

Summary



Focussing on People's Needs / Plans for Renovation of the Central Library of the Cologne Public Library Completed – 81 Million Euro Project to Begin This Year (Hannelore Vogt)
(pp. 208 – 209)

Built in 1979, the main library of the Cologne Public Library has had a long life-span and a renovation of its structure, energy needs and interior is now necessary. Recently the results of a multi-year planning phase for a wide-scale overall renovation of the interior conceptual design were presented. This involves plans for greatly improving the quality of the visitors' stay, offering a high range of different opportunities with twice as many seating options, multi-functional rooms for creative activities, a café in the foyer, and a children's library remodelled using findings from design thinking Workshops.

The »new« location will provide numerous open areas for visitors in order to provide the city's residents space for many types of activities. There will be fewer permanent PC work stations, but instead more mobile devices which can be borrowed for use on site. An important decision involved newly arranging the five kilometres of shelving for media primarily along the walls and in closely blocked segments. This will result in the creation of spacious free areas.

Due to its central location, the city council of Cologne decided that the building should be retained. The new plans for its interior design take into account the diversity of its users and their different needs, whereby the library hopes to strengthen its role as a non-commercial gathering space. Already in 2022 the first phase of work on the 81 million Euro project will begin: the collections found on shelving over the four floors will be stored externally, the library offices will move out and then in 2023 the public areas will be closed. During the renovation the central library will remain available in an attractive interim facility at a top location in the middle of the pedestrian zone.

The Library Next Door / As New Partner Country, Czechia Issues an Invitation for Cooperation and Information Exchange at Its Stand at the 8th Library Congress in Leipzig (Veronika Chruščová)
(pp. 228 – 229)

The Czech Republic has been selected as the partner country of German libraries for the years 2022 to 2025. What librarians from the country on the southeast borders of Germany can expect from its German colleagues and what they have to offer in return is described by Veronika Chruščová in her article for BuB.

»Libraries are among the most important elements of our cities and towns, whether public, academic, museum or special libraries. In Czechia one has access to the densest network of libraries in the world, thanks to its first library law. Passed in 1919, it mandated that each community set up a library. And wherever there were communities of recognized minorities, they were also to have a library. The goal was to offer all groups of the population both educational opportunities and information. There is hardly a better institution than a library to achieve this goal.

That is why still today one finds a library in nearly all cities and towns. Everyone has childhood memories of visits to their local library because these were easy to find, easily accessible, and simply just around the corner.

In connection with the library partnership programme this is the idea we will also be implementing in a figurative sense; those states which share borders and a historical background with Czechia will cooperate in advancing their mutual interest in developing library service. The library next door, in Czechia or in Germany.«

The Library and Its Professional Field: Roles, Functions, Requirements / Stimuli from Library Providers – Report on a Stakeholder Interview (Ute Engelkenmeier, Elisabeth Sträter)
(pp. 230 – 234)

On May 27, 2021, Roland Kischkel, (Chancellor of the University of Wuppertal and Chairperson of the Association of Libraries in North Rhine-Westphalia/vbnw) and Frank Mentrup (Lord Mayor of the City of Karlsruhe and President of the German Library Federation/dbv), made themselves available for a stimulating interview devoted to the current professional requirements within libraries. The idea evolved from a series of events sponsored by the working committee on personnel recruitment within the German library umbrella organisation BID (Bibliothek Information Deutschland). Both interviewees were provided in advance with a list of discussion topics and key statements. In response, they formulated arguments, ideas and demands from the vantage point of the institutions which provide funding for libraries. This report for BuB outlines the main results.

Roland Kischkel and Frank Mentrup emphasized that the intensive discussions within a community of professionals about its own field of work is quite remarkable. They described from their point of view what the current expectations toward libraries and library employees are. Both Kischkel and Mentrup observed that the image which the general public has of libraries does not correspond to reality. The core statements are a good place to begin further examination. It is necessary to delve further into the question of how to better present the professional aspects of library work for those who might be interested in entering this field. Similarly, it is necessary to examine the current educational curricula for librarianship in order to overcome an outdated image. This process needs to have an impact both on the focal points of on-the-job training and on academic course work.

Translated by Martha Baker