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# Historical Milestones of Slovak Librarianship, 1989–2014

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## ABSTRACT

Slovakia is a young and progressive country that has undergone great changes since its establishment as a sovereign state. This paper describes the transformation of the Slovak library system after 1989 in the context of the political, societal, and legislative developments in the new democratic state. It highlights the historical milestones of the development of Slovak librarianship between 1989 and 2014, outlines the historical context of Slovak library legislation, explains the preparation and implementation of the new Library Act passed by the National Council of the Slovak Republic in May 2000, and provides an overview of statistical data for Slovak libraries during the last decade.

## INTRODUCTION

Slovak librarianship is a part of the mosaic of world librarianship. An early recognition of this fact is perhaps symbolized by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) holding its annual conference in Slovakia in 1978. The top representatives of international librarianship deliberated in the beautiful setting of the Vysoké Tatry Mountains by Lake Štrbské Pleso (Procházka, 2008). This heralded things to come. During the course of the past twenty-five years, the Slovak Librarians Association has invited a number of important representatives of international librarianship to Slovakia. International committees of IFLA sections have met in the Slovak capital twice since 1989. Building international relations remains one of the core priorities of Slovak librarianship.

## SLOVAKIA IN GENERAL

Following the splitting of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic, the Slovak Republic was established as an independent state on January 1,

1993, and Bratislava became its capital. Slovakia is a parliamentary democracy. In 1996, the country was divided into eight regions (all becoming self-governing in 2002) and seventy-nine districts. The Slovak Republic joined the European Union on May 1, 2004. The size of the republic is 49,035 square kilometers, with a population of almost 5.5 million (as of September 2014). The majority is Slovak (80.7 percent); 8.5 percent are of Hungarian nationality, and there is a smattering of other nationalities.

### LIBRARY LEGISLATION IN SLOVAKIA

For seventy years, the history of Slovak librarianship was inseparable from that of Czechoslovakia, a country created in 1918 at the end of World War I and that existed until the democratically elected governments of the Czech and Slovak republics agreed on dividing the country in 1992. While the long-term development of librarianship in the republics has been characterized by common developmental trends, it has also been shaped by a range of differences in the various parts of the joint state.

Slovak librarians became very active during the period of the changes that followed the Velvet Revolution of 1989, which transformed the unitary socialist state and brought about democracy in what became known as the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic. During the general assembly of the Slovak Librarians and Information Professionals Association, which had been previously funded by the Ministry of Culture starting in 1990, a new independent legal status, statutes, and new name—the Slovak Librarians Association (SLA)—were approved.

One of the first priorities of the SLA was to draft a new library act to replace the Library Act of 1959 and to provide the legislative framework for the new tasks to be performed by Slovak libraries in an information-based society. Preparation and implementation of the new Slovak library act, however, was a challenging process that required several years. A work group that included experts from the SLA, the Slovak National Library in Matica slovenská in Martin, and the University Library in Bratislava played a key role. One of the challenges encountered by the authors of the new law was the fact that it included a proposal that the Slovak National Library should gain legal personality and become independent of Matica slovenská, which is an organization established in the nineteenth century as a Slovak cultural association and that later laid the foundations of the Slovak National Library. Dealing with it has proved to be a sensitive political matter. In 1999, a national petition was created to marshal public support for the change. Silvia Stasselová, president of SLA, represented the petition board in its negotiations with state authorities. She presented the opinions and intentions of the expert community of librarians in both the media and the Slovak Parliament, arguing in favor of the National Library becoming an independent and apolitical institution, as is the case in democratic nations elsewhere (Stasselová, 2008).

Finally, on May 12, 2000, the first autonomous library act was passed by the National Council of the Slovak Republic, becoming effective on July 1, 2000.<sup>1</sup> In order to ensure the transparency of relations between the libraries and their funding authorities, the act unambiguously specified the rights and obligations of funding authorities, as well as the rights and obligations of libraries.

The act defined the Slovak Republic Library System and its place within the information system of the state. Moreover, it specified the roles of different types of libraries (scientific, academic, public, school, and special libraries) in a decentralized and cooperative system. With its seat in Martin, the National Library was also designated by the act as a state-funded organization with a strictly defined status and tasks, which included serving as a methodological center for all libraries within the Slovak library system. Additionally, the act defined the specific statuses of the University Library in Bratislava and the Slovak Scientific and Technical Information Center in the system of specialized scientific libraries.

### MILESTONES OF SLOVAK LIBRARIANSHIP AFTER 1989

With a library system long-based in socialist ideology though now superseded by events, new library structures after 1989 were shaped the hard way, partly because of the absence of adequate library legislation. The basic types of libraries—the National Library and scientific, academic, public, school, and special libraries—however, continued to operate after 1989. Their progress since then, especially during the past decade, is indicated in the appendix.

#### *1990*

Two pieces of legislation were passed in 1990 that defined the responsibilities of municipalities for municipal public libraries and those of the Slovak Ministry of Culture for regional and district public libraries.<sup>2</sup> The latter saved an important library-system element and ultimately helped mitigate the negative impact of financial difficulties on culture in the regions (Faklová, 1995).

Legally, however, there was still no central state-administration body that could manage libraries in Slovakia. A 1990 act on the organization of ministries and other government agencies stipulated that the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic was responsible for art, state language and literature, the landscape and monuments, publishing periodical and non-periodical literature, libraries and museums and their activities, and so on.<sup>3</sup> There is no mention, however, of anything that established the ministry as the central state-administrative body for libraries. The Ministry of Culture could exercise funding authority, however, in the case of four state scientific libraries (in Banská Bystrica, Košice, Prešov, and the University Library in Bratislava) and thirty-six regional and district public libraries;

but it could not assert any direct influence on the Slovak National Library, since it was still a part of *Matica slovenská*.

