



World Library and Information Congress: 69th IFLA General Conference and Council

1-9 August 2003, Berlin

Code Number: 116-E
Meeting: 92. Library and Research Services for Parliaments
Simultaneous Interpretation: Yes

The Only Constant is Change The Bundestag Library from 1990 to 2003

(IFLA 2003 - shortened lecture version)

As at: 04.06.2003
change: 12.08.03

Marga Coing
Ministerialrätin
German Bundestag
Berlin, Germany

Abstract:

Besides the implementation of newest library techniques and the setting up of an electronic library the article deals with the fact that this library has to function in two towns, Bonn and Berlin, seperated by 600 kilometres at the same time for a transitional period of 5 years. It describes the preparations for the move of the library with its 1,2 million items from Bonn to a new multifunctional parliament building in Berlin, combined at the same time with the fact of loosing 40 % of its library trained staff and instead integrating entirely new staff, totally untrained in library work. This unique experience has very much enhanced our understandig, of what it means, to work independantly in a global environment.

1. The Bundestag Library in the 1990s

1.1. The Bundestag Library and German unity

The reunification of Germany – the issue which dominated the agenda in the early 1990s – had a major impact on the Bundestag Library's work at this time as well.

- Supporting the policies of the "Round Table", set up in December 1989 after the Berlin Wall came down;
- supplying the GDR with legal material from the Bundestag Library's existing and duplicate stocks.

Requests for German legal material from Eastern European states such as Poland, the Czech Republic, Russia and the Baltic states.

The importance of being able to consult older library stock – such as material relating to the Saarland's incorporation into the Federal Republic of Germany in the early 1950s – when seeking a solution to current problems.

The Bundestag Library made a substantial contribution to the framing of the German unification treaties.

1.2. The Network of Libraries of Supreme Federal Authorities

From 1988 to 1996, the Bundestag Library chaired the Network of Libraries of Supreme Federal Authorities. The idea of setting up this Network, which came from the Working Group of Chief Librarians of Supreme Federal Authorities, was first mooted in the late 1970s following an expert report by the Federal Audit Office. The aim was to centralize the cataloguing and indexing of the member libraries' stocks using a computerized system. In 1996, the Bundestag Library resigned from the Network as it was becoming increasingly apparent that without a common statutory basis regulating the issues arising from the separation of powers, it was impossible to reconcile the task of supplying information to the legislature, on the one hand, with the information requirements of the Federal Government, on the other. Some of the problems arose because the Bundestag Library's primary duty was to serve Parliament and it had to introduce the new technology for the legislature's purposes fairly swiftly. The ministerial libraries, on the other hand, expected greater priority to be given to their needs, especially in the indexing process, in order to reflect their specific interests. However, these interests conflicted with the parliamentary library's terms of reference. In 1996, the Bundestag Library resigned from the Network, which has since only been of marginal significance.

1.3. Staff and stock cuts in the 1990s

- As a result of German unification, there was a slight increase in the Library's staffing levels and book stock between 1990 and 1994.
- From 1994 - 2000, annual cuts in staffing levels of 1.5% were made.
- From 1992 - 1994, subscriptions to a total of around 1500 periodicals were cancelled; most – but not all – were foreign journals.
- With the founding of five new federal states in the Federal Republic's eastern regions, the Bundestag Library began to take many new official periodic publications.

2. The Library on the threshold of the new Millennium

2.1. Computerization

- At the start of the 1990s, the Library attempted to set up a fifth administrative section which was to include an IT unit.
- After these efforts failed, the Library had no option but to work with the Bundestag Administration's Central Information Technology Directorate-General (ZI), also on developing new library software.
- As the first phase of computerization – broadly speaking, between 1986 and 1996 – drew to a close, it was agreed, in conjunction with the Central Information Technology Directorate-General, that the IT contracts for the Library too should be outsourced in future.
- From 1994 to 1998, the following invitations to tender were published:
 - To select a firm of consultants to draw up the tender specifications for the software and provision of external support for the Bundestag Library's entire IT system. The contract was awarded to KPMG.

