

# ROYAL LIBRARY OF BELGIUM – ANNUAL REPORT TO CENL 2013-2014

## **The KBR Mission Statement**

The Royal Library of Belgium (KBR) is a Belgian federal scientific institution (Federal Science Policy). It is responsible for collecting and giving access to all publications produced in Belgium or elsewhere, by Belgian authors or concerning Belgium, now and in the future. The KBR is responsible for the Legal Deposit in Belgium and conserves a large, rich and varied European heritage (manuscripts, old printed books, newspapers, prints, music collections, medals and coins, maps and plans...) from the Antiquity till today.

### **1. Mandate; governance and organisation**

Since 2005, the library is led by historian Prof. Dr. Patrick Lefèvre. His mandate was prolonged for 6 new years (2011-2017) by the Minister in charge of the Federal Science Policy. At the same time, the Federal Science Policy Administration has signed a Management Agreement with the Minister for the next few years, which opens the possibility to a changing period with many structural reorganisations.

The management department of the Royal Library itself was also restructured: the Management office and the Public Relations Service were established and integrated in the Directorate of Support Services. The Digitization service was also included in the Directorate of Support Services.

### **2. E-publications**

Since legislation regarding the Legal Deposit has been amended in 2008, electronic publications on digital media (such as CD's, DVD's, etc.) should be deposited. In 2013 the number of these acquisitions decreased as a result of a more general evolution in media. On the other hand, more online electronic publications are being published. In this light, the KBR has continued to develop its voluntary e-depot of Belgian publications (electronic monographs as well as electronic periodicals).

### **3. Conservation**

The KBR has continued its efforts to harmonize its best practices in conservation and preservation issues.

Due to a growing lack of space, stores were reorganised in order to optimise placement. In 2012, the Belgian State Archives made two stores available in Leuven, equipped with mobile storage systems. From September 2012 until February 2013, more than 2.5 linear kilometers of books were moved to the Leuven depot. Every Friday, a shuttle service runs between the KBR and the depot if necessary.

#### 4. Digitization; digital library

On a national level, the KBR continued its participation in several national programs.

In 2012, an ambitious project of public private partnership which had to stress the digitization efforts of the ten Belgian Federal Scientific Institutes was cancelled, but is now redesigned as DIGIT-3, a federal digitization plan for the heritage of Federal Scientific Institutes and the Royal Belgian Film archive. The project's objective is to install three cross-cutting platforms between the federal scientific institutes regarding digitization, long-term preservation and content valorisation. DIGIT-3 aims at making a transition towards outsourcing mass-digitization programs, based on broad digitization chains (paper, image capture, object, audiovisual and enrichment of digitised objects).

A transitional phase has been established in order to test collaboration based on infrastructure and existing internal expertise. At the same time, the KBR participated in elaborating a new digitization contract document with the prospect of a 5-year tendering procedure (2014-2018).

The Cartesius-Project is a collaboration between the KBR, the State Archives, the Royal Museum for Central Africa and the Belgian National Geographic Institute. The project aims at constructing a website that gives access to these institutions' main cartographic collections relating to Belgium and Central-Africa. In 2013 this project entered the final phase: completing the lots and adding geo-metadata. The collection consists of 452 ancient maps (before 1800), a series of World War I maps (472 polygons), an atlas (74 polygons) and a Ferraris map (1 polygon). At the same time, the KBR has purchased an ArcGis server for the publication of the maps in the Cartesius web portal.

The heritage unit of Sint-Truiden (Erfgoedcel Sint-Truiden) has nearly finalized the digitization of the Sint-Truiden newspapers (25,000 pages) that are kept in the KBR.

The KBR provided support to a collaborative research program on francophone press and literature in Belgium, together with the Université Libre de Bruxelles (150,000 pages).

As part of the research project carried out at the Harold B. Lee Library (Brigham Young University, Utah, USA), historical sources regarding the La Monnaie Theater that are stored in different Belgian institutions, were digitized and made accessible on the website [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org). The Music Department of the KBR delivered 48 volumes of programme booklets for this project.

In addition, the KBR continued its own internal digital development. The Digitization service coordinates the KBR digitization policy. It consists of two parts: the Digitization service (the text chain) and the Photography service (the image chain). The Digitization service was structurally reinforced with new staff, a new equipped workspace for quality control and the purchase of a book scanner.

At the same time, a scanner for precious books was included in the operational programme, and has been installed in the proximity of those collections.

In 2013, the Digitization service has produced about 205,000 scans, 90% of which has been processed with OCR.

