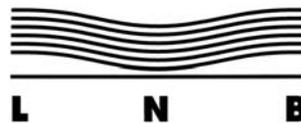


UNESCO AND THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF LATVIA

MR ANDRIS VILKS — DIRECTOR, NATIONAL LIBRARY OF LATVIA

MR ABDELAZIZ ABID — SENIOR PROGRAMME SPECIALIST, INFORMATION SOCIETY DIVISION,
UNESCO



The role of the International Commission of Experts set up by UNESCO for the National Library of Latvia (NLL) is of a consultative and advisory nature. Its members contribute to the development of the National Library of Latvia project, in particular by:

- providing methodological and technical support;
- assisting in the mobilization of financial resources and resources in kind through fund-raising campaigns and sensitization of the professional and political communities;
- developing a communication strategy.

The Commission held its first meeting in Riga from 8 to 9 September 2000. Since then, on July 5, 2001 the Parliament approved in principle the draft law on implementation of the NLL in the second reading, envisaging 1 Million Euros for continuing the project in 2002.

The 2nd meeting of the Commission took place in Riga, from 22 - 23 March 2002. The purpose of the 2nd Meeting was to review progress made and recommend solutions to a number of technical issues such as legal deposit of electronic publications, national bibliography and national union catalogue, digital library projects, staff development, as well as to assess the sketch design of the new Library building and the project management. The meeting was chaired by Tomas Lidman, Director of the Royal Library of Sweden, with Mr Winston Tabb, Associate Librarian of the Library of Congress, as rapporteur.

Since then, a 3rd and final reading took place in June 2002 when the Parliament approved funding of the project.

The Commission recommended that:

- Careful consideration is required regarding the number of cloakrooms and lockers. Experience shows that usually they are not sufficient.
- Designated zones are required for using mobile phones and smoking.

- The location of the Book Museum was also a matter for discussion (taking into account the precautionary measures and psychological arguments). Other exhibitions also require easy access.
- The experts advised to locate the reading zone in the lower floors by relocating the administrative office rooms.

It was recommended to arrange consultations regarding the multimedia center with experts from the G. Pompidou center in Paris.

It was proposed that the following tasks be solved before the next Commission meeting:

- formulating the requirements of the NLL;
- preparing the maintenance costs (maintenance of the building, salaries);
- simplifying the internal structure and flow;
- avoiding old problems from transferring them to the new building;
- maintaining security and involving experts;
- IT protection;
- shielding

The International Commission of Experts after having been acquainted with different directions of the development of the NLL considers the Library is developing to become a contemporary gateway of knowledge in the Baltic region. Moreover, the Commission stressed that the National Library has to perform new roles and new functions to be able to provide services to all other libraries, to all communities and groups of end-users. The intention is therefore not to build a library for today, but a digital library for tomorrow, catering for education, multilingualism, science, culture and multiethnic integration in the context of globalization and competitiveness.

The next meeting of the International Commission of Experts is foreseen for November 29-30,2002.