#### *1992*

In the period following the social and political changes of 1992, a number of foreign foundations became active in Slovakia. The US Mellon Foundation was particularly significant, since it began to support the Czech and Slovak Library Information Network (CASLIN) project in 1992. The goal of the project was to establish a network of libraries equipped with fully compatible software, as well as to create an online union catalog of Czech and Slovak library collections. From the very beginning, CASLIN was built as an open, integrated cooperative system based on shared catalogs. One of the key projects was to combine the catalogs of two major Czech libraries—the National Library in Prague and the State Scientific Library in Brno—and two major Slovak libraries: the National Library in *Matica slovenská* and the University Library in Bratislava. The foundation supported the CASLIN project with a three-year grant of USD 1.1 million designated for the acquisition of the equipment, including the Aleph 500 library information system, necessary for the project's implementation.

In 1992, through the initiative of the three largest Slovak libraries—the Slovak National Library, the Slovak Technical Library, and the University Library in Bratislava—the Slovak Library Association was established as an interest-based association of legal entities. Later, other member libraries joined the association also.

#### *1994*

On November 15, 1994, the newly established Slovak Library Association and the SLA, the oldest and the largest Slovak professional association of librarians (in existence since 1946), jointly organized a conference, *Slovak Librarianship in the Period of Societal Changes and before 2000*, in Bratislava. It was the first attempt in the new Slovak state of the Slovak community of librarians to create as a common platform a national library information system (Kurák, 1994).

#### *1995*

Act no. 74/1995 amending Act no. 347/1990 on the Organization of Ministries and Other Central Bodies of State Administration of the Slovak Republic, as subsequently amended, made no reference to libraries or library management.

#### *1996*

The first Slovak librarians congress, *Libraries '96*, was held in Nitra during May 14–15, 1996. The main organizers were the SLA, Slovak Library Association, Slovak National Library in *Matica slovenská*, and the Ministry of Culture. The main topic was the transformation of librarianship in Slovakia, for which the congress provided a platform for the free exchange

of expert opinion. What suitable ways and means were to be employed to help improve the organizational and economic conditions of Slovak libraries and provide them with the expertise needed to improve the quality and accessibility of library and information services offered to the public? The underlying aim of the congress was to provide opportunities for librarians to discuss their problems, define plans for the future, and to raise awareness of the importance of library and information-related activities in the education of Slovak citizens and the cultural development of Slovakia.

In 1996, two pieces of legislation established new conditions for the creation and operation of libraries.<sup>4</sup> These acts allowed for the transfer of cultural organizations (including libraries) from the authority of the Ministry of Culture to the authority of relevant regional and district agencies, including municipalities.<sup>5</sup> On July 1, 1996, the Ministry of Culture established regional cultural centers (RCCs), with public district libraries subsumed into them. Nominated to manage the RCCs were state administrators, many of whom were not qualified to perform such a specialized and challenging task.

### 1997

*Matica slovenská* became a nonstate public institution with a specific legal mandate.<sup>6</sup> The Slovak National Library was retained as a part of it, with the library's director being appointed by its chairman. This was in opposition to the proposal of the Ministry of Culture, which intended to retain for itself the funding authority for the National Library and the responsibility for appointing the library's director. The ministry reacted to the passing of the *Matica slovenská* act by adopting a measure on July 1, 1997, which revoked the role of the Slovak National Library in *Matica slovenská* as the central methodological entity for Slovakian libraries. Instead, it established the National Library Center (NLC) in the University Library in Bratislava. In this new organizational structure, the University Library now housed two major national library components: the National Center for Library Culture, and the Central Office of International Library and Information Cooperation. The University Library continued to serve as a Central Library of the Slovak Republic until 1999 (Androvič, 1997).

During October 14–15, 1997, the Slovak Libraries '97 conference was held in Sielnica. It was devoted to the topic of what constitutes a "modern" national library system and continues to serve as the focus for discussions about the transformation of Slovak libraries. The conference was organized by both the SLA and the Slovak Library Association, with representatives of the Ministry of Culture also being present. Major criticisms emerged about the problematic situation of public libraries after their integration into RCCs (together with theaters, museums, galleries, cultural centers, and, in some regions, observatories). Among the conference's declarations was the following:

The Conference requires relevant regional authorities to set exact rules for specific execution and control of the budgets allocated to specialized library units within regional cultural centers, and for defining the scope of the authority and activities performed by intendancies [administrators] in relation to libraries. Pursuant to Act no. 186/1997 Coll., Conference participants also require that the operation of these libraries within the regional cultural centers be reviewed and that their transfer to the direct control of regional authorities be re-considered. We propose that former district public libraries receive new foundation charters which grant them legal personality and define their mission and methodological activities, even in the districts where district libraries have not yet been established. (Vyhlásenie účastníkov konferencie Slovenské knižnice '97, 1997, pp. 6–7)

### 1999

Because of the negative effects of the RRCs on the cultural organizations working within them, they were eliminated on April 1, 1999.<sup>7</sup> All organizations that had previously been integrated into these centers were reinstated as independent legal entities, and regional authorities were reinstated with overseeing them.

