European National Libraries:
A Review of the Year's Activities

by MICHAEL SMETHURST

INTRODUCTION

This review of the activities of the National Libraries in membership of the Conference of European National Libraries during last year has been compiled from the summary reports for 1998 submitted by the Directors to the CENL Secretariat at the Koniklijke Bibliotheek at The Hague in the Netherlands. In all, I received reports from 31 libraries during the year, a higher number than in previous years although some that reported last year have not done so this year. Among those libraries covered for the first time are the National Library of Bulgaria, the National Library of the Ukraine, and the Vatican Library. Following the pattern established in the annual reviews of 1996 and 1997 (also published in LIBER Quarterly), I have not reported in detail on the everyday work of the libraries, nor have I included the statistics and financial figures provided by a number of libraries, except as illustration in passing. Rather, as in the past I have sought to concentrate on the principal concerns and the achievements of the past twelve months arranging these under a number of broad headings. To those libraries that consider that I have omitted what they hold to be notable aspects of their work and progress during the year and to those whose comments I have misinterpreted, I apologize. Despite the similarity of professional work throughout Europe, the terminology and jargon we use is not always easily translated from one language to another, and occasionally I have had to make a best guess at what is meant by a term, an administrative structure or even a type of catalogue!

Whatever the shortcomings of my editorial work may be, readers will, I hope, share with me the pleasure of learning of the many exciting developments that are now taking place in European National Libraries. Throughout the reports, despite the problems caused by lack of funding and short term national planning, there is a great sense of pride in achievement as the libraries successfully address new ways of improving services, and exploit new technological opportunities. What is also abundantly clear is that co-operation between libraries and across the whole of Europe is becoming a

significant element in their development. This co-operation extends well beyond the conventional areas of book exchange and document supply. Increasingly, through the work of CENL and the contacts made through membership, there is a sharing of new methods of working, of ideas for improving organizational structures and management, and in the application of technology and systems development. The old pattern of national librarianship, defensive of its own national traditions and sure in its belief that only its way of doing things could be right, is rapidly giving way to a much more flexible pattern of international co-operative librarianship. This recognizes the need for greater standardization to ensure international access to collections and the need for concerted international action to preserve the cultural heritage. It promises greater political support throughout Europe for the work of libraries. It brings great benefit to the libraries themselves, through greater efficiency and through the better use of resources achieved from the growing recognition that there is no need for everyone to re-invent the wheel; and it brings great benefit to our users, who can more easily find what they need in the many libraries they use. It does not lead to all libraries being the same; rather, it serves to bring to the notice of a wider world the extraordinary breadth and depth of the rich collections held in Europe, and the unique contribution that each national library makes to the total library resources of Europe.

FUNDING

It is evident that, in general, national libraries in Europe remain very short of recurrent funds. As much as one applauds the initiatives that have sought to raise additional revenues from the sale of services, revenue earning is itself a costly business, and whilst it can supplement government funding, it is no substitute for an annual recurrent grant that takes account of the inflation in the costs of acquisitions, staffing and other essential recurrent expenditure. Without stable levels of funding, little long term planning can be effective, and much resource is wasted in trying to achieve short-term economies that least damage to the ongoing work of the library. Of particular concern to many libraries, especially those in the new democracies and those with less stable economies, is the effect that devaluation of the local currency has on their budget when so much of the literature they require comes from foreign sources. In a number of cases, poor rates of exchange and currency restrictions have severely affected their collection development work and have even limited their programmes for the exchange of literature, as the exchange value of their own publications is reduced. The continuing crisis of funding experienced by so many national libraries must be a serious cause for concern

to all responsible for their proper development. It must also be of concern to governments who need to recognise more fully the needs of national libraries, given the importance of their role in disseminating information, knowledge, and the results of scientific research and their place at the centre of information networking.

Attention was drawn in previous reports to the severe funding difficulties faced by the British Library during the transitional period leading to its full occupation of the new St. Pancras building. In its 1997 planning submission to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport for the period 1998/99-2000/01, the Library was faced with inescapable new running costs for the new building as well as rising costs in the provision of literature. It had sought additional funds amounting to some £8million per annum in order to restore the funding of its acquisitions and conservation programmes to appropriate levels. In the event the Library's financial settlement for 1998/99 was reduced by £ 2.25 million from previous indicative levels and the Library's request for additional acquisitions and conservation funding was not met. By the summer of 1998, the Library's future funding outlook appeared so bleak that it reluctantly told its users that, without a major increase of government funding, some services of the national library could be at risk. The Library's Strategic Review completed during the early summer sought to refocus its use of resources against key priorities. It invited comment from a wide cross-section of users. A consultation paper was sent to over 8,000 of the Library's 'stakeholders', who were given the opportunity to state which of the Library's activities they considered the most important. Over 1,200 responses were received and these assisted the Library in re-prioritising its activities. Services to support scholarship, research, and innovation were considered the most important activities, but the broad view was that in a period of financial constraint, the Library should give higher priority to maintaining and developing its collections rather than to providing services. As a result of the guidance received, the Library decided to give highest priority to collection development, collection management and preservation in 1999 and beyond, whilst giving second highest priority to the provision of documents through reading room services and remote supply. The provision of information services, exhibitions, publishing, education and general support services was regarded as of lower priority. Significant opposition was expressed by those consulted to the option of introducing reading room charges. These views influenced the Library Board in making its decision to maintain free reading room services for the foreseeable future. Fortunately, in December 1998, the government announced a significant improvement in the Library's grant-in-aid for the year 1999/2000. Although the Library was then able to plan for the future on the basis of higher levels of government support than it had previously been led to expect, its grant is nevertheless still insufficient to enable it to fund all of its ambitious programmes.

The National Library of Finland reports with some relief that no additional funding cuts had been imposed during the year, and that, rather than further cutbacks, the budget frame for the period 1998 - 2000 was increased. Additional project money had also been received to start creating a National Archive for Recorded Sound, and a major grant was received for the National Electronic Library. As a result, the Library has been able to allocate additional money to acquisitions and to upgrading the computer network, as well as reserving funds for the completion of the retrospective conversion of the catalogues and for cleaning the collections in preparation for the move to new premises. The National Library of Spain's budget increased by 46.6 % in 1998, an increase that benefited all areas of the Library but mainly supported the renovation of its building, and allowed work on this to proceed much more rapidly. The Library was however able to use part of its increased budget to support a contract for external cataloguing services to make up for the lack of staff for cataloguing modern monographs and to invest in computer equipment.

The need to find supplementary funding to augment government grants is widely recognized. In common with many national libraries, the National Library of Austria sought to improve its overall budget by independent initiatives to raise revenue. By means of fund-raising, renting accommodation, and charging for various services the Library raised additional income corresponding to 15 % of its material budget. Particularly successful was a book sponsorship campaign that raised almost a third of this additional revenue. The Croatian National Library earned 6 % of its total budget as did the National Library of Ireland which also benefited from a 29 % increase in its operating cost budget allowing it to address aspects of collection development, the expansion of IT services and to reduce cataloguing backlogs. The National Library of Iceland earned about 7 % and the National Library of Poland some 8 % of its total budget. Earnings by the National Library of Slovenia from the sale of goods and services now amount to some 15 % of its gross expenditure. The Vatican Library was able to augment its increased budget by readjusting its prices for reproductions and publications and the funds from these sales provided for the almost complete renewal of costly equipment in the Photographic Laboratory. It has been able to draw up new and more advantageous agreements with co-publishers to further increase its publications revenue as certain rights expired. Other supplementary resources are provided by the American Friends of the Vatican Library, which funds cultural programmes and publications, and by private sponsorship for certain editorial projects. The National Library of Denmark, although it will receive additional sums for the maintenance of its new buildings, will also rely heavily upon income generation activities to support the cultural activities of the library that are to be developed in the Black Diamond building. These activities will include concerts and other events in the new multi-functional

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concert hall. The Bulgarian National Library obtained sponsorship to augment its funding, and was particularly successful in attracting funds in support of various subject programmes from a number of foreign and international sources, including the Open Society Foundation, UNESCO and the International Centre for Ethnic Problems and Cultural Relations. Funding form external sources and from various foundations accounted for some 25 % of the programme costs of the Macedonian National Library. Additional funds were received from government by the National Library of Liechtenstein for its new building extension and for IT; the National Central Library in Rome received a substantial supplement for long-term projects although its annual grant was the same as in 1997.

Elsewhere the position was much bleaker. The National Library of Turkey finds that its lack of autonomy and its status as a dependent unit of the Ministry of Culture prevents it from raising revenues and expanding its resources. This hampers development in the design and implementation of new projects, the renewal of computer equipment and the purchase of new publications. It even has problems in buying the paper it needs for publishing of bibliographies and catalogues. In 1998, the National Library of Russia received only 33 % of the sum estimated in the State Budget approved by the President. The regular annual appropriation for the Czech National Library was 15 % lower than the sum it really needed, and the limited funding affected most areas of the library, including staffing and the purchase of literature. The Library fell further behind with maintenance of buildings and equipment, and was unable to fund the replacement of obsolete equipment. The National Library of the Ukraine has no stable source of funding and finds it impossible to subscribe to periodicals and journals. It was unable to buy a single foreign language monograph during 1998, and its book exchange programme was severely restricted by the Ukrainian Custom authorities. It also suffered a reduction in staff numbers. The National Library of Hungary received additional funds to support increases in wages and wage related items, which form 66 % of its costs, but faced a decline in real terms of 15 % in its operating and materials budgets because of inflation. The National Library of Lithuania, although it received higher funding than in the previous year, still had a serious shortfall in funding and in the final quarter of 1998 did not receive part of the funding already allocated in the state budget because of the generally unfavourable economic conditions in the country. The National Library of the Netherlands failed to obtain full reimbursement of its personnel costs and has to reduce its staff budget by some 5 % over the next four years. This equates to a loss of 12 established posts during the period, and in 1998, 3 posts were cut towards that target. Staff cuts were also made in the National Library of Poland, which is expecting a reduction of funds in 1999.

LEGISLATION

In 1998, a number of countries modified or introduced new legislation that affected the role or legal status of the national library. Many of the changes were designed to give new authority and status to the library; others were concerned with the responsibilities of particular ministries in relation to the national library, and with funding arrangements.

In December 1998, the Slovenian Government passed a new Act on the Creation of the National and University Library, which establishes the Republic of Slovenia and its Government as the main trustee of the Library. At the same time, it re-affirms the Library's leading position, as the first among equals, and assigns to the Library a number of tasks and functions, usually associated with national and university libraries, setting out its national and international responsibilities. In Poland a new Statute was enacted that introduced a four-year term of office for the National Librarian. Other legislation arising from the new Library Law were rules governing the appointment and the terms of reference of the Scientific Council of the National Library.

In Finland, new Statutes, attached to the University Act, came into force on August 1, 1998, and strengthened the National Library's status as the service and development unit for research libraries of the country. Preparations have been made to introduce a new practice of agreeing an annual contract with the Ministry of Education for financing the Library's tasks as the National Library. The will form part of the University of Hlesinki's overall contract. For historical reasons, some universities have responsibility for institutions which have a national role. The present principles of financing the universities do not easily cover this type of activities and will be revised so that a certain percentage of the total university budget will be reserved for national tasks. The National Library will also be financed out of this budget.

