

# NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MALTA

## ANNUAL REPORT 2001

The Department of Libraries and Archives comprises the National Library in Valletta, the National Archives at Rabat and Mdina and the Public Libraries in Malta and Gozo.

### THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

#### Staffing and Finance

The personnel at the National Library is made up of 42 employees: 18 Library Grade employees and 24 Civil Service Grades.

The Department encourages members of the staff to take the Diploma in Library and Information Studies of the University of Malta. This year two library employees are reading for this Diploma and they will be awarded the Diploma in February 2003.

The operating budget for the whole Department was increased by Lm35,000, from Lm603,000 in 2000 to Lm638,000 in 2001. Personal emoluments, i.e. salaries, social security contributions, bonuses and allowances, account for Lm 517,000 or 75.7% of the Department's running costs.

#### Quality Service Charter

The Quality Service Charter organised by the Staff Development Organisation of the Office of the Prime Minister was awarded to the National Library of Malta on Thursday, 27<sup>th</sup> December 2001. For the occasion all members of staff contributed to the organisation of a special ceremony of inauguration. The ceremony started with an introductory speech by the Director. It continued with the reading of a poem with the National Library as its subject written by a staff member and the presentation by the Maintenance Section of the Department of a vehicle for the Library's use after the same section performed the necessary works to upgrade the said vehicle to an almost brand new condition. Mgr. John Azzopardi blessed this vehicle. The ceremony culminated in the speeches of the Hon. Dr. Louis Galea, Minister of Education and the Hon. Dr. Austin Gatt, Minister for Justice and Local Government. Then the Quality Service Charter Document was officially presented. The ceremony ended with a reception.

One has to say that prior to this inauguration ceremony, the National Library's staff prepared thoroughly to ameliorate the standard of service and achieve goals, which were formulated during a seminar held in May 2001, where the targets were set. Furthermore, in 2001 numerous meetings were held between staff members, during which aspects such as security, regulations, etc. were discussed and decided. As a result of this collective effort the National Library was awarded the Quality Service Charter – a Charter that not only gives great satisfaction to the National Library's staff but also provides a new stimulus to achieve an even higher standard. Thus several goals for 2002 have already been set.

#### Award during Public Service Week

During the Public Service Week organised by the Management and Personnel Office at the Office of the Prime Minister, Mr. Anselm Sciberras, Library Officer at the National Library was awarded the *Ghotja Ta' Rikonoximent*, for his interest and work in improving efficiency in a tangible way that resulted in reducing the Department's expenditure. The Hon. Prime Minister presented this award on Friday, 22 June 2001.

#### Bibliographic Services Unit

The preservation of the national imprint is one of the main functions of the National Library. This is achieved through the Legal Deposit Act, which stipulates that authors or publishers are bound by law to deliver two copies

free of charge to the National Library, of any work printed and published locally. Throughout 2001, a total of 466 distinct books were deposited, together with approximately 578 local periodical titles that include journals, newspapers and magazines.

Once again, budget cuts restricted the number of books purchased by the department. Whereas before two copies were purchased in addition to each book received by legal deposit, the lack of funds dictated the acquisition of only one extra copy by the department. Similarly, with regard to foreign books, only those with an evident Maltese link were purchased, together with very few reference works.

A total of Lm1,294 were spent on books published locally, with Lm200 being spent on foreign books. An approximate total of Lm1, 303 were spent on subscriptions to and membership in foreign periodicals. 3 titles of last year's periodicals amounting to Lm309 still remain to be paid from this year's budget. The receiving, acknowledging and chasing of books and serials are all done via computer. 67 additional serial titles were entered into the database this year, complementing last year's overall number of 563 serial titles.

Legal Deposit	Books	Periodicals
Total	466	578

Purchases	Local Books	Foreign Books	Foreign Periodicals (Subscription & memberships)
<b>Amount Spent</b>	Lm1,294	Lm200	Lm1,287

Throughout 2001, the former Librarian of the National Library, continued to meet library staff from this section on a weekly basis, carrying out supervision work on the National Bibliography, specifically to do with the classification of the bibliographic entries. As a result, in July, the Malta National Bibliography for the years 1995 and 1996 was completed, using GEAC software that facilitates the compilation, editing, indexing and formatting of the bibliography. Progress was made in the compilation of the 1997-1998 bibliography during the remaining months of the year.

### **Readers' Services Section And Archives Section**

The only area of the National Library accessible to the public is the Reading Room. The new lay-out of the Reading Room enabled supervision by the staff to be stricter and damage to Library material more difficult to inflict. Supervision was also rendered easier since occasional visitors were not allowed to roam around the research area. A new security system was introduced at the end of the year whereby visitors and researchers were required to stop at the reception desk on entering the library in order to have their details registered on computer. The system enabled staff to monitor the presence of the public. Children under 15 years of age were forbidden to use the National Library facilities. Material ordered by researchers began to be registered on computer. Photocopying charges were revised to protect Library material from further damage.