During November 22–23, 1999, following the Slovak Libraries '97 conference, the second Slovak librarians congress, Libraries for the 21st Century, was held in the city of Kosice. It too was organized by the SLA, the Slovak Library Association, and the Ministry of Culture. The congress is regarded as a ground-breaking event because of the attention it generated. Even the president of the Slovak Republic himself, Rudolf Schuster, sent a letter of greeting to participants. The aim of the congress was to define the priorities and principles that would govern the strategy for library development in the Slovak Republic for the period from 1999 to 2005. Issues like computerization and Slovak libraries' integration into international library structures were also discussed. An open letter by the congress's participants declared the following:

Passing of the new Library Act at the earliest date possible is vital for the successful development of the library and information system. Passing of the Act as it has been drafted shall secure promotion and development of library services as an important factor in developing and maintaining democracy. We call upon the National Council of the Slovak Republic, the Government of the Slovak Republic and the expert as well as the general public to acknowledge our discontent with the status of the Slovak National Library in *Matica slovenská*, which has become the subject of a political game even though the issue in question is really a professional one. The Slovak National Library currently exists as a part of *Matica slovenská*. The continuation of this situation has a negative impact both on the Library and its professional prestige. During the last ten years, *Matica slovenská* has become politicized and, thus, operation of the Slovak National Library within the structure of *Matica slovenská* is in stark contrast with the fundamental condition applying to a national library operation—that it should be a non-political

organization. With regard to the authority of the National Council of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Slovak Republic, we ask these to support our effort to make the Slovak National Library in Matica slovenská in Martin a national library that will be an economically-autonomous legal personality funded directly from the State Budget through the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic. (Otvorený List Účastníkov, 1999, pp. 32–33)

### 2000

In the period following the Libraries for the 21st Century congress, the professional community of Slovak librarians initiated a nationwide petition in favor of passing the new library act that would guarantee the legal independence of the National Library. The petition had no media support, and it lasted for one month, but by the beginning of 2000, a total of 7,803 individuals, mostly the representatives of experts from the general public and library staffers, had signed the petition. The petition and a letter addressed to the president of the Slovak Republic, the prime minister, and the chairman of the National Council of the Slovak Republic were sent out in March 2000 by Stasselová, president of the SLA.

The first “Week of Slovak Libraries” was held between March 27 and April 2, 2000. The event was launched by Milan Kňažko, the then Minister of Culture, on the premises of the University Library in Bratislava. All types of libraries in all regions of the country took part in the preparation of the special events organized for the week. The former Minister of Education, Milan Ftáčnik, was a guest speaker during one of the flagship events—the expert seminar titled “The Slovak Pedagogical Library and Its Role in the Process of Transforming the Education System.” A gala occasion on March 31, 2000, in the State Scientific Library in Banská Bystrica, “Library–Librarian–Society–Citizen,” had the president of the Slovak Republic as guest of honor (Jurášová, 2000).

The 30th international symposium of INFOS, INFOS 2000: Culture of the Information Age, was held in the Vysoké Tatry Mountains during April 3–6, 2000. During the symposium’s official opening, Wim van Drimmelen, the director of National Library of the Netherlands and president of the Conference of European National Librarians (CENL), delivered an address. He spoke about the importance of effective and independent national libraries for the development of national library systems. His visit symbolically crowned the successful efforts of the Slovak community of librarians to establish the Slovak National Library in Martin as an independent legal entity with its own budget.

Finally, on May 12, 2000, partly as a result of the activities of the petition committee during the period between the end of 1999 and March 2000, the National Council passed the first Slovak Library Act. This act defined the status and roles of all libraries in Slovakia, the requirements for the provision of library and information services to the public, and the obliga-

tions of both libraries and their funding authorities, as well as the scope of authority of the Ministry of Culture.<sup>8</sup>

The act also established the National Library in Martin as a state-funded institution that would serve as the central methodological body for the entire Slovak library system. A separate section of the act defined the mission and main tasks to be performed by the National Library on the basis of the internationally recommended norms of ISO 2789:1974 ("International Library Statistics"). The library was now able to function as a national library in a way similar to the national libraries of other democratic states (Katuščík, 2000, p. 76) and become a foundation of the Slovak library system.

The inaugural ceremony of the National Library was held in the presence of Minister Kňažko, who appointed Monseigneur Peter Cabadaj as interim director of the library until the formal process could take place for selecting a permanent director. In his address, Kňažko denied accusations of an attempt having been made to destroy *Matica slovenská*, stressing instead the historical role of an independent National Library and praising the contribution of *Matica slovenská* to the Slovak Republic's culture and cultural heritage (Sabov, 2000).

On May 8, 2000, Dušan Katuščík was installed as the first general director of the National Library. In his inauguration speech, he spoke of his vision for the library and his specific goals. Katuščík could not avoid the issue of the relations between the National Library and *Matica slovenská*, stressing repeatedly that these relations must not result in escalating polarization and tension but instead be based on the principle of cooperation between two equal partners (Cabadaj, 2000).

### *2001*

In 2001, the government issued the policy document "Slovak Librarianship Development Strategy until 2006."<sup>9</sup> This was the first time the government had dealt directly with the complex issues of Slovak librarianship. The document was an important joint achievement of the professional community of Slovak librarians and the Ministry of Culture. It defined the tasks to be carried out by individual members of the government, as well as offering guidance for the leading representatives of independent territorial administrations. The purpose of the document was to establish medium-term strategic goals for libraries operating within the Slovak library system, treating library policy as a facet of state information and cultural policy. The main strategic tasks for all Slovak libraries were identified as

- automation;
- the provision of information sources;
- the provision of library and information services to disadvantaged users;
- the salvaging, stabilizing, and preserving of traditional information carriers;

- the protecting of and opening library collections to the public;
- the training of library staff members and human resources development;
- the construction, repair, and maintenance of library buildings; and
- promoting information literacy and youth education.

