

ANNUAL REPORT TO CENL YEAR 2023



Name of country: **Latvia**

Name of library or equivalent national-level organization: **National Library of Latvia (NLL)**

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1. General overview of recent major developments at the National Library of Latvia (NLL)

The priority of the previous year and central axis according to the NLL's development strategy was the library collection – its comprehensive development, preservation and research. Despite the budget restrictions and difficult economy conditions, all the strategic directions set by the NLL were gradually implemented, even exceeding certain performance indicators.

The Development and Operation Strategy of the NLL for 2024-2028 was developed and approved, with a human as the main priority within this period. The NLL's daily work and development goal is to be a support and ally for everyone in the process of learning, research, self-education and creativity, jointly building strong, democratic knowledge society.

A completely new NLL Risk Management Policy has also been developed, which is included in the strategic planning.

In 2023, during the process of writing the Development and Operational Strategy 2024-2028, the NLL implemented a complex study that included four surveys with the purpose to obtain information for planning operations within the new period. One of the surveys was aimed at getting library users' opinion about the value, cultural and social impact of the NLL, as well as about the services provided by the NLL. For the first time, the NLL asked its users to indicate to what extent they would recommend the NLL to others. In 2023, the NLL's Net Promoter Score was 72, indicating strong loyalty and satisfaction.

The Competence Development Centre of the NLL is accredited until November 3, 2028, which provide the professional development opportunities for librarians and carries out tutoring and advisory center functions in library education.

The Digital Library (digitalabiblioteka.lv) was launched on October 26, 2023 and provides access to images, documents, periodicals, books, maps, museum objects, paintings, sheet music, films, sound and video recordings, collected by archives, museums, libraries, organizations, communities and individuals in Latvia. In total, more than 3.8 million digital items on any subject can now be found.

The NLL joined a campaign by the European Commission and the Europeana Initiative "Twin it! 3D for Europe's culture". The goal of the campaign was to collect and showcase emblematic and high-quality samples of Europe's cultural assets in 3D. The NLL delivered to the Europeana a 3D model of the Freedom Monument, the surveying and visualization of which was carried out by the National Heritage Board of Latvia.

“The Children, Youth and Parents’ Jury”, “The National Reading Aloud Competition” and “The Book Start” are reading promotion programmes, which are recognized worldwide. Thousands of children and young adults between the ages of 5 and 18 have become active readers, both in Latvia as well as in Latvian communities abroad. Approximately 850 libraries participate, including 73 in Latvian diaspora centres in 28 countries around the world.

In 2023 the reading promotion programmes have obtained the necessary funding as well as dialogue on a joint strategy to promote reading at a national level has been facilitated with the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Culture.

The NLL building - *Gaismas pils* - named after the Castle of Light in a legendary Latvian tale – in 2023 have acquired status of Cultural Monument of the State Significance. It was designed by the world-renowned Latvian-born architect Gunnar Birkerts (USA). Only two contemporary library buildings have been supported by the UNESCO – the first was the *Bibliotheca Alexandrina* designed by Norwegian architects, the second – the National Library of Latvia.

From 2021 to 2025, we are celebrating the 500th anniversary of the first Latvian book. Latvian book culture became one of the nation’s cornerstones, therefore the history of words written in Latvian and printed in books is an important period for Latvia and Latvians. In the extensive five-year set of events in the 500 years of Latvian Books programme (2021-2025), we highlight the most significant processes that once set in motion the circulation of the Latvian written and printed word. The theme of year 2023 was “Dissemination of texts in the past and today (publishers)”.

The significant events of year 2023 were: guest exhibition "The Essence of a Typographer. Nicolaes Mollijns: Rīga-Antwerp" – displayed at the Museum Plantin-Moretus in Antwerp, Belgium; extended exhibition "Awakening. The Story of the Herrnhutians"; international scientific conference "Publishing and the Nation"; preparation of the exhibition "Text is Not Our Type", which is dedicated to the form and materiality of the book and is displayed in the NLL from January 18, 2024 to August 30, 2025. The NLL, in cooperation with regional libraries, launched the project "Towards "500 Years of Latvian Books" in the regions of Latvia: publishing and distribution of texts in the past and now", prepared travelling exhibition "Acceleration: the short path taken by Latvian book publishing in the 19th century – from patronage to an independent industry", which was launched on February 29, 2024.

The online version of the Latvian National Encyclopedia celebrated 5 years anniversary. During this period, the total number of views of the site reached almost 10 million. The most visited page in the National Encyclopedia is about the national epic "Lāčplēsis" with more than 70 thousand views. And the most popular topics are literature, music and history. In the beginning on the enciklopedija.lv website about 900 pages were published, and in the first five years the content of the virtual encyclopedia has increased more than four times, reaching about 4,200 pages.

In 2023 the NLL started implementing the project "Interreg BALTIC–UKH, Urban Knowledge Hubs - Transformative Societal Spaces for Hybrid Libraries in the Baltic Sea Region". The aim of the project is to provide public authorities and others with tools and methods for the participatory design of accessible and attractive informational spaces and services.

In 2023, the NLL launched new Project No. VPP-LETONIKA-2022/3-0003 “Narrative, Form and Voice: Rootedness of Literature in Culture and Society” (2023 – 2024) of the national research programme “Letonica – Fostering a Latvian and European Society”; Project No. VPP-MM-LKRVA-2023/1-0001 “The Cultural Ecosystem of Latvia as a Resource for the Resilience and Sustainability of the Country” (2023 – 2026) of the national research programme “Latvian Culture – a Resource for National Development”; Project No. VPP-IZM-DH-2022/1-0002 “Development of an Open and FAIR-Compliant Digital Humanities Ecosystem in Latvia” (2022–2025) of the national research programme “Digital Resources of Humanities”; Project No. VPP "Financing of the Implementation of the Historical Latvian Lands Law for the Digital Collection “Selonica”.

