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2007 – An Overview

Expressed as succinctly as possible, the statutory duty of the Swiss National Library is to preserve Swiss published documents as well as documents about Switzerland and, at the same time, to make them accessible. The strategy for the years 2007 – 2011, which we developed in 2006², contains three main activities for the future in the sometimes conflicting areas of collection and use. The implementation of these activities started in 2007 as follows:

- Users' requirements were defined by means of a web-based survey. The intention is to respond to these requirements as far as possible in the years ahead³, among other means by the digitization of relevant documents.
- The assembly of electronic collections has begun and publishers can now upload their electronic publications into the long-term archive and, for the first time, the websites of the political parties for the federal elections were archived⁴.
- The conceptual principles for the Centre for Paper Conservation were developed. It is anticipated that from 2009 onwards we will be able to advise related institutions both in Switzerland and abroad on the conservation of their collections⁵.

Satisfied users

Users are satisfied with the services currently provided by the NL. In the on-line survey mentioned above, the NL was given a rating of 5.1 out of 6 – a good mark by any standards. The advisory services came out particularly well, with a rating of 5.4 (the target mark in the 2006 – 2008 objectives is 4.5). The topicality, completeness (target 4.3) and availability of the collections (target 4.5) each scored 4.9, which are considered to be satisfactory ratings.

New at the NL: the Federal Archives of Historic Monuments

In 2007 the growth of the General Collection and of the Swiss Literary Archives remained within the normal limits; on the other hand, the size of the Prints and Drawings Department increased by an extraordinary extent, mainly as a result of the integration of the Federal Archives of Historic Monuments which previously belonged to the Cultural Heritage and Historic Monuments Section of the Federal Office of Culture. An independent external assessment indicated that our collections were very well protected and preserved in almost all respects.

Cataloguing needs increased funds

In contrast to the number of new acquisitions and the state of conservation, accessibility is only partially satisfactory. While monographs, periodicals, posters and the acquisitions made by the Swiss Literary Archives since 1991 are well catalogued, association journals, for instance, and large parts of the prints and drawings collection are only catalogued at a summary level and can therefore only be accessed with difficulty. Whether cataloguing can be completed to the extent necessary and in the required depth depends on whether we can obtain the resources for the task. The technical requirements for cataloguing a wide range of document types were completed during the year under review. The archive data-base *HelveticArchives* was set up in addition to the existing general library data-base *Helveticat*. The NL's collections of photographs will be catalogued in this in the near future. In the long term the intention is that *HelveticArchives* should include all the NL's archive collections.

² Cf. Swiss National Library, 93rd Annual Report 2006, page 7

³ More information about this on page 14

⁴ More information about this on page 12

⁵ More information about this on page 13

International cooperation

The use of the collections was slightly reduced. This was particularly evident in the requests made in the NL although on-line enquiries increased⁶. Cooperation with a number of outside institutions became more intense – and with it the number of requests from corresponding specialist bodies. In response to this development the Swiss Literary Archives have recently created for the first time a number of discussion groups which they are using to participate in research at an international level⁷; the *Kafka verschrieben* symposium provided authors and scientists alike with the opportunity to exchange ideas. Cooperation in the widest possible variety of national and international bodies is essential for our work; the new *European Dewey Users' Group* was formed last year in the NL. The National Library has recently taken the Chair of the Conference of University Libraries in Switzerland (the 'KUB').

National influence and recognition

As a national institution, the NL wishes to gain influence and recognition beyond the immediate circle of its users and, by presenting its collections, to ask questions about the culture and self-image of this country. During the year under review, the NL succeeded in this objective with the exhibition *Am Rande der Sprache* at the Dürrenmatt Centre, with literary events on Mani Matter, Gerhard Meier and Etienne Barilier as well as other public events. The exhibition *Tell in Focus* attracted a particularly large amount of attention in the media. Presenting the Tell myth in poster form, this exhibition also provided an insight into our poster collection (one of the most significant and comprehensive in Switzerland) for the first time.

Motivated staff

The excellent assessment we achieved from the NL's users reflects our staff's extraordinarily high level of commitment. According to a survey conducted in 2007 by the Federal Personnel Office (*Eidgenössisches Personalamt*), 79% of the NL's staff are in the category 'genuinely satisfied' (2005: 52%. All federal employees in 2007: 60%).

New Chairperson for the National Library Commission

The Chairperson of the National Library Commission, Mrs Rosemarie Simmen, retired from the Commission at the end of 2007. She has helped us in our work since 1999 and during this period has been a valuable confidante and support both for my predecessor Jean-Frédéric Jauslin, and myself. I would like to thank her very sincerely for the constructive criticism which she always showed us. In December the Federal Council selected Mrs Christiane Langenberger as her successor. I look forward to working with her.

Marie-Christine Doffey
Director