The Central Library Council (CLC) was established as an advisory body to the Minister of Culture for library-related issues on May 16, 2001. Represented on the council were the directors of the major Slovak libraries and the top representatives of the SLA and the Slovak Library Association, and it was presided over by the general director of the national library.

High-level meetings of the representatives of the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Finance, and the government were held during 2000–2001. These resulted in approval of the cofinancing of the Multifunctional Cultural and Library Center Restoration and Revitalization of the Historical Buildings of the University Library in Bratislava project (Lechner, 2004),<sup>10</sup> which was supported by credit provided by the Council of Europe Development Bank of over 137 million SKK (Slovak koruna) (approximately €4.5 million). This important project was designed to transform the historic buildings of the University Library in Bratislava into a modern library, with a capacity of 570 study places and a multifunctional cultural center. It was completed in 2006 (Bahna & Šimkovič, 2009).

### 2002

The Program of Computerization of Slovak Libraries was approved in July 2002.<sup>11</sup> The rationale for the program was the fact that during the coming years, the entire library system was supposed to focus on the provision of library and information services by means of information and communications technology (ICT). An information-oriented library system was to become an important element in the support of contemporary science, education, culture, and the economy of the Slovak Republic.

Following the approval of the computerization program, the Library and Information System of the Third Generation (LIS3G) project was established in 2002. Since 2003, the National Library and participating member libraries have been using the VTLS integrated library and information system, Virtua. Thus, all libraries funded by the Ministry of Culture now use the same software. Moreover, the LIS3G project created the Slovenská knižnica (Slovak library) web portal through which library catalogs and collections, as well as the digital library portal Memoria slova, can be accessed (Katuščák, 2004). The implementation of the LIS3G project in Slovak libraries, however, resulted in two key Slovak libraries—the National Library in Martin and the University Library in Bratislava—dropping out of the original (1992) Czech–Slovak CASLIN project, which consequently disrupted the project’s Czechoslovak integrity.

2003

Slovakia joined the Council of Europe Member States National Cultural Policy Review Program in 2000. The July 2002 report, *National Cultural Policy of the Slovak Republic*, was officially presented to the council's Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage, and Landscape, which met in Strasbourg, France, in February 2003. A related document was the December 2002 *National Cultural Policy of the Slovak Republic: Report of a Group of European Experts*, which also included the evaluation of Slovak libraries. This report was critical of library funding, observing that in 2000, the state earmarked 8 percent of the total cultural budget for this sector—considerably less than that for theater (18 percent) and an amount that was the same as the one-off sum set aside for the restoration of the Bratislava Castle Museum (Council of Europe Steering Committee, 2003). The *National Cultural Policy of the Slovak Republic* report defined the status quo, identified the weak areas in Slovakia's culture, and stressed the importance of culture for the healthy development of society as well as for the strengthening of democratic principles in the process of international integration. About Slovak libraries, the report observed that “in spite of the increased attention given to libraries by the Slovak Government, their potential is underrated and the importance as well as influence of libraries in their capacity of societal institutions does not match the status libraries enjoy in other developed countries” (Faklová, 2005, p. 38). This is influenced by a number of factors:

- The perception of libraries is marked by persistent social depreciation.
- Libraries are only recently starting to be perceived as a major economic factor in societal development.
- The cultural and social dimensions of libraries are persistently viewed from the perspective of ideological destruction, which only allows for a very narrow space for the modern regard of library activities.

2004

A festive launching of the InfoLib library and information theory and practice portal ranked among the top events organized by the SLA for the Week of Slovak Libraries 2004. The ceremony culminated in the seminar “Information Education as a Challenge for Librarians of the 21st Century,” which was held in the State Scientific Library in Banská Bystrica (Knížničný Portál InfoLib vykročil, 2004). The InfoLib portal was prepared as a part of the project supported by the Open Society Foundation, with the SLA responsible for the operation of the portal as well as for its related financial matters after 2004. InfoLib has been an extremely popular means of communication for the entire Slovak library community. In 2004, the portal won two awards: ITAPA's (Information Technologies and Public Administration) Certificate of Merit; and the INFORUM International

Conference Prize (Portál InfoLib, 2004). (InfoLib is available at <http://www.infolib.sk>.)

### 2005

During its general assembly in December 2005, the SLA resolved to sponsor, in 2006, an international event for promoting reading among children, "A Night with Andersen." The event originally was the idea of two Czech librarians, then grew to become international, with the Slovak Republic ranking second in the world in terms of the number of participating libraries and children. During this annual event, children are invited to spend the night in public and school libraries, where librarians and important cultural figures prepare various activities for them. "A Night with Andersen" takes place on the last Friday in March and marks both the International Children's Book Day and Hans Christian Andersen's birthday. The idea is that this unique experience will foster in children a positive attitude toward reading and culture as well as toward libraries. About 1,500 children in 45 libraries participated in the event in 2006; by 2014, some 9,000 children and 221 public and school libraries throughout Slovakia were taking part. Overall, around 45,000 children have participated in the nine iterations of the event so far. The SLA has been collaborating in preparing the event with its long-standing partners, Slovart Publishing House and Slovak Radio and Television (RTVS). The latter covers the event with live reports and features relevant topics, such as the importance of reading and libraries (Stasselová, 2010).

