

# **The National Library of Romania**

## **Annual report**

**September 1997 - August 1998**

### **Basic data**

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### **Main statistics**

Collections: 8,824,991 b.u.

162 incunabula

20,059 (Romanian and foreign) old books

10,982 (Romanian and foreign) rare books

30,972 audiovisual materials

36,761 (old and modern) manuscripts

48,067 periodicals

over 800 engravings

117,260 originals photographs and illustrated postcards.

### **1. Major innovations and changes during the year**

Much has been achieved in what regards a new version of the "Organizational and operational regulations" and of the organizational chart, that would adequately reflect the interdepartmental relationship in a modern library operational flow, improve the books' circulation and the informational network's results.

### **2. Finance and funding**

a. Government funding received: 6,866,000,000 lei, out of which:

- i. for staffing: 4,041,000,000 (spent 4,040,918,285)
- ii. for maintainance: 2,700,000,000 lei (spent 2,699,929,642.54)

iii. for capital expenditure: 125,000,000 lei (125,000,000 spent).

b. Revenues earned and transferred to the state budget: 217,922 thousand lei in 1997.

### **3. Legal status**

The Draft Library Law has been augmented with the help of professionals from major institutions in the field (the National Library, the Central University Library, the Romanian Academy Library, the National Information and Documentation Institute, the Centre for Information and Cultural Memory), as well as representatives of the public libraries in the country or professional associations. The Draft Law is at the moment at the Ministry of Culture, in view of being submitted to the other ministries involved (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finances, Ministry of Research) for their approval. It contains the government's obligations towards libraries and also libraries' obligations towards the users (tax-payers). The National Library continues to remain a government-financed library.

### **4. Legal deposit**

At present the Legal Deposit Law of November 1995 is in effect. It must, however, be amended to include also some categories of materials overlooked in its first version (nonprint, electronic and other documents). The law ensures the inclusion of 50-60% of the Romanian editorial production into the National Library collections, constituting the main source for the library's collection development (around 90% of the Romanian publications).

### **5. Building and plant**

The new building's condition is more or less the same (rather under "degradation" than "in progress."). Fortunately, in 1997 the storing areas in one of the building's wings were finished, this way solving the uncertain situation of some publications the library had to evacuate from other locations.

Following an arbitrary decision, the building's back area (the assembly hall and a number of other spaces that could locate the institution's offices, leaving the rest of the building for public service purposes) had been assigned to the National Information and Documentation Institute (INID). During 1997 much action and petitioning were initiated at the Ministry of Culture in support of the idea of having the entire building assigned - by means of a government ordinance - for the National Library's use. The aim was to raise the authorities' awareness of the true development requirements of a national library, as the space being allotted was - already at the respective moment in the past - absolutely insufficient. In the library's central building (the one that was formerly stock exchange) have - through space re-appropriation measures - been re-established two reading-rooms (one for UNESCO/EU/BIEF materials and another for periodicals). A solution for saving the collections (around 300,000 b.u.) housed in the building's basement has been sought for (as the space there is permanently flooded and its relocation to the groundfloor may provide the answer). However, with the number of staff the National Library has at present, the relocation might be done only with very great difficulty.

During the same period the automation division was re-organized and moved to a more suitable room.

### **6. Acquisitions**

Owing to its representative position in the Romanian culture, the National Library maintains the encyclopedical character of its collections. According to the Legal Deposit Law in effect it collects all categories of Romanian publications, documents and materials specified in the Law. The acquisition policy aims at a qualitative selection of publications, considering quantitative growth as secondary. The present-day selection concerns: current Romanian books, current Romanian periodicals, foreign books and periodicals, its success depending greatly on the strategy adopted in the relationship with the suppliers and distributors. The retrospective acquisition also implies selective criteria, setting a priority for old or rare Romanian books (1508-1830), prime editions of Romanian or world literature classics, numbered, autographed, as well as artistically bound and small-run Romanian or foreign editions.

