

## **Letter of Support for the NFDI-Initiative Text+: Language- and Text-based Research Data Infrastructure**

Presented by the Network of Romance Studies in Germany (AG Rom):

Deutscher Romanistenverband (Association for Romance Studies)  
Frankoromanistenverband (Association for French Studies)  
Hispanistenverband (Association for Spanish Studies)  
Italianistenverband (Association for Italian Studies)  
Katalanistenverband (Association for Catalan Studies)  
Lusitanistenverband (Association for Portuguese Studies)  
Balkanromanistenverband (Association for Romanian Studies)

represented by

Prof. Dr. Carolin Patzelt, University of Bremen, President Deutscher Romanistenverband  
and

Prof. Dr. Annette Gerstenberg, University of Potsdam, President Frankoromanistenverband

To

Prof. Dr. Erhard Hinrichs

Text+ Spokesperson

Leibniz-Institut für Deutsche Sprache R-5, 6-13

68161 Mannheim

Bremen / Potsdam, 1 September 2020

Dear Professor Hinrichs,

The associations for Romance Studies highly appreciate the concepts and goals of the planned consortium Text+ to be submitted to the German Research Foundation (DFG) under the NFDI program. We sincerely welcome the initiative of Text+ which covers a broad range of topics, within the planned SCCs collections, dictionaries, editions and infrastructures.

These topics are of vital interest for the core domains in Romance studies. The realization of Text+ will be of immense advantage for the development of our scholarly activities.

On behalf of the professional associations active in the wide range of fields related to Romance cultures, languages and literature, we hereby declare our willingness to support the goal and the future initiatives of Text+.

The network AG Rom brings together the elected presidents of seven Associations: The Association for Romance Studies (Deutscher Romanistenverband), French Studies (Frankoromanistenverband), Hispanic Studies (Hispanistenverband), Italian Studies (Italianistenverband), Portuguese Studies (Lusitanistenverband), Catalan Studies (Katalanistenverband), and Romanian Studies (Balkanromanistenverband), with more than 2000 members.

Since the beginnings of our scholarly traditions, various forms of textual data, such as literary sources, but also coins, charts, legal texts, non-fictional texts and ego-documents, have played a crucial role in our discipline. Scholars from Romance studies have contributed pioneering works to the development of textual editions, dictionaries, grammars, and linguistic atlases. These venerable traditions have undergone digital transformations during the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. More recent innovations in the fields of digital humanities, computational linguistics and corpus linguistics have also been fruitfully applied in the various fields of Romance studies.

It is our ambition and passion to contribute to producing, improving, and sharing our resources. With this aim, AG Rom has successfully supported and consulted the application of library and digital services (Fachinformationsdienst Romanistik, [fid-romanistik.de](http://fid-romanistik.de)), funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) since 2016; the combined representation of Romance interests by FID and AG ROM in the Text+ consortium will open new perspectives for this intensive cooperation. Out of many initiatives, the Network Digital Romance Studies (AG Digitale Romanistik) is to be mentioned as playing an active role in motivating discussions on crucial topics. The network's key topics are the promotion of open access resources and teaching digital literacy in specialized workshops. The network also aims to achieve acknowledgement of the production of digital tools and resources in the careers of young scholars.

With this background, we can provide expertise in the individual disciplines and sub-disciplines of literature, linguistics, cultural studies and educational studies, with a broad range of experience dealing with data produced in heterogeneous writing systems and linguistic varieties, from the earliest documents to the wide range of text types found today on the internet. Furthermore, we are familiar with the challenges of providing access, storage and conservation for digital data, of applying state-of-the-art analytical tools and of preparing metadata suitable for our multilingual resources. We are committed to the goal of respecting our field's methodological diversity while at the same time contributing to the implementation of standards that guarantee the long-term usability of our research output. In the scientific community of Romance studies, many smaller projects store their data in non-digital archives and are actually planning the digital transformation of their data. The cooperation with Text+

will help us to find solutions for digital data as well as for data awaiting digital transformation and to raise the visibility and availability of our research data within the scholar community.

We will therefore be delighted to serve the future Text+ consortium as an active partner in all the fields of the planned activities, from scholar consultations to the participation in the individual boards and working groups. The continuous exchange with our members gives us the opportunity to communicate the needs and crucial topics of current research in Romance studies, but also to be of use in spreading the future innovations and developments of Text+ within our communities.

We very much look forward to the cooperation with Text+.

Yours sincerely,

  
Prof. Dr. Carolin Patzelt

  
Prof. Dr. Annette Gerstenberg