

THE SLOVAK NATIONAL LIBRARY

(SLOVENSKÁ NÁRODNÁ KNIŽNICA V MATICI SLOVENSKEJ)

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN NATIONAL LIBRARIANS

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1. Special topic 1998-1999:

Management of the library (developments and improvements)

According to the Act on Matica slovenská approved in February 1997 the Slovak National Library (SNL) has a status of legal body. However, the competencies of the Director are limited as the final decisions concerning the library are done by the Administrator of the Matica slovenská .

In January 1998 the director of the library nominated two deputy directors: one for library processes and international co-operation, other for automation. The intention is to make possible better communication between librarians and "automation staff".

2. Major innovations during the year

In accordance with the plan of the library the whole database containing the records of Slovak books and articles was transformed for the purpose of access via Internet. The records are structured in UNIMARC format.

The Slovak National Bibliography - Series Articles - is accessible on CD-ROM edition.

New software for using the scanner at transferring the text on hand-made paper was implemented in the Restoration and Conservation Institute.

The Union catalogue of monographies serving the needs of Slovak libraries was implemented in October.

3. Finance and funding

The Matica slovenská received the budget as a special chapter of the state budget. The Financial Board is the main body to divide the whole amount among all institutes which form part of the Matica slovenská. The budget for the SNL for the year 1998 remains on the level of the previous year. Even the basic activities (publishing of the national bibliography, preservation of books...) were endangered and the library management asked for additional financial means. The result was that the government offered extra funds to make possible to continue in publishing of the national bibliography and in current binding of documents.

Very low capital investment caused insufficient support of technological background.

The restrictions in financing led to the decision of the library management to ask new Minister of Culture (after the elections in September 1998) to support the library with the special budget independent of the Matica slovenská budget.

4. Legal status

The most important step in legislation represents the effort to prepare the new Library Act. The Ministry of Culture nominated the working group with the aim to prepare the draft of the new Library Act. SNL intensively took part in meetings and discussions concerning the Act itself as well as special instructions which will form the part of the Library Act (Instruction on National Bibliography, Instruction on Historical book collections, Instruction on Interlibrary Loans...)

The new Library Act will define the position and role of the National Library within Slovak library system and the position and tasks of all kinds of Slovak libraries as well.

The approval of new Library Act is expected in October 1999.

Altogether with the new Library Act the update of existing Law on Matica slovenská is expected.

5. Role of the national library in the national library network

The new Library Act will define the national library network and the role of the national library as well. For the time being the main task for the National library is to prepare the background for Slovak union catalogue in co-operation with the University library in Bratislava. In October 1998 the Union catalogue started to be accessible. It contained primarily records from ISBN National Agency. The plan is to convert the records from the local catalogue retrospectively (about 350.000 records)

According to the new Library Act some functions which were transferred from the National library to the University library in Bratislava will return back (Co-ordination Centre for Libraries...)

6. Legal deposit of materials

Legal Deposit Law approved in 1997 is still valid, but since 1998 it has become the object calling for updating. Libraries are not the only institutions which propose the innovation of existing Legal Deposit Law. The big group of publishers who see the insufficiency of the law submitted the proposal how to change the Law and the special instruction concerning supply of electronic version of printed material. This instruction does not solve the questions on production and usage of such a kind of material.

Another problem is the number of Legal Deposit copies (16) which are sent to the libraries without any advantage for the publishers (postage lower price ...). The existing Law contains the definitions which are not valid (about the ISBN National Agency...).

The general discussions on Legal Deposit Law in Slovakia are oriented to the definition of the basic tasks which should be fulfilled by the Law. The state should take into account that the Legal Deposit cannot serve the means of acquisitions for a big amount of libraries. The question of acquisitions is very closely connected to the state budget which should be sufficient for the acquisitions purpose.

7. Buildings and plant

Five years ago the project for the new library building was prepared. The insufficient budget did not allowed to continue in preparation works and the new library building remains in the platform of planning.

The library is situated in the building which was built for the needs of the National Library and in 1975 the library moved from the older building to the new one. During the period no significant reconstructions or renovations were done. The real problem of present is the lack of space in the main deposit.

8. Acquisition

The main sources of acquisitions are: legal deposit, purchase, reserve collections, international exchange of documents and purchase from abroad.

Thanks to the fact that the ISBN National Agency is located in the National Library there are no bigger problems in acquiring Slovak documents. Concerning purchase we still need higher budget because of books and periodicals prices.

In December 1998 the Head of Acquisitions together with other librarians prepared the draft of internal instruction on Acquisitions Policy. The instruction will define the issues concerning acquisitions in the National Library and will make acquiring of documents more effective. After approving the instruction the intention is to offer it to the libraries as recommendation when preparing their own instructions.

