



**Seminar on
Reforming library legislation in Central Europe:
Needs and Expectations**

Strasbourg, 7-8 November 1994

Conclusions and background documents

Council for Cultural Co-operation

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I. INTRODUCTION

Within the framework of the Council of Europe programme "Books, reading, translation and archives", the Workshop on "Library legislation in Central and Eastern European countries" took place in Strasbourg on 7-8 November 1994. It was organised in collaboration with NORDINFO, a Nordic Council of Ministers institution concerned with the development of research libraries.

The workshop was the result of three major events, which all occurred in 1994. The first was the "Workshop on library development in Central and Eastern Europe. From assistance to co-operation", organised in Strasbourg by the European Commission and the Council of Europe on 3-4 February 1994. The second was the Conference "Towards a European Forum of library associations", organised by the Council of Europe in collaboration with EBLIDA, on 19-20 May 1994, also held in Strasbourg. Both Conferences gathered key persons from library institutions and associations in Europe as well as from other international and national organisations (Deutsches Bibliotheksinstitut, the British Council, International Book Development, etc).

The third was a seminar devoted to library legislations and policies in Europe, held in Birkach (Stuttgart). The organiser, Deutsches Bibliotheksinstitut, had invited many Eastern and Western librarians to speak about their respective library systems, providing in this way a good opportunity to exchange information and establish links.

In the three Seminars, it was highlighted how seriously policies (or lack of policies) in "new democracies" have affected library systems in Eastern Europe. Financial constraints and legislative shortcomings are serious hindrances to the effective fulfilment of the institutional duties and tasks assigned to libraries. Scarce resources were constantly denounced as well as the lack of interest of public authorities for the state of public reading.

In May, participants from Eastern and Central Europe were already expressing "a general dissatisfaction with existing legislations" and proposed to initiate actions based on case studies, including commentaries and analysis of improvements.

The objective of the Workshop held in November was therefore twofold: on the one hand, it was intended to collect information and make enquiries regarding legislative needs and expectations in three states: Slovenia, Poland and Slovakia; on the other, to issue a set of recommendations which could reflect existing trends in European library legislations, thus pushing forward the process of reforms in Central and Eastern European countries.

Three more countries were present as observers, thanks to the generous help provided by NORDINFO: Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia. Two Moldovan librarians had also been invited, because a provision concerning libraries was under discussion at the Parliament (and has been in the meantime approved).

The discussion was mainly based on a background document prepared by Mr. Traniello. In describing the legislative situation in Western European countries, Mr. Traniello had

identified current trends and advances. More papers describing the current library picture in the three invited countries were also presented during the Seminar.

Following the introduction of a free market in Eastern countries, the situation of libraries has become critical. In Slovakia, 4000 libraries out of 12,000 have been closed; similar figures are recorded in Moscow. Declining governmental support to public reading is noted everywhere and libraries are being asked to find their own resources. If the process is not stopped, many libraries will not resist the temptation to charge users even for the basic services they provide.

Where libraries can receive external support, they still have a good grip on the situation. But in general, library activities are paralysed, with consequences that may be fatal for the educational, cultural and informational development of the countries concerned. Reading practices, which used to be of very high level, are now declining dangerously.

Participants were divided into three Working Groups according to the three most relevant library sectors: national, academic and public libraries. The results of the discussions that took place in the specific sessions (first day, afternoon) and in the plenary sessions (second day, morning) are condensed into three different sets of conclusions.

Being aware of the serious situation encountered by all libraries in Eastern Europe, participants expressed great concern for the future of public reading. They also called on their governments to give full support to library activities, by establishing appropriate policies with adequate funding and sufficient and qualified staff. They therefore invite the Secretariat to exert pressure on Ministries of culture and education and other relevant bodies in order to disseminate the following conclusions widely.

The Secretariat of the Council of Europe encourages any initiatives aiming at accelerating library legislation reforms in Central and Eastern Europe. It welcomes the progress made in Moldova, where a library legislation law was recently approved according to the Conclusions drawn by the Secretariat and invites the countries signatory to the Cultural Convention to undertake similar steps, if the case, with the support and assistance of the Council of Europe. To this purpose, it sees with favour the proposal presented by the Hungarian Library Association to organise a Seminar in September 1995 oriented at the Balkanic region, where the Hungarian case will be presented to relevant national Ministries and to an international audience.

II. CONCLUSIONS

Group No. 1 : National Libraries Legislations

Notwithstanding a great diversity in the position of national libraries in different European countries, all the participants of our working group did agree on some principles concerning the legislation on national libraries. These are as follows:

1. National libraries in European countries are cultural, scientific and educational institutions of major importance and therefore they deserve special, both legislative, as well as economic guarantees for their existence and further development.

First of all, it is of great importance to establish or to retain their specific legal status as the national archives of the country's intellectual heritage in written form, in print, or in a variety of formats. They should also maintain their legal responsibility as the bibliographic centres, main information suppliers, and training centres for librarians. It is also desirable that, given the economic difficulties in Eastern and Central Europe, national libraries receive special financial guarantees for acquisitions and equipment, as well as librarians' salaries.

This should take the form of either a specific national library law or of a separate chapter in the general library law.

2. Secondly, special measures should be provided in order to guarantee the complete delivery of the legal deposit copy covering, not only the print-on-paper material, but also text pictures, sound and other media.
3. Thirdly, national libraries should become institutions supervising the preservation of both the cultural heritage of their nations to be able to provide access to it in other countries, as well as the intellectual heritage of all ethnical and national groups living in their countries.

These problems, well known to all of us, should be repeated loudly and as frequently as possible, simply because in the situation of acute shortage of financial resources in countries of Central Europe, libraries used to be the first victim of the economical policy of their governments. The losses resulting from such a policy are hardly visible in the short run, but are leading directly to create a civilisation deprived of historical memory and sources of information accumulated in the past.

We therefore call on the Council of Europe to stress as frequently as possible in its contacts with Eastern and Central European countries the importance of National Libraries as guardians of both the intellectual output of the nation, as well as other information resources. It seems that this very important task, well recognised in Western Europe, has a more dramatic dimension in the so-called post-communist countries.

The cause of national libraries should be a cause common to all Europeans.

Group No. 2 : Academic Libraries Legislation

Preamble

Academic libraries play an essential part in meeting the information needs of teachers, students and researchers in higher education; they preserve and provide access to an important part of national cultural heritage; they contribute to the national and international information and cultural resource; and they act as gateways to the global Information Society. As a co-ordinated national resource, a network of academic libraries can offer both universities and the wider population a broader range of high quality services than those of any single institution. It follows that academic library provision should be encouraged through appropriate national initiatives to develop in a co-ordinated manner that meets both institutional and national needs.

