

THE CYPRUS LIBRARY

(KYPRIAKE VIVLIOTHEKE)

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN NATIONAL LIBRARIANS

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1. Management of the library

After several years without proper management, 1999 was a critical year for the Cyprus Library when both a Director and an Advisory Council were selected. According to the Law on the Cyprus Library the Council's task is to advise the Minister of Education and Culture and the Director on everything that has to do with the administration of the Library.

2. Handling of electronic publications and formats

There has been no progress in this area.

3. Funding

Funding is one of our major problems but considering the fact that the staff needed to expedite the ordering/receipt/cataloging of materials is non-existent, more money for acquisitions would not be very useful. The book budget in 1999 remained at the 1998 level (20,000 Cypriot pounds). All the funds come from the government.

4. Legislation

No changes.

5. Buildings

The building facilities are inadequate for the needs of the Cyprus Library. At present the existing facilities consist of: the main building on the D' Avila Bastion of the old Venetian walls, a structure dating back to the mid-1920s and the Children's Library, another old building in the yard of a primary school that needs to be scrapped and a new premises found elsewhere.

An existing building was bought in 1991 to house the Library but the refusal of the company that rents the ground floor to evacuate the premises has stalled all efforts to renovate and utilize the building. A Committee was set up to draft specifications for an architectural contest to renovate the building but progress has been slow largely due to bureaucratic procedures and legal hurdles.

6. Staffing matters

One of our major problems is the lack of personnel (let alone trained personnel). The vision of a national library that led to the passing of the Law on the Cyprus Library in 1987 became a victim to government bureaucracy and the effort to hold down the exploding numbers of civil servants. In addition, for more than a decade the Library has been administered by individuals who had no library training with the exception of a brief period in the mid-1990's. The ultimate result was that things remained stagnant for many years and the Library had a very limited role to play while most Cypriots were unaware of its existence. Today the situation is still unacceptable but gradually improving.

Apart from the Director, there is an assistant librarian on loan from the Cultural Section of the Ministry of Education and Culture, a secretary and an assistant. Three other employees from the Cultural Section work three afternoons (14:30 - 17:15) a week. An educator with health problems on loan from the Ministry is staffing the Children's Library. Two librarian positions remain unfilled partly because there is a shortage of candidates with university degrees in library science but also due to the bureaucratic delays of the Civil Service Commission.

7. Information technology and networks

Thanks to the Year 2000 problem the Library has been able to upgrade all its personal computers but the planned setting up of a local network did not materialize.

8. The digital library

No changes.

9. Legal deposit of materials

No changes. The law needs to be amended in order to bring legal deposit to the Library rather than the Public Information Office under existing law.

10. Acquisitions

The book budget is grossly inadequate but considering the shortage of staff we could not have been able to spend the money and process the books. In 1999 our collections grew by more than 4,300 books, out of which 635 were donations, 693 were deposited to the ISBN collection and 672 were UN documents. It was also decided to strengthen our periodical collection with more than twenty new subscriptions, mainly of Greek periodicals.

11. Preservation & Conservation

No changes.

12. Services of readers

After a lengthy bureaucratic process the Library has managed to receive approval for access to the Internet and one PC is now available to users who seek information through the Internet.

In an effort to extend services to other categories of users that have not been well-served by libraries, the Cyprus Library in cooperation with the University of Cyprus Library is participating in the European funded program Accelerate, with the aim of improving access to library resources by individuals with eyesight problems. The program began in December 1999 and is scheduled to be completed in an eighteen month period.

13. Cultural events, exhibitions and publishing

Due to lack of the necessary resources (staff and funding) no cultural events/exhibitions could be organized by the Library. The Cyprus Bibliography for 1999 will be published in 2000 for the first time.

14. Library co-operation

The foundations for national cooperation have been laid with the establishment of the Cyprus Library Network but progress has been very slow. So far we have been able to create a home page in the Internet with a listing of all the periodicals held by the members but with no holdings information. Future goals include adding the holdings and extending cooperation through the exchange of articles and books. Some members of CLN have negotiated a contract with Infotrac (Searchbank) for access to four databases.

Participation in the European pilot program Accelerate entails the co-operation of the Cyprus Library with the University of Cyprus, the University of Macedonia (Greece), the Universities of Graz and Linz (Austria), and other institutions that cater to the needs of blind people.

15. Major celebrations (anniversaries and events)

Nothing notable.

16. Other notable information

None.

17. Organisation chart

The Cyprus Library is part of the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Director of the Library is answerable to the Minister himself. A seven-member Advisory Council is appointed by the Government for a three year term with the mission of advising the Director and the Minister on the administration of the Library.

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