THE SLOVAK NATIONAL LIBRARY

(SLOVENSKÁ NÁRODNÁ KNIŽNICA)

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN NATIONAL LIBRARIANS 1999 – 2000

| August 2000 |
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| To August 1999: Dr. Horst Hogh |

From August 1999 to July 1st, 2000 the Administrator of "Matica slovenska", Dr. Miroslav Bielik took over the function of the Director of the Slovak National Library as his second fuction by an order of the Chairman of Matica slovenska, Mr. Jozef Markuš

From July 1st, 2000, according the new Library Law, Mr Peter Cabadaj was appointed to the position of the Director by Minister of Culture of the Slovak Republic.

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General:

This period was for the Slovak National Library very difficult, turbulent, painful and hectic, marked by the sharp fight for a separation from its mother organisation "Matica slovenská" and constituting the autonomous legal body "The Slovak National Library" with full competencies and responsibilities of such organisation and its director and management. The 1st of July 2000 became a memorable day of the Slovak National Library because according to the new Libraries law which became effective on this day, the Slovak National Library has got the proper legal status and became a state cultural organisation under supervisory of the Ministry of Culture. Thus dreams and efforts of generations of Slovak librarians and bibliographers had been crowned with success. This probably needs some brief historical explanation and review:

Matica slovenska was founded in 1863 as one of the first organisation of a newly forming modern Slovak nation in a new Europe after revolutionary years 1848-49 as a society of "lovers of Slovak language and Slovak nation". From the very beginning it started to collect books for it's library. Soon it became general universal cultural and political organisation defending the national rights in then multinational Austrian-Hungarian empire. Practically Matica associated also the political representatives of the Slovak nation. It was closed by force by the Hungarian government in 1875 and its property was confiscated. However, roots of many Slovak cultural institutions can be traced back to Matica slovenska. Some of its activities then continued in the frame of other societies (Museal society) until 1919 when Matica slovenska was revived after creation of Czechoslovakia as the new state of Slovaks and Czechs. It continued then to support cultural life, national research, and, of course, building the library etc. The local and interests clubs of Matica slovenska were always an important part of its activities and were spread throughout the whole country. The Czechoslovak government supported some functions of Matica slovenska like it's library. However, it has got the legal deposit copy only in 1938. The wise leaders of Matica slovenska already in the second half of thirties felt that running the national library is a kind of burden exceeding the mission of Matica and established the Slovak National Library as a kind of foundation that was expected to become a state institution later. This foundation was abolished in 1954 and it's collections again incorporated in the library of Matica slovenska.

In 1954 Matica slovenska was from the political reasons turned into a state organisation by the communist regime as a part of the fight against so called Slovak bourgeois nationalism, local and interests clubs were dissolved and activities of Matica were practically restricted to the functions of the national library, literary archive and literary museum and some other professional work units. From that time Matica slovenska and their workers build up quite well running national library even if to some extent restricted by the socialist ideology. In addition, they always have been bearers of the traditions of Matica slovenska. After the fall of communist regime in 1989, Matica slovenska again revived it's memberships and local and interests clubs and started to develop new activities. Step by step the new leaders of Matica slovenska were changing the priorities and mission of the organisation. Though they verbally claimed importance of the Slovak National Library for Matica slovenska, in reality the library was moved more and more out of the core of it's activities.

Matica slovenska from the beginning declared itself as an apolitical or impartial organisation also with regard to religion, but during its history when struggling for or defending rights ad issues of Slovak nation under various circumstances it was quite often intentionally or not, dragged into politics. During long years it became a sacred national symbol and kind of national political phenomenon.

However, after splitting Czechoslovakia and creating the Slovak republic in 1993 as an independent, autonomous state of Slovaks and other citizens of Slovakia with all state attributes and political bodies, like Parliament, Government, President, Courts etc., Matica does not need to be involved in politics any more, but new leaders of Matica slovenska did not understand this new situation and were not able to formulate a new mission for the whole organisation. Instead on focusing on issues of national culture and its research they continued to be involved in politics and assumed the right to comment anything on behalf of the whole nation with the inclination to the nationally oriented parties. They even signed an agreement on cooperation with the Slovak National Party which sometimes presents even nationalistic opinions. That was of course not acceptable for the national library who wants and must serve equally to all citizens.