### 2006

In June 2006, the Libraries 2007–2013 conference was held in Martin, organized by the National Library, the Slovak Library Association, and the SLA. The conference aimed to evaluate how well the government's librarianship-development strategy and program of the computerization of libraries had been implemented to date and also to introduce the main strategic areas of development for the Slovak library system beginning in 2007 and extending through 2013 (Katuščák, 2006).

The SLA celebrated its sixtieth anniversary on December 4, 2006, with a gala event attended by representatives of library associations from the Czech Republic, Croatia, Germany, and the Netherlands. The theme of the meeting was "Sixty Years of the Librarians Association Activities in Slovakia from the Perspective of European Cooperation: Librarians Associations and Their Role in Lobbying." Since 1990, the SLA has been an independent voluntary civic association, following the tradition of its predecessors. Before 1989, the activities of the association were fully subsidized by the Ministry of Culture, and it had its own premises and salaried staff; since then, however, it has been operating on a voluntary basis and with limited funding, its main source of income being membership fees (Čelková, 2007).

*2007*

In November 2007, the Strategy of Development of the Slovak Libraries for the Period 2008–2013 was issued (Stratégia Rozvoja Slovenského Knihovníctva na Roky 2008–2013, 2007).<sup>12</sup> Conceptually, what was proposed follows the strategy adopted for the previous period, involving eight strategic tasks:

- The automation of libraries
- The provision of information sources for libraries
- The provision of library and information services
- The creation, protection, and opening up of a digitized cultural and scientific heritage
- The protection of historical library collections
- Human resources development and continuing education for library staff
- The promotion of lifelong learning and the information literacy of users
- The construction and renovation of library buildings and the preservation of library collections

The Ministry of Culture was charged with carrying out these tasks. Specific recommendations were also issued for the chairs of self-governing regions, mayors, and the president of the Slovak Academy of Sciences.

*2010*

In March 2010, Minister of Culture Marek Maďarič dismissed the general director of the National Library, Dušan Katuščák. Both the Slovak Library Association and the SLA issued subsequent statements objecting to the dismissal and sent them to the media (Vyhlásenie Slovenskej asociácie Knížníc, 2010). In October 2010, following the installation of a new government, selection procedures involving secret ballots were implemented for the general director position, with the result that Katuščák was reinstated.

*2011*

In 2011, the president of the American Library Association (ALA), Roberta Stevens, visited Slovakia as a guest of the SLA. She was the keynote speaker at the INFOS 2011 international symposium during May 9–12 and also lectured in several Slovak regions (Stasselová, 2011c). This was the thirty-sixth meeting of INFOS, and presidents of library associations were present (two from Slovakia, others from Czech Republic, Croatia, Austria, and the United States) (Stasselová, 2011a). In 2011, the SLA commemorated its sixty-fifth anniversary (Stasselová, 2011b).

*2012*

Following the parliamentary elections of March 2012 and pursuant to Article 113 of the Slovak Constitution, the newly appointed Slovak govern-

ment presented its “Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak Republic” to the National Council in May 2012. The manifesto included the following:

The Government is aware that culture has been neglected and its importance underestimated in the long-run, and it realizes that the lack of systemic changes has led to inadequate conditions for its development. A policy that recognizes the social importance of culture and provides stronger support is necessary. Culture is viewed as a creative area that can play its part in the development of a knowledge-based society and overall competitiveness, and ultimately to Slovakia’s social and economic growth . . . the Government considers the role of national cultural institutions to be irreplaceable and, therefore, their further development will be supported. (Vláda Slovenskej republiky, 2012, n.p.)

In May 2012, the general director of the National Library resigned. The selection procedure for the vacated position was held in early July, with Katarína Krištofová being appointed as the new general director. The full version of her “Concept of Slovak National Library Development,” which she initially presented during the selection process, was published in a late 2012 issue of the journal *Knižnica* (Krištofová, 2012).

During July–August 2012, the SLA carried out the first detailed survey of the country’s library facilities. It focused on the quality and capacity of library buildings, premises, and interiors, as well as on their shortcomings as perceived by library users and staff members. In the period after 2000, the historic buildings of the University Library in Bratislava and the State Scientific Library in Banská Bystrica were remodeled, and the premises of the State Scientific Library in Košice were partially remodeled. The opening of the new Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information in Bratislava had taken place in 2008. Several library buildings had been recently built: the University Library of the Technical University of Košice, and the University Library of the Catholic University in Ružomberok. The survey results were published in *Knižnica* (Stasselová, 2012, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c, 2013d, 2013e). Unlike the situation regarding scientific and university libraries, new buildings in Slovakia for public libraries are extremely rare. The survey results indicated that many Slovak library buildings will soon need to be remodeled and modernized.

In September 2012, the government established the Slovak Government Council for Culture (SGCC) as an advisory body for issues related to the development, creation, and promotion of culture and the preservation of the country’s cultural heritage.<sup>13</sup> The SGCC consists of twenty-four members, including several acting ministers, and it is presided over by the Minister of Culture. The president of the SLA was appointed a member of the council.

During September 24–25, 2012, the Libraries 2012 conference was held in Liptovský Ján, organized by the SLA, the Slovak Library Association, the National Library, and the University Library in Bratislava (*Zborník z Kon-*

*ferencie Knižnice 2012, 2012*). The purpose of the conference was to assess the state of Slovak librarianship following the Strategy of Development of the Slovak Libraries for the Period 2008–2013 and to recommend new strategies for the future. These recommendations will become the basis for preparing the librarianship-development for 2015–2020.