- Under KPMG's management, specifications for the library software system were drafted, together with criteria for outsourcing the Library's IT support.
- A Europe-wide invitation to tender for the library software.
- An invitation to tender for the Bundestag Library's IT support. The company selected was also required to manage and support the library software which had already been selected by this point.
- The Berlin company Astec was awarded the contract to supply the library software (ADIS/BMS).
- The contract to supply the Bundestag Library's computers was awarded to Siemens Business Services, Berlin.
- The ADIS/BMS software was introduced in January 1998. All data available on-line since 1987 were transferred to the new system. Thus the Library underwent a dramatic phase of modernization in 1998, which meant that all its staff had to be inducted and trained to work in a very different system. All the work processes were computerized, which inevitably resulted in significant changes to all aspects of the work routine in the individual sections of the Library. Finally, all the staff's job profiles had to be revised and agreed with the Organization Division (ZV 4).
- All users had to be trained in the use of the new technology at induction sessions.
- The Library's entire stock had to be given new lending labels and prepared for the automated lending system with the appropriate short catalogue entries.

2.2. Updating the thesaurus

- At the start of the 1990s, the conceptual framework and initial decisions on the design of a new thesaurus were adopted. In light of experience with the old thesaurus and following a review of various indexing systems, including EUROVOC, the specifications for the new thesaurus were agreed. The new system is based on the POLIANTHES library thesaurus which has existed since 1949.
- At the same time, its form and content were brought into line with the PARTHES and ANTHES thesauri operated by the Bundestag's Subject and Speakers' Indexes Division. This makes it easier to switch between the different parliamentary information systems.
- The new thesaurus consists of 90 microthesauri. It is structured on very similar lines to EUROVOC, the European Parliament's thesaurus.

2.3. Changes in premises and personnel from 1999 to 2003

- In 1999, after an interval of almost ten years at Adenauerallee 103, the entire Library was relocated to the Bundestag's old high-rise complex of buildings in Bonn, known as the *Altes Hochhaus*, where all the sections of the Library had originally been housed from its establishment in 1949 until the 1970s.
- From 1999 to mid 2000, the entire Library and all its staff occupied a building in the *Altes Hochhaus*.
- During the 1999 summer recess, the Members of the German Bundestag moved to temporary premises in Berlin.

2.3.1 The Library's temporary premises in Berlin

- In 1999, the Library opened its first information and loans unit, comprising just 40 m², at Bunsenstrasse 2 in Berlin. This was to accommodate the Library, including the Head of User Services and the Head of the Library during their service-related visits to Berlin, for more than a year.

- Between January and autumn 2001, the Library – primarily its information service and reading room – moved to Schadowstrasse 12/13, where it was allocated 150 m² of space. This had to accommodate 40 new members of staff as well as the information service, together with the qualified librarians who had relocated from Bonn and who now had to train the new unqualified recruits in Berlin.
- During 2001, the information service in Schadowstrasse 12/13 was greatly expanded and a reading room was opened, equipped with a substantial stock of material for the information service and Library users. The staff employed in the Collection Development I, Collection Development II and Indexing and Documentation sections, who had already moved to Berlin, were relocated to Schadowstrasse 6 where they were able to resume their work under greatly improved conditions.
- In February 2002, a small reading room was also opened in the Jakob Kaiser Building. Here, too, a range of services is available, including an information desk and a collection point for books and periodicals requested by users.

Thus since February 2002, the Library has not only been split between Bonn and Berlin; it also has to organize its work processes between various sites in Bonn and Berlin. This situation will continue until spring 2004.

The information and enquiry services in Bonn and Berlin are fully integrated, as are the late opening hours during weeks of sittings.

2.3.2 Staffing changes

Between November 2000 and April 2001, the Library lost around 38 % of its qualified staff who did not wish to move to Berlin.

During the same period, the same percentage of new, **untrained staff** joined the Library from other federal authorities in Berlin. The Library therefore lost a massive amount of professional expertise at a time when it also had to try to train 38% of its staff in an entirely new area of work and integrate them in a new authority very quickly.

