

# THE NATIONAL LIBRARY IN WARSAW

1999 Annual Report

to the Conference of European National Librarians (CENL)

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## 1. SPECIAL TOPICS

In March 1999, after over twenty years' lasting construction, the National Library new premises officially became operational. The National Library celebrated the formal opening of the new building for its users.

However, at the same time the National Library has initiated the efforts to seek extra funds in order to begin the construction of the new additional building, dedicated mainly for the storage of the main and special collections because the storage space of the National Library shall reach its limits within a few years.

In 1999 the National Library has drawn much attention to monitor the situation of public libraries in Poland. They have found themselves in especially complexed financial, legal and organizational situation, resulting from the administrative reform of the country, empowered on 1 January 1999.

## 2. MAJOR INNOVATIONS

In February 1999 first 20 OPAC computers have been made available for the public in its new premises. The National Library main database in the Innopac system, as well as nine other bibliographic, union catalogs and reference databases in the MAK system could be – since January 1998 – freely accessed over the Internet.

Much attention has been drawn to acquisitions, processing and public access to new types of special collections. The National Library catalogers have started to process documents of social life, audiovisual and electronic documents in the Innopac system and in the USMARC format. Significant changes in bibliographic processing and cataloging of serials in the Innopac system in the USMARC format have been introduced.

Upon the completion of the the laboratory building, and the final stage of the purchase and the installation of the system of collections' disinfection, the Department of Library Collections'

Conservation and Preservation has started to prepare the change of the organization and the technology of the conservation and the preservation of main library collections.

The long-term governmental program, approved in November 1999 by Cabinet of the Republic of Poland, in order to save the most endangered nineteenth and twentieth century collections that were printed on acid paper, has added to the National Library duties new tasks of the coordination of this program countrywide. The issues of the preservation and the conservation of library collections have there fore become one of more important tasks in the coming years.

With relation to more frequent theft incidents, the National Library has worked out the conception of the improvement of the security of collections, buildings and the property. It has introduced several substantial organizational and technological changes (modernization of the electronic monitoring), the improvement of the security of both National Library buildings – the new complex and the Palace of the Republic, where special collections are preserved.

### **3. LEGAL STATUS**

In 1999 the legal status of the National Library has stayed unchanged. However, the amendment of the funding rules of cultural institutions (scheduled for autumn and empowered on 1 January 2000) has resulted in the analysis of the financial situation of the National Library, the possibility of the increase of the own income and the improvement of staff salaries. In 1999 the National Library has applied to the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage for the approval of the changes in its Statute, covering changes in the internal organizational scheme and the structure of the management, as well as covering new legal regulations relating to funding rules.

In 1999 two new executory regulations to the Library Law of 1997 have been empowered: one, relating to the evidence of library materials (among others allowing for computer inventories), and one, relating to the council of countrywide library holdings' resource, presided, due to the regulations, by the National Librarian.

The works on the amendments of the Copyright Law, continued in 1999, have aroused discussions among library circles due to the unfavourable attitude of the present regulations towards library user services' rules and the private use of copies by library readers.

### **4. FINANCE AND FUNDING**

The financial situation of the National Library in 1999 has been very complexed and unstable. In comparison with the previous year the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage declaration of the allocation has been effectively diminished by some 10 per cent (due to the inflation rate). In addition, the National Library has not been provided in 1999 with any means to complete the construction, as well as to proceed with necessary investments. Thanks to the determined efforts of the National Library the required allocation has finally reached almost 100 per cent of the last year's subsidy.

The National Library funds come from the budget generally up to 95 per cent, and are allocated by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. The income from sales of databases, publications and other services comes to the average of 6 per cent of the costs of the National Library activity. Staff salaries reach some 70 per cent of the total expenditures. The vital part of the National Library income are also grants, made by Polish and foreign foundations for special tasks, as well as private and municipal institutions' donations for the purchase of the collections, publications and cultural and exhibition activity.

### **5. BUILDINGS AND PLANTS**

The formal completion of the construction of the new complex of buildings has taken place in 1999, with the symbolic opening of the main public entrance. However, the lack of means has not permitted to finish the arrangement of the building site's environs. The adaptative works of the laboratory building for the preservation and conservation of the collections were going on.

Special attention has been drawn to the improvement of the collections' and buildings' security: the system of utility TV, monitoring public spaces, has been modernized, central security monitoring system, overseeing buildings' security, has been installed, etc.

In 1999 the National Library has officially initiated efforts to seek extra funds to begin the construction of the second stacks' building in 2002, and has prepared the functional plan for this construction. The storage space to house the National Library collections – according to the up-to-date prognosis – shall reach its limits within a few years. Therefore the issue of the relevant storage conditions for the national collection in future becomes more and more crucial.

