both parties expressed interest in strengthening the mission of scientific centers not only as information providers but also as carriers and disseminators of shared cultural values.

This cooperation with the Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University Library created another strong bridge in the CSL's map of international partnerships and contributed to the further development of an institutional cooperation model between Azerbaijani and Turkish libraries. Such legal and strategic documents lay the groundwork for maintaining relations on a systematic and long-term basis.

The year 2019 marked a period when new horizons opened in the CSL's cooperation with the Republic of Türkiye in the scientific-information sphere. In this context, the business trip of CSL staff to the İzmir Institute of Technology (IYTE) and the İzmir National Library was of particular importance.

The main purpose of the trip was to become acquainted with library management experience at Türkiye's leading higher education and information institutions, enhance knowledge and skills in the application of innovative technologies, and strengthen competence in managing digital resources. During meetings, CSL staff examined the IYTE Library's activities and observed its information services, collection management, user-oriented service models, and technological capabilities on site.

During the visit, a training seminar on the DSpace digital archive software drew special attention. CSL staff became practically familiar with the structure and functionality of the program, the process of digitally archiving scientific works and dissertations, and received answers to technical and implementation-related questions. This experience served as an important basis for applying new approaches to digitization at the CSL itself.

At the same time, meetings held at the İzmir National Library provided familiarity with the library's history, collections, modern collection management, and user service systems, and preliminary agreements were reached regarding possible future directions of cooperation.

This trip, on the one hand, expanded the CSL's international partnership map and, on the other, became a significant milestone in professional development and experience exchange in the field of digital information systems. These cooperation steps in İzmir contributed to shaping new technological and institutional perspectives in the development of Azerbaijan–Türkiye scientific information relations.

3. New Trends in Interlibrary Cooperation

In 2021, a business trip to Ankara by Mubariz Goyushlu, Head of the International Relations Department of the ANAS Central Scientific Library (CSL), became an important step toward strengthening interlibrary cooperation. Within the framework of the visit, meetings were held with libraries of higher education institutions in Ankara, as well as with scientific, educational, and cultural organizations. The CSL representative became closely familiar with these institutions' operational principles, management models, and mechanisms for using information resources. At the same time, one of the key priorities of the trip was to study innovations in modern library and information technologies and to exchange practical experience on a reciprocal basis. In addition, Ankara-based partner institutions were provided with comprehensive information about the CSL's areas of activity, organizational and structural capacities, rich collections, participation in international projects, and proactive initiatives, and future cooperation prospects were discussed.

In 2022, the Director of Istanbul University Library, Sonay Tahmaz Kaleci, along with staff members Gulsum Akalan and Gulcan Çakır, paid an official visit to the ANAS Central Scientific Library. The primary aim of the visit was to establish cooperation ties between leading libraries of the two brotherly countries and to organize mutual exchange of experience and information. During the meetings, the parties reached agreements on implementing joint projects in the library and information sphere, ensuring reciprocal access to scientific collections, co-use of electronic resources, and other strategic areas of cooperation. As a result, an initial legal and institutional framework was formed to enable the realization of joint initiatives in the future.

In October 2022, a delegation led by Mustafa Guzelkayan-Chairman of the Iğdır Aralık Municipality and a well-known figure of the Justice and Development Party (AK Party)-visited the ANAS Central Scientific Library during his trip to Azerbaijan. The delegation, together with representatives of the Union of Turkic Elders (TAİB) and the Chair of the "Support for Development and Reforms" Public Union, became acquainted with the library's strong scientific and cultural potential and exchanged views on strengthening cultural and scientific ties between the two countries. In particular, cooperation opportunities were discussed with the aim of promoting and disseminating Azerbaijani literature in the Iğdır region. This meeting is considered significant for shaping a strategic dialogue that may contribute to developing mutual relations between Azerbaijan and Türkiye in culture and literature (Archive of the ANAS Central Scientific Library, 2022).

In November 2023, Associate Professor Shahla Guliyeva, Deputy Director of the ANAS Central Scientific Library, participated in the "ANKOSLink 2023" conference held in Türkiye. That year's conference-dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Türkiye-was organized under the theme "Rethinking University Libraries in the 100th Year of the Republic" ("Cumhuriyetin 100 Yılında Üniversite Kütüphanelerini Yeniden Düşünmek"). The event served as an important platform for discussing new approaches in the library and information field and for exchanging experience.