Background

Universities are undergoing rapid change as student numbers increase, new courses of study are introduced, research activity grows and interdisciplinary activities develop. Furthermore, the national and international environment is changing, both through the adoption of democratic structures and through the development of the Information Society with its global networks and information services. The role of academic libraries, which must anticipate and respond to these changes, is also developing. They are becoming more central to the teaching and learning process, while in acting as information gateways, they play a crucial role in ensuring that members of the university have access to the world's information resources. Both universities and national authorities can provide, through appropriate strategies, the resources, co-ordination and structures to enable academic libraries to make effective contributions to the success of universities and the health of national cultural, scientific and economic life. Universities can ensure that libraries can play their development and implement the changes needed to achieve their objectives. Government initiatives may be needed to encourage networking between libraries, to provide capital investment in Library buildings, collections and information technology, and to facilitate staff development.

Thus, the provision of the best possible academic library service requires actions on the part of both government and the university within a suitable legislative framework. That framework may encompass:

- legislation concerning universities themselves;
- general library legislation;
- specific legislation (such as that concerned with copyright) which has a bearing on Library operations.

Conclusions

We urge national governments to establish appropriate mechanisms to:

1. Promote the development of high quality academic library services to meet university, national and international needs.
2. Promote co-operation between libraries, both between academic libraries and between libraries of different types, including the establishment of effective inter-library loan systems. Attention may have to be given to the need to avoid excessive charges for inter-library lending operations which destroy the benefits for society at large.
3. Provide opportunities for the exchange of experience between librarians and the sharing of good practice between academic libraries.
4. Encourage the maintenance of professional standards within academic libraries, including the determination of qualifications through appropriate bodies.
5. Promote the development and use of common, and especially international, standards, particularly in the area of information technology.
6. Ensure that copyright legislation permits academic libraries to meet the legitimate needs of their users for textual and other resources.
7. Ensure that the nationally and internationally significant collections of individual academic libraries are protected and exploited for the good of universities and of the cultural life of the nation and of Europe.
8. Encourage universities to view their libraries as integrated resources for the benefit of the academic community as a whole.

In addition to our specific conclusions we acknowledge the need for ongoing co-operative activities at the international level to assist all European countries to develop their academic libraries and to raise the level of provision to the highest international standards.

Group No. 3 : Public Libraries Legislation

Freedom, prosperity and the development of society and of individuals are fundamental human values. They will only be attained through the ability of well-informed citizens to exercise their democratic rights and to play an active role in society. Constructive participation and the development of democracy depend on satisfactory education as well as on free and unlimited access to knowledge, thought, culture and information.

The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for life-long learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups.

The Council of Europe therefore encourages national and local governments to support and actively engage in the development of public libraries.

The public library is the local centre of information, making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users.

Although the public libraries constitute only a sub-system of the national library system and national information policy of a country, it is recommended to provide a specially dedicated law to regulate their services, organisation and maintenance, because this library sub-system provides services for the entire population on an everyday basis.

Library legislation is determined by the social, political, legal and economic conditions of the country in question. However, some conclusions concerning the issues to be dealt with in the act may be considered in general.

The public library act should be based on the human right to education, information and recreation and the principles laid down in UNESCO's Public Library Manifesto (November 1994).

A public library legislation should deal with:

1. Services

Materials

The objective of the public libraries is to promote the diffusion of knowledge, education and culture by making all types of media and modern technology available as well as traditional materials.

The objective of the public libraries shall be achieved by observing quality, comprehensiveness and topicality in the choice of materials to be made available. This criteria alone shall be the decisive factor and not any religious, moral or political views which might be expressed in the matters.

Access

The services of the public libraries are provided on the basis of equalities of access for all regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status.

Specific services and materials must be provided for all people who cannot, for whatever reason, use the regular services and materials, for example linguistic minorities, people with disabilities, people in hospital or prison and inhabitants of sparsely populated areas.

An Electronic network should be provided as a tool maintaining the overall access, the ultimate goal being to connect even the smallest public libraries to the national overall electronic networks.

2. Principles

The core principle of public library services includes lending, reference work, community information and interlibrary lending (i.e. to secure document supply and information flow). The possibility of using materials on the library premises must also be regarded as a core principle.

3. Cooperation

In order to ensure nationwide library coordination and cooperation, legislation and strategic plans must also define and promote a national library network based on agreed standards of service.

The public library network must be designed in relation to national, research and special libraries as well as libraries in schools, colleges and universities.

4. Users

Legislation on public libraries should be comprehensive of the rights and duties of the user; registering himself in any public library of the country, access to materials and information, acquisition and services corresponding to the actual user needs, convenient opening hours, interlending, etc. accepting the rules of use, decent behaviour, respecting the interests of fellow users, etc.

Protection of personal rights in library files (eg circulation).

5. Administrative and legal organisation

Public library provision is to be approached as an organic system. Within a country one should distinguish between at least three levels of provision (local authorities, regional/county and national).

The law should allow two or more local authorities to run a joint library service.

Integration of public libraries with other institutions of information, culture, education and recreation. Even under these circumstances those public libraries are

still run as part of the public library system, the same rules and standards apply, a qualified librarian should be in charge, direct public access is required, the library expenditures are to be earmarked within the budget of the institution.

A central co-ordinating, advising, monitoring, etc. agency is needed. It may be a self-dependent institution, a department of the national library or of any other library.

6. Staff

Professional and continuing education of the librarians is indispensable to ensure adequate services.

7. System of funding of libraries

The public library shall be in principle free of charge.

As a public institution, the public library should be financed by national and local governments.

The local government is responsible for the financing of the local public libraries. The counties and the national government are responsible for the financing of the superstructure.

However there may be offered some fee based services which are to be specified by the sustaining bodies. The fees are not to exceed the actual costs. The law should stipulate the limitations to maximum fees.

Finally a list of problems which have to be considered in connection with public library legislation:

- National information policy
- National bibliography
- Status of national libraries

- Legal deposit
- Education of qualified librarians
- Copyright
- Public lending right

The public libraries also depend on standards for:

- Cataloguing and classification
- Library services
- Telematics

III ANNEXES

LIBRARY LEGISLATION IN WESTERN EUROPE

Background document prepared by Paolo Traniello

1. The legislation on public libraries is a part of the administrative organisation of a specific country. Therefore it depends first of all by the general characteristics of the administrative law system in force in that country.

Concerning Western Europe, we must first of all distinguish two fundamental models :-

- a. The "continental" system, based upon a written constitution of a formal type, which makes provisions for the existence of some local bodies, attributing them some powers, whose execution is regulated by law.

To this category belong the administrative systems which were in some way influenced by the Napoleonic reforms : French, Italian, Belgian and Spanish systems ; and, moreover, the German, Dutch, Danish systems, and those of Northern Europe, where the influence of the Common Law, while persisting in civil matters, is less felt on administrative matters ;

- b. The system based upon the Common Law, characteristic of the Anglo-saxon world, in force in the United Kingdom. In this system, which does not have a written constitution of a formal kind, the duties of the local bodies or "Authorities" are determined, case by case, by specific "Acts".