## **6. LEGAL DEPOSIT OF MATERIALS**

By the regulations of the 1996 Legal Deposit Law, the National Library receives two promotional legal deposit copies of books, serials, music scores, maps, ephemera, audio-visual and electronic documents. In spite of the legal duty of publishers to provide the National Library with all these publications, it is estimated that only some 80 per cent of the national book production reaches the National Library. In 1999 the systematic counselling of book publishers has been undertaken. These actions relate also to the publishers of serials and documents electronic and audio-visual shall be intensified in the year 2000.

## **7. ACQUISITIONS**

By the end of 1999 the National Library collections included 5,718,469 volumes/units, and together with duplicates (1,439,364) – 7,157,833 volumes/units. The National Library added to its collections in 1999 134,088 library units, including 106,792 legal deposit copies, 13,828 units acquired through purchases, 5,395 exchange and 8,073 gift acquisitions. Altogether, the National Library had spent 1,625,760 zloty (USD 400.000) for the purchases of library materials.

The substantial part of the cost of subscriptions of foreign serials and CD-ROM databases (31) was covered with special grants done by the Committee of Scientific Research.

The National Library collections (without duplicates and certain types of documents), as of December 31, 1999, included:

- monographs published since 1801 2,022,192 volumes
- serials published since 1801 708,479 volumes
- documents of social life 1,746,002 volumes
- library and information science

special collection 158,669 volumes

- manuscripts 25,051 units
- early printed books pre-1801 160,696 volumes
- printed music 103,468 units
- sound recordings 48,045 units
- graphics and engravings 380,156 units
- cartography (maps, atlases and globes) 78,605 units
- microforms 198,222 units
- negatives of graphics and engravings 87,861 units

## **1. BIBLIOGRAPHY, CATALOGING AND OTHER TECHNICAL SERVICES**

In 1999 the conversion of bibliographic and catalog databases, created and maintained in the previous years in own MARC BN format in the homegrown local system MAK, has been fully completed. By the end of December 1999 the database in the Innopac system included 318,000 bibliographic, and 590,000 item records, including over 10,000 bib records of serials and almost 26,000 bib records of documents of social life. The National Library has also started to process electronic documents, for their inclusion in the current national bibliography and the catalog of the collections, basing on the Polish standard of the description of this type of documents (under preparation). The catalogers have also started to unify and rearrange authority files of names, corporate names and series.

Since the provision of access to the online catalog on the Internet the interest of the users in the National Library databases distributed on CD-ROM or as files (FTP, electronic mail) has not decreased.

## **2. CONSERVATION/PRESERVATION OF THE COLLECTIONS**

After several years of efforts of the group of experts from libraries, archives and academia, Cabinet of the Republic of Poland has approved in November 1999 the longterm governmental program of saving nineteenth and twentieth century original collections, printed on impermanent paper. The program shall include the massive scale deacidification and reinforcement of these collections. The National Library has been designated the direct coordinator of the program.

In 1999 the National Library has purchased the system of collections' disinfection – SUPHATEC – put together and completed by Czech specialists. The installation of the system is planned for the year 2000. This new tool shall serve the needs of the National Library, and other libraries and archives in Poland.

For almost 50 years the National Library has carried on the action of the protective microfilming of collections, allocating for this task own financial means. Considerable achievements have been noted in this field, however, microfilming of the Polish press and serials is still a crucial issue. In order to meet the needs and continue this action additional funding shall be indispensable.

Within the frames of the Polish-German cooperation, the National Library continued in 1999 the project of microfilming early printed books in the field of Polish-German cultural borderland, as well as Jewish serials published within the territory of pre-war Poland. This project shall be continued until 2001, and is financed with external funds.

## **3. IT AND NEW TECHNOLOGY**

In 1999 the National Library fully used cataloging and management modules, and the OPAC (its Telnet and WWW versions) of the Innopac system. The implementation of the remaining modules (acquisition, serials control and circulation) has also been continued. At the end of 1999 the upgrade of the Innopac software to the latest version of the system – fully Y2K compliant INNOPAC – Millennium 2000 – has been successfully performed. Within the contract agreement the National Library has purchased the cataloging workstation for Windows client software for catalogers, which shall be implemented in the year 2000.

Y2K working group has been appointed by the National Librarian to analyze potential problems linked with the computer hardware and software. The report of the working group has resulted in several actions, among them the replacement or the upgrade of the computer hardware (main boards, processors, BIOS), and software (operating systems, Novell NetWare, and UNIX serving the Innopac database).

The National Library has also commissioned an external expert with the task of analyzing of the status and the capacity of the Local Area Network, installed in 1996. This expertise proved the necessity of several hardware and software upgrades and investments to be done within two-three coming years. Some of the improvements, i.e., those crucial of the LAN performance, have already been undertaken in 1999. The ongoing modernization of the Local Area Network, better and quicker data flow on the Internet (meeting the needs of the remote users), the purchase of relevant hardware and software to proceed with the digitalization of the collections, more OPAC computers for the public onsite, and well organized user access to electronic documents – these are main challenges for the National Library in the nearest future.