A new Cultural Act was adopted in Macedonia that changes the funding arrangements of libraries in the republic. The Ministry of Culture will in future finance only those institutions that are of national interest. This will particularly affect the public libraries since they are likely to be excluded from Ministry funding. In a totally different direction to this narrowing of responsibilities, the Ministero per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali, responsible for the National Central Library of Florence, became responsible for a wider range of interests including sport and theatre, and changed its name to the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali.

The National Library of Russia is participating in the compilation and the discussion on the Federal Laws on library service and on legal deposit of publications in collaboration with the Russian State Library and the Ministry of Culture. The Federal Laws define the background of state policy on librarianship and strengthens the role of libraries through various guarantees.

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The final version of the Romanian Draft Library Law was completed and submitted by the Minister of Culture to the Chamber of deputies for Parliamentary approval. In Hungary, Parliament passed an Act regulating public library services. The Czech Ministry of culture submitted a draft government cultural policy document that included matters relating to the provision of library services. It proposes the creation of a more independent system of public not-for-profit institutions. The National Library of Liechtenstein was particularly affected by the current national legislation in the fields of copyright, information right and media promotion. The present proposal of a new copyright law exempts the National Library from its duty to charge for media distribution. The vital role in maintaining access to public information that the National Library plays is to be guaranteed by the new information law.

BUILDINGS

Last year's review covered the opening of three major new buildings: the British Library, La Bibliothèque nationale de France, and Die Deutsche Bibliothek, Frankfurt. During 1998, each of these libraries came into full service. Apart from attracting new readers, all new library buildings attract an endless stream of visitors who wish to see the building and its facilities. They come singly and in groups, ranging from heads of state and politicians, and those with a professional interest such as architects and librarians, to school parties and ordinary citizens interested in seeing a new public building. Ensuring that the visit is enjoyable and memorable is a major task in public relations, and arranging and leading the tours becomes virtually a full time job for a number of staff. In common with the British Library and the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Die Deutsche Bibliothek welcomed many who wished to see its new building. Visitors included the Federal President Roman Herzog and his wife who were genuinely impressed with the library's modern equipment and furnishings, as well as by the collection of the Deutsche Exilarchive 1933-45, which is housed there, and several tours were arranged for those attending the 88th German Librarians' Conference held in Frankfurt for the first time.

In the British Library, which opened its first reading room services in the new building in November 1997, the formal opening by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in June 1998 was celebrated by over a thousand guests. During the first half of 1998, various other areas including the Rare Book Reading Room, three large exhibition galleries, the bookshop, the conference centre and the restaurant and cafes had been opened. By the end of the year, the book move into St. Pancras was nearing completion. Since December 1996

when the first book was taken to St. Pancras, over 11 million items had been transferred from various depositories across London in what will be one of the biggest library book moves undertaken any where in the world. At the same time, work was continuing in preparing for the move of the Special Collections Departments, including Manuscripts, Maps and the India Office Library, and for the Science Reference and Information Services. Specialised reading rooms associated with these collections will open in 1999. The building, as well as being a superb home for the collections and services, provides an excellent venue for events, conferences and other meetings. A wide range of organisations not exclusively associated with the library and book world have already made use of the conference facilities and the public spaces for a variety of prestigious receptions. The building also provides a magnificent setting for works of art, displaying material from the Library's own historical collections of paintings and sculptures and specially commissioned works such as the tapestry in the entrance hall and the massive bronze figure of Newton on the public piazza.

During 1998, the move of the printed book and audio-visual collections from the Rue de Richelieu building to the François-Mitterand site of the Bibliothèque nationale de France at Tolbiac was undertaken. Begun in March 1998, it was completed by January 1999 and more than 10 million books and over a million audio visual items have now been transferred with no more than five months interruption of delivery service to readers. La bibliothèque de recherche, inaugurated by the Prime Minister, opened its doors in October when fourteen reading rooms with some 1900 reader places were brought into use and the national collections of books and other materials transferred from Richelieu were made available to readers. The daily average use of the building had risen by July 1999 to 2684 for the general library, la bibliothèque du haut-de-jardin, situated on the upper floor, and 883 for the research library at the lower level of the building. The manuscript collections at the Richelieu building were consulted by an average of 350 users daily. Unfortunately, however, an accumulation of problems relating to the computer systems and to the effect these were having on conditions of work, led to staff unrest and the closure of the library for three weeks in the autumn of 1998. The conflict was resolved by an agreement between the library and the union and by changes in personnel and in administrative procedures.

The National Library of Russia opened its major new repository in St. Petersburg in January 1998. Staff began work on the complex task of removing books from a number of different bookstores in the city, a task made more difficult by the different peculiarities of each store and the problems of transporting material across the city in the depths of the Russian winter. Several reading rooms in the new building opened for service on May 27th.1999, the All-Russian Day of Libraries. The book move allowed the Library to begin its plans for redeveloping the present main building as the

home for manuscripts, prints and maps, and to continue with the general renovation of the adjoining building in Sadovaya Street.

The Danish Royal Library continued with its preparations for opening its new building, the Black Diamond, in September 1999. In addition to a concert hall and several large exhibition areas, this major extension to the original building will contain a number of reading rooms, a reference hall equipped with computer work stations, and five new centres bringing together collections and services: the Centre for Manuscripts and Rare Books, Centre for Prints and Photography, Centre for Orientalia and Judaica, and the Centre for International Studies which is to be housed in the former main reading room. Whilst the major work in creating the bridge linking the old and the new buildings and the refurbishment of the old building is in progress, the Slotsholmen building has been closed. In May 1998, a completely new stack building for the Royal Library was opened at Amager. The stack building is the first of four phases in a project to build a large flexible university library building which will follow the Anglo-American pattern of large collections of literature on open access shelving with easy access to material in closed stacks. With its classic rectangular forms, the new stack building stands as a glittering, high-tech, metal and glass cube, in contrast to the University of Copenhagen's grey and red concrete buildings from the 1970s. The building consists of two parts: a seven-storey stack with double-height storeys in concrete and brick and full temperature and humidity control, surrounded by a weather screen in aluminium and glass, and an office block with glass facades the height of the building. The two parts are connected with a glass-covered atrium, running to the full height of the building. When all four phases of the project are completed, the total construction will have 40,000 m² gross, and hold 200 running kilometres of shelves. It will also serve as a new faculty library for the more than 10,000 students and staff on the Amager campus of the University of Copenhagen.

Work associated with renovating older buildings and extending them continues in a number of national libraries. Maintaining services to readers with minimal interruptions during extensive renovation and rebuilding programmes is a thankless task, but one that many librarians have now learned to manage with considerable expertise. Unlike a new building programme, where the library can generally follow well established practices in planning and preparing for the transfer of collections and services, renovation work is generally constrained and governed by issues which are unique to a particular building; one renovation project may have nothing in common with another apart from the frustration of working in a building site for months or years. The excitement and, usually, the beneficial publicity for the library generated by a new building are rarely experienced in a renovation programme. The renovation work may, in contrast with a new building, give much smaller immediate public benefit from the real improvement to parts of

a building that may have little to commend it architecturally or functionally. New wiring and environmental improvements to stack-rooms rarely generate great excitement among the readers who have worked through the noise and interruptions of access and service that seem to go on forever.

The National Library of Norway took over the old main building of the University of Oslo in January 1999, and is planning a total renovation of the building, which has been neglected for many years. Plans include the extension of the storage capacity by building a new underground store, and a new building to extend the Repository Library in Rana that was built as recently as 1993. The Austrian National Library has completed the renovation of the AURUM, which gives it a generously proportioned exhibition and reception area. The three floors of storage space below the AURUM has been adapted to house the entire Department of Old and Rare Books in accommodation that meets high standards of environmental control and security and some 1.3 million volumes have been moved into underground storage space. The move of the Papyrus Department and Museum to newly adapted space in the Hofburg was also completed in 1998, and offers greatly improved accommodation for the collections and for staff. New display facilities allow the Department to show many valuable items from what is the largest collection of its kind in the world. The Bulgarian National Library is continuing its planning and preparing the arguments for early funding of its new building. In the meantime has been renovating and reconstructing its present buildings, and has installed new fire precaution and security systems. The cleaning of the building has been undertaken as part of the Beautiful Sofia Project.

The building projects for the National Library of Finland, described in previous reports, continue to make good progress, but the Library continues to cope in the middle of a construction site, as two separate buildings in the same block are being renovated as part of the total project. By September 1999, both buildings will be in full use again, and the new underground stacks will be completed in the following year. A new exhibition area and a larger cafeteria are included in the project. The National Library of Switzerland is in the middle of an extensive renovation of its buildings and has established a temporary reading room facility on the top floor of its underground stack room. Many of the staff not immediately involved in the direct provision of public services are accommodated in temporary premises some two km. from the main library. The work of remodelling the existing listed building takes account of the need to restore and conserve some of the original features of the building.

Renovation work continues at the National Central Library of Florence, where, following the completion of its central store, the old stacks have been converted to house compact shelving, adding a further 14,000 linear metres to the library's storage capacity, enough for some ten years growth. Under two

special projects, the antiquarian collections have been brought together, and the modern collections reorganised in a more logical manner. In all, some 60,000 linear meters of materials were moved, with few restrictions on the availability of material during this complex operation. In Rome, the National Central Library has also maintained its service to readers whilst it has been renovating its building and reorganising its existing space to provide more rational use of its reading areas. New reading rooms for music, multimedia, science and technology are being created by remodelling the internal areas of building, planned originally in the 1950's and increasingly unsuitable for today's demands. A separate reading room will also be provided for the Oriental, Roman and cartography collections that previously shared a common space with rare books and manuscripts. The National Library of Liechtenstein, on the other hand, has been suffering real difficulties in keeping the normal library business going during an extended programme of renovation begun in 1997, and looks forward with clear relief to the day in 1999 when its enhanced and extended building, equipped with compact shelving and new IT infrastructures, will be completed. The major renovation programme of the National Library of Lithuania continues. The Library hopes to open a new annexe that will greatly expand its capacity by 2001. It has already begun the various moves of the collection under this programme. As part of its overall renovation programme the National Library of Macedonia has created a new reference reading room providing more material on open access and seating for 20 readers within its existing building. The National Library of Hungary, which, like so many libraries, is short of storage space, is planning to build an underground stack room and hopes to begin construction in 2000.

The National Library of Slovenia currently works on two separate sites. It continues the renovation work on its handsome main building where the basement and ground floors have been completely refurbished, a new periodicals reading room, café, and public cloakrooms have been opened and a new information centre is about to open. Meanwhile work on the new building progresses slowly mainly because of protracted archaeological work on the site.

The National Library of Ireland brought into use a new technical services building housing the bookbinding unit, conservation department, and the newspaper-microfilming unit. The newspaper collections are stored in this same building. Work has begun on the conversion for library use of the former National College of Art and Design building adjoining the library. The Vatican Library also completed work on the enlargement of its photographic laboratory.