The management of Matica slovenska used functions and tasks of the national library to get funding for its budget and then money were partly used for other purposes because the budget was not specified in detail. The library was permanently forced to decrease the number of staff on account of creating new jobs in other parts of Matica. The financial flow was very restricted and irregular. It was very difficult to plan anything, especially development programs and projects that were practically frozen. The competencies of the director of the library, who was never duly appointed but only charged with the function, were quite limited and decisions about all important issues were reserved to the management of Matica slovenska. The library could not make its own staffing policy and recruit new people as it needed. The value of average salaries in library stagnated comparing with other units of Matica. This gradually lead to decreasing of functionality and operability and in some instances even to disability of the national library to fulfil their functions e.g. towards other libraries and partners and, of course, users.

In 1997 Minister of Culture proposed the law which should establish the Slovak National Library as an autonomous legal body under supervisory of Ministry of Culture, but this draft was not supported by political parties of his own coalition. The Parliament approved another draft of the law on Matica slovenska which turned this organisation into so called legalpublic organisation (like Slovak radio, or Slovak TV), however without declaring the responsibility of the Chairman of Matica slovenska to give an account on activities of Matica to its major funding source, i.e. the state, to the parliament or government. He is responsible only to the General Assembly of Matica slovenska consisting mostly by deputies of local and interests clubs (at the most only a director of the SNL had voting right in General Assembly with one single vote) who elect him. As Ministry of Culture did not want to loose outreach on the National Library and control over some functions of the National Library, they decided to force Matica slovenska to give up and to move some functions (e.g. ISSN agency, methodical support and coordination of libraries) to the University Library in Bratislava and in fact the existence of the national library in Martin has got in stake. This case was apparently some strange kind of political bargains, where roles of some players and their interests were not quite clear. In this law Slovak national library has got the status of the legal body, but the juridical interpretation was very flexible and questionable and as it showed, it was just formal camouflage as the management of the library never got the appropriate competencies.

As the oppression of the national library was getting worse and unbearable, the director Mrs. Slizova resigned from her function in July 1997 and her deputy Mr. Prokop was withdrawn at the end of the year. The new director, Mr Hogh was charged by this job as well as two new deputies, Mrs Majerova and Mr. Rakus. However, as they also did not show enough loyalty with the management of Matica slovenska and the orientation and priorities of the organisation the Administrator of Matica withdrawn them in August 1999 as well as the

director in charge who became the deputy director and the function of the director was overtaken by Administrator of Matica, Mr. Bielik, himself. Thus it happened that the director and official representative of the national library did not defend the interests of the National Library but of Matica slovenska and its management. In this situation the staff of the library could not express freely to the issues of the position of the library as every other opinion was considered as a treachery of its ideas and tradition and we were still subordinated to the leaders of Matica. The management of the National Library was permanently threatened by dismissal or discharging.

In the meantime the political opposition won the parliamentary election in September 1998. This meant that there was higher political will for changes and separation of the Slovak National Library from its mother organization. The new Minister of Culture was much more open for the opinions of the library community. He appointed a new Central Library Board as his advisory body. He also established working group for preparing a draft of a new Libraries Act that had been already discussed for several years without acceptable results. There were also representatives from our library appointed into this group. The Administrator of Matica was often making obstacles to their participation in the team work. Finally the law draft was prepared and it suggested complete separation of the Slovak National Library from Matica slovenska. It was the result of the natural development when the new state is creating it's standard institutions such as the national library that undoubtedly belongs to them. The more, when there were serious obstacles in the normal operation and development of the national library in this corporation with Matica slovenska.

In addition to Ministry of Culture we have found great support of the library community especially on the ground of the Central Library Board, the Slovak Library Association and the Slovak Association of Librarians which became the real public apologists of the new law and separation of the national library. The 2nd Congress of the Slovak librarians in November nearly unanimously approved the prepared draft of the new Libraries Act and the text of a statement and open letter to all political and cultural bodies and personalities requiring the support for the new law draft. The delegates, professional librarians, de facto approved further orientation of development of library system in Slovakia and of the national library. On protest Mr. Bielik as the Administrator of Matica slovenska and statutory representative and director of the SNL withdrawn the membership of the Slovak National Library in the Slovak Library Association.

We had to develop a lot of lobbying and this had to be done often in conditions of strict confidence, illegality and conspiracy. It took a lot of energy and only little then remained for the professional library work, often of the key persons of the library. Matica slovenska also developed a broad campaign against the draft using a lot of hypocritical and dogmatic phrases and supporting statements of people who were not informed and who had perhaps never been in the library and never met and spoke with it's staff or library community. We organised also a public petition in the beginning of 2000 to support the draft of the law and separation the National Library from Matica slovenska and sheets with signatures of citizens were delivered to the Chair of the National Council of the Slovak Republic. Instead of being happy that Matica slovenska is giving the birth of a new viable offspring – a standard national cultural institution - the National Library of the new Slovak republic which they celebrated so much, the leaders and some affiliates of Matica speaks about destroying the national symbol of Matica slovenska. They now declare how important the National Library is for Matica slovenská, but when they could prove their support they behaved to it like the step-mother to Cinderella.