The greater part of the documents (about 14,000) were digitized as part of the international project Europeana Collections 1914-1918: 5,000 medals and coins, 3,500 postcards, 1,200 printed books, 580 geographic maps, 600 posters and 350 prints and drawings.

Other documents were digitized for several internal and (joint) research projects. There was a collaboration with the Manuscript Department, a joint research project with the Musée Félicien Rops and the province of Namur on the correspondence of Félicien Rops, the digitization of musical sources in collaboration with the Alamire Foundation. More than 2,560 scans were made in 2013 for the AGORA project (collection of Ancient drawings). About 300 prints and drawings were digitized for the Alvinus project. The KBR continued the Popp project, which aims at digitizing the complete collection of land register maps made by Christian Popp, and has also continued digitizing newspaper microfilms.

More focused and sometimes single-use digitization projects were carried out in the KBR 'special' and museum collections (the Manuscript Department, the Newspaper Department, the Music Department,...).

On an international level, the KBR has continued its participation in EUROPEANA COLLECTIONS 1914-1918 project, a collaboration between 10 major European libraries, led by the State Library of Berlin. The project's goal was to bring together different historical sources of World War I, regarding military history, daily life, social and cultural history. The KBR was in charge of the coordination of content and the enlargement of the network. The network was extended with the National Library of Russia, the National Library of Slovakia and the University Library of Osnabrück (Germany). By the 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2014, all collections were available on Europeana, TEL and through some thematic portal dedicated to WWI ([www.europeana1914-1918.eu](http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu)), which also integrates collections from two other major European projects on this topic: Europeana 1914-1918 (user generated content) and the European Film Gateway 1914. The KBR also provided content for the educational website (E-learning microsite) and the virtual exhibition connected to this project.

In 2013, the KBR became associated partner of the EUROPEANA NEWSPAPERS project (2012-2015), with the perspective to provide an online access to the out-of-copyright part of its digital corpus of Belgian newspapers (1830-1950).

The KBR participated in the ARROW Plus project (Accessible Registries of Rights Information and Orphan Works toward Europeana), a collaboration initiated by national libraries and other actors in the book industry, such as editors, writers associations, etc. The project aims at identifying entitled copyright holders for public collections. The ARROW database is operating in a test phase since the end of 2013.

## **5. Exhibitions and events**

LIBRARIUM, the permanent exhibition space of the KBR dedicated to the discovery of books and the written word, was nominated for the European Museum of the Year Award 2013 and received an honorable mention for being innovative. An edition of Dante's Inferno was displayed in the "livromaton", a didactic attraction where the public can discover a selection of digitised books accompanied with an audio guide.

As usual, the KBR has organised and welcomed many scientific conferences and meetings (e.g. the colloquia “Art, Knowledge and Commerce. Print publishers and the professionalization of printmaking in Europe 1500-1650”, “Musical life in Belgium during the Second World War”), educative events for scholars, cultural amateurs, guided tours, creative workshops, noon recitals...

The KBR frequently lends collection items to national and international exhibitions. In 2013 the KBR provided documents for 17 national and 12 international exhibitions.

The exhibition ‘Shock! 1914... What if war began tomorrow?’ opens in September 2014. This biennial exhibition?? is a collaboration between three federal institutions: CEGESOMA, the Belgian State Archives and the KBR.

The Print Department of the KBR collaborated with the University of Leuven and Museum M for an exhibition on Hieronymus Cock in Leuven. The exhibition attracted about 30,000 visitors, and got positive reactions and reviews in the national and international press.

## 6. National and International partnerships; cooperation

On the National level, the KBR participates in:

- Forum of federal libraries: every three months the KBR updates its data in a joint catalogue of federal libraries and participates in an annual seminar organised by the Forum.
- The Flemish library and archives association (VVBAD): the KBR is linked to VVBAD’s Scientific and documentary Information Section and contributes regularly to their journal ‘Meta’.
- The Musicology Society of Belgium
- The Royal Numismatic Society of Belgium

On the International level, the KBR participates in many different organisations and projects that are connected with its missions and activities:

- Conference of European National Libraries (CENL)
- Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL)
- Réseau Francophone Numérique (RFN)
- International Standard Identifier for Libraries and Related Organizations (ISIL)
- Répertoire international de la littérature musicale (RILM)
- Répertoire international des sources musicales (RISM)
- TEL
- Europeana

## 7. Key figures

General collection (in million of units)	6
Budget (in million)	7 M EUR
Staff (full time equivalents)	261.89
Scientific staff (full time equivalents)	28.83