ORGANISATIONAL AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

At Die Deutsche Bibliothek, further progress in the unification of the three library locations was achieved during the reporting year. Installation of the ultra-modern ATM network technology, introduced at the new Frankfurt facility in 1997, was completed at the Deutsche Bücherei Leipzig and the Deutsches Musikarchiv Berlin in 1998. Now, the logical ATM network links all three locations. Having achieved this stage of unification, the Library is looking at its internal organisation and seeking to improve the efficiency of its practices and administrative processes. Because of the many different national and international projects in which Die Deutsche Bibliothek is currently involved, the previous practice of assigning projects to the individual departments that were responsible for the respective fields of content was abandoned. A central project co-ordination office has been established for projects funded by third parties and given responsibility for guidance for all phases of the projects, from the application process to the integration of the work into regular routines and the subsequent utilisation of project results. In the medium term, Die Deutsche Bibliothek also plans to introduce process-oriented working procedures. The initial steps to implement these procedures were taken in the area of periodicals processing, where the potential for application of an integrated business-process model is now being assessed. The model will cover periodicals acquisition, indexing, cataloguing and the development of a data-record model to be used in integrating the Rules for Alphabetical Cataloguing (RAK) and the International Standard Serial Number Manual. (Die Deutsche Bibliothek, the headquarters for the National ISSN Centre, reports the ISSNs assigned by the Centre to the International ISSN Agency.)

After receiving the approval of its Conseil d'administration, La Bibliothèque nationale de France reorganised its activities under a new general structure centred around five major priority areas: the collections, the development of the electronic library, cultural and pedagogic activity, national and international collaboration and networking, and quality management. This has resulted in the organisation of services in three large functional directorates: Strategy, Cultural, Communication, and International Relations. A new Strategic Plan for the beginning of the 21st. century and a new functional structural chart has accompanied this reorganisation. Under the changes brought about following a period of disrupted services, four principal thrusts have been retained: the evolution of management methods dependant upon prudent and dynamic human resource management aimed at restoring the best social relations. (This will be achieved by wider participation and the development of internal communications assisted by the establishment of an information office); the improvement in the working conditions of staff, and of public relations through a long term programme of work; and the bringing

together of skills to reinforce the coherence of services in a management project which will set objectives for the year 2003 and will define the strategy in the short and medium terms. This project, which will be developed with the participation of the staff, the Board, and the users of the Library, will be established in March 1999, and will form the base for a contract of agreed aims with the Minister of Culture and of Communication.

One of the focuses of the National Library of Norway has been planning the setting up of a new division of the National Library in Oslo. In January 1999, the National Library took over the departments of the University of Oslo Library that so far had taken care of several of the functions of a national library. The National Library now consists of the Office of the National Librarian, placed in Oslo, and the two Divisions in Rana and in Oslo. In November 1998, a new position as head of IT and Innovation in the National Library was established. The new position is part of the Office of the National Librarian but located in the Rana Division, and has responsibility for strategic planning and for the coordination of all activities. As part of the overall corporate development, a project to create a new graphic profile for the National Library was completed. The result is a new logo and a complete new design for letters, prints and so on. The logo symbolises both the book and the new digital future of the Library. The profile is also used at the new web site (<http://www.nb.no>).

After two years of preparatory work, which included auditing and analysing various processes, the National Library of Hungary has modified its organizational structure. The main changes lie in the merging of the book cataloguing department, the editorial office of the national bibliography of books and the ISBN office; the merging of the serial publications cataloguing department, the editorial office of the national bibliography of serial publications and the ISSN office; the organisation of various acquisition departments into a single main department that now handles purchasing, exchange, and the collection of deposit copies; and the establishment of an electronic document supply department within the main department for reader service and information. Departmental reorganization in the National Library of Slovenia led to changes in the R&D Department, which had traditionally been responsible not only for research projects, but also for education and training, for advisory functions to the library network and for computing services. Under the new arrangements three independent centres have been formed to cover this work: an R&D Centre, an Education and Training Centre and a Library Advisory and Monitoring Centre, These changes, the Library believes, have already led to significant benefits. Further organisational changes are being planned for 1999 to assist the Library to cope with new challenges. However, the Library recognises that it is at present seriously understaffed, to a point where several working processes are

hindered or statutory work is not fulfilled. It has identified a requirement for thirty additional posts.

In the National Library of Finland special emphasis has been laid on improving the organization and workflow within the basic functional units. The organization is based on production chains and is a much flatter pyramid, but the aim is to develop the line of responsibilities to be horizontal rather than hierarchical. With the help of an external consultant, a major project has investigated the internal organization of the bibliographical and cataloguing services to improve the internal logistics and greater integration of different processes. In reviewing the issues facing management, the Library draws attention to the major efforts that are still required to introduce entrepreneurship as a commonly accepted approach to its work, and reports that it is not easy to empower the staff if it is not also prepared to accept the responsibility that must be associated with greater individual authority for decison making. The Library is also preparing a written strategy for its national library activities. The strategy will be approved at the beginning of the autumn. Greater entrepreneurship through new management and marketing policies has also been the goal of the National Library of Bulgaria, which employed a special advisor to recommend appropriate policies and suggest sources for raising funds and ways of optimising working processes.

Strategic planning is now an on-going process in many libraries. The Czech National Library is preparing a new Strategic Plan for 1999-2000 and the new Library Board approved the first draft in the autumn. (The Board, which acts in an advisory capacity to the Minister of Culture, will serve for the period 1998-2000). Five main strategic long-term research and technological development projects have been defined and submitted to the Government. These relate to the following key areas of activity: the creation of the digital library (production, preservation, and access); managing and developing complex information systems (mainly large data files produced during retroconversion); merging and linking analytical records to full-text digital documents; the enlargement of the union catalogue; and conservation and preservation. Work on drafting an extensive strategic policy document at the National Library of Iceland is expected to be completed in 1999. An overview describing the principles and main functions of the library and presenting a vision for the next ten years will be published shortly. Work was also begun on preparing a three-year performance-related contract between the Library and the Ministry of Education and Culture. The library comments that the management workload has greatly increased in recent years, as the Government's policy has been to increase the independence of state institutions over a wide range of their internal affairs, including responsibility for pay negotiations.

Whilst strategic and corporate plans set out the library's goals and objectives over a given period, and usually seek to link these to certain levels of funding provision, they may also serve as a form of contract or service level agreement between the library and the sponsoring Ministry, and also between the library and its users. In the National Library of Denmark, the economic framework for 1998 and the following years has been determined by what has been termed a result contract for the years 1998-2001 between The Royal Library and the Ministry of Culture. The result contract, 'For education, scholarship and culture', is not a contract in the usual sense of the word, but an agreement with the Ministry of Culture on the economic framework for the library and its tasks during a four-year period. The result contract will ensure the opening of the library in its new building and that the Royal Library, functioning both as a National Library and a University Library, will offer a considerably expanded service to all its users under the new conditions. The contract has removed the uncertainty about the economic situation of the library and means that longer term plans can be made. As part of the systematic work undertaken by the Library to highlight the connection between tasks and goals, a new accounting system has been introduced, where, in addition to traditional accounts, there are also activity accounts relating to the accomplishment of the main tasks of the library. The Royal Library presented its first activity accounts in 1998, relating to the 1997 financial year. These activity accounts have initially proved to be useful in evaluating the cost benefits of national and international co-operation. Internally, too, the accounts have brought new insight about the activities and finances of the library. It is expected that the accounts will have a greater effect internally in the coming years, when comparisons can be made between figures for several years.

A regular review of its work is a statutory obligation for the National Library of the Netherlands. In 1998, a committee of independent experts from the academic world, the IT sector, and the international library community undertook this review. As part of the self-evaluation, KB commissioned an information technology audit by an information technology consultant. The committee concluded that the KB is on the right track and functioning well. Its tasks and functions are clearly defined. The key issues of its twofold mission are evident: professional care for the national cultural heritage, and participation in the national scholarly information infrastructure with the objective of furthering its development. The KB rightly decided to follow a two-track policy: innovation where possible and continuity where needed. In its policy plans, the specific goals in both tracks are of a highly innovative character and do justice to traditional tasks. The KB supports and stimulates the development of national and international library services in a unique way through research and experiments and its research profile offers prospects for a long-term market share. The committee made specific recommendations for

the improvement of the user-friendliness of the search and retrieval systems and to strengthen user-orientation based on a marketing strategy. It also commented that the recurrent government grant is insufficient to finance new operational tasks in addition to existing tasks such as collection building. Following the recommendations to strengthen user-orientation, a two-year marketing plan was started. The annual operational plans and management reports, which the division heads submit three times a year, are the main means of monitoring achievements. The management reports mainly deal with the progress and bottlenecks in the production of services. A project management team is responsible for the planning and control of all projects, and the financial management of projects is separate to the budgets for exploitation, capital investment, and housing.

A new strategic plan for the years 1998-2001 has been drawn up. For these years, the KB will follow the policy lines that were set out in 1996 when the strategic plan 1996-1997 was first issued. New activities will focus on three areas. Firstly, the deposit collection of Dutch Electronic Publications, where the experimental arrangements have now to be developed into an operational service. For 1998, the government provided NLG 800,000 from a fund dedicated to new services on the Information Superhighway but it is estimated that in future years some NLG 1,000,000 per annum would be needed. Secondly, the digitisation and preservation programme under which parts of the collection will be digitised and made available through the KB Website; and thirdly, strengthening library services for the humanities. Six university libraries have agreed to KB's proposal for a national plan for additional funding of library services in the field of the humanities.

As has already been reported (see the section on Funding above) the British Library undertook a major strategic review of its services during the year, which involved considerable consultation with its users and 'stakeholders.' The National Central Library of Rome, is also undertaking a re-evaluation of services under a three-year total quality project to improve its services to the public. As a first stage, a customer satisfaction survey was used to analyse both staff and public perception of the service as a means to reaching a better knowledge and understanding of the user's needs and the obstacles to satisfying them. The final objective is to achieve a state of continuous improvement by keeping a constant eye on new needs and looking for ways to satisfy them. The National Library of Estonia, through its reinstated Learned Council, is evaluating performance through a research project begun during the year. The research will include a study of services to target populations and the quality of service achieved. The users of the music and fine art materials will make up the first target group to be studied. The National Central Library of Florence has adopted 'total quality management' in an ambitious project to reshape its entire internal organisation. Working groups have been set up to monitor progress in each of the departments.

TECHNICAL SERVICES AND NETWORKS

The retrospective conversion of catalogues continues to make progress throughout the European National Libraries. The National Central Library in Rome is beginning to convert its post 1958 catalogue, a project that will add 600,000 records to its existing post 1992 database of 500,000records when it is completed in two years time. At the same time, the library is also developing its OPAC, which will be accessible via the Internet. More than 600,000 retrospective records for the period 1886-1956 relating to its holdings listed in the old series of BNI are being added to the on-line database of the National Central Library of Florence under Project CUBI that started in June 1998. Under a second project, PIC, the Library is adding the bibliographic descriptions and holdings statements for its periodical collection. Half of the data has already been added, and new funding from the Ministry should enable the work to be completed.

