

Report about Professional Visit to the Libraries of Berlin, Germany

**From 14th to 21th November 2012
Visit Financed and Sponsored**

By

**Bibliothek & Information International (BI-I) (Library & Information International)
At the Bibliothek und Information Deutschland (BID), GERMANY**



Thanks to the funding, provided by the Kommission **Bibliothek & Information International BII**, we had an invaluable opportunity to visit five Berlin's libraries from November 14 to 21. Also we are grateful to our colleagues from Goethe Institute libraries in Kaunas and Klaipeda for their well – wishing help. And of course we express our sincerest gratitude to the staff of the visited libraries in Berlin. We really appreciate being the ones who benefited from this visit.

We visited these libraries:

1. Ibero – Amerikanisches Institut (IAI) and library
2. Stadtbibliothek Berlin – Mitte, Philipp-Schaeffer-Bibliothek
3. Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Bibliothek (SWP)
4. Universität Potsdam, Universitätsbibliothek
5. Polonische Institut Berlin Bibliothek

Our main purposes were to acquaint with library services, new strategies and achievements:

- New technologies in library (Potsdam university)
- Cooperation between libraries and library network in Berlin (Stadtbibliothek Berlin – Mitte)
- Public relations
- Information services (SWP)
- New projects
- Digitization processes
- Old books and manuscripts (IAI)

Our group consisted of 7 librarians from Ieva Simonaityte Klaipeda County Public Library. The librarians Jurga Bardauskiene, Ingrida Skridailaitė, Viktorija Karaliene and Vida Pelegrin are the employees at the Reference and Regional Studies Department. Egle Kavaliauskiene is the head of Book Preservation Department, Daiva Nakrosiene - head of Library and Culture Management Department and Alma Venclauskaite - head of Children's Literature Department.

Our first visit was to *Ibero – Amerikanisches Institut (IAI)* and its library. We had a meeting and discussion with Dr. Ulrike Mühlshlegel. She was our guide in the library.

IAI was founded in 1930. Later it was incorporated into the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation. IAI is a center for academic and cultural exchange between Germany and Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain and Portugal. Combining an information, a research and a cultural centers, the IAI is a platform for cooperation and transcultural dialogues. It organizes a wide range of cultural and academic events, including readings, lectures, discussions, symposia, conferences, film screenings, concerts and exhibitions, also awards ten to twelve grants each year to support a one - to three - month research stay in Berlin. For us the most important object was the library. This institute holds the largest library specializing on Latin America, Spain, Portugal and Latino Studies in Europe. We had an opportunity to get acquainted with library collection – maps, books, journals, audio media, videos, manuscripts. We learned a lot about manuscript's cataloging, description, storage conditions. All materials are made available to users through the online catalog www.iaicat.de or international interlibrary loan system (except for holdings in the image archive and some material in both the map collection and the Papers & Manuscripts section). To us this was an important and useful message as the Spanish language in Lithuania is becoming more popular, and the reason of it is emigration. We already have users who were born in Spain and whose first language is Spanish. The library is involved in a series of projects that complement its user services and routine activities such as acquisitions, cataloging and preservation. Current important projects include the mass deacidification of library holdings and the creation of the workflow and presentation environment of the IAI Digital Library. Since 2011 the IAI has been building a digital library. But digitalization process primarily is focusing on the holdings available at the IAI. The digitalization is being financed only to a small extent with own funds. The greater part of it is implemented with external funding. Presently the library staff is planning a new library building for book storage. We do not have a similar institution in Lithuania therefore it was a great revelation to learn.



The second visited library was *Philipp – Schaeffer - Bibliothek*. Birgit G. Schulz was our guide in library. She presented the services and introduced to the public libraries network in Berlin. Stadtbibliothek Mitte is a public library system within district maintenance. The libraries of Mitte are structurally integrated into a close web of museums, galleries and other communal institutions under the guidance of the Kulturamt Mitte. The library system comprises eleven houses. The central functions and tasks are distributed between the Philipp-Schaeffer-Bibliothek near Rosenthaler Platz and the Bibliothek am Luisenbad in the northern part of Mitte. Acquisition, book processing, cataloguing, and public relations are the tasks centralized on district level.