By means of the international exchange of publications the National Library enriches its own collections with important world culture works, while also promoting the Romanian artistic, cultural and scientific values abroad.

The acquisition policy has also in view the needs of the new modern specialized audiovisual section - that functions at the Special Collections Department and has set as its goal the collection of records reproducing the voices of political and cultural Romanian personalities, records of famous Romanian singers of the inter-world wars period, old Romanian music scores, most recent CDs or LPs, original opera video cassettes or recordings of symphony concerts.

## **7. Conservation/preservation of collections**

The Book Restoration Laboratory of the National Library restored 10,317 conventional pages of documents (printed materials and manuscripts) and 62 bindings, while also completing 2,515 physico-chemical and biological investigations. 103 volumes of books were disinfected, cleaned and reinforced, while other 50 Romanian periodicals ones were dust-cleaned, repaired and re-bound. Professional training involved training a restorator for the Central University Library. The laboratory staff participated in the professional specialized events in the UK (Binders' Society), in Satu Mare (conference) and Braşov (exhibition).

As far as preservation is concerned, a coherent policy has been adopted, including the creation of a "Preservation office", that would work according to this policy, implementing an optimum strategy for the severe degradation condition of most of the National Library collections. A contribution concerning the storing and preservation state of the National Library collections was sent to International Preservation News, depicting the requirements and priorities of the matter.

## **8. IT and new technology**

Automated services for the readers include: OPAC with three workstations for the charge-free access into the library database (around 100,000 bibliographic records covering the 1992-1998 period); free access to the weekly updated governmental documents database (documents since 1964), LAN that has a library-functions application installed. The work stations have access to INTERNET. A new Web page is being created by using the newest technologies so as to allow the online access to all catalogues.

The financial and bookkeeping activities use software applications developed by specialized companies in the country.

The strategic measures being taken aim at achieving such objectives as: ensurance of direct access to the National Library database through INTERNET, improvement of the library's software performance, ensurance of necessary equipment for habitual use of CD-ROMs by the readers, CD-ROM-based record of the national bibliography, digitalisation of valuable

materials (manuscripts, maps, etc.). The current investments are directed towards acquiring a more powerful server that could work with the same library system but in UNIX version.

## 9. Services to readers

The National Library as an encyclopedical and public library, open to all categories of users over the age 16, has 15 specialized reading-rooms with about 450 seats.

On December 31, 1997, the annually enlisted readers numbered 15,000 people, the total of titles circulated during the year being of 865,045, while the interlibrary loan requests amounted to 1,530 titles.

The use of library materials is done in the library's reading-rooms, the (internal and international) lending and document-supply services being performed only for other libraries or institutions.

As far as charging for services is concerned, payment is compulsory for the library's publications (by yearly subscriptions or acquisition on the spot), for the bibliographies made on request (on quite a lot of subjects), for the printed catalogue cards subscriptions and the xerox copies made on request.

According to UNESCO principles, the general library-specific services (reading and access to library materials) are free. Recently two additional reading-rooms (for UNESCO/EU/BIEF materials and for periodicals) have been opened, this way expanding the capacity of available seating-space.

## 10. Major cultural events and exhibitions

Some of the important exhibitions of last year were: "Elena V?c?rescu", "Franz Schubert", "German book illustrations of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: Goethe's poetry", "Artistic book-binding". The library also cooperated with other institutions, providing assistance and materials for exhibitions organized by those, such as "Associations and foundations in Romania in the 1830-1940 period" (in cooperation with the National History Museum), "Romanian-French cultural interferences" (in cooperation with the Municipal Library in Bucharest) and "Restoration - an enigma?" (in cooperation with the Romanian Literature Museum).