The National Library of Spain continues with the programme begun in 1991 to convert its manual catalogue and is working through the catalogues in alphabetical order. The library has now reached letter U, and has fully integrated all records up to letter L, although material published prior to 1830 has not yet been added. By the year 2000, it expects to have completed the conversion of the entire catalogue of monograph records. Records relating to periodical titles have already been converted. Retrospective conversion of the card catalogue in the National Library of Slovenia has been planned in two phases. Phase 1, the conversion of the older material, 1774-1947, was completed in 1998, and records are now available in UNIMARC and COMARC formats. Phase two, covering records from 1948 to the present, has just begun. Some 400,000 records are expected to be added in this phase. The Library has also published an updated version of the CD-ROM of the National Bibliography, with an improved user interface and indexing system and all records in UNIMARC format. The CD-ROM also includes electronic resources, cartographic material and printed music. The Vatican Library has been developing electronic formats for the cataloguing of older bibliographical material, and for prints and archival documents. It is working intensively on technical issues relating to the provision of headings and name indexes for bibliographic databases on CD-ROM.

Last year saw the completion of the first phase of the project on catalogue digitisation in the Austrian National Library. All four major catalogues for printed book materials (two author and two subject catalogues, a catalogue of places of printing 1501-1800 and a catalogue of literary genres totalling over 6 million catalogue cards), in addition to the card catalogue of autograph letters in the manuscript department, are now available as image files on the Internet. The next stage in the catalogue digitisation project is the transformation of the image catalogues via OCR into bibliographic data bases that

will also combine the subject and the author catalogues. A corresponding project for the older catalogue (1501-1929) is now well under way; a similar one for the catalogue 1930 to1990 is in preparation. As planned, the current library network system was replaced at the end of 1998 by a new system - Aleph 500 (Exlibris). Data migration was completed by December 1998; Aleph 500 was started in January 1999. Despite some unavoidable teething troubles, the new system offers major advantages including highly flexible management of local OPACS, user masks for cataloguing purposes, integrated data connections etc.

The Aleph system has also been purchased by the National Library of Liechtenstein. A central server in the library will support local networking that will extend to schools, municipal and private libraries. Aleph will replace the SIBIL system that has been used by a number of Swiss libraries in the St. Gall network. As part of the reconstruction programme, the Library has been rewired with new common cabling for IT and telecommunications. The Czech National Library is planning to upgrade its Aleph system, in terms of both its hardware and its software. It finds the very fast development of hardware and software difficult to keep up with, and fears that the cycle of renewal and modernisation it would need to follow is reducing from about four years to just eighteen months. The Library has enlarged its LAN and achieved a fast connectivity between its main building and its repository; it will use the LAN to support automated access to digitised documents in a central storage device. Large disc arrays already support access to most of the digitised catalogues held in image format that are now accessible through the Internet. (<http://katif.nkp.cz>). A new server has been bought for the union catalogue and the library has developed several ORACLE applications for administration and shared cataloguing.

The National Library of Estonia has begun converting its data for use in an integrated library system that will network the data resources of nine major Estonian research libraries. Cataloguing for the INNOPAC system started in 1998, and the most important databases had been converted by the time the system was implemented at the beginning of 1999. The system supports the National Bibliography (1992-1998), the Union catalogue of foreign books (1993-98), the Database of Estonian Periodicals (1994-98) and the register of library users. INNOPAC has also been in use since January 1998 in the National Library of Poland. During the year the system has used to support the current National Bibliography database and, since April, records for all new editions of Polish and foreign monographs have been entered into the system.

In Iceland, a committee appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture was preparing recommendations for a new integrated library system that could be adopted by all the libraries in the country. During the last decade there have been two main systems in use: the National and University

Library and a few other libraries have used LIBERTAS, Reykjavik Public Library and a number of other libraries have used DOBIS/LIBIS. Upgrading the basic IT systems within the country's research libraries network is also seen as a major task for the National Library of Finland. It has been authorised to prepare a proposal for the software to be chosen and to manage the change process. All university libraries will have the same software and the final stage of selection is now almost concluded. A radical change in the network architecture is being considered. At present, almost all the libraries run their own local installations, which are connected with the union catalogue maintained by the National and University Library of Helsinki. The alternative being considered is to concentrate the server capacity in one place, possibly under a company, CSC, owned by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry is already responsible for the university network, FUNET. This is seen as a much cheaper and more reliable solution than the continuance of a distributed network. It would be a major innovation that would greatly assist libraries to make full use of the new technology. It would also enable them to outsource processes that are not part of their core functions. This would increase the opportunities for them to invest resources in more demanding electronic services. (The National Library has itself recently installed a new internal network using NT technology, and replaced its older servers and PCs). One of the serious issues the Library faces in any consideration of networking is that libraries that participate in the joint computer network are entitled to use the union catalogue free of charge, but the Library is legally bound to charge for the use of all other databases. Public libraries, not part of the network, are arguing strongly for the free use of the Library's databases since one of them is the union catalogue of the main public libraries. The Library would suffer lost revenue if this were to happen, and is anxious that it should receive compensation if free use were to be permitted.

Networking has also been the focus of activity in the National Library of Croatia where 10 libraries will form part of a network based upon common use of the CROLIST (Croatian Library Information System) programme on a UNIX platform. The main thrust of the network is to enable a programme of shared cataloguing following international standards of bibliographic description. The translation of ISBD(ER) into Croatian has now been completed. The implementation of the Lithuanian Integrated Library Information System (LIBIS) has continued in the past year. The National Library of Lithuania introduced LIBIS software to develop sub systems for acquisition, cataloguing and authority file creation and to support the National Bibliography. The objective of the LIBIS project is to create a union catalogue of the holdings of the Lithuanian research libraries. By the end of the year, 119,872 records had been supplied by six of the main libraries in the country, and the union catalogue had been made available on the web. Over 7000 'hits' are made on the database each month. UNIMARC and UNIMARC/

Authorities formats are used in record creation and records in the database are available for exporting. At present the Library's own computerised catalogue only covers some 10 % of its holdings, and priority is now being given to completing a retrospective conversion programme that will cover the entire collections and improve remote access to the holdings of the Library.

The Swiss National Library as part of its overall modernisation and renovation programme has migrated its computing infrastructure to a full TCP/IP network. The new environment for clients, servers and CD ROM is Windows NT 4.0, Office 97 and MS-Exchange. Telnet/Telnet 3720 and other software in addition to Internet options provide a wide selection of links to Swiss and foreign libraries. The Library comments that it remains difficult to talk of a national library network in Switzerland. The university and research libraries in the German-speaking part of the country have chosen a different system to that used by the French-speaking part and by the SNL. Although initially it was stated that the common use of USMARC would help data exchange, it seems that there will be substantial variations in the application of the format, leading to some difficulty in exchanging data. The university and research libraries and SNL have now all opted to move to AACR, though as yet the implications of this on existing data have not been studied in depth. The SNL is heading a working group that is analysing the feasibility of setting up a national name authority file. A revised design of the Swiss National Library website was launched at the end of the year at <http://www.snl.ch>. The move to temporary premises and the computer migration unfortunately led to a considerable increase in the cataloguing backlog which had reached a five months delay in processing current material by the end of 1998.

Information systems are now all pervasive in the British Library in managing and providing access to the Library's collection, in internal and external communication, and in much other day-to-day work. Increasingly, the primary commodity (a bibliographic record, or even a collection item) is in machine-readable form. Work on the Digital Library is at the frontier of this revolution, but there were many other examples during 1998-99 of the growing importance of IT in the Library's activities. In particular, information systems underpinned the opening and operation of further reading room services in the Library's new building at St Pancras. Access for readers to the Library's collection is principally via the St Pancras integrated system. This system is made up of three components: the reader admissions system, the on-line catalogue and the automated book request system. The reader admission system now holds information on 100,000 users. The OPAC was expanded during the year as each new reading room opened and now gives readers access at over 140 terminals to more than 8 million records for items they can consult. The automated book request system, which allows readers to order the stock they have selected to see, now handles more than to 2,000 book requests a day. Members of the public visiting the galleries at St Pancras are

welcomed by an electronic information system, and they can search the OPAC for themselves. Visitors can pursue their interests using various multimedia tools, including Turning the Pages, an award winning on-line system that allows them to screen-browse, page by page, through selected library treasures. Meanwhile, more than three quarters of the requests for remote access to the Library's collection handled by the Document Supply Centre at Boston Spa (i.e. 3 million a year) are now sent electronically. Automated requesting is increasing following the launch in 1997 of the World Wide Web version of inside, the Library's electronic current awareness and document ordering service. A new version of the inside software was implemented in 1998-99. Customers reacted favourably to the improved interface. The Library's main Website (<http://www.bl.uk>) now handles up to three million transactions a month. OPAC 97, the Internet version of the St Pancras online catalogue containing details of over 8.5 million items listed in seven of the library's catalogues, records a million 'hits' a month.

Work continued throughout 1998-99 on the new Corporate Bibliographic System, which will integrate and underpin the Library's cataloguing, bibliographic, and information systems. When fully implemented it will have the capability to support up to two thousand concurrent users and handle up to thirty million records. The benefits of the system will be fully realised through the Access Development Programme, which was initiated by the Library during the year to improve access by staff, users, and partners to its catalogues and collection. A series of projects over the next two years will integrate existing automated catalogues and convert catalogues not yet in machine-readable form.

The opening of the Research Library at the Bibliothèque nationale de France saw the introduction of new IT systems, essentially to support various public services including reader accreditation, seat reservations, document retrieval and consultation of the on-line catalogue, BN-OPALE PLUS. Access to digital versions of some 86000 works and to a collection of 144 CD-ROM titles as well as Internet access was provided through a large number of terminals. Unfortunately, the setting in hand of these services was hindered by problems with the technical infrastructure and delays in the implementation of procedures for exploiting the databases. The development of services offered by the BN on its website (<http://www.bnf.fr>) is an aspect of its wish to open up its services to remote users and to offer them a wide range of information. In October 1998, it greatly enriched these services by providing remote access via the web to its catalogue, BN-OPALE PLUS which integrates most of its catalogues of printed works and contains some 7 million bibliographic records and 850,000 authority records. It receives about 35,000 hits per day.

From March 1998, Die Deutsche Bibliothek offered an electronic reporting form on its home page on the Internet for publishers participating in the CIP

program, and publishers have been making regular use of this service. Project work on the personal names authority file, (PND) carried out under the auspices of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) was completed during the reporting year. Biographical keywords contained in the subject authority file were incorporated into the PND and Die Deutsche Bibliothek now offers this important authority file as a regular service. The PND presently comprises 1,825 million records. The retrospective enhancement of earlier biographical data through the addition of specific information begun in 1997 was integrated into routine cataloguing work in 1998. Recognising the value of this service, the majority of German library associations have agreed to implement the concept used by Die Deutsche Bibliothek. In co-operation with the Library of Congress (LC), selected biographical data records are to be augmented with LC Name Authorities identification codes and additional data contained in the LC files in a test phase.

The second edition of the Deutsche Nationalbibliographie CD-ROM retro 1945-1971 (DNB-DC retro 1) containing data for the years 1965-1971 was issued in the first half of the year along with an expanded edition of the CD-ROM der Hochschulschriften containing data for the period 1945-1997. The Deutsche Nationalbibliographie CD-ROM retro 1972-1985 (DNB-CD retro 2), comprised of the annual bibliographies of the Deutsche Bibliothek Frankfurt am Main for the corresponding period, was issued later in the year. Thus, ten years after publication of the first DNB-CD, the complete records of the holdings of the Deutsche Bibliothek Frankfurt am Main have now been made available on CD-ROM. On the other hand, only catalogue data for the most recent data of the Deutsche Bücherei Leipzig have to date been compiled on CD-ROM. However, preparatory studies for the conversion of the catalogues for 1913-1945 were completed in 1998; work on this project will begin once a contract is in place. DNB-Musik, the electronic catalogue of the Deutsches Musikarchiv, contains Series M and T as well as music publications from 1982 to the present, the „Historical Recordings" database and the „Bonner Katalog" of reverse-bound printed music that is available for loan. Containing some 588,000 data records, it is Europe's largest music database.