We should consider separately the administrative organisation that existed in communist regime countries. Specifically, in the USSR, the control of the local administration depended upon local soviets, which were government bodies peculiar of that regime ; in other countries, like Romania, while there existed a local administration of a traditional kind, the influence of the various political associations, expressions of the party, was very strong.

It would be very interesting to know the actual changes occurring from an administrative point of view, in the new republics formed after the fall of the communist regime and the dissolution of the USSR. On these matters, we are not sufficiently informed.

2. Concerning the sphere of application of different laws on libraries, it varies in relation to the different nature of the state to which those laws belong. In the set of 12 countries that today constitute the European Union there are federal states, like Germany, and in some way, Belgium; regional states, that hand over legislative powers to regions, like Italy, or Spain, states composed of different national realities, with different legislations, united under one sovereign, like the United Kingdom,

states with unitary features, like Eire, France, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Denmark, Portugal and Greece.

We have to notice that even in some states of the last category, there exist territories with administrative autonomy, as in the case of the Faroe islands and Greenland as regards Denmark.

In the federal and regional kind of state that we can consider together in one category, the legislation on libraries is issued by individual state members or by the regions, while in the unitary states the legislation is centralised. In the first case, the various laws are effective only on the territory of the regions or of the state members. Thus, in Belgium two different library laws are in force; one for the French community, the other for the Flemish community.

In Italy and Spain the local public libraries are regulated by regional laws that are valid for the individual regions.

In the United Kingdom, the Public Libraries Act of 1964 is in force in England and Wales, while in Scotland the Scottish Public Libraries Act has been in force since 1955.

The most peculiar situation for what concerns this group is that of Germany. In this country, even if it is a federal state, the Länder did not legislate on public libraries, except that of Baden-Wurtttemberg, while Länder laws on universities' libraries are in force. Nevertheless, a national library planning does exist, approved by the libraries' associations confederation. It also regulates public libraries, although these provisions do not have a legal character.

In the Netherlands, Eire, Denmark and Greece, there are national library laws; in Greenland and in the Faroe islands, which are part of Denmark, there is an autonomous regulation, as mentioned above. France does not have a specific law on libraries; this subject is included in various laws that regulate the state's administrative interventions.

Regarding the states of Northern Europe, some of which will soon be associated with the European Union, they all possess national library laws, except, oddly enough, Sweden, that has abrogated its legislation on this subject from 1965 onwards. In the Aland Island, an autonomous territory of Finland, there exists a provincial Law on libraries.

3. In the matter of library policy we can distinguish a mode of intervention based on autonomy, and a mode based on decentralization. Autonomy and decentralisation do not mean the same thing. By "autonomy" we mean the attribution, by centralized power to a subordinate local body, of the powers that are needed in order to manage a given asset, along lines of intervention that are singled out by the same local body. The autonomous body avails itself of financial means that may derive from local incomes, and also of transfers from the central government, provided that those will be part of the local budget. Autonomy can be divided in a system in which different territorial bodies carry out different functions in an integrated way.

For instance, in Italy we have a three-level autonomy system : the first and highest one is the "Regione", next comes the "Provincia" and then the "comune". These three local bodies have powers in the matter of local libraries : the "regione" has legislative power and can financially help the "comuni" ; the "provincia" carries out functions of co-ordinating services, while management and financing of individual local libraries is a task of the "comuni".

In the majority of the European systems of local autonomy, we have a two-level organisation: at the bottom level the town council, that, in the case of a big city, may have administrative subsections in it; at the second level, the department, the province or the county. This is the situation for instance of the Netherlands, where at province level "provincial library centres" are working, with the function of co-ordinating the circulation of materials among the local libraries ; of Belgium, where there are library co-ordination offices in every province for both the communities ; of Norway, that attributes to counties the responsibility of county libraries, along with functions of organising loan co-operation among municipal libraries.

On the contrary, Denmark's county libraries, and Finland's provincial and central libraries, are all municipal libraries, appointed by the central government to carry out co-ordinating functions. In the case of Denmark, they are also financed by the central government, following the most recent laws (end of 1993). This arrangement is formally nearer to decentralisation than to autonomy. In the United Kingdom public libraries depend from "library authorities" that exert their power in a fixed area, usually quite a large one ; it usually coincides with the County council, except in the cases of "metropolitan districts" in the big cities, and of the capital, where the "London Boroughs" and the city constitute librarian authorities. These library authorities, a total of 167, dispose of means sufficient to be able to carry out in their area the whole library service, subdivided into many different structures. Decentralisation policy responds to a logic partly different from that of autonomy, though the two different trends may coexist: for instance we have seen decentralisation for county libraries in Denmark, but obviously there are many autonomy features in the library policy of that country.

We have decentralisation when the central government singles out goals to be reached through administrative action, which it entrusts to the local bodies, giving them the means to realise those goals.

This, regarding public libraries, is the case first of all in France. In France, since 1982 with President Mitterrand, a vast process of decentralisation has been initiated, in which the central government took part financially by the means of "conours particulier", that means, with state allocations given to local bodies for the development of specific services. In the library field, the "conours particulier" has concerned most of all the "Bibliothèques centrales de prêt" (central libraries for lending) that depended on central government until 1983, when they were transferred to the "départements". The municipal libraries also receive financial support from the central government, especially for expenses for investment. Lastly, since 1992, some municipal libraries of particular importance have been declared as having a "regional vocation" and receive special financing from the government to carry out their functions over an area larger than the municipal one.

In Portugal, a central government intervention is also possible, to finance 50 % of the expenses sustained by the local bodies, provided they meet some development standards in the services they provide, services that are set by a convention, on the basis of town dimensions.

To sum up this point we can say that both methods - autonomy and decentralisation - do have advantages and disadvantages.

Autonomy presents the advantage that it boosts local participation, making a more direct control of services possible, and also a different library organisation, according to the peculiarities of the local situation. Yet, in a situation of autonomy, the local body managing the services ought to be big enough in order to sustain adequate expenses, as in the case of the United Kingdom. If there are different levels of autonomy, the higher level body may efficaciously intervene with its own prescriptions, if it is able to couple interventions with adequate economic incentives.

Decentralisation by contrast can obtain better effectiveness in carrying out intervention plans over the whole national territory, but it entails a larger subordination to the central government's political choices, and it requires an efficient bureaucracy.

4. In library theory, it is largely recognised that no library can respond alone to all users' needs. Therefore, all library legislations include principles related to intralibrary co-operation. Other co-operation procedures may exist in an independent way, based upon agreements or upon single administrative acts.

