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The National Library of the Czech Republic

Annual Report 1995

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Politics

The National Library Board has been executing its tasks in the time period subject to this report: a conclusion has been delivered about the Klementinum to become the definitive seat of the National Library, i.e. about necessary reconstruction and adaptation of the whole baroque complex to comply with modern library services requirements. Now, technical as well as archeological feasibility studies have to be performed, and then, the proposals and plans for a new Library building will probably be, after decades of discussions, put aside. The budgetary plan of the year 1996 has been analyzed several times, as operating amount assigned by the Ministry of Culture does not allow even to buy any foreign documents or to pay for salaries of all staff, etc.

New Library Organization Document along with a new Organizational Chart has been delivered, describing changed tasks and responsibilities resulting from integrated system implementation, development of automated network between libraries as well as from the fact that an entirely new Library Division - Central Repository - has been established.

Legislation

According to the new Law on non-periodical literature, ie. on legal deposit, the number of free exemplars the publishers must render to entitled libraries has been reduced from 16 as before to 4 resp. 5 (two of them coming to the NL) starting from January 1996.

Construction

A new Central Repository of the NL for ca 4 million volumes has been finished. It has been reconstructed from a former factory hall in Prague, at 15 km distance from Klementinum. Moving of Library collections from or between several remote repositories, as well as of material, devices, and staff is going on.

Automation

Implementation of the ALEPH system, selected in early 1993 by the consortium of four Czech and Slovak main libraries as the most convenient for their common CASLIN project (ie. Czech and Slovak Library Information Network - realised with the support of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and The Pew Charitable Trusts), is going on. Conversion of all National Bibliography records from CDS/ISIS into ALEPH system has been performed (now ca. 130 thousand records). In addition, a new programme supporting conversion from the so-called Czech/Slovak exchange format into UNIMARC is now at disposal for all libraries enabling them to start cooperation with the CASLIN Union Catalogue.

Several NL bibliographical databases have been made available, both on Internet and in LAN, e.g. NL catalogue, foreign periodicals, articles from Czech newspapers and journals,

etc., and in addition, participants of ISBN, library and information institutions directory, etc.

The NL retrospective conversion programme is going on: scanning of the NL General Catalogue is to be finished, and the Czech National Bibliography of the 20th century is going to be scanned in turn. But for the time being, the NL is looking for financial means so that further steps of retroconversion process could be performed.

Conservation and Preservation

After opening the Central Repository, conservation and preservation activities focused on preparation, organization and assisting process to moving book collections from or between various Library repositories. Since book collections are to be redefined, a new organization of Library holdings has been proposed.

The NL digitization programme concerning old manuscripts and printed books including namely a special software has made good progress. After having published two significant medieval manuscripts on CD-ROM, a complete digitization unit has been established in Klementinum and contract on technological part of the process agreed with special private firm. A special series of the UNESCO Memory of the World programme has been set out named *Memoriae Mundi Series Bohemica*.

The micrographic preservation programme is being developed as well, and in addition, joined Czech/Slovak working group on coordination was active.

The NL has compiled a National Preservation Programme which is now to be promoted through libraries.

Public Relations and International Cooperation

The NL continues in promoting its mission and activities through the general public, using both mass media and its own initiatives. The Prague Book Fair, held in May, is traditionally a good opportunity for the NL both to present its new library activities and to open doors to attractive baroque premises of the Klementinum.

The NL Society (i.e. Friends of the NL) was established in Autumn 1995, taking over the mission of the former NL Foundation.

The Library hosted several important events, e.g. the *XIX. Congress of International Association of Bibliophiles* (September 1995).

A grant awarded by the *Open Society Institute - Regional Library Program* enabled NL to organize the international seminar *Opening of the East European Library* on cataloguing standards, retrospective conversion and digitization of manuscripts (November 1995), as well as to prepare publications dealing with seminar topics.

Another important event was the *Memory of the World Joint UNESCO/EC Meeting* of experts on Technology (Memory of the World Sub-Committee on Technology), held in Klementinum in March 1996 with financial support of the European Commission. The results concern recommendations of classical preservation methods, reviewed standards of digital data capture, and the proposal of the structure for digitized manuscripts and old books.

A number of exhibitions were prepared, some of them meeting major public interest. E.g. the exhibition *the Memory of the Nation*, i.e. most rare items of NL collections, accompanied with press conference, was successful to provoke public interest in problems of preservation and access. Presentation of *Bosniaca 1992-1995*, i.e. Bosnian book production, contributed to call public attention to the Bosnian problem.