In spring 1999 also staff of the library publicly expressed its opinion and required separation from Matica, that was quite clearly and definitely repeated at the meeting organised by trade unions. The staff of other professional part of Matica – Memorial of National Culture, comprising the Literary Archive, Slovak National Literary Museum and Biographic Department also decided to support the separation and join the Slovak National Library.

The new law was approved on June 15, 2000 and it became effective nearly immediately – from 1st of July 2000. The Minister of Culture appointed a new director, Mr. Peter Cabadaj until a new General Director is selected through a standard competitive selection process, that should be completed at the end of September 2000. The main task of the temporary director is to fix up and secure running of the new organisation, dividing the staff and separation of the property or management of the state property between the SNL and Matica including buildings, collections, movable property, delivered services like telecommunications, energies etc.

This process shall not be easy and may last for a quite long time as Matica is not willing to hand over the property or management of the state property without using all possible means to keep it as long as possible and it is clear now they shall obstruct and put in doubts this process with all their effort.

Legislation

The new law on libraries basically determines position and roles of practically each type of library in the library system in the Slovak Republic. It deals also explicitly with historical and rare library collections and items and handling with them. In spite of all obstructions from Matica slovenská, experts from SNL intensively took part in meetings and discussions concerning the Act itself as well as special instructive guidelines which will form the part of the Library Act (Instruction on National Bibliography, Instructions on Historical book collections, Instruction on Interlibrary Loans, Instruction on Union Catalogue)

At the same day of June 15, 2000, the parliament approved an amendment to the law on legal deposit copy of periodical and non-periodical publications and copies of audiovisual works. It removed some controversial statements, like the duty of publishers to provide electronic version of publications, even in the case when they were not published in such a version nor produced from such a form. Now this duty relates only to material that was published in electronic form. The receiving libraries may lend the legal deposit copy on their premises and in special cases also out of library on written requirement if necessary for scholarly or professional purposes and under specified conditions. However the new amendment did not eliminated rather high number of required legal copies (Periodicals: 20, in the case of regional or local scope: 9, non-periodicals: 15, standards and publication of companies: 4, audiovisual, multimedia, CD-ROMs: 4, publications in Braille script: 3). The publishers are not satisfied and receiving libraries are silent or support this law because in the situation of a critically low funding for purchase of literature to libraries the legal deposit copy remains the main source of their new acquisitions, even if it does not match exactly their true needs. In this way the state transfers it's duty to provide sufficient financial means for the purchase of documents in libraries on the shoulders of publishers. This law also defines the National Agencies for ISBN, ISMN in the Slovak National Library and ISSN in the University Library in Bratislava.

The National Council of the Slovak republic also approved the update of the law on authors' rights protection. However this update did not provide the solution for fair remuneration for authors for using their works in libraries and providing access to them. The law admits only

collective collection and management of fees and anticipates agreements on a form of their collection with Associations for authors' rights protection and Ministry of Culture, but these agreements have not been reached yet and much more negotiations will be needed. In addition, the consequences of this controversial law were not taken in regard in funding of libraries or in the budget of Ministry of Culture and thus they are not able to pay them. This legal gap needs to be solved as soon as possible.

Management of the library

In August 1999 the Administrator of Matica slovenská withdrawn two deputy directors, degraded the director in charge to the position of deputy director and took over the control over the library. As his primary interest apparently was not to solve the professional problems of the library but to keep the national library in a subordinated position in Matica slovenská, he did not pay attention to problems of library that called for solutions. By this step he became the only official statutory representative of the Slovak National Library. The top management of the library practically ceased to exist, or at least it was not positively to be felt. The fight for legal position of the library caused neglecting of the problems and issues that were waiting for solutions necessary for proper performance and development of the library and library system in Slovakia. In many regards, the library ran only by the momentum of inertial forces. Only the middle and lower management did their common duties and their day-to day work, but their competency is rather limited. This contributed to the general problems of management from previous years and left the library in rather poor present state and a lot will have to be done in the next future. It will be one of the main task of the new General Director to reorganise the library. Very important is that library has got new parts, that should be integrated in the structure of the "great" Slovak National Library.

The new Authority Files Department was established for issues of authority control and creating and management of authority files and records that bridges over the Cataloguing Department and the National Bibliographic Institute.