Co-operation can be realised at different levels. At international level, the case of Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark is very interesting : for several years now there has been a co-operation, based on specific agreements, among the central institutes for the libraries. This co-operation nowadays is expressed in two organisations : the NORDBOK, a committee that depends on the Nordic Council of Ministers, with jurisdiction over the publishing promotion and public reading fields among others, and the NORDINFO, that takes care especially of research libraries, but also of the application of new information technologies to public libraries.

This kind of library co-operation is not codified in the law, but, nevertheless, it responds to principles both current and well-rooted in the political and cultural relationships among those countries.

A role of ever-increasing importance in co-ordinating national library services is played by national libraries. We know how national libraries asserted themselves in the last century as the expression of cultural unity of a country, and how in this way they played their traditional role of bibliographical control and book archives. But today the national libraries' role is being discussed from several points of view. From the point of view that interests us we can observe with Maurice Line that "The days of the comprehensive all-dominating national library have gone. The national library will retain a leading role, in the sense both of being the most significant library in the system and of guiding the management of national research collections". In the same article Line hints at the possibility that those national

libraries functions be carried out in a co-operative way, and expressly refers to Northern European countries on this matter.

Many things could be said about the national libraries new functions, and on the various possibilities of collaboration with other libraries and agencies, for the national bibliographic control and access, that today must rely upon computers, but that is not part of our topic. Regarding the institutional and legislative definition of national libraries, we have to point out that in Europe there are some special situations. In Italy, for instance, there exist, for historical reasons due to the country's unification, two national central libraries, one in Rome, the other in Florence ; in the United Kingdom, apart from the British Library, established in 1973, national libraries are also operating in Scotland and Wales ; in Denmark, the functions of national library, as concerns legal deposit, are carried out jointly by the Royal Library of Copenhagen and the University Library of Aarhus; but many important functions for bibliographic control are carried out by the Central Bureau for Libraries, of which we will speak later; in Norway, national library functions were until recently carried out by the University Library of Oslo. But in 1989 a new law on legal deposit of publications was promulgated, and the functions of national archive of new media were entrusted to a new library, created in the small town of Mo i Rana.

Germany's reunification has brought about the administrative unification of the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek of East Berlin with the Preussischer Kulturbesitz of West Berlin, and of the Deutsche Bücherei of Leipzig (East Germany national library) with the Deutsche Bibliothek of Frankfurt. The result of this unification is an integrated library complex that in Berlin, Frankfurt and Lipsia carry out together the functions of national library.

In Spain, some autonomous regions that have the features of real national entities, like Catalonia, have their own national library.

Apart from the role of the national libraries, it is important to note the role played in many countries by the central buros responsible for librarian co-ordination. Some of those have a prevailing consultative role, like the two Advisory Councils codified in the British Public Libraries Act of 1964, and the Public Libraries National Council existing in France.

Other bodies are instead responsible for co-ordinating all of the state's intervention in the matter of libraries : such is the case in the Republic of Ireland with the "Library Council" (An Chomhairle Leabharlanna) established in 1947, of Portugal with the "Istituto Português do Livro e da Leitura", created in 1987, of Norway, with the Norwegian Directorate for Public and School Libraries. In Italy, the "Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo", controlled by the "Ministero dei Beni Culturali", is responsible for the "Servizio Bibliotecario Nazionale" (SBN), a national network, linking online, by a central index, the catalogs of about 150 university libraires, research libraries and also local public libraries. In Germany and in Northern European countries, the central co-ordinating bodies have a noteworthy autonomy with respect to the central government, and sometimes are totally independent. In Germany, the most important central co-ordinating bodies are the "Deutsches Bibliotheksinstitut" and the "Einkaufszentrale für Öffentliche Bibliotheken". The DBI

was established in 1978, based on a Berlin Land law. It takes care of, among other things, library research, database and authorities' archives production, library statistics, the production of instruments for regulating library activities, the elaboration of systems of consulting, classification and international library collaboration.

The EKZ (central body for libraries' purchases) is a real trading society, with public bodies for the most part as partners, that operates as a centralised buro for purchases and also as a bibliographical information centre on current production.

Central bodies for libraries similar in structure and functions to the EKZ operate also in Norway and Finland.

Also in the Netherlands, the Dutch Centre for Public Libraries and Reading operates as a non governmental co-ordinating centre.

In Denmark, since 1990, there exists the National Body for the libraries ("Statens Bibliotekstjeneste") that exerts a co-ordinating action, concerning all types of library and is helped by three consultative committees: the Research and public libraries Joint Committee; the Committee of the public libraries, and the research libraries Council. Furthermore, in Denmark there are other central institutes: the central bureau for libraries ("Statenbibliotekscentralen"), whose principal duty consists in the production of a national bibliography and that recently underwent restructuring due to severe financial crisis; the central deposit for libraries, the central Danish library of literature for immigrants, the binding centre. In many library laws provisions are allocated to appropriate centralised bodies or designated libraries which, at an intermediate level, are responsible for co-ordinating library activities.

To the first category belong the provincial library central bodies existing in the Netherlands, the technical offices for libraries ("Staatliche Fachstellen") operating in the German "Länder", the regional and provincial offices provided for in the Italian regional legislation.

To the second group belong in France the central libraries for lending that operate at "département" level and the recently established regionally vocated libraries. In Spain, the central regional libraries; in Belgium the principal libraries, whose action concerns a set of towns, and the central ones, that have functions of co-ordination at a provincial level; in Denmark and Norway the county libraries; in Finland the provincial and central libraries with responsibility over a limited territory, or in the whole county; in Italy, the "centrosistema" libraries provided for by some regional laws.

5. With regard to services, there would be many important problems to discuss, that cannot be dealt in detail. Today's most important technical problems, that of realising automated networks for the circulation of bibliographical information and documents, has until now been relatively little studied, from a legislative point of view.

A very interesting issue is that of co-operation among libraries of a different nature (public, school, research) - this necessity is particularly underlined in some laws, for instance in the Danish, Finnish and Norwegian ones.

Another important problem is that of service for categories that have particular physical (hospital patients, blind) or juridical (jailed), or cultural (immigrants) features. Interventions in those areas are provided for under Belgian, Dutch and Danish law, and in Germany's national library plan.

Payments to authors for the usage of their works in a library are also provided for by some legislation, for instance the British Public Lending Right Act of 1979, and Dutch and Norwegian library laws.

Regarding the problems of responsibility in the management of the public libraries, this is strongly felt in the Italian regional legislation, which makes provisions for, in the majority of cases, the existence of managing committees which represent the different sociopolitical forces in the territory. Lastly, we must briefly consider one of the most crucial points in public libraries legislation : that of the free of charge nature of services. This problem has been much debated in the last 10 years, in relation to the processes of economical recession that, in many countries, have limited the amount of resources available to libraries, and also in relation to the development of high-level computerised information services, that can be evaluated for their economic benefit to users.