Within the framework of the trip, the CSL's Executive Director visited the Antalya Library and the Cemil Meriç Library, which began operating under the Kepez Municipality of Antalya, in connection with a centenary project implemented under the title "100 Libraries Project" ("100 Kitaplık Projesi"). During meetings at both libraries, detailed information was shared about their activity areas, user services, collection structure, and management principles, and extensive discussions were held on the current benefits and future prospects of mutual cooperation.

The CSL's Executive Director, Shahla Tahirqizi, presented scientific and literary publications reflecting Azerbaijani literature and culture to Oguzhan Ceylan, Coordinator of Antalya Libraries, and to the heads of municipal libraries. These gifts are important for further strengthening cultural relations between the two countries and advancing scholarly information exchange.

Thus, the ANKOSLink 2023 conference and the parallel library visits can be regarded as important steps toward expanding the CSL's international relations, learning innovative practices, and deepening Azerbaijan–Türkiye cooperation in the library sphere.

In December 2023, Professor Mustafa Latif Emek, Director of the Institute of Economic Development and Social Research (İKSAD); Alvan Jafarov, the Institute's Chief Coordinator for Azerbaijan; former ambassador Hasan Yavuz; Guray Alpar, a Major General and Head of the Strategic Thinking Institute (SDE); and Mehmet Tumay, Rector of Alparslan Türkeş University, visited the ANAS Central Scientific Library. During the visit, the guests became closely acquainted with the library's collections, operating principles, and management system, and preliminary agreements were reached on strengthening scientific and cultural cooperation between the two countries. This meeting is assessed as an important step toward expanding mutual cooperation opportunities in the library and information sphere within the framework of the Azerbaijan–Türkiye strategic partnership (Archive of the ANAS Central Scientific Library, 2023).

In June 2024, an online meeting was held between the ANAS Central Scientific Library and the Istanbul University Library to discuss cooperation matters. The meeting was attended by the CSL Director, Associate Professor Huseyn Huseynov, and other members of the library's leadership team. The Istanbul University side was represented by Selçuk Aydın, an employee of the Information and Document Circulation Department, and Cihan Kalın, a librarian responsible for electronic resources.

During the meeting, extensive discussions were held on opportunities for digitizing rare publications held by both libraries, available technological tools, and future cooperation prospects. This dialogue is important for ensuring the preservation and effective use of the two institutions' scientific and cultural collections through modern information technologies.

Also in June 2024, a working meeting took place between the CSL Director, Associate Professor Huseyn Huseynov, and Hayrettin Özçelik, Baku Program Coordinator of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA). The meeting addressed meeting readers' electronic book needs through the application of the latest technological innovations at the CSL and emphasized the importance of studying the experience of countries worldwide, including Türkiye, in this direction. The parties also exchanged detailed views on implementing joint projects in the library and information field and on future cooperation prospects.

In July 2024, Orkhan Kirman, Chairman of the Board of Kobikom Telecommunications (Türkiye), met in Baku with the CSL Director, Associate Professor Huseyn Huseynov. During the meeting, the parties discussed possible areas of cooperation and exchanged views on implementing joint activities in the future.

In October 2024, the CSL Director, Associate Professor Huseyn Huseynov, paid a business trip to Ankara organized by the Azerbaijan Culture Center under the Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the Republic of Türkiye. During the visit, he held meetings with Ayhan Tuğlu, Head of Türkiye's Millet Library; Taner Beyoğlu, Director General of the National Library of Türkiye; the Central Library of Gazi University; and the heads of libraries of several well-known Turkish universities.

During the meetings, Associate Professor Huseynov provided detailed information about the history, areas of activity, projects, and initiatives of the library he leads, as well as its electronic library and international relations. He also became acquainted with the collections and the technical and organizational capacities of Ankara-based libraries. He presented books about Azerbaijan's rich culture, art, and ancient history as gifts to partner libraries, noting that mutual cooperation would be beneficial for both sides and would enable readers to benefit from wider scientific and cultural resources. An agreement was reached on book exchange.