At the end of 1999 also the unit for microfilming was upgraded to self-standing department for microfilming and digitization of documents.

Funding

The Matica slovenská received its state contribution of its budget as a special chapter of the state budget, but the transfer of money was administered through Ministry of Culture based on their agreement. In 1999 the Minister of Culture insisted on explicit allotment of certain portion of the contribution to the Slovak National Library and Memorial of the National Culture. This, of course, caused a wave of dissatisfaction of the leaders of Matica slovenská as it limited their possibilities to use this state financial contribution (by the way creating approx. 95% of Matica's budget income) in such a free way as before. However, the budget of the Slovak National Library did not improve too much, but it was at least somehow guaranteed. As the Matica provided only lowered amounts of agreed money to the library during the year, at the end of the year it had to clear the balance what enabled the library to buy a new server and to upgrade some of the older PC's.

The Financial Board was the main body to divide the whole amount among all institutes which formed part of the Matica slovenská. The same procedure applied for the year 2000, but from July 2000 the SNL receives its budgetary financial means directly to its own bank account.

However the budget of the library is critically low. It constrains the library not only from developing new programs and projects, innovation of technology and purchase of library material, but also from keeping the standard library operation in good shape.

Though the library received some grants from external sources the height of them was not significantly high.

Staff

The lack of competencies of the library management to recruit new employees and pressure to lower the number of staff in the last years caused serious staffing problems. The library suffers from lack of younger workers, especially with university education in library science and from area of information technology (programmers, technicians, network specialists). Stagnation of the library and ignorance of leaders of Matica caused also damage on motivation of the existing staff. A lot of the staff is just performing routine operations. The library needs new, young blood, ambitious workers with new features and skills, creative thinking, knowledge of foreign languages especially English, but it is very difficult to recruit them as the graduated from universities usually can get much better conditions in other sectors then libraries.

Buildings

The national library shares the building with the Matica slovenska. This building was built in 1965-1975 for the purpose of those parts of Matica slovenská which now comprises the new Slovak National Library and the owner of this building is the state. Now steps are done to move the management of this state property from Matica slovenská to the SNL. We claim also some other buildings from the management of Matica, e.g. the building where the exposition of the Slovak National Literary Museum is installed.

We would need new capacity of storage, but look-out for funding the new annex building are poor – at least in the few next years we can hardly expect such investment from the state budget. So we shall have to find some other solutions how to save the space in the main deposit. .

Role of the national library in the national library network

The new Library Act defines 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 and some other more significant libraries. In October 1998 the Union catalogue started to be accessible, but unfortunately it did not developed into the planned stage due to lack of available staff to deal with it. It contained primarily records from ISBN National Agency. The plan is to convert the records from the local catalogue retrospectively (about 350.000 records) and then to add records from other libraries.

According to the new Library Act some functions which were transferred from the National library to the University library in Bratislava returned back (Co-ordination Centre for Libraries) and SNL will have to create appropriate work team that was dissolved some 3 years ago.

Acquisition

The main source of acquisitions is the legal deposit, in less extent 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 have very low budget available – in 1999 we were able to buy directly only 34 foreign titles in value of 7.200 Euro and through international exchange 2. 134 titles. Through domestic purchase we acquired 860 documents in value of 13600 Euro. This low purchase capability endangers the fundamental functions of the library as they are defined by the law and generally accepted definitions, not to speak about the needs and requirements of our users. We have spent about 13.400 Euro for purchase of documents for international exchange.

From remarkable acquisition:

- 1. Historia Diplomatica De Statu Religionis Evangelicae In Hungaria...B.m. 1710.
- 2. Sleidani, Ioan: De Statv Religionis... B.m. 1555
- 3. Székély, István: Chronica ez Vilagnac Yeles dolgairol. Cracoba 1559.

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.

In spite of 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. Even if he 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 selected library collections of books and periodicals as well as for preparing the microfilms for customers.

The project of digitization microfilms for improved access of users to documents has been discussed and is being prepared.

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. Unfortunately only little has been done yet.

As Matica had to return withheld part of the state contribution to the library at the end of the year 1999 we were able and managed to buy a new computer server Compaq DS 20 and parts necessary for upgrading about 20 PC's. This also helped us to be prepared for transition to the year 2000 what happened without any significant problems. The server is being prepared for the installation of the new upgrade of the library software system ALEPH 500. The Ministry of Culture approved our application for additional funding for purchase of this upgrade and

related costs and some 25 new PC's and thus we are expecting the implementation of this planned funding from state income from lotteries etc. at the end of this year.