In 1999 the National Library homepage service – enabled for the internauts in 1997 – has been improved. Its English version is under preparation, as well as the broadening of the offer for remote users.

#### **4. SERVICES TO READERS**

The National Library still performs as the biggest public library in Poland that in 1999 has provided its 217,462 readers in its reading rooms with altogether 600 seats with 795,740 volumes of books and serials, but also with 40,000 microfilms and some 40,000 units of graphics and engravings. Almost 200,000 xerocopies have been requested and done for readers in 1999.

The National Library users have also been provided with the access to the computer catalog – Innopac OPAC. They also have access – for several years now – to CD-ROM databases via CDRom-LAN, and to other catalog and bibliographic databases maintained in the homegrown MAK system via LAN from dedicated computers located in the Reference Room.

In 1999 new reading room of documents of social life has been organized and opened to the public, as well as the preparations for the opening of the audio-visual reading room have been continued.

#### **5. LIBRARY COOPERATION**

##### National cooperation

By the virtue of the Library Law of 1997, two countrywide advisory committees have been established: National Library Council, and the Council for Countrywide Library Holdings' Resource, both presided by the National Librarian.

In 1999 the National Library – for over fifty years involved in carrying out research and advisory activity relating to public librarianship – has monitored the situation of public libraries that have found themselves in the complicated situation resulting from the administrative reform of the country of 1 January 1999. Issues of public librarianship have dominated relations of the National Library with library circles of the country.

The National Library, together with a group of the most important academic libraries of the country, has continued the works on the creation of the national union catalog of research libraries' holdings controlled with authority files. The union catalog management center is to be located at the University Library in Warsaw. Bearing in mind the fact that a few years ago academic libraries have created the center of shared database of authority files for their use, it is crucial for the National Library to establish the criteria and rules governing the cooperation relating to the creation of the unified database of authority files' database countrywide, to serve the needs of the national bibliography, and also the needs of the other Polish libraries.

##### International cooperation

The National Library cooperates with many international organizations. It is a member of the IFLA, CENL, LIBER, IASA, IAML, IADA, IRA (International Reading Organization), FID and ASLIB. It also acts as the national center of international ISSN and ISBN systems. It participates the meetings of ISO/TC46, ELAG, Bibliotheca Baltica, ECPA, and transfers data to many information systems: EROMM, ABHPB, Index Translationum, RISM, RILM, and UNESCO Statistical Yearbook (statistical data on publishing in Poland).

In 1999 the National Library has signed the agreement with Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem regulating, among others, the exchange of microfilms of Judaica and Polonica preserved in the collections of both libraries.

## **6. EXHIBITIONS AND OTHER FORMS OF CULTURAL ACTIVITY**

The National Library program of cultural events in 1999 has been plentiful and varied. Twelve exhibitions have been organized at the National Library premises, and two – abroad (at the National and University Library in Oslo – "Art of Conservation of Book Bindings", and in A. Pushkin Museum of Literature in Moscow – "From Russia and About Russia").

From among exhibitions organized at the National Library, three deserve special attention: "Hommage à Chopin" – the exhibit of the works dedicated to Chopin or composed basing on Chopin's motives; "Warsaw Uprising 1944 in the Eye of the World" organized to commemorate 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this revolt, and the first exhibit in the series "Our Neighbours – New Outlook" – devoted to Lithuania ("In the Lithuanian Mirror"), with the participation of the director of the National Library of Lithuania, Dr. Vladas Bulavas. The special presentation of F. Chopin's manuscript collection, preserved at the National Library, has also been organized for the participants of the International Musicological Congress, devoted to F. Chopin's composition.

Within the new series of meetings with writers and publishers, initiated by the NL in 1998, 12 Polish writers and 6 publishers have been introduced to the broad public ("Conversations About Books", and "Publishers Parlour").

Cultural events organized at the National Library have entered for good the cultural offer of the capital city, and have also been a great success.

## **7. PUBLISHING AND RESEARCH**

The National Library acts as one of more important research centers of the country in the field of the bibliography, library science, librarianship, reading habits, information science, book science, history of books and libraries, preservation and conservation of collections. The direct results of the research activity are numerous publications. In 1999 21 titles of serials and 18 titles of monographs have been published. It is worth mentioning that the National Library, charged with this task by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, is the publisher of six cultural serial titles, among them a new title in Russian language "Novaja Polša". Among mostly appreciated by readers items published in 1999 one has to mention the collective work "Z dziejów mecenatu kulturalnego w Polsce" (From the History of Cultural Patronage in Poland), facsimile bibliophilic edition of the autographs of 24 preludes by F. Chopin; "Dokumenty życia społecznego Żydów polskich (1918-1939) w zbiorach Biblioteki Narodowej" (Documents of Social Life of Polish Jews [1918-1939] in the National Library Collections), and the last 7<sup>th</sup> part of the multivolume work "Katalog portretów osobistości polskich i obcych w Polsce działających" (Catalog of Portraits of Polish and Foreign Notables Acting in Poland).