Birgit G. Schulz emphasized that Philipp – Schaeffer - Bibliothek is mainly engaged in offering non-book media like DVDs, CD-Rs, or audio books. The stock amounts to 115.000 items. Since it re-opened again in 1996, the number of visitors and the circulation steadily increased. In 2002, a total of 575.000 in circulations, and 250.000 visitors were counted. Today, it not only attracts people from the area of the old district of Mitte but from all of Berlin. We found it as an innovatory library and a modern place for meetings, frequented by visitors. At first sight the building is like an old factory, but the architecture by Abelmann und Vielain and the furnishings of the building combine functional and modern designs with the attractive and easy accessible presentation of the holdings.



We were overwhelmed by the children’s section in the basement. Back in Lithuania we studied Berlin’s libraries websites. The library decision to organize children’s library in a cellar came as a surprise because in one’s imagination a cellar is a dark, sometimes mystic room without windows and natural sun light. But here we found a pleasant space for playing, storytelling and puppet – shows to crown it all. Besides, the place strikes by its good spatial arrangement and very comfortable book – shelves on wheels. It is very easy to maneuver the room’s space if you need. The children’s section in the basement shows new ways of presenting books and media to its young users and combined it with an atmosphere that supports a playful reading and learning without any disturbing elements.

The library system has 3 library buses. Since 5 th September 2005, the City Library Bookmobile travels regularly to secondary and 5 elementary schools in Friedrichshain. It is very important especially for children in grades 1 through 4. Bookmobiles supply them with books and other media, introduce to the use of media and present libraries. At different times the bus stays for 2.5 hours at each stop. Utilizing modern wireless technology, the buses are connected to the network of public libraries Berlin (VÖBB). The idea of a mobile library prompted us a solution that can be applied in our country where, as it is the case in our region, several small village libraries have been closed. The reason is a declining population which makes library service too expensive. To buy a bus can be a good decision.

The third institution we visited was *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik Institut, Bibliothek*. We had a meeting and discussion with Nele Morkel, library director, and her colleague. They introduced their institute, the main activities, the database World Affairs Online (WAO), Online Access (IREON Gateway, GENIOS) and others, the library cooperates in the construction of the WAO database and the gateway IREON by choosing and indexing the relevant documents. A several of them are meant for German residents only, the rest have a free for the rest. They also support the Bundestag and the Federal Government with information and the products required.

It is impossible to compare the level of information activities in our library and this one, but the discussion turned out to be useful. We received some instruction about reference work and were provided with links to useful websites. We were interested in library programs and cooperation. The Library and Information Services of the SWP works as a service provider for the research institute, as information service facility for other institutions, as coordinator of the German Network on International Affairs and Regional Studies (FIV), acting by appointment of the federal government as national infrastructure unit in this field.

As a result of cooperation with other European institutions of research and documentation the multilingual "European Thesaurus on International Relations and Area Studies" is developed. Specialized vocabulary for the field of International Relations and Area Studies, given in nine European languages: German, English, French, Italian, Croatian, Polish, Spanish, Czech, Russian. The European Thesaurus is online accessible and searchable under Keywords within the IREON Gateway. We had a chance to view its printed version.