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 Slovak Library Association as well as of the professional journal "Libraries and Information". Staffing problems related to IT are critical. We are missing skilled specialists like programmers and technicians mostly because of low salaries.

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 and photocopies belong among new reader services.

The new electronic version of ILL request form was introduced for use. However the use ALEPH ILL module is still in the stage of preparations as well as the module for Serials management.

We have successfully linked bibliographic records of articles from the database of the Slovak National Bibliography with full text articles on the Internet, but only on experiment level with electronic version of our journal "Libraries and information" that is on Internet on our WWW server. This should be extended for as much serials as possible, but then a lot of other problems should be solved.

Digitization

First Slovak project output of the Memory of the World program should be completed soon. We managed to organise scanning of the medieval document (antifonars) of which three parts are owned by three different organisations. The digitization as well as preparation of the CD-ROM including presentation software was outsourced and we cooperated with the same company as the National Library of the Czech Republic in their program of Memory of World. Thus experiences and products developed there were used also for our project. Again, due to lack of financial means for scanning and digitizing equipment and mass storage no systematic approach to digitization have been developed in SNL yet. There is a hope it could be changed soon with the new position of the library.

12. Exhibitions

The most important exhibitions in 1999:

"Medical Literature in collections of the SNL"

Personal library of Martin Hamuljak

Personal Library of Michal Rešetka

"Veduts in the collections of SNL

13. Publishing

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. SNL published also several retrospective bibliographic works as well as personal bibliographies and books of collected papers on bibliography.

Specialists of the National Library published quite a lot of various articles in our journal or in other periodicals or proceedings from different events.

SNL had been producing the journal "Knižnice a informácie" up to the No.8 of this year. Due to the facts that official publisher was Matica slovenska and it did not want to gave up its copyright for the title and we did not reach agreement on the transfer of copyright on SNL, our will to publish independent professional journal and lack of time for further negotiations, we decided to start publishing a new journal with the title "Knižnica" (Library). We are sorry

for that because the journal was quite known and articles records were included also in international professional databases, but we could not admit to be blackmailed.

14. Cataloguing and other technical processes

The main standards and rules approved are ISBD, AACR2 and UNIMARC Format (UNIMARCAuthorities). The Slovak interpretation of AACR2 is planned in co-ordination with the development of the union catalogue, however the works proceeds only very slowly. The new Authority Files Department prepared first experiments and outputs.

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 fulfil as many partial tasks as possible.

We cooperated on preparation of the Multilingual Dictionary of Library Terminology (coordinator of the project was NUK of Slovenia).

We have processed several questionnaires for various international organizations (IFLA, EC, LIBECON 2000, ISBN.

SNL signed an agreement with the State Technical Library in Prague on International ILL through electronic means (Internet).

We have signed an agreement on exchange of databases of publishers with the National Agency ISBN in the National Library in Prague.

The National Library provided material for the virtual exhibition of the National Libraries' Treasuries on Gabriel. However, we are very well aware that it is necessary to update information on Slovak National Library in Gabriel and provide also French and German version.

The SNL is a member of IFLA, ICAU (International Consortium of ALEPH Users), FID and the newly acquired museum is a member of ICOM.

Acquisitions 23.948

from that: books 12.151

periodicals 5.548

other document types 6.249

According the way of acquisition:

Legal deposit 19.401

Donations. purchase 1.925

Exchange, foreign purchase 2.622

International exchange/ sent titles/copies 4.330

Acquired foreign slovacica 490

Purchase of serials: 588.023,60 Sk =13.836 Euro

Retrospective acquisitions 579.896,90 =13.645 Euro

Purchase for exchange 567.436,78 =13.350 Euro

Foreign purchase 305.914,00 = 7.200 Euro

Registered users 16.786

Users in reading rooms 19.394

User in Audiovisual reading cabinet 1385

Excursions 124

Visitors in excursions 4.500

Users and visitors 42.065

Loans from the main collection through ALEPH 77.634

Loans from reading rooms 57.246

- books 4.285
- serials 52.961

Loans from Audiovisual cabinet 2.963

ILL 3.396

from SNL 3.265

from other libraries 131

International ILL 1.859

from SNL 131

from abroad 1.728

All loans together 143.058

Claims 14.369

Bibliographic information 1.963

Consultations 1.012

Classic retrospective researches 267

Computerized researches from own databases 536

CD ROM researches 213

Total Researches 1.016

Reprographic services 260.609

for users 60.824

for employees 199.785

Income from users' services 340.360,00 = 8.000 Euro

Na ISBN:

Publishers: 2 231

Reported titles / assigned ISBNs 6 666

Report prepared by Igor Prokop