### 2013

Michael Dowling, director of the international-relations office of the ALA, visited Slovakia in March as a guest of the SLA during the Week of Slovak Libraries 2013. His visit was the culmination of a successful two-year project, financially supported by the US embassy in Slovakia, that aimed at increasing cooperation between the SLA and the ALA.

In 2013, the CLC, created in 2001 but whose role had been suspended in 2012, was restored. The council is an advisory body to the Ministry of Culture. It proposes conceptual, strategic, organizational, and legislative measures regarding librarianship and the library system and also submits proposals and recommendations concerning the priorities and needs of the library system, librarianship, libraries, and librarians. One of the key tasks of the CLC will be drafting the librarianship-development strategic plan for 2015–2020, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture. Another task of the council will be to work with the ministry in drafting a new library act, since some provisions in the current act (passed in 2000) require changes that reflect the new role that libraries play in a knowledge-based society.

### 2014

Following the official registration of changes in the statutes by the Ministry of Culture, the name of the oldest and largest librarians association changed from the Slovak Librarians Association (SLA) to the Slovak Librarians and Libraries Association (SLLA) as of January 2014. Delegates at the general assembly in December 2013 in Bratislava voted in favor of the change, endorsing the argument that the original name (from 1990) no longer reflected the actual membership, which now consisted of both institutional and individual members (Stasselová, 2014, p. 5).

In March 2014, the work commenced of the Temporary Working Group of the Government Council for Culture on the Re-Codification of the Copyright Act. The interests of Slovak librarianship in relevant statutory exceptions that should be granted to libraries in accordance with the recommendations of international librarians associations, such as IFLA and EBLIDA, were represented by Katarína Krištofová, general director of the National Library; Silvia Stasselová, member of the Government Council for Culture and president of the SLLA; and Alojz Androvič, director of computerization and integration at the University Library in Bratislava and vice president of the SLLA. The new copyright act should become effective in 2015, subject to the Slovak National Council's approval.

The Developmental Strategy for Slovak Culture for 2014–2020 was enacted in 2014. Representatives of various cultural institutions took part in the drafting of the strategy, library interests being represented by Stasselová.

A unique digital library and digital archives (DIKDA) project financed with EU structural funds (€49.6 million) is being implemented in the National Library, to be completed in 2015. The project aims to digitize over 2.5 million items from the Slovakia collections of the National Library and the National Archives and will be part of a Digitalization and Conservation Center for Library and Archive Documents. The most recently digitalized documents are available to the public in accordance with current copyright law. The collections digitized by the National Library will also be available through the European libraries, museums, and archives portal, Europeana (<http://www.europeana.eu/portal/>).

## APPENDIX: SLOVAK LIBRARIES IN FIGURES

Table 1. Number of libraries according to the type of library in the Slovak Republic (2003–2013)

Year	Public libraries	Research libraries	Special libraries	Academic libraries	School libraries	Total number of libraries
<b>2003</b>	2,676	12	397	22	5,012	<b>8,119</b>
<b>2004</b>	2,677	12	380	46	5,360	<b>8,475</b>
<b>2005</b>	2,658	12	357	46	5,483	<b>8,556</b>
<b>2006</b>	2,231	12	359	60	5,273	<b>7,935</b>
<b>2007</b>	2,153	9	348	62	4,913	<b>7,485</b>
<b>2008</b>	2,116	9	325	58	4,554	<b>7,062</b>
<b>2009</b>	2,061	9	313	56	4,046	<b>6,485</b>
<b>2010</b>	1,990	9	307	58	1,859	<b>4,223</b>
<b>2011</b>	1,916	9	308	59	1,945	<b>4,237</b>
<b>2012</b>	1,891	9	292	59	1,812	<b>4,063</b>
<b>2013</b>	1,789	9	286	59	1,759	<b>3,902</b>

Table 2. Number of public libraries in the Slovak Republic (1989–2013)

Year	Public libraries	Year	Public libraries
<b>1989</b>	2,647	<b>2004</b>	2,677
<b>1990</b>	2,627	<b>2005</b>	2,658
<b>1993</b>	2,683	<b>2006</b>	2,231
<b>1995</b>	2,710	<b>2007</b>	2,153
<b>1996</b>	2,706	<b>2008</b>	2,116
<b>1999</b>	2,696	<b>2009</b>	2,061
<b>2000</b>	2,657	<b>2010</b>	1,990
<b>2001</b>	2,656	<b>2011</b>	1,916
<b>2002</b>	2,690	<b>2012</b>	1,891
<b>2003</b>	2,676	<b>2013</b>	1,789

Table 3. Library holdings according to the type of library in the Slovak Republic (2003–2013)

Year	Public libraries	Research libraries	Special libraries	Academic libraries	School libraries	Total number of library holdings
<b>2003</b>	18,480,935	15,962,180	4,777,451	4,856,111	9,158,112	<b>53,234,789</b>
<b>2004</b>	18,396,360	16,072,098	4,694,402	3,576,570	9,659,091	<b>52,398,521</b>
<b>2005</b>	18,365,646	18,801,044	4,474,975	3,630,895	9,551,597	<b>54,824,157</b>
<b>2006</b>	17,597,761	17,880,279	4,570,699	5,565,782	9,313,216	<b>54,927,737</b>
<b>2007</b>	17,406,761	17,325,526	4,472,836	5,705,804	9,003,296	<b>53,914,223</b>
<b>2008</b>	17,262,649	17,913,221	4,305,874	5,780,944	8,571,063	<b>53,833,751</b>
<b>2009</b>	17,044,947	13,846,356	4,227,574	5,884,379	7,942,209	<b>48,945,465</b>
<b>2010</b>	16,854,591	13,959,459	4,111,595	5,975,887	7,054,265	<b>47,955,797</b>
<b>2011</b>	16,534,607	14,086,950	4,113,200	6,007,846	7,075,292	<b>47,817,895</b>
<b>2012</b>	16,388,061	14,211,447	3,964,754	6,110,689	6,456,457	<b>47,131,408</b>
<b>2013</b>	16,030,662	14,064,569	3,973,835	6,238,718	6,445,485	<b>46,753,269</b>