The newly developed online communication interfaces (Z39.50) have been highly successful, allowing both global searches and the online distribution of national bibliographic services. Under a recently concluded contract with the Research Library Group (USA), university and other research libraries in North America and elsewhere that are members of RLG can now gain Z39.50 access to the bibliographic data provided by Die Deutsche Bibliothek. In addition, a new program for German libraries, DDB-Online, has been available since 1998: This service provides for direct downloading of data from the Internet into the databases of individual library systems.

The National Library of Russia has completed its development of the RUSMARC format, and the Russian Library Association has approved it as the national standard for all libraries in Russia. Work is also proceeding on the creation of a national authority file and on the creation of a common bibliographic standard and MARC structure for the cataloguing of newspapers, hand press books, maps, prints and manuscripts. Since 1998, a number of the Library's databases have been made accessible on the Internet, including the catalogues of Russian books, scientific and technology documents, and cartography. The creation of an electronic catalogue of Russian books started in 1998, and all books in Russian have now been processed. Special classes have been arranged to help users search on the network. The National Library of Russia's General Alphabetic Catalogue has been microfilmed in its entirety, and the master copy is available for use.

From January 1999, the National Library of Norway will assume responsibility for the NORMARC format and for the national committees for classification and cataloguing. Much of the preparatory work for this development and for planning a project to create a new Norwegian abridged version of the Dewey Decimal Clarification System (DDC21) was undertaken during 1998. During the year, all divisions of the National Library were connected to the Norwegian Research Network, an ATM based high-speed network interconnecting all universities, some colleges and some research institutes. Currently the services of the National Library are available through a 30 Mbps connection, although the link between the divisions of the Library that are more than 1000km apart runs at 12 Mbps. The network also supports all internal telephony. A Z39.50 interface has been installed to access the National Bibliography, the Norwegian List of Serials and the Union Catalogue. The retrospective conversion of the National Bibliography 1921-1970 continues, and the database, Norbok, now covers the whole of the period 1041-1945.

THE DIGITAL LIBRARY

As more and more national libraries offer access through the Internet, the dreams of creating a digital library becomes closer to realisation. This year has seen considerable progress, and some set backs, in the numerous plans to digitise material in the collections of the European National Libraries. Moving from experimental projects to a fully functioning digital library is a major step that requires additional resources and a clear business strategy. It is interesting to note the different strategic approaches taken by a number of large European National Libraries to obtaining resources and moving form experiment to implementation.

The British Library's digital library developments aim to enhance the current collection and services and improve access to them. It anticipates that its future digital library collection will be built from a number of sources: the digitisation of some of its existing collection material, the acquisition of published digital materials through purchase and leasing/licensing, the legal deposit of digital materials published in the UK and the provision of access to international sources of digital data. Its plans include an ambitious vision for the digital library encompassing four main areas of digital activity: document supply, patent services, a picture library service, and heritage multimedia publishing. In order to harness the innovation, enterprise and investment required to realise this vision, the Library hoped to exploit the UK Government's Private Finance Initiative to develop the project through partnership with the private sector. However, in December 1998 it became clear, during negotiations with a prospective partner, that it would not be possible to reconcile the British Library's public service obligations and aspirations with the commercial imperatives of the private sector, and consequently negotiations were terminated on an amicable basis. By the end of the period under review, the Library was exploring alternative sources of capital investment in digital library infrastructure with the support of the UK Government.

Die Deutsche Bibliothek came a step closer to the realisation of a digital library during the reporting year. Following a test phase, the library began collecting and archiving online dissertations in July 1998. Appropriate Internet delivery procedures, processing guidelines and technical specifications were developed especially for this purpose. Some 250 online dissertations have been received and processed to date. The new digital library for academic publications has been received with considerable interest. In the development of the Digital Library, Die Deutsche Bibliothek is involved in co-operative projects devoted to the standardisation and indexing of networked publications (Meta-Lib, the German Libraries' Metadata Project) and, at the European level, on certain identification and long-term preservation issues under the NEDLIB (Networked European Deposit Library) project. This latter project looks towards the development of a basic infrastructure and the software tools that will be incorporated into a fully functional prototype system for the long-term preservation and long-term availability of electronic publications.

The first meeting for the pilot project, called the Electronic Deposit Library, which aims to develop ways of ensuring the long-term availability of networked publications at Die Deutsche Bibliothek was held in August 1998. The participants, including Die Deutsche Bibliothek, four publishing houses (Dumont, Saur, Springer and VCH-Wiley), and the Buchändlervereinigung, formed a steering committee and a task group. This group is responsible for shaping and guiding the process of realising the project's objectives

throughout the duration of the pilot phase. Particular emphasis is to be placed upon the co-ordination of collection guidelines, technical specifications, data structures, document management and description, long-term preservation, access and usage rights as well as costs. Legislation providing for the mandatory deposit of networked publications will not be drafted and passed until sound knowledge based upon experience in dealing with this complex material has been gathered. Until such legislation is in place, networked publications will be submitted on a voluntary basis in accordance with the recommendation of the Publishers' Committee of the Börsenverein.

Of all the European National Libraries, the Bibliothèque nationale de France, where the creation of a digital library is an essential element in its overall strategy, is perhaps the most advanced in the practical realisation of its plans. The first stage of its digital library opened to the public in October 1998. It consists of 86,000 titles of works in all disciplines and from all periods digitised in image mode, 2600 titles digitised in text mode from the Frantext database of INALF, and 125,000 fixed images accessible at each of the library's sites. The texts and images on the database come both from the BnF and from other libraries. A sample of the digital collection, of French nineteenth century material, can be accessed from the BnF website through the GALLICA server (<http://www.gallica.bnf.fr>). A new version accessible from October 1998 offers 5000 texts in image mode as well as 15000 images and several hours of sound recordings. To this will be added, in March 1999, GALLICA CLASSIQUE, comprising 700 texts in image mode and 300 in text mode from the major authors of French literature from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century aimed at teachers, schools and students. The development of the Library's web site (<http://www.bnf.fr>) includes the provision of information on the Library, professional information, virtual exhibitions and educational programmes as well as access to the catalogues and the electronic library.

During the period 1997-1999, the National Library of Denmark is carrying out a pilot project under the Danish Electronic Research Library Programme. The project is to provide access through a number of public libraries and research libraries to the Royal Library's CD-ROM collections and to some web-based full text databases. The aim is to test the technical and economic feasibility of the proposed web access and to assess the content to be associated with an extension of the readership that will include the readers of more university and research libraries located outside the Royal Library's own network. The Library comments, with some optimism perhaps, that it sees the reality of the virtual library becoming ever closer. The evidence for this, it suggests, can be seen in a number of changes to traditional ways of disseminating information. For example, in 1998 its Office of International Publications received no microforms, since the international data published in the past on microform is now in full text on the Europa server of the

European Union. A growing number of the series that were once published on paper and consumed a great deal of shelf space each year are now available on CD-ROM. This greatly improves the accessibility of the information to a larger public, and additional data can be searched and accessed through linked web pages. The Library is working on plans to integrate its CD-ROM collections with other electronic works, and to provide a full information service on the use of electronic materials. In 1998, a book, CD-ROM in the Royal Library, was published to assist readers. An updated version has now been made available on the Internet.

In Finland, good progress has been made with the government programme for the National Electronic Library. During 1998 and 1999, country licences have been purchased for about 2600 electronic journals and 70 bibliographic databases under a centrally funded and managed programme where the costs are shared. A steering group and a number of working groups channel the views of the participating university libraries into the decision making process, and the National Library is responsible for the organisation of the programme. The National Electronic Library programme has already brought considerable benefits to the universities and compensates to some extent for earlier cuts in acquisition budgets. It has been recommended that libraries should try to discontinue subscriptions to printed journals when the electronic version is available through the programme. The National Library has strengthened the team responsible for the development of its electronic services. This allows it to play a full part in a number of European and Nordic projects. Its current priorities are to participate in the development of standards, including Z39.50 and metadata standards, and in exploring working methods for handling the legal deposit of electronic publications. It is also strengthening its capacity for digitisation of texts and images and is working on the digitisation of newspapers.

A range of smaller scale projects for digitising particular parts of the collections is being set in place in a number of libraries. The National Library of Austria is undertaking a project to digitise its portrait and pictorial archive. It is beginning the work by digitising the catalogues of its pictorial documents (1.3 million records) after which it will create digital images of the documents themselves. The Czech National Library has digitised 170 rare vinyl and shellac sound recordings, and is also scanning a number of rare documents and digitising microfilm of rare material. It hopes to put the digitised microfilm on the Internet during the course of 1999. It has created its own software tools for its digitisation programme, and is developing a SGML based data format for compound digital documents. The format was adopted by UNESCO as the standard for its Memory of the World Project and has been published on CD-ROM and on the Internet. The National Central Library of Florence completed its Galileo Project during the year. Under this project, the Library has transferred into a bibliographic and image database 347

manuscript files on the importance in the history of science. Transcriptions of the manuscripts and a thesaurus are available on the BCNF web site and a CD-ROM produced because of the project has won the Pirelli award.

The Norwegian National Library is participating in the LAURIN project supported by the European Union. This two-year project is to undertake text scanning, using OCR. Its objective is to make large collections of newspaper clippings available in digital form. Partners in the project come form Norway, Sweden, Austria, Germany, Italy and Spain. The Library has also made the photographic archive of the Iranologist Georg Morgenstierne available as a multi media database of sound, film, text and photographs. The Roald Amundsen photographic archive is also being digitised and will be accessible in 1999. In the National Library of Ireland work continued on digitising selected items from the Library's collections of photographs, prints and drawings. The National Library of Sweden is currently digitising old (pre 1700) Swedish prints, historical pictures and maps, heavily used manuscripts and letters, and journals from the 19th century. At the same time, a number of strategic projects for digitisation are being put in place. One of these aims to standardise all Swedish digitisation projects on a single platform. The work deals with issues relating to access, technical development and standards, and the selection of material for digitisation. In the Vatican Library, negotiations with IBM for the start of a second phase of the project for digitising the manuscripts are proceeding. New, more advanced scanners have been bought. Experimental work in digitising prints maps and manuscripts began in the National Library of Russia.

LEGAL DEPOSIT

The extension of legal deposit from books and other printed matter to electronic and multi-media publications has become a major campaigning issue in Europe. The British Library, with the support of other UK legal deposit libraries, submitted a proposal to the UK Government last year for the extension of legal deposit to non-print publications. In 1997, Government produced a consultative paper, following which the British Library was asked to set up a working group. Under the chairmanship of Sir Anthony Kenny, the former Chairman of the British library Board, the group met to consider how a voluntary scheme of deposit might operate. This group reported that it did not consider a voluntary scheme to be viable and in December 1998, a statement was made in Parliament that contained a firm undertaking to move towards legislation for the legal deposit of non-print publications. This legislation is expected in 2000-2001.