9. Conservation and preservation of collections

Conservation and preservation of collections are one of the main tasks which are fulfilled by the National Library.

The Book Restoration and Conservation Department (BRaCD) is responsible for activities which concern physical conditions of books and periodicals. Continually the restoration of damaged material from library collections is done and restored old and rare books are kept in special deposit with temperature and humidity measuring.

Taking into account very modest space and technical equipment the BRaCD offers its services to various customers. The incomes were partially used to purchase of new technical facilities and partially to payment of invoices.

The microfilming of the collections is represented in the project: National Programme on Microfilming for Preservation Purpose. The National Library plays a key role in these activities within the Slovak Republic. The project on microfilming forms a part of wider National Library Programme on New Information Technologies Application. However the Microfilming Department has a lot of difficulties - staff, technical equipment, budget - it produces the microfilm copies of original documents in high quality. The Department is responsible for microfilming proper library collections of books and periodicals as well as for preparing the microfilms for customers - Normann Ross Pbl.

The digitisation project has been discussed very intensively thanks to the fact that Slovakia was chosen as a contributor to the UNESCO Programme: Memory of the World. The National Library in co-operation with the National Archive prepared the data of the document which is intended to be digitised. Due to the misunderstanding of the Matica slovenská top

management the works on digitisation have not been started. We still hope that the changing situation will contribute to the development of all programmes and projects that could not be finalized.

The situation on staff issues will change in accordance with the general changes concerning the position of the National Library in the Matica slovenská .

10. IT and new technology

The Programme on New Information Technologies Applications prepared in 1998 consists of various partial projects: on retrospective conversion, union catalogue, authority files, digitisation, microfilming and automation of libraries. The problems dealing with solving projects are mentioned in point 9. As the Minister of Culture declared that there are no capital investment for the year 1999 we will have to concentrate on that tasks which do not need new technologies. Anyway, the library management is still trying to find any other sources for financing some of the library projects - sponsors, foundations...

The library homepage is accessible via Internet. It contains the basic information about the library and its activities. The Library Database Centre maintains the homepage of the Association of Slovak Librarians as well as of the professional journal "Libraries and Information".

Since December 1998 the library management has the opportunity to follow the internal accounting and staff agenda and for invoices payment uses homebanking facilities.

The investments in 1998 concern mostly the purchase of PCs and printers. No significant investment was approved.

Staffing problems relating to IT are critical. There is a lack of skilled programmers and technicians because of low salaries.

11. Services to readers

The National Library offers standard and non-standard services to its reader. Some of them are charged, some are free of charge. The charging policy depends on the budget allocated for services, but principally the fees for reader's card, photocopies and claims are requested. The changes concerning charging policy for research and bibliographies are being prepared.

Internet services and online requesting for books photocopies belong among new reader services.

The project on ILL module of the ALEPH system is being prepared together with possibility of using the union catalogue for the purpose of ILL.

12. Exhibitions

Since 1998 the National Library started the new tradition of regular exhibitions showing the richness of its collections.

The information about the exhibitions became a fixed part of information accessible via Internet.

The most important exhibitions:

"Old photographs of Slovak and European towns from the SNL collections"

"Slovakia, Europe and world on old maps"

"Printing houses and printers in old Levoča"

"Medical literature from the SNL collections"

All exhibitions organized by the National Library were prepared without any funds excepting the payment for photocopies or photographs.

13. Publishing

In January 1998 the publishing plan was prepared on the level of library management. The Slovak National Bibliography and all its series belong among the most important publications of the National Library. At present the SNB is available in printed version, online catalogue, on floppy discs and finally as a CD-ROM version.

In 1998 after a long break the Publishers' Directory was published thanks to the ISBN National Agency. The intention is to publish the directory every year.

The basic processes concerning the print preparation are done in the Library Database Centre by means of DTP.

14. Cataloguing and other technical processes

The main standards and rules approved are ISBD, AACR2 and UNIMARC Format (UNIMARC Authorities). The Slovak interpretation of AACR2 is planned in co-ordination with the development of the union catalogue.

In January 1999 the Project on Authority Files was submitted to the library management. The project was approved and a new Authority Files Department was established.

15. Library co-operation

On the national level the Slovak National Library co-operates with other large libraries participating in the CASLIN Project (University Library in Bratislava, libraries joining in the KOLIN Project - East-Slovakia libraries).

The SNL acts as a methodical centre for cataloguing policy and prepares the trainings for librarians from all kinds of libraries.

On the international level the SNL as a member of top library institutions and associations tries to fulfill as many partial tasks as possible.

Report prepared by Jarmila Majerová, Deputy Director of SNL.