## 11. Publishing

The current periodical publications issued by the National Library are:

- The Romanian National Bibliography with the series:
  - Books, albums, maps (24 issues/year);
  - Serial publications (1 issue/year);
  - Government publications (2 issues/year);
  - Music scores. Records. Cassettes (4 issues/year);
  - Dissertations (1 issue/year);
  - Românica (1 issue/year);
- The National Library Review (2 issues/year);
- The Union Catalogue of the foreign books in the Romanian libraries (4 issues/year);
- The Union Directory of the foreign serials in the Romanian libraries (1 issue/year)
- Cultural anniversaries (2 issues/year);

- Culture in Romania (6 issues/year);
- Abstracts in Library and Information Science - ABSI (12 issues/year);
- Librarianship. Collected adapted translations (4 issues/year);
- Issues in book pathology (1 issue/year).

The library also issues printed catalogue cards delivered on subscription to all libraries in the country in two variants: A (two cards) for 2,500 titles/year and B (two cards) for 1,500 titles/year.

Other non-periodical works published by the National Library in 1997 include "The Universal Decimal Classification. The Romanian version of the medium international edition" - 2 vols. As a government-financed institution, the National Library is under the obligation to transfer all publication-sales revenues to the state budget.

## **12. Technical processes**

The National Library catalogues all current acquisitions (grey literature included). Based on these files, a database was created. Since 1993 it has continued to grow so that now it contains 100,000 records. The records of the Romanian published books and unpublished dissertations of the 1983-1992 period, stored on magnetic tapes, are to be downloaded into the database when a full-power server becomes available. In database-creation the TINLIB library system is used (product of the IME Company, London). Beside distributing printed catalogue cards for the Romanian currently published books, the National Library offers the interested libraries disks containing the bibliographic records of these. The bibliographic records serve at compiling the Romanian National Bibliography (Books, albums, maps series, Dissertations series, Serial publications series). Lack of necessary equipment and insufficient human resources make the initiation of catalogues' retroconversion impossible.

In cataloguing, the National Library abides by ISBD and AACR-2 rules (in all record-creation since 1983), while for indexing UDC is used. In 1999 an own subject headings system is going to be implemented.

The entire database is accessible to users in OPAC on three workstations.

Other existing local databases include the ones for foreign books and periodicals in the Romanian libraries (1990-1997), for government publications (1993-1998) and for abstracts in library and information science (1993-1998).

## **13. Library cooperation**

On national level the National Library cooperates with all libraries in the public library system, as well as with other major libraries (academy, university, special a.s.o) countrywise. At local level it cooperates with libraries in Bucharest in matters of library automation, publication processing and professional training, or with organizations/associations in the research and the information/documentation fields.

At international level, the National Library had a prime contact with the OCLC concerning the downloading of the national bibliographic records into the OCLC database, making these available - this way - to all OCLC users. At present, this is still in a project stage because the National Library has not got the necessary technological equipment for ensuring a permanent transfer of data.

The National Library acts as the BIEF national centre and participates in the European Commission's and ECPA's cooperation programmes. It is the national ISBN/ISSN centre for Romania and maintains permanent contacts with the centre in Paris. Other important cooperation actions with international organizations and bodies - consisting mainly in

exchange of publications - include relationships with UNESCO (since 1981), NATO, UNO, OMS, the European Communities a.s.o.

The library is also present with contributions in a number of international publications, such as: the Annual Bibliography of the History of the Printed Book and Libraries (ABHB), Index Translationum, Bibliographie Internationale de l'Humanisme et de la Renaissance, the Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature. It is also member and participates in the activities of such international organizations as IFLA, CENL, ELAG, LIBER, etc.

#### **14. Staffing matters**

At present the National Library's staff consists of 348 individuals, out of which 242 professionals (114 with an academic degree, 128 with post-highschool training) and 106 maintenance and administrative personnel. The moment the new Regulations and procedures and the new organizational chart are implemented, the personnel structure is going to be amended accordingly.

Unfortunately, in 1997, consequent to the budget approved by the Parliament, a 15% reduction of personnel was forced on the library.

During this period the strategy of staff training and continuous education has been re-examined, some guiding principles and main directions being established in cooperation with other institutions and organizations in the field concerning modern and permanently updated personnel development programmes devised according to the current professional issues of interest.