

NEWS IN BRIEF



On 13–14th October 2011, the Warsaw Polish National Library housed the international digitalization conference attended by colleagues from the national libraries of the Visegrád Four (Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland), as well as experts from other Central and Eastern European countries. The National Széchényi Library was represented by General Director Dr. Andrea Sajó, Director of E-services Dr. Lajos Vonderviszt and Director of Collection Management Szabolcs Dancs. Participants formulated recommendations for the process of digitization, for long-term preservation of digital content and for related marketing activities.

Visits by foreign delegations

On 16th February, US ambassador Eleni Tsakopoulos Kounalakis and her husband, the well-known journalist Markos Tsakopoulos Kounalakis came to the library to get their reading cards. The seemingly unusual step was far from being a pre-negotiated diplomatic move: both the ambassador and her husband wish to become library regulars. For them, culture is part of their everyday life. In addition, as a professor and journalist Markos Tsakopoulos Kounalakis knows the region very well. They arrived at the library in the afternoon, where General Director Dr. Andrea Sajó met them at the entrance and guided them through the reading rooms. They visited our exhibitions, the map collection and the Apponyi Hall, where they were shown precious old prints. Ambassador Eleni Tsakopoulos said she was amazed at the number of valuable items the national library has managed to save in the turmoil of wars and revolutions.

On Monday, 9th May, a South Korean delegation of three visited the National Széchényi Library. The **Embassy of South Korea** had earlier contacted the library to request help in some cultural and specifically library related issues. Before arriving, they had sent us a letter asking about NSZL's role and significance, as well as about Hungarian libraries and our reading programs in general. They wondered how many Korean volumes we possess. (Since the 1990s we have had 96 items translated and stock another 65 in the

original Korean edition.) On behalf of the South Korean delegation, Sung Woo Yang, president of the Ethical Commission of Korean Publishers offered assistance with our digital library building program.

On 1st June, our library was visited by Dunja Seiter-Šverko, General Director of the *Croatian National and University Library* and Vlaho Bogišić, Director of the *Miroslav Krleža Lexicography Institute*. The guests were received by Director of Research and Academic Affairs László Boka and shown round the *Miroslav Krleža – A Croatian Classic who Spoke Hungarian* exhibition and were given a brief introduction to our institution.

On 5th December 2011, a delegation from Kosovo visited the *National Széchényi Library*. *Representing the Republic of Kosovo, the guests were Ambassador Shkendije G. Sherifi, Deputy Head of Mission Delfin Pllana, the General Director of the National Library Dr. Sali Bashota and the international secretary of the embassy Durim Hasaj.* The main goal was to establish professional cooperation between the Kosovo National and University Library and NSZL for exchange of experience, information and scientific results. Agreement was reached on launching inter-library loans and on future joint exhibitions and contributing to international projects.

WANDERING IN THE WORLD OF CULTURE AND SCIENCE

On June 8th the National Széchényi Library and the Count Kuno Klebelsberg Foundation launched a joint series of lectures under the title of *Wandering in the World of Culture and Science*. NSZL General Director Dr. Andrea Sajó pointed out in her opening address that it is the National Library's mission to whole-heartedly support all quality cultural initiatives. Bearing the name of the former Hungarian minister of culture and public education, the Foundation is also famous for standing behind activities in line with Klebelsberg's value system. President of the Foundation, Countess Éva Klebelsberg also welcomed the joint program and briefly introduced Professor József Makovitzky, who then gave a lecture

entitled *The Bauhaus – An Overview of Hungarian and European Art History*.

On 20th September, we launched *A Dog's Comedy*, a book by János Kemény, the writer who had a truly adventurous life and happened to be former NSZL colleague Zoltán Kemény's grandfather. The novel was introduced by series editor Péter Sas and literary historian Béla Pomogáts, with the participation of the chair of the "Helikon János Kemény Foundation",

Gyula H. Szabó and followed by a mini concert given by violinist Gergely Györffy and actress Zsuzsa Turek Belányi.

On 6th October the guest of the lecture series was Marcell Jankovics, Kossuth Prize winning cartoon film director, cultural historian and book illustrator. He talked about his recently completed animation film *The Tragedy of Man*, screening a few of its excerpts.

Consultation sessions within NSZL Under the title of *Professional consultations in the reading rooms*, on 11th November 2011 the NSZL Information Department launched a new project, in the framework of which university lecturers and other specialists provide professional information and advice about literary science, history, linguistics, ethnography and art history for one or two hours each week.

It is an open secret that the aim of the project is to promote the library. Therefore, the dates and themes of sessions are advertised in several forums, including our own web page, universities, community pages, public channels and publications of cultural recommendations. The consultations have been run as informal discussions in groups of ten to fifteen, where after introducing the given topic the consultant would answer visitors' questions, or in

case of more participants, give a presentation. The first session was a lecture by Géza Balázs on The Hungarian Language in the 21st Century; next István Fried led a discussion on the theme of Hungarians and Slavs. Various areas of history and ethnography were handled by János Poór, László Kósa and István Simon, ranging from the debate on the Hungarian Jacobins, through the introduction of cultural and civilisational changes in 19th century Hungary, to the theoretical and practical aspects of genealogy.

Next term, the themes will be extended to cover almost all the fields of social sciences. Participants may attend the consultations using free daily tickets.

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