Many different public library laws codify the principle of free basic services, as for instance in the Public Libraries Act of the United Kingdom, under Danish and Norwegian law, in the Italian regional laws and in the national library plan of Germany ; library services are not free however in the Republic of Ireland, and are only partially free (for young users) in the Netherlands and Belgium. In the Netherlands all reference services are free, and for other services there is a principle of discretionality. The assertion of the principle of free service is one of the arguments of those who would reintroduce a public library law in Sweden.

We have to point out that, even if this principle is one of those on which the contemporary public library was founded, today it must necessarily be regulated, even in the countries that explicitly affirm it. Therefore, for example, Denmark's new law on libraries states that local authorities may still charge for special services, and for the loan of recorded music and videogames. In the United Kingdom, where the principle was strongly upheld by the Library Association against Mrs Thatcher's government, the "Library charges regulations" for England and Wales were issued at the end of 1991, to determine exactly the conditions under which library services can be free of charge. For instance, payments may be asked from the user for special researches from which she/he may gain a profit.

As a conclusion of this synthetic review, I would highlight forward three problems which are to be considered when planning public library legislation.

a. The first problem concerns the same necessity of a library legislation, in particular that on the public libraries. The question if such a legislation is however necessary could seem an idle one and the answer to be taken for granted. But the evidence shows us that there are in Europe at least three great countries which do not have a specific public libraries legislation. These are France, Germany and Sweden.

These three countries, whose social and cultural development is obvious, have a well developed public libraries service too, even though they have no legislation on this matter.

What can be said about this ?

In the case of France, the provisions concerning the public libraries development are not enclosed in a specific Act, but in some acts concerning the government interventions for decentralisation, which have been remarkably effective, from a financial point of view too.

In the case of Germany, it is important to emphasize the role of librarians' associations, that were able to draw up a national plan containing some specific directions to central government and to the "Länder" concerning library policy, even if they were not prescriptive.

At last, in Sweden, the lack of a public libraries act since 1965 can be explained, almost paradoxically, by the determined defence of their autonomy by the local bodies, which ensure with their own power a very well organised library service.

In any case, it is important to point out that, while on the one hand we cannot say that an adequate library service cannot exist without library legislation, on the other hand, we cannot assert that library legislation is enough to ensure that library services work satisfactorily.

Good library legislation is very useful and probably necessary too ; but the most important thing for the library service development is the will to act effectively in the administrative field and to allot to the libraries the indispensable financial resources.

So it might be reasonable, in some situations, to advance some suitable practical intervention prior to the introduction of a specific law, in order to obtain the grounds for an efficient library system.

b. The second consideration, a consequence of the first, is that in planning library legislation, we have to examine carefully what we want to achieve and what means we have at our disposal.

It is not the same thing, for example, to plan the organisation of a network of small structures that guarantee a basic service in a particular environment, as it is to organise multimedia centres, based on modern information technologies and able to answer the various users' needs.

I can more directly refer to the Italian case, which I know better.

In Italy, in the last twenty years, today under the impulse of regional legislation, there has been a wide spreading of public libraries, which now exist in the majority of municipalities : recent research estimated their number at about 5,000. But, among these 5,000, those achieving a remarkable dimension are only a few hundred, whereas many of them are very small structures, financed with some million lire (a few thousand dollars) per year. This limited financial support comes also from Regions and this encourages even

the small rural districts to found very small libraries. I personally think these micro-structures are not at all useless : they especially serve primary and high-school pupils, who need some encyclopedias or handbooks, but older people who can go there to read newspapers, for instance.

In these libraries there are often cultural activities which may help to increase cultural and perhaps political participation, too.

All this can be positively considered and does not require great resources.

But, where a local authority wants to establish a real public library, able to offer a comprehensive service, also with the modern information technologies, then the necessary expenses are quite different.

For example, a little town near Milan with less than 20,000 inhabitants, Vimercate, in 1992 allocated seven billion lire (about 4,300,000 dollars) to found a new library, in a purpose-built building and endowed with automatised facilities. But very few municipalities are ready to bear such an expenditure. We can note, however, that the financial support for libraries coming from the Lombardia Region is about 3 billion lire per year, less than half of what has been spent for the establishment of just one local library.

c. What we have said leads us to a third final consideration, concerning the dimensions that the local body responsible for a public library service ought to have for securing the best results.

Such a dimension depends simply on the kind of services that we want to offer to the users. If we want a comprehensive public library service, such a service has to be managed by a body with a sufficient budget. This problem cannot be settled by means of a library system joining together some small libraries, because in this case the sharing of the resources would not to give rise to a better performance.

In the case that the body responsible for the library is a basic one, that is the municipality, and provided that this body has very small dimensions, the solution may be sought in one of these two directions : either a cut in the number of the municipalities, by means of a general administrative reform, as happened in Belgium, in the Netherlands, in Norway, or else the establishment of library service performed by some associate local bodies, as contemplated in Belgium's and Denmark's laws.

Another possible solution to this problem lies in entrusting the responsibility for the public library to an authority operating in an area wider than just municipal, as is the case in England, where the library authorities, except in the London case, are the county councils and the metropolitan districts.

SLOVAK REPUBLIC

LIBRARY LEGISLATION IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC: THE STATE OF THE ART

Legislation in 1919 - 1989

The Municipal Libraries Act, passed by the Government of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1919, has been the first step made towards the implementation of library legislation affecting Slovak legislation in later years. At the time of its introduction, this Act represented a positive step in that it imposed, apart from other positive features, the liability of local authorities to establish and maintain libraries.

After World War II, the need was felt to state the effect of libraries in view of the librarianship status as well as of cultural and educational needs of inhabitants. The efforts made were successful in 1959 when the Unified Library System Act came into force in Czechoslovakia.

Despite validity of the same Act in both republics, there were differences in the librarianship development. The Act did not fully consider the specific features of the Slovak cultural development (i.e. the position of the Slovak National Library, the national minorities in the Slovak Republic and the quite divergent economic and cultural standards). These differences resulted in 1968 in the draft to prepare the national library law. However, such an act could not be implemented during the period following 1968.

The Library Act passed in 1959 had been influencing the development of Czech and Slovak librarianship for more than 30 years. At the time of its issue the Act played a positive role as it covered state involvement in establishing and funding the libraries at all levels. The Act, however, had its weaknesses as a result of insufficient government funding. Moreover, the Act respected the ideological pressure of the state on library activities.

Library Legislation after 1989

The activities of libraries are regulated by the following types of legal rules:

- (1) Special legal rules (prepared by the Ministry of Culture and passed by the Parliament) obligatory for libraries in all sectors.
- (2) Regulations of particular ministries with an effect on the activities in their sectors.
- (3) Obligatory rules of local authorities regulating activities of their libraries.
- (4) Obligatory regulations affecting activities of libraries in the territory of the Slovak Republic, passed by the Parliament (eg Civil Code, Labour, National Estate Administration Act, laws of income tax, Work and Remuneration Act, acts on social welfare and health insurance, price regulations, etc.)

