

National and University Library - Available Facilities and Possibilities of Collaboration

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Twice during the 20th century a National and University Library has been built in Croatia; at the beginning of the century from 1911 to 1913 and at the end of the century from 1988 to 1995.

The construction of today's National and University Library from conception to completion took almost five decades. Namely, the first initiatives started many years ago in 1947, and at the beginning of the 1960's the first preliminary project for the new library was completed. However, that particular project and location was soon abandoned. However, during the euphoria of the Croatian Spring in 1971 the Croatian Government, in keeping with the new cultural policies of aroused Croatian national consciousness, approved a decision to finance four capital cultural objects: The Museum of Sacral Art in Zadar, the Museum of Croatian Archaeological Monuments in Split, the Croatian Archive in Zagreb and the National and University

Library in Zagreb. This involved the production of a project for the building of a new National and University Library, in line with the latest achievements in librarianship, particularly with regard to the development of new technology and also securing the necessary financial means for construction.

After comprehensive discussions the new (present) location of the library was determined and tenders invited for realisation of the project, based on which the work of the Zagreb architects, Hrzic, Mance and Neidharth was chosen. It was also decided that financial means for the construction would be secured on the basis of voluntary contributions from the majority of employed persons. The foundation stone was laid on 28 March 1988 and on 28 May 1995 the new building of the National and University Library was opened.

The National and University Library was constructed on a building plot of 3.75 ha. The Library consists of three parts: a central building of ten floors and two buildings of five floors on each side. The total floor space of the Library amounts to 44,432 m² and the total capacity 4,500,000 volumes. Each floor has 4,000 m². The exploitable areas on the upper floors of the central part of the building are flexible spatial units of open-plan layout with an area of approximately 3,000 m². The building can accommodate 750 individual users, 100 in seminar halls, 377 employees and 186 in the restaurant.

The standards for the Croatian Library were passed in 1990, which define the National and University Library as an establishment within the framework of the decentralised library systems of the University with a larger or smaller number school libraries and libraries of independent scientific institutes.

The total area and articulation of rooms for specific use, and particularly the level of technical equipment and level of informatics, are pre-conditions which suggest that the National and University Library will become the central Croatian library system for planning, further activities, reading, study and research, and also an competent informatics centre in Croatia and the world. By linking the Library with member universities the international dimension of higher education is emphasised, which is also a good basis for inter-university co-operation within Croatia and on an international level.

The organisation and function of the National and University Library is based on the Law on Libraries, passed by the House of Representatives (Croatian National Parliament) on 19 September 1997. The National and University Library is an independent professional organisation within the framework of Zagreb University. It is the central library institution for all other units of the University Library system, which initiates co-operation between faculty libraries. Thus the National and University Library decide on plans for the future development of librarian activities in the University and provide for their implementation.

In accordance with the increasing need for rationalisation and economy, and at the same time the increasing demands of new technologies, it has become clear that there is a need to link our School with the National and University Library. This has resulted in discussions being held on the possibility of signing an agreement on future co-operation.

By becoming involved in the activities of the National and University Library, as a leading educational institution, which offers daily service to hundreds of users, we shall attempt to realise joint programmes, which, if they prove valuable, could become a model of co-operation for other schools.

Co-operation would include all activities of the School, from graduate and postgraduate teaching, scientific activities and permanent education, to organisation of the School Library, and co-ordinated acquisition of professional and scientific literature of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary importance. For this purpose the National and University Library has a central filing system with requirements, lists of recent and recommended acquisitions. The central filing system carries out bibliographic supervision and assists in the formal and content related elaboration of material, and in the production of informatics aids in all units of the University Library system. The National and University Library provides the means for general and specialised data bases, and offers advice and training for all units of the University Library system. The commencement of graduate teaching in the academic year 2000-2001 will include a visit by first-year students to the National and University Library, where they will be met by the Dean of the School and the Director of the National and University Library. As future users of the Library they will be acquainted with all available facilities.

The co-operation commenced this year during postgraduate teaching with the introduction of a new course of lectures "Scientific information: sources, availability and searching" in the National and University Library. Possibilities for use of the available areas of the Library for permanent education, and for important meetings will ensure permanent co-operation of these two institutions.