In 2023 the NLL hosted the 5th Baltic Summer School for Digital Humanities, an annual event that brings together students and researchers of humanities and social sciences, library, and archives professionals from the Baltic region and beyond to learn about the latest developments and techniques in the field of digital humanities. The summer school programme offered must-have introductory courses for digital humanists and digital social scientists who wish to come to grips with programming with Python, digital literary studies, collecting web data, discourse analysis, network visualization, DH infrastructures.

The NLL has the status of a research institution and performs scientific research work in library science, bibliography and book science. The long-term strategic goal of the NLL is to develop the NLL as a research centre for Letonica, national identity, information and cognitive sciences, as well as a base for national culture research and a leader in digital humanities infrastructure.

In 2023, the NLL researchers published 52 scientific publications, including 9 monographs, scientific bibliographies, collections of articles, etc. NLL together with its partners has organized 4 scientific conferences. For example, the conference "Pietism in Baltic History – Research Issues and Perspectives". The results of the NLL's research activities were also presented in the exhibitions organized by the NLL, as well as included in the event posts on the NLL's social network profiles – Facebook, YouTube, SoundCloud.

2. Key facts and figures

| | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|----------------------|
| User services | | | | |
| Registered users | 159 969 | 162 276 | 169 455 | 117 878 ¹ |
| On-site visits | 139 186 | 46 928 | 211 755 | 309 444 |
| Virtual visits (in million) | 3.623 | 4.445 | 3.752 | 3.933 |
| Loans | 114 987 | 53 573 | 133 241 | 159 023 |
| Collection | | | | |
| Collection (in million units) | 4.283 | 4.329 | 4.361 | 4.388 |
| Books (in million units) | 2.007 | 2.020 | 2.031 | 2.038 |
| Serials | 868 234 | 883 897 | 896 262 | 905 553 |
| Audio-visual materials | 79 766 | 81 403 | 85 143 | 86 632 |
| Microforms | 96 310 | 96 310 | 96 310 | 96 219 |
| Cartographic materials | 43 014 | 44 035 | 45 011 | 46 203 |
| Sheet music | 225 221 | 226 487 | 227 135 | 228 926 |
| Graphic documents | 243 684 | 252 513 | 264 381 | 267 365 |
| Manuscripts | 30 994 | 31 470 | 32 165 | 32 438 |
| Small prints | 652 522 | 655 298 | 647 351 | 650 170 |
| Other | 4 635 | 4 685 | 2 846 | 2 862 |
| E – Resources collection (total number of units): | 21 330 | 24 474 | 75 367 | 110 903 |
| e-books | 8 165 | 8 998 | 9 852 | 10 816 |
| e-serials | 9 420 | 10 748 | 11 667 | 12 615 |

¹ In order to ensure correct information about the number of registered readers, as of 01.01.2023, reader data is stored for 10 years after the end of the term specified in the reader's profile

| Staff | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Employees | 348 | 343 | 351 | 351 |
| Including librarians | 203 | 193 | 226 | 224 |
| Infrastructure | | | | |
| Size of premises used by NLL | 48 595 m ² | | | |
| Number of places for readers | 1 000 | | | |
| Budget and Expenditures | | | | |
| Total budget (in EUR millions) | 12.739 | 12.785 | 14.125 | 16.102 |
| Financing from state budget (in EUR millions) | 11.869 | 12.288 | 13.737 | 14.560 |
| Expenses – salaries (in EUR millions) | 5.559 | 5.544 | 6.011 | 6.442 |
| Expenses – social insurance, allowances, compensations (in EUR millions) | 1.393 | 1.354 | 1.580 | 1.673 |
| Expenses – building of collection | 778 535 | 925 731 | 264 950 | 296 259 |
| Periodicals | 20 416 | 21 492 | 11 714 | 11 220 |
| Expenses – goods and services (in EUR millions) | 3.564 | 4.310 | 3.447 | 3.020 |
| IT services (in EUR millions) | 0.801 | 1.390 | 1.207 | 1.319 |

3. Outlook for 2024

- To ensure stabilization of the NLL funding. In the dialogue with the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Culture achieve clarity about the basic funding of the NLL for science;
- To stabilize the new service – online information resource licenses purchase and access service for state-accredited libraries and scientific institutes to promote availability of e-resources and open publishing;
- To solve various security-related issues: inventory security, cyber security, civil protection;
- To activate the promotion of reading by continuing the realization of the NLL event cycle "500 years of Latvian Books" and expanding the activities of the public involvement movement "Restart Reading";
- To complete the development of the new NLL website and implement its promotion campaign;
- To implement the Development and Operation Strategy of the NLL 2024-2028;
- To improve the welfare of employees, work on attracting and retaining new employees;
- To establish additional solutions for saving energy resources and achieving climate neutrality goals;
- To improve the content, accessibility and service culture of the NLL services, so that each customer is served according to his/ her/ their individual needs;
- To continue the inventory of the NLL digitized collection and the development of the Digital Library;
- To create a homogeneous national bibliographic and authoritative data set based on RDA standard principles;
- To participate in projects financed by the EU Recovery and Resilience Mechanism, new projects of the State Research Program and the Latvian Science Council, as well as other internationally funded projects.