Political and social changes faced in 1989 and the following period show that the Act of 1959 and a vast number of orders are mostly obsolete. Although they are still valid, they

are often unnecessary and non-applicable for libraries and they even conceal the activities of libraries.

Preparation of a New Library Law

Regarding the changing economic conditions and legislative structures, relations between the Government, central administrative bodies (ministries) and local authorities, financing possibilities at particular levels of the government and local authorities, a decision was made to prepare the General Library Law.

This has been, in recent years, one of the main requirements placed by librarians on government representatives. These requirements are even more important now because economic measures and some steps taken by the Government have a great influence on the existence of libraries, particularly the public ones. Public libraries have been transferred to the administration of local authorities in 1991 and a further transfer of district libraries which are in the administration of the Ministry of Culture is in preparation.

The main objective of the legislation currently under preparation is to contribute to the development of public librarianship, financed from public sources, which would be independent of political, ideological and social effects and would thus guarantee unlimited and equal access of all citizens to information as is common practice in democracies.

Requirements Placed On Legislative Documents

Librarians would like to see the following items covered by the library law:-

- A declaration of the government's interest in the existence and development of libraries at national and local level.
- A definition of the basic institutional structure of the library system in the Slovak Republic.
- Basic responsibility for the national and local authorities towards the libraries to ensure an obligation to maintain at least basic library services for citizens.

Comment: This regards the suitable acquisition conditions in both public and research libraries with domestic and foreign information sources.

Experience in providing the mobile library services in the district Svidnik as part of the Dutch/Slovak project demonstrates the citizens' interest in reading up-to-date books.

According to the statistical data available, since 1989 approximately 4,000 of the 12,000 existing libraries have been closed. These libraries were mostly housed in institutions and information centres which were subsequently closed down. It is therefore necessary to support the library system and make it more operational.

- To declare the inevitability of mutual library cooperation in particular areas of library work.
- To solve the position of the Slovak National Library.

Comment: *The position of the Slovak National Library is covered by the Matica slovenská Acts from 1954 and 1991 (Matica slovenská = foundation). The amendment to this Act is now being prepared. The positions and functions of the Slovak National Library are expected to be covered in the above-mentioned Act and/or allied legal documents.*

- To determine the state share in financing the libraries and in promoting the material and professional conditions for the existence of libraries, particularly in the following field of library activities:-
 - infrastructure planning for library and information services;
 - maintenance and publishing of a national bibliography;
 - building of a union catalogue;
 - promotion to acquisition, assessing and protection of library collections;
 - maintenance/establishment of research and methodology centres to provide advisory and consultancy services, and central organisation for design, construction and establishment of libraries, eventually bookbinding, publishing, etc.
 - supervision of the library services by professional staff.

Comment: *Until 1989, the development of libraries was fully centrally planned and financed by the resources state budget.*

- to state the free of charge library services;
- to guarantee the legal deposit for the national library and for the selected research libraries

Comment: *The contemporary legal deposit law does not consider the current needs of the libraries within the split library market.*

- to nominate a guarantor for the implementation of the national library policy

Comment: *The Act on administration of ministries and other authorities (the so-called "Competency Act") which was passed in 1990, includes a general formulation according to which the Ministry of Culture represents the central administration for the area of library activities. However, the Ministry of Culture is not the supreme body for establishing and financing of libraries in other sectors.*

The library law under preparation should consider the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto to be adopted as the recommendation in the meeting of the IFLA Section for Public libraries to be held in February 1995 in Bratislava.

There are several barriers to library law preparation:

- the need to modify social relations in the period of social system transformation
- the necessity to consider the existing legislation which strongly affects the library activities
- the preparation of a new territorial and administration arrangement of the Slovak Republic which is not finished

- non-transparency of the library professional terminology
- the preparation of an amendment to copyright law and problems in the compensation of authors
- the local authorities refuse the legislative obligations, mainly due to economic reasons, to establish and maintain the public library and/or to provide library services in the other way.

Proposals Addressed to the Council of Europe

- The participants of the February workshop recommended that the Council of Europe prepare questionnaires for ministers of cultural affairs in order to obtain information on library cultural policies of the Council of Europe member countries. In our opinion this recommendation is very important for the library law preparation in our country.
- It is necessary to continue in the preparation of the library law in the context of the historical development of Slovakia and in line with current European trends. It would be sensible to attract the attention of national government representatives to this point for example by promotion in the Council of Europe.

SLOVENIA

BASIC INFORMATION ON THE LIBRARY SYSTEM AND THE LAW

- I. **The existing Library Law** was passed in July 1982, in the period of former Yugoslavia, when the republics had full competence and responsibility in cultural matters.
 1. According to the above-mentioned law, libraries could be established by the State, local communities, enterprises and agencies. The founder chooses the type, the area of activity and the long-term orientation of the library, in accordance with its own interests in the fields of the library activity and, of course, assures the basic conditions for the existence of the library.
 2. The managerial body of the library is the Council consisting of the representatives of the employees and of the State and the local community, respectively.
 3. The legality of the libraries' activities is supervised by the municipal agency for culture.
 4. **Libraries** are divided into:
 - local and regional public libraries, appointed to the education and instruction and satisfying the cultural needs of the resident population;
 - school libraries, appointed to the educational process and the needs of students and employees in primary and secondary schools;
 - polytechnic and university libraries appointed to the study, research process and art activities, and the needs of students and lecturers at this level;
 - special libraries appointed to the professional and research activities in particular areas of these activities;
 - national libraries appointed to the keeping, representing and assuring of access to library materials, representing the national spiritual creativity and the coordination of the Library Information System in Slovenia (art. 8).
 5. Libraries in Slovenia are acting as a uniform library information system, representing an important part of the general system of information. In close connection with the documentary services of research organisations, they are also included in the research information of the Republic. The unity of the Library Information System is assured through:
 - the "parent" libraries (advisory and supervisory services)
 - the uniform processing of library materials
 - the uniform way of collecting, processing and dissemination of data and information
 - the uniform way of keeping the catalogues and other documentation on library materials, and common generation and use of central catalogues
 - the development and coordination of inter-library lending (art. 9, 10)
 6. The "*parent*" library is developing professionalism and the national organisation of the library activities, looking after the professional improvement of the staff in the

libraries, coordinating the acquisition policy, managing the register of libraries and directing the part of library stock which is eliminated by the public libraries.

The "parent" library is controlling, assessing and directing the professional library activities through information, acquired by libraries, and through the direct control of their activity. Libraries have to send to the "parent" library all data requested on their professional activities and allow the experts to survey their work.