The heads of Turkish libraries, in turn, emphasized the importance of cooperation between Azerbaijani and Turkish libraries and exchanged views on advanced practices and innovative approaches in librarianship. As part of the Ankara business trip, close cooperation ties were established with Türkiye's leading libraries, and prospects for future collaboration were defined. Consequently, this trip is assessed as an important step

toward deepening scientific, cultural, and information exchange between Azerbaijan and Türkiye and made a significant contribution to expanding the CSL's international relations (Archive of the ANAS Central Scientific Library, 2024).

It is also worth noting that, within the framework of cooperation, nearly 150 examples of Azerbaijani literature were sent over the last five years to the National Library in Ankara, the Antalya–Azerbaijan Culture and Fellowships Organization, the Ankara Adnan Otügen Public Library, the Azerbaijan Culture Center in Türkiye, and other institutions. In addition, more than 40 books and journals from various Turkish organizations were added to the CSL's collections.

Finally, it should be emphasized that not only the ANAS Central Scientific Library, but also other libraries in Azerbaijan, have established effective cooperation ties with relevant institutions of Türkiye's higher education libraries as well as public libraries.

4. The Role of the National Library of Azerbaijan in Interlibrary Cooperation

One notable example of interlibrary cooperation has been established between the National Library of Azerbaijan and the National Library of Türkiye. As part of efforts to deepen cultural relations between the two countries and to improve operations in public libraries within the network of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan, a joint project was implemented to introduce the Koha Integrated Library System.

From 26–29 December 2022, a group of specialists from the National Library of Azerbaijan visited Ankara and worked at the National Library of Türkiye to study the experience of Turkish public libraries in implementing Koha and to participate in training sessions related to the project's rollout across libraries affiliated with the Ministry of Culture.

On 19–22 December 2023, another delegation from the National Library of Azerbaijan conducted a second working visit to the National Library of Türkiye and to the Technical Services Department of the General Directorate of Libraries and Publications under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye. The purpose of this visit was to gain on-site experience with the Koha system, including the specification of the e-book platform and audiobook applications, linguistic adaptation, pilot implementation in city (district) centralized library systems, the integration of existing databases into the new system, and the methodology and mechanisms of software deployment in Turkish libraries.

Subsequently, on 26–29 April of the following year, practical workshops and training sessions were held at the Training Center of the National Library of Azerbaijan with the participation of Turkish specialists. These sessions focused on implementing the system in libraries under the Ministry's authority. Library staff from the centralized library systems of Baku, Ganja, Gakh, Aghdash, and Guba took part in the trainings.

In 2024, to ensure the successful deployment of the Koha Integrated Library Management System across public libraries under the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan, multiple on-site trainings, sessions at the National Library, and online meetings were organized. Toward the end of the year, Hülya Dirican, Head of the Technical Services Department of the General Directorate of Libraries and Publications of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye, along with department staff members Ferhad Oztürk and İsmail Karaca, were invited to Azerbaijan. From 18–23 December, they conducted training sessions for library staff in Baku and in regional libraries.

The trainings primarily covered the Cataloguing module, including the creation of new bibliographic records; adding single or multiple copies to existing records; editing records; barcode printing; detailed and copy-level searching; authority files; list and report generation; and system settings. In addition, the Users module was taught, focusing on searching users by various parameters and library branches, new user registration, and updating user information. The Circulation module addressed lending items to users,

returns, renewals, reservations, and cancellations. Training also included the OPAC (User Interface), covering user registration and profile updates; searching and pre-ordering materials; creating lists; viewing item status; writing comments on items; creating folders; reviewing reading history; and saving search histories. Practical exercises accompanied all modules (Archive of the National Library named after M.F. Akhundov, 2024).

Overall, the National Library of Azerbaijan's cooperation with the National Library of Türkiye-particularly through the systematic implementation of the Koha Integrated Library System-represents a significant and sustainable model of interlibrary collaboration. It demonstrates how shared technological platforms, professional training, and coordinated implementation strategies can strengthen institutional capacity, harmonize library services, and enhance cultural and informational integration between Azerbaijan and Türkiye.

5. The Importance of International Cooperation in the Development of Azerbaijani University Libraries

International cooperation plays a crucial role in strengthening the institutional capacity, technological modernization, and global integration of Azerbaijani university libraries. In this context, partnerships with libraries of the Republic of Türkiye occupy a particularly significant place.