The National Library of Austria is one of a number of national libraries actively seeking to extend the legal deposit privilege to include non-print materials, including electronic data. It intends to introduce a pilot project for on-line publications. In Bulgaria the National Assembly is considering the range of material to be deposited, but at the same time is proposing to reduce the number of obligatory copies to be deposited from twenty to seven. At present, the law requires the deposit of audio-visual materials but not electronic publications. Under the proposals now before the Assembly, these will be included but issues relating to copyright and preservation of the data have yet to be resolved.

The Ministry of Education in Finland is preparing a revision to the Legal Deposit Act. This aims to include electronic publications in all formats. It has been suggested by the state owned broadcasting company that the Act should place responsibility on the National Library to archive programmes, although earlier proposals had been for creating a separate archive for radio and television. The National Library is already developing the National Archives of Recorded Sound and has created procedures for archiving electronic publications. It is concerned that the new suggestion might lead to further delays in adopting a new law. In Iceland a committee appointed in 1997 with the task of revising the Legal Deposit Act of 1977 is expected to make recommendations that electronic materials in all formats, films, radio and television broadcasts should be deposited in addition to printed works and sound recordings. In Sweden a new legal deposit law was proposed by a governmental committee in November 1998 in a report that suggested the Royal Library should have the responsibility for collecting Swedish electronically published material on the World Wide Web. Sound and audio-visual materials were to be the responsibility of the National Archive for Sound and Moving Images. However, it was proposed that access should be restricted to accredited researchers and this caused a strong protest by libraries throughout the country, in favour of access on no more restricted terms than those applying to printed material. No formal law has yet been presented to the Parliament, and it is expected that legislation will be delayed until the end of 1999. The Legal Deposit Act in Turkey dates from 1934, and a special commission has been appointed to revise it to take account of electronic publications. Under the proposed amendments, collection will be undertaken by the National Library, which will also assign ISBN and ISSN codes. The number of deposit libraries will be reduced from six to three and the number of copies required to be deposited from six to four.

In Denmark, a new Act on legal deposit of material came into force in January 1998. The new Act, which imposes legal deposit on an expanded circle of suppliers and applies to new materials, had to be incorporated simultaneously with the winding up of the last legal deposit in accordance with the old Act of 1927. A major task has consequently been informing new

as well as current suppliers that in future, all publications issued in any medium, including electronic publications, had to be deposited. According to the new Act, The Royal Library has to collect two copies of all publications in print (except for newspapers), in microform, in photographic form or in digital form (except for sound recordings and video) and in multi-media. In addition, electronic publications on the Internet must now be deposited. The State and University Library in Århus is to receive newspapers, sound recordings, and video. Each of the two legal deposit institutions send one of the copies to the other, and the Danish Department of the National Library can look forward to handling 400,000 pieces of printed matter a year, of which half are to be sent to Århus after unpacking and inspection.

The extent of legal deposit has also been modified in Lithuania, where the law now requires publishers to deliver audio-visual and electronic publications as well as printed material. The National Library has found it difficult to detect publishers, but attempts to alleviate the problem by checking ISBN's and by tracing items in news items in the media. It finds particular difficulty in claiming non-traditional documents in audio-visual and electronic formats. The National Library of the Netherlands, on the other hand relies, on broad agreements with publishers for the deposit of material and there is no statutory requirement to deposit. Under an agreement with the Dutch Publishers Association, the Royal Library received some 1000 off-line publications. It has bilateral contracts with three large publishing houses for the deposit of seven hundred electronic journals and government publications in electronic formats. Good progress is being made in discussions with publishers to extend the deposit to all forms of electronic publications, both off-line and on-line. Academic dissertations in electronic form will also be deposited.

A new library law of 1997 in Croatia includes mandatory deposit of audiovisual and digital publications. Under a new law of 1998 in Greece, publishers, or authors, are required to deposit two copies of every publication in the National Library, one copy in the Greek Parliament and one copy in the National Book Centre. In Hungary, a new legal deposit law of 1998 requires six copies to be deposited of which two go to the National Library (one copy is for use and the other for preservation) and the other four are distributed to other libraries. A substantial increase has been recorded in the deposit of CD-ROMs.

A number of libraries continue to report difficulties in acquiring material covered by legal deposit legislation. The Russian National Library reports that whilst acquisitions from this source rose during the year, possibly because of the revival of publishing activity in Russia, it believes that this may be a short-lived improvement and expects the deposit to decline because of the crisis of August 1999. In Ireland, whilst the majority of publishers promptly deposit material, a study conducted by the National Library during the year indicated

that some 205 of Irish titles published during the year, and shown in the British National Bibliography list as deposited under reciprocal arrangements with the United Kingdom, had yet to be received by the National Library of Ireland. A series of amendments to the Law of Deposit in Romania have been made to assist in the effectiveness of the deposit arrangements, following the experience of the National Library in the three years since the passing of the act. The Library is currently obtaining some 70 % of the entire Romanian publishing output. In Slovenia, the National Library organized a campaign to include non- print items within the legal deposit, and gave considerable publicity to the case for revising the law at the main national book fair. In recent years, there has been an enormous increase in the number of publishers and it is difficult to ensure comprehensive coverage. The Library estimates that up to 20 % of publications are not deposited.

ACQUISITIONS

Lack of resources continues to affect the breadth and depth of acquisitions in many European National Libraries, and collection development policies often have to be modified to reflect the financial realities rather than the role of the national library as a primary research library and custodian of the national collections. Many libraries continue to remain highly dependent upon exchange arrangements for the growth of their foreign literature collections, and this is particularly the case in Central and Eastern Europe and the new democracies. The Bulgarian National Library, for example, reports that financial collapse lead to restrictions in the profile of acquisitions, and that acquisition funding from its budget is 'unorganised and sporadic'. Although for the first time since 1990 money had been allocated for subscriptions to foreign periodical titles, 'the permanent lack of means does not permit any planning or regular purchase of the latest foreign publications and electronic editions.' The Library bought only 280 Bulgarian books, and 45 foreign titles during the year. Its purchase of periodicals was limited to 65 foreign titles. In attempting to impose some guidelines for acquisition in these dire circumstances it concludes that priority must be given to the purchase of reference publications, and publications about the country and its people.

These difficulties in purchasing material must also be set in the context of the difficulties experienced in many countries in ensuring that publishers fulfil their legal deposit obligations; in many cases libraries are forced to spend their acquisition funds on buying material that has not been deposited or have to rely on donations. Frequently, too, their slender resources are spent on acquiring, at second hand, older material which should have been available

under legal deposit had the law existed at the time of publication or been strictly followed.

Great efforts are made to exercise good judgement on what to acquire when funds are so limited, and much time and real funding is obviously spent on this work. This must inevitably lead to very high unit costs for the acquisition process, and on expenditure, which might under more flexible funding arrangements, have been directed towards purchase rather than selection. The National Library of Croatia, for example, has a monthly meeting of its large Acquisition Committee to plan its budget, allocate funds and decide the acquisition list for the next monthly period. During the year, following these procedures, it purchased 3074 monograph titles of Croatian literature, compared with 3691 titles received on legal deposit, and 1787 foreign books. Considerable costs, both in selection and in acquisition, could possibly have been saved, or used more beneficially, under a more effective system of legal deposit.

The National Library of Russia reports that it has inadequate funds for acquisition, but has received two special grants for acquisitions amounting to 2 million roubles through the support of the President of the Russian Federation. The total number of acquisitions in the National Library of Lithuania fell by 4753 items compared to the 1997 figure. Whilst it was able to buy 7,688 items, most of its acquisitions, other than the 40 % received under legal deposit (34,739 items), were gifts and free of charge editions (15,467 items). The exchange programme remains the most important source for foreign publications. Many of its purchases were made at a large book exhibition organised by western European and American publishing houses where the publishers allowed a substantial discount. Although the National Library of Slovenia increased its expenditure on foreign language material by 23 % it continues to limit its in-depth research support to the traditionally strong areas of the humanities and social sciences. Any expansion of its acquisitions in terms of widening subject areas is impossible to support due to lack of finance. On the other hand, the National Library of the Ukraine, suffering severe budget restrictions and with practically no foreign currency allowance, was unable to buy any foreign monographs or periodicals; it, too, relied heavily on gifts and exchanges across its total acquisitions.

Many of the National Libraries in Western Europe and Scandinavia, though infinitely better provided for in acquisition funds, are nevertheless finding difficulty in sustaining levels of expenditure and rates of acquisition. The National Library of Spain cut by 6 % the acquisitions budget of its Department of Bibliographical Patrimony, which is responsible for acquiring works missing form the library's patrimonial collections. The number of titles acquired fell considerably from the previous year's rate. Although the Library's general acquisition budget was increased, the higher cost of

publications and the decline in value of the peseta in relation to other currencies led to a smaller number of purchases. The National Library of Finland comments that funds allotted to acquisitions are too small, mainly due to the reductions earlier in the 90s. With its dual status as a National and University Library, it suffers from a particular problem of divided responsibility for funding. The acquisition of foreign research literature is part of the responsibility of the University, which cannot afford to make any substantial increase in the acquisition fund. The Library hopes to resolve the problem by a proposal that funds should granted as part of the National Library budget for the maintenance of a broad national collection of foreign literature in particular in the arts and humanities. By tradition, the Library is regarded as the library of last resort for this material in the country. Purchasing specialised research literature would, under the proposal, remain a responsibility of the University. The Library is preparing a new collection policy where the distinction between the University's funding responsibility and that of the National Library is made clear.

The British Library also saw a further reduction on expenditure on acquisitions during the year, and had again to make major reductions in its collecting programmes. It made further cancellation of duplicated science publications even where high use was reported from both the Document Supply Service at Boston Spa and the Science Reference Service in London. To live within its reduced budget the library undertook a major cancellation exercise of foreign journals, and the purchase of foreign language scientific monographs and foreign humanities books was severely reduced. Massive reductions were made to the budgets for buying manuscripts and older books in the salesrooms or by private treaty. The manuscript budget for 1998-99 is now only £200,000, and the funds to build the national printed archive retrospectively to 1914 are at a historically low level. Budgets for scientific and technical reports, theses, market research material and newspapers have also been cut. That many of these cuts have been made necessary by the additional costs of running the new building which enables so much better access to the Library's collections is a cruel twist. What logic is there, one might ask, in successive governments providing funding to create a magnificent new building to preserve and make available the rich collections acquired in the past, yet failing to invest in collection building today for the future user?

To end this rather dismal record on a brighter note, it is good to report that the National Library of Ireland, which in the past has had a very limited funding for acquisitions, increased its expenditure in 1998 by 63 % over its 1997 figure. Its acquisition of heritage material is likely to improve also as a result of changes in the tax law that allow for tax credits to individuals in respect of certain donations to the Library. Under this provision, the Library has acquired An Duanaire Nuinseannach, an important Gaelic manuscript of the 16th.Century. It also benefited from a special grant from the government

for the purchase of an important collection of family papers. Let us hope that a similar improvement might be reported next year by a number of libraries, including the National Library of Hungary, which spent no more than 2.8 % of its budget on acquisition. This figure would have been even lower if it had not received a special grant from the Ministry of Culture for the purchase of a valuable manuscript collection.

PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION

Although digitisation of text is still primarily seen as a way of improving access rather than as a conservation measure, digitisation can of course assist conservation by preventing overuse of the original. Considerable interest is being shown in Europe in digitising microfilm, from the point of view of improving access, both locally and remotely, to the microfilmed data and as a way of creating digital data without further handling of the original material. Particular attention is being given to the digitisation of microfilm of newspapers, partly because in some cases the original copy is no longer in a fit state to be digitised directly, and also because digitisation, when combined with image conversion to OCR text, allows better retrieval of the information sought.

A project, partly financed by NORDINFO, which is studying in depth the digitisation of newspapers from microfilm, is being undertaken by the National Libraries of Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and the State and University Library of Århus in Denmark. The National Library of Finland considers this work to be one of its top priorities and because the technical prospects appear to be promising, it is developing a programme to make newspapers available on-line. At the same time, it is discussing copyright issues relating to on-line access with the newspaper publishers. These digitisation programmes have established that high accuracy in the camera work when microfilming is a critical factor in successful digital conversion. This adds force to the argument that the highest quality should always be sought both in camera work and in laboratory processing when microfilming newspapers. It is, as the National Library points out, extremely expensive to re-film newspapers, and it is clear that many papers are not in a fit state to be re-filmed and that the only sustainable medium for the permanent archiving of content is microfilm. The present condition of newspapers printed in the last hundred years suggests that many will not survive to be re-filmed again in the next fifty years.

Microfilming Slovenian periodicals and newspapers has continued in the Slovenian National Library. Priority is being given to filming the oldest daily newspapers and those receiving heavy use. In common with many libraries,

the preservation programme is limited by lack of resources, but financial support for external sources has been of great assistance in supporting new work. The Open Society Institute, through its Regional Library Programme, has provided funding support for the digitisation of an important collection of Slovenian manuscripts, for the electronic cleaning of nationally important sound recordings, and for the organisation of a workshop dealing with the conservation and restoration of parchment bindings.

The National Library of Ireland has brought its new technical Services Building into use and the microfilming unit has begun work on filming newspapers under the NEWSPLAN project. This co-operative project between British and Irish libraries has identified the great majority of newspapers held in the two countries and established a set of priorities for microfilming them for preservation purposes. Part files held by separate libraries are brought together if necessary to ensure that the best copy is available for filming. The National Library of Ireland has begun work on its own files and on other holdings in Ireland that have been defined as being at greatest risk. The Library is also continuing to work on its Photographic Preservation Project under which positive film copies are created of glass negatives. Film testing equipment and modernised microfilm cameras installed with the assistance of experts from the Library of Congress enabled the National Library of Lithuania to speed up its newspaper-microfilming programme. Work is in hand on filming Lithuanian newspapers published in the 19th and 20th centuries and for filming current Lithuanian daily papers. It is also filming Judaic periodicals published in Lithuania in the early 20th Century. Under the agreement with Osnabrück University, the Library continued its programme of selecting and filming literature in its Old and Rare Book Department relating to special events. Special emphasis in the overall preservation programme was placed on the preservation of the archival collection of the Lituanica department and on the National Archive of Prints, but limited resources and inadequate technical facilities prevent the Library from making more rapid progress on the general problem of restoring the great mass of documents that are in need of preservation. The criteria for selection of items and new working standards for descriptions of restoration processes were devised. The National Library of Austria also placed emphasis during the year on microfilming newspapers. A major sponsoring initiative within the book sponsorship campaign provided funds for a microfilm of Die Presse/Neue Freie Presse from 1848 to 1939. This work was accompanied by the mass restoration of decaying newspapers by freezing and drying. The Library has also preserved a number of posters used in exhibitions during the year. Further volumes of the Glaser collection of Southern Arabian manuscripts were preserved. The microfilming of 19th and earlier 20th Century newspapers was a priority at the National Library of Croatia too, and in addition to the filming work, older Croatian newspapers were conserved by

lamination. The Library continued with its work of preserving manuscripts in its collections.

Conferences on preservation continue to play an important role in getting home the message that preservation and conservation of the collections must be treated as a matter for urgent concern. A Nordic conference on conservation, relating to the use of historical collections, was held in Stockholm in October 1998. The purpose of the conference was to create a Nordic forum for library directors and decision makers to exchange experience about conservation, and present information relating to access and to the use of the collections in national, research-university and university libraries. Approximately 80 people from Scandinavia, the Baltic States and the rest of Europe, attended the conference, which was arranged by the Swedish Royal Library and The Danish Royal Library. Greater public access to collections, and the expanded role of the libraries in disseminating information and culture, increases the need for new working methods and policies in relation to conservation, presentation of information and access to the use of historical collections. The conference was intended to make clear the interaction between these activities and the responsibility of the library to preserve the collections for posterity.

In collaboration with the Polish Librarians Association, the National Library of Poland organised a nation wide conference devoted to important issues of conservation and preservation. Topics covered in the conference included mass preservation for 19th and 20th century collections, and preventative measures in the case of floods, a topical and important issue following the disastrous floods in southern Poland in 1997.

In the Danish Royal Library, conservation work in 1998 was dominated by preparation of the collections that are to be put on open shelves in the new library building on Slotsholmen, which will open in September 1999. The decision by the photographic section to concentrate on taking and supplying pictures digitally has proved to be the right one, as can be seen in the large number of digital documents presented on the world wide web, and the smaller number of photographic reproductions supplied in 1998 is a direct consequence of the decision to prefer digital reproduction. The extensive work with copying microfilms also continued in 1998. The modernisation process of the Photographic Studio, which has been in progress for a couple of years, will also continue in 1999.

After many years of research and pilot projects, mass de-acidification plants are beginning to play an important role in the preservation of books. An important milestone for Die Deutsche Bibliothek was the privatisation of the Zentrum für Bucherhaltung at the Deutsche Bücherei Leipzig in March 1998. All specialists at the Centre were retained by the new limited company. The industrial mass de-acidification process and the mechanical paper-splitting techniques used remain unique in Germany. Die Deutsche Bibliothek

and the Zentrum für Bucherhaltung will continue to work closely together and have concluded a co-operation agreement to this effect.

The Swiss National Library has been successful in establishing the case for a mass de-acidification plant in Switzerland. In August 1998, Parliament allocated 13.5 million Swiss francs to the construction of a plant, with an annual capacity of 120 tons of which two thirds will be used by the SNL and the Swiss Federal Archives. Other libraries and archives in Switzerland will share access to the remaining available capacity. The library estimates that it will cost them about 27 Swiss francs per kilo of documents de-acidified. In the first five-year phase, the Library estimates that a budget of 10 million Swiss Francs will be needed for the de-acidification of federal documents, of which the SNL will spend one half. It reports that it was a struggle to obtain funds for the construction of the plant at a time when all departments are required to make cutbacks. However, it received the strong support of the Deputy Director of the Federal Office for Culture, who persuaded the political authorities of the importance of this project for the future of the national cultural heritage.

Education and training in new methods of conservation and in technical of documents matters is being given a high priority and the skills and experience of experienced conservators are much sought after. The National Library of Bulgaria was able to send two conservators to the North East Document Conservation Centre, Andover, USA to learn about the Book Keeper method of neutralisation and methods for light bleaching. The Library intends to use the Book Keeper method but has yet to acquire a suction table for chemical treatment and cleaning of documents. A conservation survey has been undertaken of the Library's special materials, including sound recordings and official publications, and a Disaster Plan is being drawn up. The National Library of Iceland also engaged the services of an American expert on book binding to prepare a report on the condition of the collections and to advise on bindings. His recommendations are under consideration. The Library preserves one copy of material received under legal deposit in a reserve collection and has recently renovated a schoolhouse some 100km from Reykjavik to provide a new reserve store. All copies of the reserve collection, occupying some 5000 linear metres will be examined before removal, cleaned and, where necessary, given conservation treatment.

The British Library's expertise in conservation continues to be recognised throughout the world, and its conservators offered advice and assistance to numerous libraries and held conservation workshops in Japan, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The library continues to offer short-term placements in its conservation departments whenever possible. It continues with a number of research projects and conservation work on problematical materials. Of particular significance during the year has been the conservation assessment

of the collection of Khotanese manuscripts written on wood some time earlier than the 11th century. After the assessment, the manuscripts were rehoused and photographed to reduce the amount of handling they receive. Digital images from these photographs will be made available as part of the database of the International Dunhuang Project. The Library has a long tradition of undertaking technical research with specialised university departments, using the experience of chemists and paper technologists to help to find viable solutions to conservation problems. Joint research has recently been undertaken with Queen's University Belfast to develop a new non-intrusive method of measuring the pH levels of paper, and with University College London to determine the effects of a new de-acidification solution.

In the United Kingdom and Ireland, the National Preservation Office continued to fulfil its leadership role at the national level in working towards the development of a national preservation strategy for both traditional and digital materials. In Russia, a Federal Centre for Conservation was established based on the National Library of Russia's Restoration and Conservation Department, recognising the high skills held in the department. Both research and practical applications are included in its activities. In 1998, more than 43,000 items were rebound and a great amount of restoration work was undertaken.

On-going research and development in classical conservation and preservation methods continued at the Czech National Library. The Library continues to participate in a national co-operative programme of microfilming. The Conservation Department of the National Library of Slovenia continues to participate in the EU 1681 Eurocare Laclepa Research Project for the laser cleaning of paper and parchment. In Turkey, the lack of skilled staff forced the Pathology Centre at the Suleymaniye Library, which had been equipped with the latest technology and had considerable financial support, to close. The National Library of Turkey comments that the opening of a modern pathology centre within the National Library must take account of this experience. Hardware has already been bought for the centre.

LIBRARY CO-OPERATION AND COLLABORATION

One of the major recommendations from the British Library's strategic review consultation exercise was that the Library should increasingly work in partnership with other libraries. Five functions were identified where partnership would be beneficial - collection development, record creation, preservation, access and the creation of the national bibliography - although this has not been taken to mean that a programme of co-operation should be limited only to those activities. Collection retention policies, for example, also

provide a basis for co-operation and lead naturally to preservation responsibilities. It has been recognised that the information technology of the digital age is likely to facilitate a distributed approach to the provision of access to material. The Library considers that all aspects of digital development must be undertaken in the spirit of co-operation in order to ensure that there is no wasteful duplication of effort.

There is, however, no expectation among members of the UK library and information sector of major savings from collaboration. The benefits should lie in improved knowledge and awareness of the major research collections. Most importantly, there should be improved value for money across the publicly funded UK library system as a whole from a reduction in unnecessary duplication of provision and an extension of provision in areas previously not covered. The NEWSPLAN initiative, a co-operative UK wide programme to film historic files of local newspapers at risk to archival standards, begun in 1985, is one example of how the Library has been collaborating to preserve and develop better access to a distributed but unique part of the national heritage. In April 1998, an application was submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funding to support a five-year programme of microfilming under the Newsplan programme. The bid received a sympathetic response from the Lottery Fund and approval has been given for the further development of the project. The Library itself continued to offer expert advice for grant applications to the Heritage Lottery Fund and the National Manuscript Conservation Trust. The Library is also working in partnership with the British Broadcasting Corporation in the BBC Millennium Oral History Project, the largest oral history project ever undertaken in Europe. Plans have been agreed to record up to 8000 biographical interviews with people of all ages and backgrounds for transmission in late 1999. The British Library National Sound Archive (NSA) will train those recording the interviews in the best oral history practice and will become the permanent repository for the collection of tapes, the Millennium Memory Bank, and have responsibility for preserving and ensuring access to them.