Table 4. Annual increase of library holdings according to the type of library in the Slovak Republic (2003–2013)

Year	Public libraries	Research libraries	Special libraries	Academic libraries	School libraries	Total number of library holdings
<b>2003</b>	350,112	135,182	79,781	130,553	99,877	<b>795,505</b>
<b>2004</b>	304,091	165,646	74,913	87,201	144,376	<b>776,227</b>
<b>2005</b>	351,110	597,998	67,636	93,217	170,692	<b>1,280,653</b>
<b>2006</b>	322,319	607,834	59,606	309,750	145,815	<b>1,445,324</b>
<b>2007</b>	307,609	700,594	71,091	242,433	167,275	<b>1,489,002</b>
<b>2008</b>	304,292	605,976	67,162	183,126	150,405	<b>1,310,961</b>
<b>2009</b>	296,098	136,847	53,245	182,950	138,707	<b>807,847</b>
<b>2010</b>	261,838	163,272	45,067	239,106	143,187	<b>852,470</b>
<b>2011</b>	259,930	162,676	48,950	177,335	123,272	<b>772,163</b>
<b>2012</b>	243,932	147,443	53,616	179,091	125,023	<b>749,105</b>
<b>2013</b>	248,246	153,108	39,993	202,376	172,041	<b>815,764</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>						<b>11,095,021</b>

Table 5. Number of library loans according to the type of library in the Slovak Republic (2003–2013)

Year	Public libraries	Research libraries	Special libraries	Academic libraries	School libraries	Total number of library loans
<b>2003</b>	23,708,580	2,878,680	1,385,450	2,721,552	1,538,650	<b>32,232,912</b>
<b>2004</b>	23,129,268	2,735,937	1,391,184	2,084,383	1,593,738	<b>30,934,510</b>
<b>2005</b>	21,482,289	3,564,203	1,299,996	1,895,878	1,560,573	<b>29,802,939</b>
<b>2006</b>	20,819,305	3,735,544	1,205,693	2,613,975	1,493,226	<b>29,867,743</b>
<b>2007</b>	20,102,704	2,699,517	1,122,151	2,767,893	1,473,755	<b>28,166,020</b>
<b>2008</b>	19,098,030	2,633,847	1,049,287	2,824,807	1,399,090	<b>27,005,061</b>
<b>2009</b>	18,519,384	2,687,955	1,039,843	2,889,262	1,298,598	<b>26,435,042</b>
<b>2010</b>	18,127,505	2,913,252	984,369	3,623,747	1,180,179	<b>26,829,052</b>
<b>2011</b>	17,475,143	2,907,824	997,699	3,163,695	1,226,318	<b>25,770,679</b>
<b>2012</b>	16,899,062	2,780,736	820,666	3,042,201	1,259,539	<b>24,802,204</b>
<b>2013</b>	16,112,766	2,292,938	781,512	3,094,449	1,333,583	<b>23,615,248</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>						<b>305,461,410</b>

Table 6. Number of registered users according to the type of library in the Slovak Republic (2003–2013)

Year	Public libraries	Research libraries	Special libraries	Academic libraries	School libraries	Total number of registered users
<b>2003</b>	618,367	86,464	91,543	134,979	416,596	<b>1,347,949</b>
<b>2004</b>	601,869	90,127	84,916	114,815	425,216	<b>1,316,943</b>
<b>2005</b>	578,295	110,582	75,599	137,318	420,586	<b>1,322,380</b>
<b>2006</b>	563,341	114,530	84,325	154,604	416,144	<b>1,332,944</b>
<b>2007</b>	546,778	83,709	76,161	149,424	385,981	<b>1,242,053</b>
<b>2008</b>	523,639	70,583	67,961	171,471	373,452	<b>1,207,106</b>
<b>2009</b>	512,958	61,853	66,568	184,744	326,328	<b>1,152,451</b>
<b>2010</b>	506,248	72,824	64,186	184,600	321,850	<b>1,149,708</b>
<b>2011</b>	485,822	73,536	66,487	185,057	320,588	<b>1,131,490</b>
<b>2012</b>	470,429	77,937	59,761	227,035	307,288	<b>1,142,450</b>
<b>2013</b>	445,061	76,637	56,998	183,235	306,594	<b>1,068,525</b>

Table 7. Number of public events according to the type of library in the Slovak Republic (2003–2013)

Year	Public libraries	Research libraries	Special libraries	Academic libraries	School libraries	Total number of public events
<b>2003</b>	22,495	696	1,584	573	10,675	<b>36,023</b>
<b>2004</b>	23,003	787	2,978	1,263	10,648	<b>38,679</b>
<b>2005</b>	22,983	1,211	2,221	1,495	11,128	<b>39,038</b>
<b>2006</b>	23,529	1,684	2,367	1,718	12,192	<b>41,490</b>
<b>2007</b>	24,438	1,494	2,755	3,046	11,197	<b>42,930</b>
<b>2008</b>	24,075	1,988	3,086	1,367	12,455	<b>42,971</b>
<b>2009</b>	25,023	13,904	2,570	2,151	12,464	<b>56,112</b>
<b>2010</b>	26,599	1,416	3,043	1,892	12,774	<b>45,724</b>
<b>2011</b>	27,373	1,701	2,516	1,101	19,056	<b>51,747</b>
<b>2012</b>	27,399	1,827	2,786	1,179	23,296	<b>56,487</b>
<b>2013</b>	28,140	2,097	2,770	1,421	33,354	<b>67,782</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>						<b>518,983</b>

