

Politics

Considering a particular legal act as more appropriate for improving legal position of the National Library, a proposal of a special Law on the NL was submitted by the Library to state administration at the beginning of 1994. However, as there has been no clear concept existing, yet, among political and legislative authorities on any legal concept of the position of top national institutions, only a revised **Statute of the NL** was assigned by the minister of culture at the beginning of this year, as well as a **National Library Board** established. The consequences are to be seen as positive, as discussions on possible independency and special national position of the Library have come outside its walls contributing to public awareness of its problems, on the other hand more attention has been called to Library's strategy, management, as well as financial issues, among politicians and state administration.

As influential advisory body to the minister of culture, the NL Board has recently approved a new **Strategic plan** of the NL for the period up to 2001, along with a proposal of the Library's **budgetary plan of the year 1996**.

In consequence of substantial cuts in **1995 budget** the Library at present faces financial problems (acquisitions, book preservation, building repairs): only 90 % of previous year's operating amount has been assigned, without having taken account of 10 % inflation rate and increasing prices, while real need of the NL for operation would be double amount. The number of positions had to be reduced this year, again.

Many changes in Library's **organization** took place during reporting period, owing to new and/or changed tasks and responsibilities resulting from integrated system implementation, and development of automated network between libraries and cooperation, as well.

Legislation

Revision of the Law on nonperiodical literature, ie. on **legal deposit**, has become an almost political issue during last two years period. According to the new version recently approved by the Parliament the number of free exemplars the publishers are obliged to render to libraries entitled has been reduced from 16 as at present to 4 resp. 5 (two of them coming to the NL) starting from January 1996.

As organization funded by the Ministry of Culture, ie. disposing of means coming from national budget, the NL has to observe number of legal provisions and regulations, often complicated and/or ambiguous in practical use, be it budgetary instructions, bookkeeping, duty, taxation liability, open calls for bids etc.

Construction

A new **repository** of the NL for ca 4 mil. volumes, which in addition will become **branch library**, is currently being reconstructed from a former factory hall in Prague, at 15 km distance from Klementinum. Provided the entire amount needed is released from the national budget for this purpose, the construction is to be finished by late Autumn 1995. The next year is expected to be a period of complicated moving of Library collections from or between several remote repositories, as well as of material, devices, and staff. In addition, a new organizational structure of the Library will be implemented. A preliminary outline of future system of library loan and information services, administration, and management, as well as

future accommodation of departments and location of library holdings, both in the new branch library, and in Klementinum, has been already prepared.

Automation

First phase of laying down complex telecommunication and information **infrastructure** inside the Klementinum has started and is going on. It will replace the provisional LAN working here till now, as well as a parallel Library's administration computer network. A **CD-ROM server** has been installed with the support of the VolkswagenStiftung, enabling the Library to develop a scale of information services based on CDROM databases. Implementation of the **ALEPH system**, selected in early 1993 by the consortium of four Czech and Slovak main libraries as the most convenient for their common **CASLIN project** (ie. Czech and Slovak Library Information Network realised with the support by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and The Pew Charitable Trusts), is going on, a new DEC Alpha server and a recent ALEPH version have been installed, Czech localization finished, while training programme is proceeding as scheduled. The conversion from so called Czech and Slovak Exchange Format into UNIMARC has begun, as the CASLIN consortium had declared complete adherence to international standards (**UNIMARC, ISBD, AACR2**). Accordingly, the current issue of revised and completed **CD-ROM version** of the **Czech National Bibliography** presents UNIMARC records already. In this context, the Library was able to bring the Czech National Bibliography records up to the level that they could comply with OCLC's requirements: as a result, a **contract between the NL and OCLC** was signed in January and exchange programme has been launched. The same as for the CASLIN project, the NL **retrospective conversion** programme has been awarded by the Mellon Foundation grant. The NL General Catalogue, and later the Czech National Bibliography of the 20th century, are going to be scanned, both catalogue cards, and printed records, then decoded by the OCR/ICR where possible, and finally tagged into UNIMARC fields. Appropriate software products have been developed. The NL **image digitization** programme including namely a special software has made good progress. Two significant medieval manuscripts were recently published on CDROM, with partial financial support contributed by UNESCO and the NL Foundation (see next paragraphs).

Conservation and Preservation

In addition to establishing appropriate organizational basis, the Library has prepared a general **preservation strategy**. The monitoring of microbiological condition of the holdings enabled the Library to put the deterioration process under control. Mechanical **cleaning** of library holdings has been finished, so that the books could be forwarded to following purification and conservation process when moved to new premises. **Conservation survey** of the Library's rare collections, now being completed, has been made possible by a Getty grant. Additional high level micrographic devices have been installed, so that the Library can set out a **micrographic conservation** programme, complying with European standards.

International Cooperation and Public Relations

In addition to standard scheme of library cooperation such as international loan lending service, or exchange of publications, taking part in international **library associations and**

programmes, and keeping a number of other expert contacts should be seen as very important (IFLA, LIBER, CERL, ELAG, IAML, CENL ...).

The cooperation with **UNESCO** took a great deal of the NL international activities. The Deputy Director of the NL, as a member of delegation of the Czech Republic, participated in the X. Meeting of the Intergovernmental Council for the **GIP** (General Information Programme) of UNESCO, held in December 1994 in Paris.

The Director of the Library was delegated as a member of the International Expert Commission of UNESCO for the Revival of the National and University Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo. The Prague International Expert Meeting on Bosnia contributed to the Commission activity.

As settled in contract with UNESCO, digitized facsimile of the Antiphony of Sedlec, one of the most outstanding Czech medieval manuscripts, has been issued on CDROM in collaboration with Czech firm Albertina icome, as a pilot project of the **UNESCO Programme The Memory of the World**.

The Library is going on cooperating with both foreign and Czech **foundations** and other institutions (e.g. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, The Pew Charitable Trusts, The Getty Grant Programme, Die Volkswagen Stiftung). The National Library Foundation decided to support publication of another digitized facsimile on CDROM, ie. of the Chronicon Concilii Constantinensis.

The scope of **public relations** activities expanded significantly during reporting year both among the general public and in massmedia (e.g. Czech Radio, Czech TV). On the occasion of the Prague Book Fair "BookWorld '95" held in May, fourday open doors of the baroque premises of Klementinum met enormous public interest.

The Library hosted several important events, e.g. some meetings of the 61st International **Congress of the P.E.N. Club**, or twoday international **conference on Russian, Ukrainian, and Bielorussian emigration** between two World Wars in former Czechoslovakia, recently organized, including an exhibition, by the NL, as considerable collection of relevant documents are kept by the Slavonic library (attached to the NL).

In addition, the Klementinum is visited not only because of library services, but also as place of exhibitions, or classical concerts given daily in the baroque chapel, or lectures on literature, history, or philosophy regularly read in session hall, while other attractive premises have been rented to a bookseller.

August 1995

General Information

Holdings (total) - ca 6 000 000 items including:

manuscripts - ca 9 000

incunabula - ca 3 500

Director: Vojtech Balík Ph.D.

Klementinum 190 21663262

110 01 Praha 1

Czech Republic

Tel.: +42224213276

Fax: +42224227796

Email: vojtech.balik@nkp.cz