This year the staff delivered to the public 2,457 manuscript volumes, 5,521 volumes of newspapers and periodicals, 3,858 printed books and 2,245 rolls of microfilm. The above items averaged 54 items per day of opening. Reading Room staff not only delivered material to the public but also dealt with users' elementary queries and directed them to the catalogues and other sources available at the Library.

This year a total of 73,301 pages of photocopies and microfilming were made for the general public and all this netted the sum of Lm3,976.

	Arch MSS	Libr MSS	Melit.	Ref.	Per/News	Microfilms
January	144	69	305	64	484	194
February	118	78	253	58	601	204
March	245	86	354	54	629	206
April	182	98	335	64	626	227
May	66	45	197	65	411	181
June	99	41	254	47	425	171
July	128	40	241	50	489	199
August	126	139	255	39	406	160
September	90	79	284	60	309	155
October	139	124	284	56	505	203
November	141	51	240	64	326	212
December	58	71	186	49	310	133
TOTAL	1536	921	3188	670	5521	2245

***Total of 14,081 items or 54 items per day of opening***

Postal and E-mail enquiries were received from all over the world. The majority required information from the Archive of the Order of Malta which is preserved at the Library. These concerned mainly proofs of nobility of the knights. The requests, most of which came from France, Italy and the U.K., amounted to 145 during the year. Queries were also forthcoming from Argentina, Indonesia, Norway, Australia, Canada and Ghana. Apart from the written requests, several Maltese and foreigners visited the Library in order to carry out research of some sort. Some of them came to trace their relatives; others made specific or general queries usually regarding family surnames, genealogy and sports events. Most of these queries were dealt with on the spot.

**Microfilming Section**

The volume of microfilming work performed during 2001 consisted of 68,250 frames and the execution of orders for private individuals amounting to 38,820 frames. The number of frames copied from the Government Gazette was 24,050. The Library Manuscripts were also copied on positive film totalling a number of 94,250 frames. All this work amounted to 195,370 frames in all. All films were developed, checked and labelled. The project of checking the negative and positive film of the Archives of the Order of St John was continued throughout the year 2001.

**Bindery Section**

The total number of volumes bound this year by the bindery section amounted to 492. Each member of the bindery section bound an average of 164 volumes during the year, i.e. approximately 3 volumes per week. Another 155 items, not including plastic jackets and pocket files, were soft bound.

The following is the breakdown of items:

Newspapers 128 volumes

Electoral Registers 31 volumes

Malta Government Gazette 62 volumes

Parliamentary Debates 43 volumes

DOI Press Releases 17 volumes

Miscellaneous Maltese

Periodicals 182 volumes

Miscellaneous Foreign

Periodicals 29 volumes

**TOTAL 492 volumes**

### **Cultural Policy**

In August 2001 the Ministry of Education published its first ever written Cultural Policy of Malta, constructed after eighteen months of consultation and debate with respective cultural representatives in Malta. The Department had an important role in preparing all information and compiling the necessary statistics for the publishing of this Cultural Policy.

### **Cooperation Agreements between Branch/Regional Libraries and the Department of Local Councils**

The exercise of signing a co-operation agreement with Local Councils in the various places of Malta and Gozo was very active during the year 2001. In fact thirteen co-operation agreements were concluded with the respective Local Councils.

### **Increase in the remuneration payable to Branch Sub-Librarian**

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April, 2001 the remuneration of Branch Librarians was increased to be at par with the hourly rate of a Casual Library Assistant. Moreover, the rate was also tied up to any future increases granted by Government. This was very much appreciated by all the part-time officers in charge of a Branch Library who saw their remuneration increased three times as much. Also it was taken into consideration that the work performed by a Branch Librarian had now changed to a more professional output involving in it the IT element. Moreover, the level of qualifications required now are more demanding and should conform to the Co-operation agreements signed between the Department of Libraries and Archives and the Association of Local Councils.

### **Participation in Conferences Abroad**

In 2001 the Director represented the Department in two international Conferences.

#### **A. *67<sup>th</sup> Council and General Conference of the International Federation of Library Association and Institutions (IFLA)***

The IFLA 67<sup>th</sup> Council and General Conference was held in Boston, Massachusetts, USA between 16 and 25 August 2001. The theme of the Conference for this year was Libraries and Librarians: Making a difference in the Knowledge Age. Certainly this is an essential concept for this new century.