The Library and Information Center (LIC) of Azerbaijan Technical University actively implements joint initiatives with Turkish university libraries. Notably, the LIC has cooperated with Bilkent University. During the reconstruction of the university library, representatives of the AzTU LIC visited the Bilkent University Library to observe best practices firsthand. They became acquainted with library management systems, digital repository platforms, academic database subscription models, book acquisition procedures, and technical processing workflows. This experience contributed significantly to the modernization of the AzTU library infrastructure (AzTU, 2023).

Representatives of the AzTU Library and Information Center also regularly participate in the ANKOSLink conference. Meetings with library directors and information professionals within the framework of this conference create broad opportunities for establishing sustainable and effective cooperation (AzTU, 2023). (LIC, 2023).

The AzTU Library and Information Center maintains close ties with the İzmir Institute of Technology. LIC representatives have made multiple visits to the institute, and several online meetings have been held to discuss joint activities. Both institutions act as supporters of the OpenAIRE Open Science initiative-AzTU in Azerbaijan and İzmir Institute of Technology in Türkiye-serving as national representatives of this major European Commission-affiliated organization. Regular meetings are organized between the two institutions to coordinate actions and plan joint steps in promoting Open Science (OpenAIRE, 2024).

In addition, the AzTU Library and Information Center maintains a partnership with the library of Middle East Technical University. Within this cooperation framework, regular consultations are held, and METU's extensive experience is utilized in organizing book provision and other library services. This partnership contributes to knowledge and resource exchange between Azerbaijani and Turkish higher education institutions.

Another prominent example of international cooperation is provided by Azerbaijan State University of Economics (UNEC), one of Azerbaijan's leading higher education institutions, which places special emphasis on developing international academic and scientific relations. UNEC has established long-standing cooperation with numerous reputable universities in Türkiye in the fields of education, research, and student and faculty exchange. Joint projects, shared scientific symposia, and academic mobility programs implemented within this framework make a significant contribution to strengthening Azerbaijan-Türkiye educational relations.

A symbolic embodiment of this cooperation is the Faculty of Economics of the Turkic World, which has been operating at UNEC for over 30 years. One of the defining features of this faculty is that instruction is conducted in Turkish, with a substantial proportion of courses taught by distinguished professors from Türkiye. This approach not only enriches students' economic knowledge but also supports their formation within a shared linguistic and cultural context.

The Library and Information Center of UNEC plays a key role in supporting this cooperation. Its rich collections include thousands of Turkish-language books, textbooks, and scholarly sources across various fields of economics. These resources significantly stimulate teaching and research activities and enable a deeper understanding of economic thought traditions within the Turkic world.

Moreover, UNEC students benefit from opportunities to continue their studies in Türkiye through cooperation agreements and international exchange programs signed with Turkish universities. This process fosters not only academic development but also the strengthening of intercultural dialogue.

As a result, the deep and multifaceted cooperation model established between UNEC and Turkish universities further reinforces the strategic partnership between the two brotherly countries in science and education. It contributes to the training of highly qualified professionals who support the economic development of both Azerbaijan and Türkiye, while also expanding a shared scientific and intellectual space.

Within the framework of international cooperation, the UNEC Library and Information Center has established special ties with Turkish university libraries, and its staff regularly participate in the ANKOSLink international conference held annually in Antalya. In addition, in 2022, UNEC's Library and Information Center organized a webinar entitled "*Directions of Academic Library Activities in the Era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Turkish Experience)*." Library directors and expert professionals from Marmara University, Yozgat Bozok University, Kastamonu University, Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University, Artvin Çoruh University, and Bogaziçi University took part in the event.

Presentations addressed topics such as "*The Fourth Industrial Revolution and Academic Libraries*," "*Entrepreneurial University Vision and the Transformation of University Libraries from an Industry 4.0 Perspective*," "*Online Libraries, Databases, and Academic Activity: Where and How to Start?*," "*Resource Sharing between Local and International Libraries*," and "*Electronic Information Resource Subscription Processes within ANKOS (Türkiye and TRNC)*." Discussions evaluated the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution on librarianship, including technological innovations, the emergence of smart libraries managed by robotic and cyber systems, the use of Big Data in libraries, analytical research practices, and the organization of national and international interlibrary resource sharing.

