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NATIONAL PROGRESS REPORT OF ESTONIA 1992-1994

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Estonia presents its progress report for the first time. Having read the progress reports from the years 1990-1992 I noticed that presently we have the same problems as Hungary and Poland had then. Estonia is in the process of setting up a new political and social system, and libraries as part of this system must carry out new functions.

During the Soviet period large scale maps, representing the territory of Estonia, as well as maps published in the Baltic countries before 1945, showing them as independent countries, were hidden or banned, and copies in libraries and archives were not available for public use. A large number of maps were destroyed. Nevertheless, today the National Library of Estonia (NLE) possesses a large and valuable map collection, and so do the library of Tartu University, the library of the Estonian Academy of Sciences, the Historical Museum and several archives and specialized institutions. Since 1990 map collections of all public libraries have been made accessible to the general public.

The map collection of the NLE is one of the most complete depositories of printed maps and atlases. It is located in the Department for Fine Arts and consists of over 10,000 maps, atlases and town plans, representing many countries around the world with an emphasis on Estonia and the Baltic states. During the Soviet period the NLE received the all-union deposit copies of all maps published by the Board of Geodesy and Cartography of the U.S.S.R. Presently the NLE gets, according to the Legal Deposit Copy Act, three copies of all maps published in Estonia or published by Estonian publishing houses abroad. Despite our complicated economic situation the NLE continues to buy rare Estonica.

In 1993 'Eesti Kaardikeskus', the national map producer, initiated activities to compile a topographic map series of Estonia on the scales 1:10,000 and 1:50,000. The first sheet was published in the spring of 1994. Currently there is no special education for map curators and there is no working group for map curators.

The automation of cataloguing processes is progressing slowly. Map curators are still using fiche catalogues as before. NLE anticipates to digitize its collection of rare maps and in the near future will collect digitized maps elsewhere

produced. The hard- and software have already been selected but we are still co-ordinating our plans to create a larger multimedia project, which will include art and music as well as maps.

A considerable part of the map collection is in bad condition. Three major causes can be distinguished: mechanical, chemical and biological degradation. A number of maps have already been restored in the NLE. Some maps have been treated with special chemical solutions and some have been improved with the leaf casting method. The restored maps were shown at an exhibition in November 1993, which was devoted to the 75th anniversary of the NLE. The most popular exhibition in the last few years was *The world with changing frontiers* which ran from May to August in Tallinn. On exhibit were Estonian maps from the years 1918-1945 which were highly classified during the Soviet period.