

Latvi a

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State Agency Culture Information Systems

Introduction

Cultural Policy

The Latvian cultural policy model is organised around the Ministry of Culture, that is the main institution creating and co-ordinating the state cultural policy. Almost in all the cultural branches there are advisory boards or councils that involve culture operators, experts, representatives of non-governmental organisations, who actively participate in the policy making process. The National Board of Culture established in 1995 is the most important advisory body to the Ministry of Culture. Its main tasks are to promote public participation in cultural life and to enhance co-operation between the state, public institutions and individuals. Advisory councils include fields that are under the responsibility of the Ministry - literature and publishing, music, theatre, film, visual arts, museums, library, cultural heritage, property rights. There are also several boards presiding over funds, boards of various cultural establishments, groups of counsellors.

Cultural Policy documents

Main Cultural Policy Postulates of Latvia (1995) outlines the most important tasks of state cultural policy for the first 10 years after the regaining of independence. The most important national cultural policy document, "National Programme Culture", was developed in 2000 in co-operation between the Ministry of Culture and independent experts.

For previous 10 years there was lack of strategic planning and implementation instruments, inconsistent prioritising and isolated sectorial approach. Therefore it was necessary to make the shift to new paradigm – creation of integrated cultural policy framework for development of national and international competitiveness – in order to face opportunities and challenges of a modern world. There are new documents for further culture sector development – Long Term Cultural Policy Guidelines 2006-2015, Medium Term

Strategy 2006-2008 for the Cultural Sector and also new national level planning documents – National Development Plan, National Lisbon Programme, National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013. New Cultural Policy Guidelines for the period of 2006 – 2015, which are adopted at the end 2005, set 7 strategic directions for the cultural development in the future:

- National identity and cultural values: to strengthen the national identity and unity of Latvian civil society by supporting and creating national cultural values
- Culture and the new economy: improvement of the co-operation between culture and national economy branches to encourage cultural diversity and sustainable development of creative economy
- Culture and creative diversity: to create favourable environment for the diversity of creative process and to support the aspiration for excellence
- Culture and territorial development: to further balanced development of cultural process and accessibility in the whole territory of Latvia, insuring the rights for qualitative living-space for all inhabitants of the state
- Culture and knowledge society: development and proper use of culture potential in life-long society education, furthering the creation of knowledge society
- Foreign cultural policy: promotion of dialogue and understanding between cultures and nations, enrichment of the cultural life of Latvia through active collaboration and involvement in international cultural processes and networks
- Culture administration: creation of knowledge based and result oriented culture administration and promotion of cultural decentralisation.

Legislation in protection of intellectual property is harmonised with the EU, a joint Intellectual Property Council and Secretariat established with other government bodies (as of January 1, 2006).

The national programme “e-Latvia” covers modern information society needs, the availability and promotion of cultural content and services for users. The national legislation includes following Laws: On Libraries, On the National Library of Latvia, On the Construction of the National Library, On Archives, On Protection of Cultural Heritage, On Museums, Law of Copyrights, The Electronic Document Law.

A. Users and content

The main expert of digitisation policy is state agency “Culture Information Systems”. State agency works under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture. The main task of the agency is to provide for public availability information resources and culture values stored in libraries, museums and archives. The main functions of the agency are:

- to develop the information systems for libraries, archives, museums and other cultural institutions
- to provide for processing, storing and distributing information from libraries.

State agency “Culture Information Systems” developed a new strategy *Guidelines for unified information system for cultural heritage and memory institutions 2005-2012*.

Because people are the most valuable resource in Latvia promotion of investments in human resources is Latvia's priority in national level as well as in EU level. Archives, libraries, museums and other memory institutions as important keepers of information resources and handlers of services should actively participate in this process.

To promote improvement of life quality, operational activities of state and municipal institutions, development and competitiveness of knowledge-based industries, enlargement of education facilities, rising of level of knowledge and skills, providing access to information resources and cultural assets accumulated in heritage institutions through qualitative and democratic services in line with requirements of information society. Integrated information system provides all society members with the part of universal information service that refers to cultural heritage and memory institutions.

Strategic goals of integrated information system for cultural heritage and memory institutions:

1. Establishment of collection of digital information resources, cultural assets and cultural heritage resources appropriate to user needs (digitisation policy)
2. Improvement of technological competences (know-how) in preservation of resources of cultural heritage and memory institutions. To promote inclusion of archives, libraries, museums and other cultural heritage and memory institutions into united information system (technological security, development policy)
3. Accessibility of digital information resources, cultural assets and cultural heritage resources to the wide public accordingly to requirements in normative documents (access policy)
4. Availability of e-services for various groups (usage policy)
5. Development of new kinds of services and market for information resources, cultural assets and cultural heritage resources (market development policy)
6. Provision of access to information resources, cultural assets and cultural heritage resources in a future (preservation policy).

There are three very important projects financed by EU Structure Funds and the state budget:

- State Integrated Library Information System
- National Museum Union Catalogue
- State Archives Unified Information System.

