

Professional Tour in Germany

Topic: Regional Services for Libraries in Germany

Summary by:

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In August 2010, the Tel Aviv Goethe Institute and BII Germany offered The Israeli Center for Libraries to send two delegates to a professional tour in Frankfurt. The Israeli Center for Libraries' General Director, Shmuel Shem-Tov, decided to send the undersigned on this tour. We then received the tour programme and met the delegation members a few days before our flight, along with Andrea Bélafi, Library Manager at the Goethe Institute, and Toni Buda, tour organiser and leader.

The tour took place on 10-17/10/2010, during which we have visited libraries, reading promoting funds, organisations providing services to libraries, cultural and tourist sites, etc. Our experiences from this trip are shared with you below.

First, we'd like to thank the Goethe Institute, BII and especially Toni Buda for the fascinating tour, the varied and well-planned programme, and the possibility to get to know organisations and colleagues in another country – as a result, strong personal and professional links were created which would surely lead to extending our range of activities regarding libraries, literature and the promoting of reading.

We'd also like to point out that Moshe Sakal arrived in Frankfurt on 8/10/2010, and as a guest of the Goethe Institute attended the last three days of the Frankfurt Book Fair.

Regarding accommodations: Our hotel, Inter City Hotel, was located opposite Frankfurt main railway station. It was a clean, pleasant and hospitable hotel and its central location helped us move around town comfortably at all times. The hotel staff have also provided us with public transport tickets, free internet connection, ironing services, etc.

Whenever we met other professionals, we gave them a Goethe Institute bag containing information in German about the Israeli Center for Libraries, the Ministry of Culture and Sport – Libraries and School Libraries Departments, and ASMI – the Israeli Association of Libraries and Information Centers. It also contained a bookmark with photos and information on Israeli libraries and a book in English on the Bauhaus movement in Tel Aviv.

Sunday, 17/10/2010

Guided tour in Frankfurt: Driving around town on a tour bus, listening to explanations on its tourist, cultural, business, and architectural sites. This tour allowed us to learn more about our host city.

Monday, 18/10/2010

German National Library (Deutsche Nationalbibliothek Frankfurt):

- a. Meeting the library representative.
- b. Guided tour around the National Library with explanations on its history and that of its sister library in Leipzig, its impressive building, book storage and handling facilities, etc.
- c. A short meeting with the library's digitization manager who told us about three ongoing projects.



Tour of Frankfurt University, Frankfurt Central Library and Universität Frankfurt, Zentrale Bibliothek.

- a. Meeting Dr. Rachel Heuberger, Head of the Jewish Division of the university, who told us about the library collection, its usage and acquisitions policy, etc.
- b. Visiting the Jewish and Hebrew library and meeting the digitization team, which places on the web 20th century German Jewish newspapers.



Tuesday, 19/10/2010, Travelling to Mainz

The Reading promotion fund (Stiftung Lesen)

- a. Meeting fund staff: The director and two employees involved in research and in reading promotion projects. We took that opportunity to tell our hosts of similar projects we run in Israel, consulted with them on statistical studies regarding reading habits among teenagers, received samples of booklets promoting reading for children and immigrants, received explanations on a joint project with Israel's Center for Educational Technology, etc.
- b. Tour of the old town with a local guide.
- c. Visit to St. Paul with its famous Chagall windows.



- d. Visit to the Gutenberg Museum and experiencing old printing methods.
- e. Visit to the city's new synagogue, Meor Hagolah, and meeting the head of the Jewish community of Mainz.



Wednesday, 20/10/2010, Frankfurt Library Network (Stadtbücherei Frankfurt am Main)

- a. Visit to the Gallus branch of the Central Library: Meeting library staff, receiving explanations on various projects promoting reading habits among immigrant families.



- b. Central Library (Zentralbibliothek) Meeting the library director, touring the impressive library building, only two years old, seeing various technologies for book lending/returning, computerised study halls, the youth wing (Free Style), the library's electronic books collection, etc.

This meeting brought into focus for us the subject of electronic books, which we've started studying in Israel. We're sure it would gain momentum, and it was useful meeting our German colleagues to learn how they do it.

- a. Luncheon in the library's excellent restaurant with the director of the School Library Centre (Schulbibliothekarische Arbeitsstelle) and the director of the Public Libraries Network and German Library Association in Hessen.



- b. Learning about the various German library associations and about projects aimed at promoting reading habits run jointly with school libraries. Meeting with Dr. Homilius, the head of the Landesverband Hessen, Deutscher Bibliotheksverband

Thursday, 21/10/2010 Travelling to Reutlingen, south Germany:

EKZ – Services for Libraries / Acquisitions Centre (EKZ Bibliotheksservice / Einkaufszentrale für Bibliotheken)

- a. Introduction by EKZ's Director General.
- b. Guided tour of the company: Model library (we were shown equipment, furniture and new accessories for public libraries).
- c. Tour of the company store rooms, viewing the process of receiving books and sending them to public libraries. We could see the full process for each book (cover strengthening, lamination, spine stitching, cataloguing, library logo printing, etc.), until such time as it's sent to the destination library, catalogued and ready for the shelf. We were duly impressed by the efficiency and the novel 'production line' processing system.
- d. Lunch at the company restaurant. The hospitality we received was wonderful and heart warming.
- e. Meeting the School Department head – learning about their cooperation with the Library Association, and the training offered to librarians and information experts.



Long study days in schools led to the development of school libraries in order to offer students additional activities, and that way many learning kits were created for staff and students.

Friday, 22/10/2010, Frankfurt

- a. Book Arts Fund (Stiftung Buchkunst): Meeting the fund director, receiving explanations on its activities and its annual competition on the creative, artistic and visual aspects of books. Viewing the books which won the competition since the fifties in the various categories (lexicons, children books, art books, science books, etc.). Receiving explanations on the annual Frankfurt Book Fair where the fund displays its annual collection of selected books.



This opened before us a topic not yet covered in Israel. Following the meeting, we understood how important book art is, and would like to try promoting this in Israel too.

- b. Wiesbaden Public Libraries Department, Ministry of Science and the Arts (Hessische Fachstelle für Öffentliche Bibliotheken, Wiesbaden): Meeting the Library Department head. We learnt that Germany



doesn't have an equivalent of the Israeli Public Libraries Law. This department supports public libraries financially, and provides reading promoting activities, training for school and church libraries, and services for all libraries. They also deal with library development, library buildings, annual plans, acquisitions and collection development, library management and organisation, and organising professional events. Libraries there also manage their catalogues online. The department strongly cooperates with the Library Association and the Teacher Union.

We'd like to thank you again for allowing us to take part in this exciting and educational tour, with special thanks to Toni Buda, who did her best to make it succeed for us all. The atmosphere within the group was pleasant, warm and cooperative, which also contributed to the success of this tour.