The "parent" library informs the particular library about the findings and professional deficiencies inside its activities. The library council ought to discuss such information and notify the "parent" library of its decisions on the abolition of the fixed deficiencies.

The tasks of the "parent" library inside a municipality are performed by the municipal library.

The tasks of the "parent" library in the framework of Slovenia are performed by the national library (art. 27.28).

The "parent" libraries on the ethnically mixed territories are specially concerned with the rational organisation of library activities, suitable for the members of Italian and Hungarian minorities respectively.

7. The *National library* is performing - besides the general tasks of the "parent" library - the following tasks:

- collecting and keeping of library materials produced in the territory of Slovenia, library materials on Slovenia, Slovenians and the ethnical minorities in Slovenia, the issues of Slovenian authors abroad and other foreign library materials printed in Slovenian (the "Slovenica");
- dissemination of Slovenian publications and information regarding Slovenia to important foreign libraries;
- processing of all library materials, issued in Slovenia, and dissemination of respective bibliographic information to libraries and others;
- compilation and publishing of the current and retrospective Slovenian national bibliography;
- performing of other tasks of the national referral centre and cooperation with other referral centres;
- collection, processing and dissemination of information about the library materials in Slovenia and cooperation in the international exchange of information (art. 35).

8. The **Professional Library Council** of the Republic of Slovenia is a common body of the Ministries of Culture, Education and Science.

The Professional Council is principally concentrating on :

- discussing the state and development of particular library networks and the whole library information state;
- concerned about including libraries in the system of research information;

In 1993, total annual additions reached 260,360 units of the library materials and at the low weeding rate total library stock increased by up to 5,780,399 volumes. 11,774,656 volumes were on loan and thus the average annual rate of stock used was 2.03. Public libraries are graded into five types, according to the number of people they serve, primarily on the basis of municipality level. Nevertheless, on the basis of their activities and competences as to the processing of the local history materials, active or passive participation in the creation of bibliographic descriptions for the shared catalogue, and as to their general development issues, they are actually divided into two main types.

The first type consists of rural and urban libraries that serve the municipality areas with a residential population of more than 50,000, and the second type exercises its activities within the less populated municipalities. The first type (15) is equipped with compatible hardware VAX/VMS and linked to the library and information system and world wide via SIPAX (X.25) or Academic research network ARNES, the others are to be linked with the library information network using PCs and they will soon be able to retrieve data from within the Slovenian system, and in years to come they will also be able to retrieve data from outside the Slovenian system. The first group's weakness is the lack of personnel and financial resources for immediate installation of automatic lending services.

In 1990, the Public Libraries Association (Zveza SIK Slovenije) was founded and since then it has been successful in implementing several managerial objectives.

Transition to the new administrative and local government system will introduce several changes. The state will finance the salaries (employees), library materials of up to 70% of the Slovenian acquisition standard, hardware and software installation and, on a small scale, the building of new needful libraries, while local authorities will cover related premises and other running expenses, and, on a large scale, capital financing of new buildings. It is expected that in newly founded local communities which do not have their own libraries or library branches the needs and requests to establish new (branch) libraries will be put forward. But all requests overreaching the standards will burden the scarce budgets of local communities. Therefore, it is foreseen that in many cases these needs will be met by cheaper usage of mobile library services and by appointing new branches to the existing libraries.

Therefore new and smaller municipalities should be advised to exercise the co-founder role of the existing public libraries. If the Parliament introduces districts as larger local communities, the present necessary division of public libraries into two contextually horizontal and only partially hierarchically joined complexes (as to the developmental, coordinative and counselling role of district libraries) will be formally confirmed more quickly. By the division, by cooperation of all municipalities within the district, and by participation of the state, much more comprehensive library-information services are to be expected. This, of course, will contribute against the excessively centralised state, and to the fostering of local creative resources.

V. Automation and networking

- Shared cataloguing system COBISS (UNIMARC) - since 1987
- 100 libraries, all types
- VAX/VMS platform central and local mainframes
ARNES, SIPAX 25 communication network
- Local systems - school libraries (400)
- smaller public libraries (40)

VI. Financing

- Ministry of Culture
- Ministry of Science and Technology
- Ministry of Education
- Local communities

POLAND

INFORMATION ON UP-TO-DATE STATE OF LIBRARY REGULATIONS

During the inter-war period, the reborn Polish Republic was not successful in establishing and maintaining a unified and consistent library policy. Poland remained behind other European countries, in spite of the rich tradition in the development of public libraries and the existence of the relevant parliamentary law in the second half of the eighteenth century. The activities of the State were directed at that time towards individual library issues or library types, eg the legal deposit law, the creation of the National Library in 1928, school and research libraries, and, to a small extent, public libraries.

Since 1945, as a result of extensive losses of collections during the war and the change of the political system, the State was deeply involved in library issues. As early as 1946 the decree on libraries and the protection of library collections was passed which, amongst other issues, had defined the rules governing the creation of a public library net.

The basic regulation on library activities in Poland constituted "The Library Law" of April 9, 1968 which is still in force today. The creation of this law involved great endeavours and the cooperation of the most eminent librarians of that era, and it took into consideration the existing and well-established organisational and legal conditions of Polish librarianship.

General rules of this regulation state that libraries, their collections and utilities constitute the national values serving the ongoing progress in education, culture and the national economy, and the State supports the development of libraries, as well as free access to their collections.

The library law deliberately did not include descriptions of detailed matters which were then formulated in relevant executory formulae. This approach has ensured long existent up-to-datedness and acceptance of the law among library circles.

Within the library law is the idea of "the national library network" which includes all libraries of the State and of the autonomous governments. The most important common duties of libraries of all types were specified, as well as the particular goals of some types of libraries; the most important types of libraries were listed: research, professional, school, educational and public. Special paragraphs were devoted to the National Library, the issues of library collections classification according to speciality, the legal deposit law, or the status of the librarian.

Since mid 1989 the duties of libraries have started to change. The decentralisation of governing centres and disposers of public financial means have also been introduced. The new law on local governments has resulted in transferring most of the previous competencies of the Ministry of Culture and Art - in the field of creating and supporting the public library network - directly to local governments. Apart from positive phenomena, eg more independence in carrying on local library policy or the economical improvement of spending public funds on libraries, several alarming tendencies have occurred, among them the liquidation of certain libraries, the loosening of ties between libraries within the

network, the deprofessionalisation of the library profession, and also insufficient financial means to meet the libraries' needs.

Both the Ministry of Culture and Art and library professional circles grouped closely with the Polish Librarians' Association and the National Library have been working since 1990 on the preparation of a new library law. Two different projects have been launched, both widely discussed and consulted in library periodicals. In the summer of this year, the Ministry of Culture and Art founded a second committee, consisting of library professionals and employees of the Ministry itself whose aim is to prepare one joint project of the law, including compromised solutions to questioned matters. The document has been completed and is to be submitted to the Ministry of Culture and Art by the end of October and subsequently brought into legislation.