The Swiss National Library has also been collaborating on a major project with a radio station under its VOCS project. Here, the intention has been to create records in the Swiss Union Catalogue for radio interviews with Swiss authors whose archives are held in the Swiss Literary Archives, which are part of SNL. For each interview, a multi-media link was created in Helvicat from the bibliographical record to the digitised recording held at RSR (the Swiss French radio station). Access to the recordings is limited for copyright reasons, but will be possible from workstations in the Library reading room.

Die Deutsche Bibliothek and the Goethe-Institut have formed a cultural-policy alliance for the purposes of promoting the exchange of information and knowledge and of fostering the appreciation of German language and literature both at home and abroad. Through this co-operative program, two

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organisations with similar functions and responsibilities will benefit from the special insights provided by the respective partner institutions. As the central archives and national bibliographic information centre, Die Deutsche Bibliothek offers the Goethe-Institut a substantial foundation for its own library and information work through the free use of its databases and information services. This will represent one of the most significant cultural information-transfer functions performed by the Goethe-Institut in the years to come. In turn, the Goethe-Institut, thanks to its worldwide network of institutes, offers the Library both useful international contacts and precise knowledge about local circumstances. These sources are to be tapped for familiarising a broader international public with Die Deutsche Bibliothek and its products beyond the present scope of its own numerous contacts abroad. Sales-promotion measures and a touring photo exhibition of superior quality and artistic merit are to serve as vehicles for the library's message.

From 1994 onwards the Bibliothèque nationale de France has sought to create a bibliographic network of associated nodes where the collections are complementary to its own and with whom the fields for co-operation could range from sharing documentary materials and the collection of legal deposit material to digitisation projects. By the end of the year, the network covered the whole of metropolitan France and its overseas territories in respect of legal deposit. Some 59 associated nodes have been established grouped in some 77 institutions and all have been invited to participate in a national meeting in 1999. One of BnF's responsibilities is the work of completing the Catalogue collectif de France, a joint project of the Ministers of Culture and National Education, which, when completed, will provided locations for some 13 million documents conserved in the most important municipal and university libraries and the BnF. In October 1998, the National Index of Libraries and Documentation Centres associated with this catalogue was made accessible on the Internet (<http://www.ccfr.bnf.fr>). It holds detailed descriptions of some 3700 French institutions, their collections, and their services.

Shared cataloguing is a common aim of many co-operative programmes. The Czech National Library has been undertaking the shared retrospective conversion of records relating to Czech book production in the 20th century with the regional state research libraries, and operates a scheme for the shared cataloguing of current Czech book production as well as a co-operative project for microfilming. The National Library of Spain continues to strengthen its ties with the Spanish library network. Of particular importance has been the consolidation of the autonomous regions' networks. The Library co-operates closely with those autonomous regions publishing work in languages other than Spanish, such as Catalan, Basque, and Gallego, to further the control of legal deposit and shared cataloguing of the collections. Similar work in the exchange of bibliographical records is undertaken with

the newly created Network of Spanish University Libraries, the University Libraries of Madrid, and the Network of State Libraries.

Co-operation in training and education has also brought benefits. The National Library of Lithuania served as a placement library for MA students on the TEMPUS project for education in information management run by Vilnius University. As other libraries have also discovered, placements such as this have a considerable benefit for the library itself in that that they offer the possibility of recruiting new staff members often with very high skills in information technology to implement new library developments.

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

Internationally, the British Library continued to chair CoBRA+, which carried on the work of CoBRA, the group that was responsible for initiating a number of valuable projects, such as AUTHOR, BIBLINK, and NEDLIB. The CoBRA+ contract with the European Commission, although extended, ended in late 1998. However, the group continues as a technical subcommittee of CENL with the British Library providing the administrative support. Within the current programme of work, the Swiss National Library, the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Die Deutsche Bibliothek and the British Library undertook a study through the CoBRA+ programme into the feasibility of linking three subject heading systems in different languages and systems, LCSH, RAMEAU and SWD/RSWK, to provide multi-lingual subject access to material. The study showed that it is intellectually feasible to link the headings and the four libraries have agreed to fund the next phase that is to create a prototype multilingual headings file. Reports of the study will be made available on the GABRIEL web site, which provides details of other EC funded projects.

Many National Libraries continue to participate in the work of international bodies concerned with the development of bibliographic databases. Considerable support has been given to the work of the Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL) and a large number of European National Libraries are now in membership. During the year, the Slovenian National Library provided some 17,000 records to the CERL database of the Hand Printed Book and also continued to send records to the OCLC WorldCat database as did others including the Czech National Library. The National Libraries of Croatia, the Netherlands, Russia, Scotland, Spain, Sweden together with the British Library, the Bibliothèque nationale de France, and the Bavarian State Library have now all contributed selected records of their hand printed book collections to the CERL Hand Press Book database, which also includes the records of Italian libraries contributed

through ICCU. The database is hosted on the Research Library Group's RLIN system and can be accessed on-line throughout Europe. Several national libraries have followed the British Library's example and joined the Research Libraries Group as full European members, or collaborate closely with RLG in various bibliographic activities. The National Libraries of Spain and of Switzerland are among those who now contribute current records for inclusion in the RLIN general books file. The Swiss National Library offers free access to the RLIN database via EUREKA to its partner libraries in the Helvicat union catalogue collaborative.

Work continues on numerous international projects sponsored by UNESCO, including the Memory of the World Project. Many libraries take part in these projects or generously contribute expert advice. The Bibliothèque nationale de France has, for example, participated in the work of expert groups in Morocco and Tunisia and in other work associated with UNESCO's MEDLIB project. Others take part in particular technical or cultural programmes. In one such programme, UNESCO's Index Translationum Project, the National Library of Croatia has been associated with the translation of over 900 books into the Croatian language. Expert meetings and discussions on standards and collaborative work towards improved exchange of records are now increasingly part of the every day work of almost every European National Library as the importance of providing universal access to library materials is reinforced through the Internet. The work of the Vatican Library is perhaps not untypical of the sharing of expertise that informs international collaboration. It participates in both the EAMMS project for Electronic Access to Medieval Manuscripts and the MASTER project for Manuscript Access through Standards for Electronic Records and has hosted the meeting of the Medieval Manuscript Description Work Group. Similarly, the National Library of Greece, like many other European libraries, plays an important part in the joint projects commissioned under the EC programme for libraries. It shares in the work of CASA, the project for the creation of a European database of periodicals, and in the UNIVERSE project to create a logical union catalogue to deliver a number of advanced library services for both the end-user and the librarian.

In recent years, in addition to the very good informal relationships that have developed between them, many national libraries in Europe have entered into formal bilateral agreements to further co-operation in specific areas. Adding to a number of bilateral agreements made in previous years, the Russian National Library now has agreements with the Czech National Library, and the National Library of Poland and has entered into a special programme of co-operation with the New York Public Library. The National Library of the Ukraine undertakes joint research with the Biblioteka Narodova in Poland, with whom it also works in the cataloguing of the historical collection 'Regio'. Collaboration in research also takes place

between the library and the Bulgarian National Library and the National Library of Israel. At the end of 1998, the National Library of Estonia signed the revised multi-lateral agreement for co-operation between the national libraries of the Baltic countries, providing for the exchange of information, materials, and staff. A similar agreement on staff exchange was signed with the National Library of the Czech Republic early in 1999. The National Library of Lithuania also continues to co-operate closely with the other national libraries in the Baltic Sates, and with those in Germany, Poland Russia, and the Czech Republic, as well as with various Lithuanian communities and organisations in USA, UK and other countries. An International Seminar on the function of bibliographical control in the global information infrastructure was held in the library in June 1998. Organised within IFLA's UBC programme by the Library and the IFLA Permanent UNIMARC Committee, with experts from a number of European countries and from the USA, the Seminar covered issues relating to the Internet, communication formats, and metadata.

The productive bilateral relations between Die Deutsche Bibliothek and the British Library were further expanded in 1998. Executive staff and specialists from Die Deutsche Bibliothek visited the British Library for the purposes of establishing extended working contacts. A more intensive exchange of information and insights, particularly in the areas of multi-media access systems, the exchange of bibliographic data via the Z39.50 online interface, user services, cost accounting and billing and accounting for services, was agreed upon. The Bibliothèque nationale de France has, within its priorities, given high importance to co-operation with francophone countries. It has worked closely with the National Library of Canada and with the National Library of Quebec in particular on the production of bibliographic tools. This has led to the collaborative production of the French translation of the 21st edition of the Dewey Decimal Classification which has been mounted on the Internet at the National Library of Quebec's website L'inventaire bibliographique des relations franco-québécoises de 1963 à nos jours. The National Library of Denmark is co-operating with the National Library in Bhutan on a two-year project financed by DANIDA for up-grading the qualifications of library personnel in Bhutan in order to conserve the written cultural heritage and to make it accessible to research circles outside Bhutan. Tibet experts and a computer scientist are attached to the project.

At the 64th IFLA Conference in Amsterdam, Die Deutsche Bibliothek and the Russian Library Association offered a joint resolution addressing the issue of protection for cultural treasures during times of war and armed conflict.

The prototype of a virtual European exhibition of treasures from national libraries was presented at the Conference of European National Librarians (CENL) in Prague. A first version of the exhibit has been accessible on the Internet since February (<http://www.ddb.de/gabriel/treasures/entree.html>)

and has been integrated into GABRIEL, the joint information service of the European national libraries.

CONCLUSION

One element of the year's work reported by most, if not all, libraries was the increasingly heavy demand placed upon reader services as the number of readers enrolled increased. In those libraries with new buildings, quite spectacular increases in demand were reported, and in others, the development of improved catalogues and on-line services led to a greater awareness and use of the collections. These are most encouraging trends, but greater use cannot always be sustained by greater efficiency, and many libraries are finding that their highly dedicated staff are being subjected to unreal and, in the longer-term, unacceptable pressures to cope with the demand. Library managers will inevitably need to address the problem of finding additional staff resources from their over-stretched budgets, or provide hard evidence that, without funding for additional staff, their service to readers will have to be limited. Extra demand also creates additional wear and tear on the already fragile research collections of older material, and calls for additional resources for conservation work.

The high profile now being adopted by the European National Libraries is clearly shown in the many fine exhibitions, the enterprising educational and cultural programmes and the wide range of publications for all levels of readership that are noted in the libraries' annual reports. It has not been possible to give details of these in a review of this nature, and this is a pity, because one would wish to see this important cultural role of the national libraries given ever more publicity. The scholarship that informs the exhibitions, and the love of books and manuscripts, of printing and calligraphy, that is communicated through the educational and publishing programmes are a sure indication, if further proof is needed, of the extra-ordinary professionalism that is now so strongly present in European National Libraries. They can enter the new millennium confident of the value of their recent achievements.

Dr. J. Michael Smethurst
Formerly Deputy Chief Executive of the British Library
The British Library
96 Euston Road
London NW1 2DB, United Kingdom
mike.smethurst@bl.uk