Table 8. Number of internet-connected computers for library users according to type of library in the Slovak Republic (2003–2013)

Year	Public libraries	Research libraries	Special libraries	Academic libraries	School libraries	Total number of computers
<b>2003</b>	211	177	86	362	138	<b>974</b>
<b>2004</b>	298	200	107	407	206	<b>1,218</b>
<b>2005</b>	415	289	101	482	334	<b>1,621</b>
<b>2006</b>	660	309	108	836	482	<b>2,395</b>
<b>2007</b>	1,523	256	98	937	605	<b>3,419</b>
<b>2008</b>	1,690	404	121	1,033	765	<b>4,013</b>
<b>2009</b>	1,783	402	90	1,139	1,069	<b>4,483</b>
<b>2010</b>	1,879	428	141	1,370	1,278	<b>5,096</b>
<b>2011</b>	1,869	409	111	1,357	1,368	<b>5,114</b>
<b>2012</b>	1,838	401	117	1,403	1,470	<b>5,229</b>
<b>2013</b>	1,851	359	118	1,450	1,873	<b>5,651</b>

Table 9. Number of librarians according to type of library in the Slovak Republic (2003–2013)

Year	Public libraries	Research libraries	Special libraries	Academic libraries	School libraries	Total number of library employees
<b>2003</b>	1,709	961	495	509	2,829	<b>6,503</b>
<b>2004</b>	1,656	1,012	451	505	2,705	<b>6,329</b>
<b>2005</b>	1,641	1,023	440	501	2,658	<b>6,263</b>
<b>2006</b>	1,625	1,056	436	548	2,552	<b>6,217</b>
<b>2007</b>	1,599	941	365	551	2,450	<b>5,906</b>
<b>2008</b>	1,592	876	373	545	2,152	<b>5,538</b>
<b>2009</b>	1,576	875	362	580	1,860	<b>5,253</b>
<b>2010</b>	1,513	873	340	589	2,370	<b>5,685</b>
<b>2011</b>	1,462	814	316	579	2,394	<b>5,565</b>
<b>2012</b>	1,402	756	302	581	2,202	<b>5,243</b>
<b>2013</b>	1,389	829	304	589	2,150	<b>5,261</b>

Table 10. Annual budget according to type of library in the Slovak Republic (2003–2013)

Year	Public libraries	Research libraries	Special libraries	Academic libraries	School libraries	Total (€)
<b>2003</b>	13,640,696	11,935,172	2,958,508	5,549,722	821,515	<b>34,905,613</b>
<b>2004</b>	14,999,389	14,572,894	4,387,805	3,183,328	565,616	<b>37,709,032</b>
<b>2005</b>	16,393,779	22,351,424	3,893,016	3,575,925	697,385	<b>46,911,529</b>
<b>2006</b>	17,384,661	15,515,126	4,326,786	5,350,604	771,983	<b>43,349,160</b>
<b>2007</b>	19,366,594	18,043,351	6,072,993	5,833,934	929,908	<b>50,246,780</b>
<b>2008</b>	20,005,114	22,500,626	4,605,950	5,964,836	1,022,405	<b>54,098,931</b>
<b>2009</b>	20,889,299	17,738,830	4,441,004	6,349,702	2,157,284	<b>51,576,119</b>
<b>2010</b>	20,471,980	15,622,530	4,891,687	7,076,821	1,094,446	<b>49,157,464</b>
<b>2011</b>	19,862,828	14,600,763	4,001,792	7,635,247	1,232,572	<b>47,333,202</b>
<b>2012</b>	20,090,665	15,863,489	4,062,597	6,532,157	1,109,675	<b>47,658,583</b>
<b>2013</b>	20,536,853	17,718,978	4,100,556	6,955,111	1,268,424	<b>50,579,922</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>						<b>513,526,335</b>

## NOTES

1. Act no. 183/2000 Coll. on Libraries.
2. Act no. 369/1990 Coll. on Municipal Administration; Act no. 518/1990 Coll. on the Transition of the Foundation Function.
3. Act no. 347/1990 Coll. on the Organization of Ministries and Other Central Bodies of State Administration of the Slovak Republic.
4. Act no. 221/1996 Coll. on the Territorial and Administrative System of the Slovak Republic; Act no. 222/1996 Coll. on the Organization of Local State Administration.
5. This was also confirmed by Act no. 296/1996 on the Amendment and Supplement of Act no. 53/1959 on the Unified System of Libraries (Library Act).
6. Act no. 68/1997 Coll. on the Organization of Matica slovenská.
7. Act no. 303/1995 Coll. on Budgetary Rules.
8. Act no. 183/2000 Coll. on Libraries.
9. Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic no. 310 of April 11, 2001.
10. Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic no. 344 of April 19, 2001.
11. Based on Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic no. 310/2001 on the Slovak Librarianship Development Strategy until 2006; Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic no. 801/2002.

12. Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic no. 943/2007 on the Strategy of Development of the Slovak Libraries for the Period 2008–2013.
13. Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic no. 456/2012.

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