2.4. The Bonn-Berlin axis: technical and organizational parameters for the efficient provision of library services

- The Bundestag Library's Local Area Network (LAN) in Bonn is directly linked to the library system servers in Berlin. The new library system is thus already geared to direct communication between Bonn and Berlin.
- Since the Library will not move to Berlin until 2004, although all sittings of the German Bundestag have taken place in Berlin since the late summer of 1999, the Library depends on a highly sophisticated technical and organizational infrastructure in order to perform its function of supplying the Bundestag with information and lending services.
- The Bonn-Berlin information network, which is intended to safeguard the flow of information between the Bonn and Berlin sites, guarantees that the Library is able to meet all its users' information requirements.
- Members of the Bundestag can now request books and periodicals held at the Library's Bonn locations directly from their offices in Berlin via the Intranet.
- Thanks to Deutsche Post AG's logistical services and a sophisticated stack system in Bonn which is designed to take account of the special circumstances applying at present, the Library can ensure that books requested by Members one day are available the next. This

has proved so successful that many Members are still unaware that 98 % of the book stock is still located in Bonn.

This highly efficient lending service over a distance of 600 km can only function properly if all the library staff are involved in the associated organizational processes. Much of their time is spent dealing with transport and organizational matters so that the best possible service can be provided for our users.

2.5. Preparing the Library's move from Bonn to Berlin

In Bonn, the Library's stocks are held at eight different locations. The following aspects must therefore be taken into account in preparing for the Library's move from Bonn to Berlin in 2004:

- integrating the various groups of location marks used at the different sites into one uniform system which can then be transferred in its entirety to the new stacks;
- trialling this process through a real-life move in preparation for the major move to Berlin. This was done back in 2001;
- evaluating the lessons learned and including them in the final plans for the move;
- carrying out a detailed on-the-spot survey of the buildings, access, and lifting facilities at the various sites in order to allow for any physical difficulties when preparing for the move;
- addressing any problems which might arise with the movement of stock into the new stacks, e.g. ensuring that there is adequate height in the approach tunnel for the "eurovans" in order to avoid reloading the books;
- raising awareness of the complexity of the task of moving a library – which creates a very different set of different problems compared with shifting office furniture – among the relevant sections of the Bundestag Administration;
- correcting any misconceptions about the library move within the Administration, and drawing attention to the very specific problems associated with moving a library;
- enforcing the Library's ideas concerning the move within the Administration;
- carrying out the move, using the services of specialist companies with a proven track record in moving libraries. The move will be managed by the Library alone, albeit with ancillary support from the Administration if required.

Once these objectives had been accepted by the Bundestag's general Administration as well, the most difficult tasks – namely drafting a Europe-wide tender to identify one or more suitable companies to undertake the move – could be addressed:

It was only now that the real – and most challenging – task of preparing a Europe-wide tender could be addressed:

- drafting the detailed tender specifications and the subsequent contracts, which meant that applicants had to prove that they could genuinely deliver the specific services required when moving a library;
- devising a selection procedure which clearly demonstrated, from the outset, the difficulties which must be overcome, in order to weed out weak applicants;
- during the final selection procedure, ensuring that applicants had a detailed understanding of the conditions under which the move will take place, in order to identify the most capable candidates in the final round.

The group of companies which will move the Bundestag Library to Berlin has been identified since December 2000. At that time, it was assumed that the move could largely be completed in 2002, even though some delay was likely. However, the delays in the completion of the Jakob Kaiser and Paul Löbe Buildings have meant that the move is now likely to take place in the first half of 2004. During this period, some 60 km of books and archive material will be transported from Bonn to Berlin in around 400 euro-containers, each holding 40 tonnes of stock.

The Library has worked with the haulage companies identified through the Europe-wide tender to devise a long-term plan for the move, which is a uniquely challenging undertaking. Apart from the move to Berlin, it has also been necessary to move the stocks between the Bonn sites. The task of integrating the location mark groups in Bonn was used to gain experience of moving the Library's holdings from the structurally very challenging premises in Bonn and sorting them for the later move to Berlin so that the location mark groups – now integrated and reduced in number – can be arranged cohesively in the new stacks. All these preparations have been discussed with the removal companies in numerous meetings and memoranda.

The Library will commence its final intensive preparations for the move six months in advance. From this point onwards, no further changes can be made to the book stock in the stacks, as precise measurements must be taken in preparation for the subsequent storage and shelving of the entire holdings in the new stacks. The Library will continue to provide a service to users during the actual removal phase, which will take three months. The move to Berlin will be a crucial step in the Library's development and will undoubtedly be a valuable learning experience for everyone involved.