This year the number of participants attending the General Conference was an exceptional record. Up to 20<sup>th</sup> August, this number had reached 5,250. Many interesting subjects concerning different aspects of libraries and information studies were discussed during the days of the Conference.

Two important events during the Conference were the Exhibition Opening and a visit to the Boston Public Library.

#### *Exhibition Opening*

Sunday evening was dedicated to the opening of the Exhibition at the Hynes Convention Centre. In all, 189 exhibitors participated in this 67<sup>th</sup> edition of IFLA in Boston. Mr. David R. Bender, the Executive Director, in his welcoming speech encouraged the audience to enhance the conference experience by learning more about the state of the art products and services available. This experience proved an eye opener with regard to making more informed purchasing decisions in the future.

Such an experience will also help in the organisation of the Malta International Book Fair presently operating under "Il-Kunsill Nazzjonali tal-Ktieb".

### *Boston Public Library*

On Monday 20 August the Boston Public Library was visited. This Library is responsible for the management of 24 Regional Libraries spread all over Boston. This visit proved to be very helpful as in many ways the Boston Public Library's management is similar to that of our Central Public Library in Malta which also cater for the 50 Branch Libraries and 7 Regional ones. Acquired information has helped and will continue to help in the Department's efforts to always improve our Central Public Library.

### ***B. 15<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Conference for the European National Libraries (CENL)***

The 15<sup>th</sup> Edition of the CENL Conference was held in Riga, Latvia during the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> September 2001. In all 41 directors from 39 countries participated during this year's edition.

The programme on the agenda besides reporting on activities held during the year 2000/2001 had two guest speakers who spoke on Digitisation and digital preservation. The lectures which were followed by interesting discussions elaborated on the conservation of library manuscripts/documents held in our libraries.

Mr. Leo Voogt, recently appointed Director Library Relations, Elservices Science, spoke on International publishers and the challenge of digital preservation. Ms Pat Manson from the European Commission referred to the EU activities on digitisation and digital preservation.

#### **Loan of manuscript to the National Museum of Fine Arts**

In December 2001, the National Library lent Libr. Ms. 163, which includes two original drawings by Mattia Preti, to be displayed in an exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Valletta. The drawings had been discovered earlier on in the year by Judge Giovanni Bonello in the course of his research at the National Library. The manuscript was loaned to the Museum to be put on public display for the first time together with hitherto unknown drawings by the renowned Italian artist. A private viewing of the exhibition by H.E. the President of Malta took place on 28 December.

#### **Malta Book Fair 2001**

Between Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2001, the Department of Libraries and Archives organised the 17<sup>th</sup> edition of the Malta Book Fair at the Naxxar Fair Grounds.

Twenty-six exhibitors participated offering a large variety of books with topics and interesting titles covering all subjects and thus the thousands of visitors had the opportunity to browse and purchase books according to their interest and taste.

During the Fair, activities such as a discussion regarding The Maltese Book, launching of new publications and launching of programmes and initiatives aiming at enhancing opportunities for Maltese authors were organised. An average of six thousand school children from state and private schools visited the Fair in organised parties. An exhibition of Books written by Maltese authors in foreign languages was organised by the Department. It featured circa two hundred publications dated between 1950 and 2000. These were the work of seventy five different authors and subjects ranged from literature to sciences, from cookery to children's books, and many more.

#### **New Legislation and Regulations**

In December 2001, the National Library launched a set of new regulations governing access to the Library and consultation of documents and books. Among other things, the new regulations imposed an age limit on researchers using library facilities. Thus children under 15 years of age can now only enter the library as visitors accompanied by their families. Other regulations imposed restrictions regarding the reproduction of library material, such as by photocopying or photographing. The aim of the new rules was to tighten up security measures as well as ensure a better preservation of the raw material. The regulations were drawn up under the expert direction of the Office of the Attorney General and were approved by the Hon. Minister of Education. In conjunction with the implementation of the new regulations, the National Library also issued new fees for photocopies and microfilms. The previous fees of 5c for A4 sheets and 6c for A3 sheets were raised to 10c and 15c respectively. The changes were approved by the Office of the Attorney General as well as by the Prime Minister.

#### **Close Circuit Television**

For reasons of security, the National Library also introduced a new system to regulate access to the National Library and/or roaming around in prohibited areas. The installation of 32 CCTV cameras in the reception area as well as in the reading room and stack rooms of the Library was a project that had long been planned but which took rather long to materialize for financial reasons. The images filmed by the cameras are stored in the memory of the TV hard

disk and can be retrieved when necessary for a limited period of time. The idea is to control the movement of researchers and visitors, thus reducing as much as possible the likelihood of tampering with or theft of Library material.

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