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National Library of Estonia

Annual Report 1995 - 1996

IVI EENMAA

Eesti Rahvusraamatukogu, Tallinn

The Library in Politics

In 1995 the parliamentary elections took place in Estonia; during the election campaign all political parties very actively used the services of the NLE Reference and Information Analysis Centre.

The NLE has initiated the drafting of bills for the ratification of several international legal acts on cultural matters as well as for the amendment of a number of national laws and Government regulations. This initiative should considerably support the development of libraries and the establishment of information systems as well as promote international info-integration.

Construction problems

In 1996 the additional insulation of roofs and terraces commenced; we hope to complete the works by 1997.

The preserving conditions of NLE collections have gradually been improved - in 1995 filters were installed into the air conditioners and air channels of the building.

The growth of our collections required another reserve stackroom to be taken into use; it was equipped with metal shelves and now 31 stackrooms from among the total of 34 are filled with books. The increasing number of readers necessitated to expand the reading room of periodicals; the lighting of reading rooms was also improved.

Automation

The development of information technology in 1995-1996 followed the guidelines of the project "Information System of Estonian Libraries", adopted in 1994. New multiuser software based on SCO UNIX was purchased and installed for the indexing of national bibliography. The NOVELL Netware was installed mainly for the Reference and Information Analysis Centre but being also used by the Union Catalogues Department and expanding the network of PCs. The NLE presently operates 75 PCs and 34 terminals. The number of Internet access points has increased, now amounting to 60. A new communication channel was built connecting the NLE with the reading room in the parliament building, enabling to facilitate communication between the two buildings.

Throughout 1995 and at the beginning of 1996 preparations continued to select a new integrated system: under the terms of the competition 8 different systems were tested, information regarding the corresponding companies was analysed, different libraries using those systems were visited. The final selection preferred INNOPAC (Innovative Interface, USA).

During 1995 the compilation of an Estonian universal thesaurus was commenced.

At present the following bibliographical databases are maintained and supplemented in the Reference and Information Analysis Centre:

- BIBLIOGRAPHIA IURIDICA ESTONICA. Estonian law bibliography, 1918-1940.
- EMOR. Articles on market, public opinion, media and household research, since 1992.
- LITTERA. Estonian literature, since 1995.
- MAJPOL. Articles on political and economic issues published in the Estonian press, since 1993.
- PINFO. Articles concerning politics, law and economy, 1991-1992.
- SEADUS. Legislative acts of the Republic of Estonia in foreign languages, since 1991.
- VARIA. Articles on various issues; personalia, since 1994.
- OIGUS. Articles on legal issues published in the Estonian press, since 1994.

In addition to them 4 electronic databases and 61 CD-ROM databases are available to the readers. Two news agencies - ETA and BNS - send us information daily.

Conservation and Preservation of the Collections

In 1995 the climate of the stackrooms was profoundly studied, determining the temperature, the humidity, the composition of air, the condition of materials on paper carriers and some other indicators. Proceeding from the results the preserving conditions are gradually being improved, one major step being the installation of filters into air conditioners and air channels in 1995.

In December 1995, at the initiative of the NLE the Library and Archival Materials Preservation Board was formed at the Estonian Librarians Association. The task of the Board is to deal

with major preservation problems of the 7 largest institutions with preserving functions: the NLE, the Tartu University Library, the Library of the Estonian Academy of Sciences, the State Archives, the Historical Archives, the Tallinn City Archives, the Estonian Literature Museum.

Since 1996 the NLE started cooperation with the Tallinn City Archives and the Library of the Estonian Academy of Sciences for evaluating the condition of their collections. This work is based on a methodology worked out in the NLE Preservation Department.

Public Relations - the NLE as a Cultural Center

The NLE continued to carry out cultural activities also during 1995-1996. Like in the previous years, exhibitions constituted the major part of this work, the corresponding number during a year and a half was 81. Art exhibitions dominated, amounting to 46 of the whole. In addition to them our visitors could also enjoy exhibitions of books, photos, posters, postcards, etc. To mention the most significant examples: "Scripta Manent", an international exhibition on bindings and calligraphy with 72 participants from 13 countries who also attended a thematic conference; "Estonian Silverwork from 17th-19th century. The Collection of Marje and Alur Reinans", also supplemented by a conference; "The Furniture and Design of Martin Szekely"; "Estonian Silverwork from the Collections of the Estonian Art Museum". The NLE has also become a very popular site for presentations - 24 book or CD presentations took place here during 1995. The wide public's keen interest in the NLE as a cultural center but also as an impressive architectural monument is proved by over 420 guided library tours during 1995.

The staff was and is continuously informed of the library news by a weekly news release.

The publishing work of the NLE is characterized by over 50 titles that were issued during 1995.

International Cooperation

The NLE takes pride in 2 new information centers: in 1995 the Information and Documentation Centre on the Council of Europe was festively opened in the NLE. The opening ceremony was attended by Mr. Daniel Tarchys, Secretary General of the Council of Europe as well as the President and the Prime Minister of Estonia. The Centre is responsible for the dissemination of information on the goals, activity and achievements of the Council of Europe. Since January, 1996 the readers of the NLE can use the new, well-supplied German reading room, the aim of which is to promote the studying of the German language and to introduce current information on Germany in a variety of areas. The nice tradition continues - the Japan Foundation Special Programs for Japan-Europe Cultural Exchange donated a valuable collection of Japanese books for the establishment of a Japanese Information Center in the NLE; preparations are in process for opening the French reading room in autumn, 1996 - the first contribution by the French state of over 1,000 books has already arrived. The Information and Documentation Center of the European Union is also planned to be opened in the NLE. During 1995-1996 noteworthy donations have also been received by the Danish Cultural Institute and the Embassy of Switzerland (art literature) as well as from different Finnish institutions (varia). All the above mentioned events and supplements to our collections were strongly supported by foreign embassies, proving their continuous efficient cooperation with the NLE. In 1995 two significant cooperation agreements were concluded: the representatives of research libraries of the Baltic states signed a statement of intent aiming to establish a common strategy for the development of information technology in the libraries of the Baltic region; the same year witnessed the signing of a cooperation agreement between the NLE and the National Library of Poland. Cooperation continues under the two joint projects with the

Helsinki University Library (HUL): the project of microfilming Estonian newspapers from 1918-1945 and the project of HUL card catalogue conversion into electronic format. Both projects started in 1993. Under the corresponding cooperation agreements concluded in 1992 the NLE also continuously cooperates with the National Libraries of Latvia and Lithuania, particularly in the field of automation.

In 1995 members of the library staff presented 31 reports at national or international conferences and seminars.