2.7. Setting up an electronic library

One of the Library's major priorities since 2000 has been to supply electronic media to its users in a wide variety of forms. In order to present the full range of services and material to users in an appropriate way, the Library has had to set up its own portal, which provides the following information in a clear and accessible format:

- an overview of the Library's history and working methods,
- various introductions to using the Library,
- full information on opening times and using the Library,
- information on special collections,
- the option to request material held by the Library directly from Members' offices, including filling in various forms on-line,
- all the Library key publications, such as acquisitions lists, *Schnellinformationen* (the Library's in-house information bulletin) and bibliographies, as well as information on suggested reading on current topics, can be accessed and printed on-line,
- access to the Library's databases via the OPAC and ADIS/BMS client server,
- direct access from Members' offices to a wide range of electronic journals and to the Muntzinger Archive and other encyclopaedias and dictionaries,
- information on journals which are available free of charge on the Internet on a wide variety of subjects,
- the Library's stock of CD-ROMs,
- in all the Library's core areas of interest, lists of links to relevant Internet sites are also provided for users.

The Library is also trying to develop a document server, i.e. a facility for downloading key political documents from the Internet and making them available for users on a permanent basis.

With its homepage, the Library has established broad access to its client groups, making it much easier for users to access the information required and to contact the Library.

The **Internet** enables a broad interested public to use the Library databases via the German Bundestag's homepage. It also offers information about the Library's history and collections. The large number of "visits" recorded shows that this facility is widely used. The Bundestag Library is therefore making a key contribution to the supply of information not only to other federal institutions but also to the interested public.

Since 2001, the Library has been preparing the way for the acquisition of licences for electronic publications. It has also considered whether to join a consortium with the much smaller libraries at the federal ministries for this purpose. However, following detailed research and in light of the earlier experiences of working with the Network of Libraries of Supreme Federal Authorities, it very quickly became apparent that collaborating with these much smaller libraries to prepare the relevant decisions would greatly delay the acquisition of the relevant licences by the Bundestag Library. It was also clear that the Bundestag Library's requirements, especially as regards the range of licences needed, were likely to differ substantially from those of the ministerial libraries. The Bundestag Library has therefore opted for a "go-it-alone" approach to this very challenging task. It has also tried to identify other potential library consortia in an attempt to cover the full spectrum of electronic publications which the Library wishes to acquire, but has been forced to conclude that none of the existing consortia covers all the publications required. Having considered these options, the Bundestag Library has now decided to press ahead with the acquisition of electronic media on its own, albeit with the possibility of joining the consortium set up by the Network of Libraries of Supreme Federal Authorities at a later date if necessary. Further developments in this area and the issue of the costs involved in purchasing electronic publications will reveal whether this is an appropriate route for the Bundestag Library to pursue.

In contrast to its earlier position, the Bundestag Library is now in favour of devising a solution to the issue of electronic media in conjunction with the Administration's Central Information Technology Directorate-General (ZI), thus combining work in this area with the general development of the portal. Further progress will depend substantially on how quickly the Bundestag Administration can respond to the Library's rapidly changing requirements in the field of the new technologies.

Alongside its traditional functions, it is becoming increasingly important for the Library to keep pace with the latest technological developments and to seek to introduce these state-of-the-art solutions within its own administration. In this context, it has become apparent that the Library can only make progress with the introduction of new technology as part of the Administration's general modernization process. The Library must therefore ensure that the section of the Bundestag Administration which is responsible for information technology sets the right policy course at the right time.

Furthermore, if the Library is to keep up with the increasingly rapid pace of these technological advances, efforts must be made to boost its financial resources. As with all major libraries, the Bundestag Library must be meticulous in ensuring that as it steadily expands its range of material, a balance is maintained between the acquisition of traditional periodicals and mono

graphs, on the one hand, and the purchase of electronic publications, on the other, especially in view of the costs involved.

At the same time, however, the Bundestag Library must not lose sight of the long-term consequences of its ongoing modernization, especially as regards its archival duties. As well as keeping pace with short-term developments, it must also monitor longer-term trends. As a result, it often has to deal with conflicting developments and may therefore have to pursue several options at once before the situation stabilizes and long-term predictions can be made. As part of the process of monitoring the latest advances, the Library must also be willing to respond to new trends through trial and error and learn from its own experiences. This may impose more constraints on the Library or bring it into conflict with its own Administration, e.g. if there is an imbalance between the Library's terms of reference and the Administration's financial priorities, especially in view of the high costs associated with new technology. However, in order to achieve adequate compliance by the authority, it is essential to give greater priority to communicating with all levels of the Administration involved in preparing the way for the new technology. The Library must therefore ensure that it focusses to an even greater extent than before on promoting its work and explaining the conditions which must be in place so that it can provide an information service to its users which keeps pace with technological developments.