In comparison with the law of 1968, the new project is of a more general and concise character in its formulae. It retains the most important resolutions on global access to libraries, free - generally speaking - use of library collections. The rules and procedures governing the liquidation or merging libraries which are included in the project are of special importance, as well as the role of the Ministry of Culture and Art in setting forth some rules for maintaining library networks. The formula obligating local governments to support public libraries has also been proposed.

One of the most important changes, in comparison with the previous law, is the formula on the National Library Council which was founded by the Prime Minister to deal with the following:

- the coordination of strategic national library endeavours;
- the stimulation of the development of the most important directions of Polish librarianship;
- the expertise on the activities and initiatives of utmost importance for the development of libraries, and presenting the information to the representatives of the Ministry Council;
- seasonal evaluation of the libraries' activities and the efficiency of the library policy of individual ministries.

Plans are under way to establish the National Library Fund to support the efficient activity of the Council and the realisation of its goals. The Council would include 15 people, each elected for 5 years, consisting of representatives of the biggest libraries, the Ministry of Culture and Art, men of education and the Committee of Scientific Research.

Formulae proposed by the law, if passed by the Parliament, will have - within the terms of Polish legislation, as well as of the economic and political situation in Poland - an important positive impact on the maintenance and the development of public librarianship and on the realisation of joint tasks requiring library cooperation and relevant funding. Among them the automation of libraries and the creation of library computer networks, union catalogues and document delivery systems (traditional and over the networks), the preservation and conservation of collections, the user friendly and state-of-the-art access to information should be mentioned.

UNESCO

PUBLIC LIBRARY MANIFESTO 1994

Freedom, prosperity and the development of society and of individuals are fundamental human values. They will only be attained through the ability of well-informed citizens to exercise their democratic rights and to play an active role in society. Constructive participation and the development of democracy depend on satisfactory education as well as on free and unlimited access to knowledge, thought, culture and information.

The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups.

The Manifesto proclaims UNESCO's belief in the public library as a living force for education, culture and information, and as an essential agent for the fostering of peace and spiritual welfare through the minds and men and women.

UNESCO therefore encourages national and local governments to support and actively engage in the development of public libraries.

The Public Library

The public library is the local centre of information, making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users.

The services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status. Specific services and materials must be provided for those users who cannot, for whatever reason, use the regular services and materials, for example linguistic minorities, people with disabilities or people in hospital or prison.

All age groups must find material relevant to their needs. Collections and services have to include all types of appropriate media and modern technologies as well as traditional materials. High quality and relevance to local needs and conditions are fundamental. Material must reflect current trends and the evolution of society, as well as the memory of human endeavour and imagination.

Collections and services should not be subject to any form of ideological, political or religious censorship, nor commercial pressures.

Missions of the Public Library

The following key missions which relate to information, literacy, education and culture should be at the core of public library services:

1. creating and strengthening reading habits in children from an early age;
2. supporting both individual and self-conducted education as well as formal education at all levels;
3. providing opportunities for personal creative development;
4. stimulating the imagination and creativity and children and young people;
5. promoting awareness of cultural heritage, appreciation of the arts, scientific achievements and innovations;
6. providing access to cultural expressions of all performing arts;
7. fostering inter-cultural dialogue and favouring cultural diversity;
8. supporting the oral tradition;
9. ensuring access for citizens to all sorts of community information;
10. providing adequate information services to local enterprises, associations and interest groups;
11. facilitating the development of information and computer literacy skills;
12. supporting and participating in literacy activities and programmes for all age groups, and initiating such activities if necessary.

Funding, legislation and networks

- * The public library shall in principle be free of charge.
The public library is the responsibility of local and national authorities. It must be supported by specific legislation and financed by national and local governments. It has to be an essential component of any long-term strategy for culture, information provision, literacy and education
- * To ensure nationwide library coordination and cooperation, legislation and strategic plans must also define and promote a national library network based on agreed standards of service.
- * The public library network must be designed in relation to national, regional, research and special libraries as well as libraries in schools, colleges and universities.

Operation and Management

- * A clear policy must be formulated, defining objectives, priorities and services in relation to the local community needs. The public library has to be organised effectively and professional standards of operation must be maintained.
- * Cooperation with relevant partners - for example, user groups and other professionals at local, regional, national as well as international levels - has to be ensured.
- * Services have to be physically accessible to all members of the community. This requires well situated library buildings, good reading and study facilities, as well as relevant technologies and sufficient opening hours convenient to the users. It equally implies outreach services for those unable to visit the library.
- * The library services must be adapted to the different needs of communities in rural and urban areas.
- * The librarian is an active intermediary between users and resources. Professional and continuing education of the librarian is indispensable to ensure adequate services.
- * Outreach and user education programmes have to be provided to help users benefit from all the resources.

Implementing the Manifesto

Decision makers at national and local levels and the library community at large, around the world, are hereby urged to implement the principles expressed in this Manifesto.

PROGRAMME OF THE SEMINAR

Monday 7 November 1994 - Room B 301

- 9.30 - 9.45 Welcome (**G. Mazza**, Council of Europe)
- 9.45 - 10.00 The objectives of the workshop (**G. Vitiello**, Council of Europe)
- 10.00 - 10.30 Review of library legislations in Western European countries
(**P. Traniello**)
- 10.30 - 10.50 Coffee break
- Case studies - Chair : I. Papp**
- 10.50 - 11.15 Public library legislation (**M. van der Besselaar**)
- 11.15 - 11.40 Academic library legislation (**P. Brophy**)
- 11.40 - 12.05 National library legislation (**B. Rugaas**)
- 12.05 - 12.30 Discussion
- 12.30 - 14.00 Break
- 14.00 - 17.30 3 working group sessions (Rooms B 301 and No. 14) :
 Public libraries (Chair : **E. Lylloff**)
 Academic libraries (Chair : **E. Häkli**)
 National libraries (Chair : **B. Rugaas**)
on the following issues :
 . What should be covered by a library legislation ?
 . Who should perform activities determined by library legislation
 provisions ?

Tuesday 8 November 1994

- Chair : K. Zamorski**
- 9.30 - 10.00 Reports of the working groups : draft recommendations
- 10.00 - 11.00 Discussion
- 11.00 - 11.15 Coffee break
- 11.15 - 12.30 Lobbying and monitoring the effects of library legislation
- 12.30 - 14.00 Lunch

14.00 - 15.30	Chair : G. Vitiello
14.00 - 14.30	Mechanisms of awareness, information, consulting
14.30 - 15.00	The role of national institutions and international organisations
15.00 - 15.30	Conclusions

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