In November 2022, a delegation led by Adile Abdullayeva, Director of the UNEC Library and Information Center, traveled to Istanbul for professional exchange. During the visit, UNEC library staff continued experience-sharing activities at the libraries of Marmara University, Bogaziçi University, and Koç University. They became familiar with electronic services, cataloging and classification, digitization, bibliometric and scientometric research, new projects, interlibrary exchange, and restoration and binding processes. Discussions were also held on future cooperation directions between universities. Cooperation with Turkish university libraries, as well as with libraries in other countries, continues today.

In 2025, within the framework of the 61st Library Week organized in Istanbul, an online event titled "*Libraries of the Turkic World*" was held. At the event, Adile Abdullayeva delivered a presentation entitled "*Libraries in the Turkic World: The Case of the Azerbaijan State University of Economics*," which attracted significant interest among participants.

Furthermore, an extensive article on the activities of the UNEC Library and Information Center was published in *Bengütaş*, one of the most authoritative journals in the field of librarianship in the Turkic world, issued by the Turkic World Librarians Foundation.

Overall, the experience of Azerbaijani university libraries-particularly those of AzTU and UNEC-demonstrates that international cooperation with Turkish academic libraries makes a substantial contribution to modernization, professional development, and the integration of Azerbaijan's higher education libraries into the global scholarly and information space.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Azerbaijani scientific libraries function not merely as repositories of information, but as important intellectual platforms for the production, dissemination, and mediation of scholarly knowledge. Their active participation in international cooperation makes a tangible contribution to the modernization of the national research system, its integration into the global scientific ecosystem, and the enhancement of the impact and visibility of research outputs. In the future, the further deepening of these collaborations-along with the development of library services based on the principles of open science, information literacy, and the democratization of scientific results-will significantly strengthen the competitiveness of Azerbaijan's scholarly environment.

Cooperation with libraries of Turkic-speaking countries has also intensified in recent years. Through organizations such as the **Türk Kütüphaneciler Derneği** and the **Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Vakfı**, Azerbaijani libraries establish partnerships with scientific libraries across the Turkic world and implement joint initiatives. These collaborations play a key role in advancing the study, preservation, and dissemination of shared cultural and scientific heritage. In addition, scientific libraries operating in Azerbaijan actively participate in national and international conferences in the fields of science and librarianship, thereby reinforcing their presence within the global professional community (Kazimi, 2011).

International library relations, therefore, should not be understood merely as technical cooperation. In a broader sense, they constitute a vital component of scientific, cultural, and social development. Through such connections, libraries not only enhance the quality of their services but also actively contribute to the formation of a global knowledge society. In the contemporary context of rapid technological and informational change, international cooperation emerges as a fundamental condition for the sustainable development of libraries and the delivery of innovative, future-oriented services.

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Huseyn Jalil oglu Huseynov began his professional career in 2002 at the Institute of Physics of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (ANAS), in the *Laboratory of Physics and Technology of High Voltages*, where he worked as an engineer. He subsequently held the positions of Junior Researcher (2005), Researcher (2007), Senior Researcher (2013), and Leading Researcher (2015). In 2012, he defended his dissertation entitled “*Effective Methods for Solving Environmental Problems of the Electric Power Industry Based on Electrophysical Processes*” and was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Technical Sciences. He is a recipient of several competitive research grants announced by the Science Development Foundation under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, including projects EIF/GAM-1-2011-2(4)-26/02/1-M-02 and EIF-Mob-5-2014-2(17)-14/01/1. In 2024, he defended his doctoral dissertation entitled “*Development of Processes for Dearomatization and Desulfurization of Oil and Fuel Distillates Using Ionic Liquid Solvents*” and was awarded the degree of Doctor of Technical Sciences. Between 2015 and 2024, he held several senior administrative and academic positions within ANAS, including Deputy Head of the Scientific-Analytical Department of the Science and Education Administration (2015), Head of the Master’s Department (2016), and Head of the Science and Education Department (2022). Since 2024, he has been serving as the Director of the Central Scientific Library of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences. He is the author of 98 scientific articles and 2 patents.