3. The Parliamentary Library: Towards a federal library ?

Since the Library was established, the groups of users who have access to the Bundestag Library under its statutes are relatively broad. They include:

- the Members of the Bundestag and their staff
- the parliamentary groups
- the Administration of the German Bundestag
- the federal ministries and, in some cases, their subsidiary agencies
- the Office of the Federal President
- members of the diplomatic corps
- members of accredited associations in Berlin
- journalists who are members of the Federal Press Conference, and
- by individual application, researchers working on parliamentary law and parliamentary history who can demonstrate that they are unable to access the relevant literature from sources other than our collections.

At a time when the Internet and Intranet are widely used and licences for electronic media are being acquired, clear distinctions must be drawn between the various user groups. Only a very small number of the users listed above has access to the information available on the Intranet or the licensed electronic media.

By making the Library's databases available to a wider public via the Internet, the Bundestag Library, like many other institutions, has opened up its resources to external users without having to make changes to its range of services.

Furthermore, over time, a major library such as the Bundestag Library inevitably becomes a model of best practice for other authorities' libraries as well, especially at federal or *Land* parliament level.

In view of the ever-increasing costs, especially those associated with the introduction of the latest technology and electronic information, it seems appropriate to ask whether the existence

of so many smaller specialist libraries within the individual ministries alongside a major library such as the parliamentary library is still a sensible option. What is the most appropriate size for a library, and what is the most effective use of resources? There is no doubt that major libraries, due to the technological and human resources at their disposal and their staff's wealth of expertise, which is constantly being updated, are better able to master the diverse challenges resulting from technological progress than small libraries can ever be. This naturally increases the significance of a major authority's library, and inevitably, there is an expectation that it will assume something akin to a leadership role.

The setting up of the Network of Libraries of Supreme Federal Authorities between 1986 and 1996, which was chaired by the Bundestag Library, was undoubtedly a first step in this direction. However, due to the conflicting terms of reference of the executive and the legislature and thus the lack of a common statutory basis, this initial attempt must be viewed as a failure.

The attempts to form a consortium of libraries of supreme federal authorities to acquire joint licences for electronic publications, on the one hand, and to develop a joint portal for these libraries, on the other, has led to expectations being expressed that the Bundestag Library would take on a leading role in these areas on behalf of all the libraries serving the various authorities. However, experience has shown very clearly that a different statutory basis must be established so that the Bundestag Library is not forced to pursue conflicting objectives. Experiences prior to 1996 clearly show that as long as its primary duty is to serve Parliament, the Bundestag Library will be unable to carry out satisfactorily the very different functions performed by the ministerial libraries. It cannot serve two masters. In order to be able to act as a federal information centre in future, if this is the role required of it, the parliamentary library must be given greater autonomy. One option would be to establish a supervisory body consisting of representatives of the Federal Government and the legislatures, with the head of the federal library reporting to this body.

This would establish the initial basis for a "federal library", which, logically, would take on all the increasingly cost-intensive functions associated with the introduction of modern technology. It would thus become an expanded information centre for the federal authorities and supply a modern and far more efficient service. The organization would have to have its own human resource base in the field of IT, although outsourcing, as currently practised, would undoubtedly remain a viable option. Setting up this federal library would also lead to a significant expansion of this central institution through the recruitment of staff previously employed by the small and smallest libraries in the various federal authorities, which would now use the services of the central library. One option is for the various ministerial libraries merely to retain staff in the intermediate and higher intermediate services who would respond to users' enquiries, forwarding them to the central library if necessary, and supply an on-site service to users. The central library administration, i.e. the federal library, would have sole responsibility for the acquisition of material, documentation and the introduction of new technology. This may well result in the streamlining of human resources and the pooled use of the latest technology. Time will tell whether the loose cooperation between these libraries in the sectors mentioned will continue in its present form, or whether more clearly defined statutory structures are required for effective collaboration in order to set aside the constitutional principle of ministerial sovereignty in the field of information in the interests of greater efficiency.

Date: 20 August 2003