

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM STATEMENTS

Ukrainian Library Association

<http://uba.org.ua>

Statement on Manifesto on Democratisation of Libraries

Adopted by the participants of International Conference "Library in a Democratic Society", organized by the Department of Library and Information Systems of the Kyiv State Institute of Culture and Ukrainian Library Association. Kyiv, November 23, 1995.

Participants of the International Scientific Conference "Library in a Democratic Society" deem it necessary to address with this Manifesto in the first place library community of Ukraine, government officials and law-makers, all social institutions and every Ukrainian citizen.

Library is thought to be the most democratic institution in the society. It carries out its social objective of preserving knowledge accumulated by humanity over millennia and unselfishly gives these to everyone who wishes to drink from this life-giving spring.

Then what makes us to speak out loud about ourselves?

We wish in this difficult for Ukraine time to be more of use to each of you and to the new state as a whole.

We also wish our libraries to be compatible with the libraries of the civilized world which follows the path of informatization.

We wish that new technologies do not bypass our sphere and make possible not only the use of domestic informational resources but provide the access of every specialist to world achievements through information network and automated systems.

And our country has made a very important step in this direction: the Supreme Rada of Ukraine adopted a Law of Ukraine "On Libraries and Librarianship". We have legally provided for the democratisation of librarianship.

The Law creates guaranties and conditions of the realization by the libraries of their social mission and it is aimed at protecting the rights of readers, libraries and librarians.

The Law proclaims international principle of information accessibility based on the right of a citizen irrespective of the place of residence of the latter to access and unobstructed use of information contained in whatever library in the world.

The Law forbids the power structures to interfere with defining the criteria of selecting literature for library collections as well as with other types of professional activities of libraries, prohibits to suppress books from libraries for political and ideological considerations. Its main peculiarity is an attempt to overcome old ideological dogmas and develop a renewed model of librarianship as a social institute under conditions of

democratic society.

The Law guarantees to the libraries the preservation of what has already been acquired and stimulates the progressive, exercises social protection of libraries and librarians as well as establishes their social responsibility before the society.

Adoption of the Law is just the first step on the way to democratisation of libraries. A difficult task of adjustment of our laws to the international ones faces the library community of Ukraine. Elaboration of about twenty sub-laws needed for the implementation of the Law is on the agenda:

- on National Library Collection;
- on creating library computing network;
- on preservation of library materials;
- on legal depository copy;
- on international cooperation;
- on rules of library use.

The system of normative acts in library legislation should without excessive regulation exclude uncertainty and vagueness in everything related to objectives and principles of library functioning, rights of readers and libraries, responsibilities of library managers and power structures.

We are deeply convinced that the progress towards democratic society cannot happen without democratisation of all its institutions and establishments. And to speed up this process we need to determine our place in it.

Major priority in democratic society is an individual with his/her needs and a law providing for his/her normal life.

The libraries through providing relevant information may help an individual in mastering knowledge about new economic relations in a democratic society, encourage development of his/her entrepreneurship activities, teach how to exercise his/her rights and, in the first place, the right to information.

We cannot stand aside and watch the opposition of certain part of our population to the renaissance of Ukrainian nation. Ukrainian people have created an invaluable culture, which survived many centuries of statelessness.

The libraries look for and find their place in the renaissance of not only Ukrainian but also other ethnic cultures forming part of the Ukrainian nation. We take to the policy of cultural pluralism according to which cultural heritage of other nations residing in the region should be adopted by all its inhabitants. But here we hope for the support of Ukrainian culture on the part of Russians, Jews, Poles, Hungarians Germans, Bulgarian's—all those for whom Ukraine has become a motherland.

The libraries undertake responsibility to provide timely, full and objective information to the society and all its links as well as to prepare the population to the perception of new technologies and to enhance the level of informational culture of citizens. This work is to be done within the framework of computerisation of library and bibliographic processes and in the meantime we exert all our efforts to maintain in the society the high level of book culture not to lose under conditions of economic hardships the accumulated

wealth, to create convenient for the population regime of servicing library patrons from our youngest readers to elderly people and people with disabilities.

The libraries are glad to collaborate with all non-governmental organizations and societies, educational and cultural communities. With their support we hope to establish in our activities the idea of library diversity, humanise relations with readers, focus our work on satisfying their informational needs. With the assistance of the library patrons and local self-government bodies we strive to become true centres of enlightenment and communication, recreation and leisure, intellectual treasure house for the present and coming generations. Using new facilities and technologies, widely promoting our activities and potentialities we wish to become more accessible to the public, to increase the range of library services.

The lawful and with the introduction of a new Constitution constitutional right of the nationals enabling them to get familiarised with the world culture values and providing for free access to information should be secured by the state, namely: proper funding, up-grading material and technical base of libraries and implementing new information technologies, encouraging sponsorship activities and international co-operation of libraries, securing necessary conditions for training and retraining library personnel.

On the agenda - introducing professional holiday of librarians, opening an independent higher educational institution to train personnel for library and informational sphere.

State support is required for scientific research, especially in the matter of introducing new technologies, for the setting up of scientific research Institute for library and information activities similar to those available in the majority of countries. The researchers are faced with priority tasks of developing new philosophy of librarianship and identifying principles of library performance under new conditions. In need of state support is also materialisation of programs of library materials preservation, training and retraining of library personnel. It is necessary to unite the efforts of all specialists to create legal support system of librarianship.

One of the major objectives of librarians is to master the skills of self-government which is the form of already created library associations. Yet, we will not do without state leadership which can be fully provided only by an interdepartmental administrative structure. Taking into account the need to create National Information Network of which the libraries will become a compulsory link as well as the fact that currently in charge of this matter is a newly set up National Agency for Information under the President of Ukraine, we deem it necessary to create at the Agency the group of library experts.

This is our first address to the wide public in which we have taken the courage to remind the society of ourselves and we wish very much to be understood by the readers, authorities, different institutions as well as by future sponsors.

We hope that all those to whom we appeal today will share our aspirations for the libraries to become better and materialize the program proclaimed in this manifesto.

Latest Revision: 26 January 2005

Copyright © International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

www.ifla.org