The fourth our visited library was *Potsdam University Library* (Universitätsbibliothek Potsdam), the largest academic library in the German state of Brandenburg. It serves the academic community of Potsdam University as well as interested readers from other universities. The library is also open to private users from the region Berlin - Brandenburg with a research or study interest. It is a library system with a single budget and central library staff management. It comprises three divisional libraries, one at each of the three university campuses. The humanities holdings are primarily located in the World Heritage Site at the New Palace Sanssouci Park, the stocks of Law, Economics and Social Sciences at the campus Babelsberg Griebnitzsee, the human and scientific literature in Golm. The University Library is affiliated University Archives and the University Press. With a population of approximately 1.3 million volumes, about 2,850 print and 8,000 electronic periodicals and a variety of databases and e - books include the Potsdam University Library is a medium sized UBs in Germany.

Magazines: Employment Studies, Biochemistry, Biology, Chemistry, Food Science, Education, Geography, Earth Sciences, Linguistics, Music Science, Physics, Psychology, DGG collection.

We did not have the time to visit all campus and chose a new library in Science Park Golm. We had a meeting, discussions and library tour with Dr. Ulrike Michalowsky, director of the library, and her colleague. This building was built as library in 2011 and it was the first case in history of the university. Now it is a modern information and communication center in Science Park Golm occupied by students from the early morning till the late evening. The modern functional building has places for individual work and group work rooms, a very pretty room for babies, generous reading areas, rare books and multimedia. One can find any book in online catalog. The catalog has an interactive map with books dislocation. It was the good news for us and we are going to introduce it in our job.



The last visit took us to *Polonische Institut Berlin Bibliothek*. We had a meeting with librarian A. Genest and director Jolanta Miśkowiec. This institute represents Poland: its culture, art, literature in Germany. You can find books in Polish printed not only in Poland but also in Germany and other countries. The materials about Poland are complemented, too. The library is not very big. Its opening hours are not long, and the library has only one employee. It is cooperating with other institutes in Berlin, especially with their neighbors - Instituto Cervantes Berlin. They have projects for children: special language camps during their summer holidays, language weeks, film screenings, exhibitions. This attracted our attention, because the similar institute is established in Vilnius. We had common projects: exhibitions, meetings with artists. Our library published a selection of Olstyn writhers works, i.e. "Vetykle" that was translated by our library director.



Following A. Genest recommendation we visited Bibliothek Mario Vargas (Instituto Cervantes Berlin), as well as Bibliothek, mediatheque (Institut Français Berlin) and Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz. Last October AdM archive from Germany reached our library and replenished the collection of Reference and Regional Studies Department. The 4 of our group now are working with those materials.

Besides libraries, we visited museums, exhibitions and other famous Berlin's places.

Conclusions

1. We formed an opinion that there are no strict requirements for library websites designers in Germany. Sometimes it is very difficult to find some information especially if you are a foreigner. In Lithuania the structure of websites is regulated by general statute for website creators.
2. In Germany most libraries prefer to buy services such like cataloging, book restoration, and binding. In Lithuanian practice usually the libraries create such services themselves. Creating websites is generally a saleable service in Lithuania.
3. A mobile library stays to be an innovation in Lithuania. Only 3 municipal libraries have library buses.

4. There is some library structure difference between Germany and Lithuania. Lithuanian library network includes a national library, 5 county libraries and every district has its municipal public library with branches in villages.
5. There exist no librarian assistants positions in Lithuania. Volunteering is more popular in Lithuania.
6. Some problems are similar in both countries: we can't afford all books we need, the library staff is not very young, we lack librarians with high qualification, too often catering for small libraries is low.
7. During our visit we found out that German people are good readers who like to read everywhere and read as much as possible. The opportunity to become a good reader is provided in all libraries. Reading spaces and playing areas are cosy and comfortable, users' needs attended to. In Lithuania it is impossible to find a specially provided space for children in a large scientific library. One can feel that in Germany the governmental attitude towards culture is stronger.

While preparing this report we have reviewed:

<http://www.uni-potsdam.de>

<http://info.ub.uni-potsdam.de>

<http://www.swp-berlin.org/>

<http://www.iai.spk-berlin.de>

<http://www.berlin.de/citybibliothek/bibliotheken/schaeffer/>