International projects

National Library of Latvia took part in the TEL-ME-MOR (the European Library: Modular Extensions for Mediating Online Resources) project funded by the European Commission under the Sixth Framework Programme of the Information Society Technologies (IST) Programme. The project started on 1 February 2005 with the overall goal of stimulating and facilitating the participation of organisations from 10 New Member States of the European Union in projects funded within the Information Society Technologies area.

TEL-ME-MOR is supporting the 10 national libraries in becoming full members of The European Library, an initiative, established under the aegis of the Conference of

European National Librarians (CENL), providing unified access to the electronic resources of the main European National Libraries as well as to other library services. By the end of the project, a comprehensive and easily searchable pan-European collection of top quality information resources, covering all subject areas of interest to the research community, will be available on-line, via The European Library. Multilingual interfaces will be developed to enable users from the New Member States to access the on-line facility in their own language. National Library of Latvia became the full member of The European Library on January 1, 2006, providing user interface in Latvian language and four collections of digital resources: Periodicals, Posters, Maps and Portraits. <<http://www.theeuropeanlibrary.org>>

National projects

State Cultural Capital Foundation (CCF)

The establishment of the Culture Capital Foundation in 1998 was an important milestone in the Latvian cultural policy, which completely changed funding patterns in the cultural sector.

The goal of the CCF is to provide financial support and promote balanced development of creative work in all sectors of culture and art, for the preservation of cultural heritage, as well as to facilitate the development of international relations and promote Latvian art and culture world wide.

The CCF announces project competitions 4 times a year in 8 fields: literature; music and dance; theatre; cinematography; visual arts and photography; cultural heritage; traditional culture; interdisciplinary projects. The total budget of the CCF in year 2005 was about 5,7 million LVL.

In 2002 the Culture Capital Foundation established a special target program "Co-operation of Archives, Museums and Libraries in Digital Environment" for supporting projects with participating at least two types of memory institutions. This programme is administrated by state agency "Culture Information Systems". There were three calls for proposals until now. On the first call in years 2002/2003 12 projects was financed by this program for total amount 48,500 LVL. On the second call in years 2003/2004 there were also 12 projects for total amount 48,500 LVL and on the third call in years 2004/2005 financial support have got 18 projects for total amount 85,300 LVL.

B. Technologies for digitisation

Up to now each type of memory institutions uses different standards and terminology. The technical Committee of Standardisation for Museums, Archives and Libraries is the main coordinator of the work of culture institutions. It gives a possibility to exchange information, to introduce uniform terminology and adapt interdisciplinary standards. The following standards are approbated as international standards in the branch of museums, archives and libraries: ICOM, ISAD, ISBD, ISAAR etc. In co-operation with archives, museums and libraries several private IT companies have started to develop products which support digitisation of objects and access to the digital content:

- SWH-T (software for retrospective conversion of printed National bibliography)
- Lursoft (access to digital Cabinet of Folk songs, also via WAP service)
- Tilde (multimedia CD-ROM "History of Latvia", e-encyclopaedia "Letonica")
- IT Alise (single solution for archives, museums and libraries in the terms of software)
- RIDemo (developed virtual museum - multimedia and Web solution)

C. Monitoring

Ministry of Culture launched the Cultural Portal, which provides visitors with main cultural information of Latvia. It makes culture information accessible for very wide public because of its multilinguality: it provides information in three languages: Latvian, French, English. <<http://www.kultura.lv>>

Since 2000 the online Union Catalogue of National Library and seven research libraries is available. Union catalog and other library databases are based on system ALEPH500. The volume of the catalogue is about 295,000 bibliographic records now. National Bibliography Analytic database includes 1,440,000 records about articles of periodicals.

<<http://krokuss.lanet.lv/ALEPH>>

Academic Library of Latvia has its own catalogue operating in the LiberMedia system.

<<http://www3.acadlib.lv/opac/welcome.htm>>

Museum Collections on the Internet

Museum collections database of six museums: Andrejs Upits's Memorial Museum, Latvian Museum of Architecture, Latvian Museum of Natural History, Latvian National Museum of Art, National History Museum of Latvia and Tukums Museum. These pages offer text and audiovisual information about the collections of above mentioned museums. Database contains about 51,900 objects. Database operating in the system MEANDRS developed by 'IT consulting' Ltd
<<http://www.meandrs.lv>>

National Library of Latvia

Since 2000 the National Library of Latvia has implemented several serious projects, thus forming a digital library, which ensures a long-term preservation and wide accessibility to the unique Latvia culture heritage: national bibliography, periodicals, maps, posters, ancient photographs and sound recordings. Now the following information is available:

- *HERITAGE –1: Preservation of Latvian Periodicals*
There are digital copies of 82 newspapers of Latvia from period 1886-1949
- *Poster in Latvia 1899-1945 and Poster in Latvia 1945-2000*
The virtual gallery of Latvian posters includes about 600 posters from the unique collection of the Library
- *Latvia in the 16th -18th Century Maps*
The collection of the Digital Library stores 130 maps of Latvia or its historical regions
- *Ancient Prints in Latvian, 1525-1855*
The Union catalogue of ancient prints is envisaged as a part of the national bibliography - almost a complete bibliographic list revealing the starting point of the Latvian book publishing, as well as a bibliographic base, an auxiliary means for acquaintance with and the research of the past of the Latvian culture in Social Sciences and the Humanities. The Union Catalogue comprises ancient prints in Latvian having been published prior to December 31, 1855
- *Revolution of 1905-1907 in Latvia*
The compiled literature (articles from books, newspapers and magazines about 4,000 records) in the bibliographic index chronologically reflects the course of events and the run of the revolution important for the Latvian nation, having taken place in different Latvian regions. The index has been made in the period before regaining the independence of Latvia, therefore

the publications issued abroad pertaining the subject are found seldom there.

For easier search there is available help of the index of persons and the added geographical index.

- *Scores of Symphonic Music by Latvian Composers*
Within the framework of the project "A Year of Latvian Symphonic Music, 2005" scores of symphonic music with orchestra voices by Latvian authors are rewritten anew. Digital Library comprises popular compositions, which are not published and are available only in a written form.
- *Wax cylinders*
Insight into the records found in wax cylinders stored at the Department of Rare Books and Manuscripts
- *Map collection of Peteris Mantnieks and Topographic maps of Latvia* (scale 1X10 000) printed by Geodesy and Cartographic administration of the USSR Council of Ministers (volume about 4,500 map pages). These collections are not available on-line because of IPR.

However the creation of Digital Library is at the beginning stages. Databases of digital resources are created in the framework of separate projects, and by using different methods and technologies.

<http://www.lnb.lv/digitala_biblioteka/index_anglu.htm>

Next 3 projects are realized in the framework of the target programme "Co-operation Projects of Libraries, Archives and Museums in Digital Environment" supported by State Cultural Capital Foundation.

- *History of the Culture of Latvia in Images. Latvian History of Civilization in Images. Part A: Portraits*
The database contains 3000 portraits from the collection of National Library of Latvia and State Archive of Latvia. Their originals (drawings, silhouette portraits, daguerreotypes and photographs) have been created prior to 1914. A great part of images shows individuals identified by the researchers of the history of civilization, however the database comprises unknown portraits, too (probably not to be identified any more).
- *History of Latvia - Persons and places in Images*
The database contains resources from the collection of Latvian Academic Library and Literature, Theatre

and Music Museum. This is an online database of images and their descriptions with search possibilities. Creation of the database started in 2003. At the end of 2004 the volume reaches about 2,100 images, and at the end of 2005 database contains 4,462 images.

- *Literature of Ventspils district*

Library of Ventspils in collaboration with Ventspils museum and Ventspils Regional State Archive created the database which contains information about writers of 20th century in Ventspils district. There are manuscripts, articles of local newspapers, photographs, local administration and cultural institution documents.

Ventspils postcards

Ventspils museum and Library of Ventspils worked on digitisation of postcards with views of Ventspils town and surrounding areas, dated from beginning of 20th century. 550 postcards with detailed information from Ventspils museum collection are published on the Website. Project costs – 525 LVL.

<<http://hronika.ventspils.lv/>>

Ventspils periodicals from the period 1920-1930

Project participants are Ventspils museum and National Library of Latvia. As the result of the project about 900 newspaper pages were digitised and published in CD format. Project costs – 925 LVL.

VIRMUS (Virtual Museum)

VIRMUS is a project supported by FP5, IST Program. It is carried out by two partners: multimedia authoring company RiDemo and the Latvian Ethnographic Open Air Museum. VIRMUS trial uses 3DML to develop virtual representation of parts of the Latvian Ethnographic Open Air Museum. The project also provides Internet users with customised 3DML blocks and textures to create their own 3DML environments. Within the framework of TRIS VIRMUS was clustered with several other IST projects dealing with cultural heritage.

<<http://www.muzejis.lv/>>

Latvian Ethnographic Open Air Museum has extensive archive of films and videos depicting various aspects of Latvian cultural heritage. Most of the films date back to the early 20th century (20s/30s). Museum has started film processing.

NRG and MINERVA results

The Progress Report is a unique possibility to know about the digitisation policies and programmes which are developed and realized in all countries of European Union. The results of the activities of the MINERVA project have received wide and systematic diffusion within all cultural institutions. Emphasis is placed to the possibility of data exchange at the national and international level.

Practical results of the MINERVA project, such as *Good Practise Handbook* and *Handbook of Quality Principles for Cultural Websites* has been translated and presented at several seminars organized by state agency "Culture Information Systems". These books have become important guidelines for cultural institutions. The objectives of the MINERVA Working Groups also were translated into Latvian.

All the translations are accessible from Website of state agency "Culture Information Systems"

<<http://www.kis.gov.lv/>>

