



ZVEZA BIBLIOTEKARSKIH DRUŠTEV
SLOVENIJE

Turjaška ulica 1, 1000 Ljubljana
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Gerald Leitner
Secretary General
International Federation of Library Associations
and Institutions

Ljubljana, 19 May 2020

Dear Mr Leitner,

The Slovenian Library Association (SLA) prepared a report on the operation of the library system in Slovenia during the COVID-19 epidemic. The Slovenian librarians followed all the instructions of the national authorities. We very much appreciated the guidelines and information provided by international professional associations.

On 15 May, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia declared the end of COVID-19 epidemic as the first country in Europe to take this step. Since the risk of spreading COVID-19 persists, the general and specific measures will continue to apply based on expert opinion until 31 May 2020.

Slovenia declared an epidemic on 12 March and all responsible authorities called on public institutions to follow current and key information and recommendations for health protection of the National Institute of Public Health. All public institutions, including libraries, were closed, but the majority of libraries still provided their services remotely (some also offered home delivery). The majority of staff were working from home and only a few were coming to work in libraries for the most urgent tasks (IT, post, etc.). Some just waited for work at home (receiving 80 % payment). Staff promoted the available online services and resources through library websites and social media and provided regular updates and information for users.



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The National and University Library, the Slovenian Public Libraries Association, the Institute of Information Sciences and the publishing house Beletrina carried out a campaign called “Read on Click” to promote e-reading during self-isolation. The campaign highlighted **Digitalna knjižnica Slovenije** (Digital Library of Slovenia), which offers free 24/7 access to a more than 850.000 digital items in the fields of science, art and culture, and **the Biblos Portal**, which holds a collection of 4000 e-books in the Slovenian language available to library members. Both portals have recorded increased usage.

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia recommended the re-opening of libraries on 29 April. The majority of libraries opened for users on 4 May. Since then libraries have made plans for gradual reopening, as safety is still the priority. Many limitations and restrictions are in force, including the limited number of users in the library, only pre-ordered materials can be borrowed (click and collect service with a restriction on a number of units/a single user), users can return library materials, reading rooms stay closed, (preferably contactless) settling of debts, home delivery is still possible for vulnerable groups (in various ways). The measures of wearing masks and social distancing in public enclosed spaces continue to be in force.

As already published on the IFLA website, National Institute of Public Health issued special instructions for the reopening of libraries for staff and users: https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/hq/topics/libraries-development/documents/slovenian_health_guidelines_for_public_libraries.pdf

We would like to thank IFLA for this translation.

The Section on Special Libraries conducted a survey about the consequences of the Coronavirus Pandemic. There were 38 responses. The results show that 92 % of respondents have changed the operation of their library services. 82 % of librarians surveyed still provided library services; however, they carried out contactless loan and return of materials and focused on providing information and resources online. Work from home has significantly increased, including mainly personal bibliography processing and additional digitization of materials. 25 % of respondents reported that they developed new services for users during the pandemic.

However, special libraries were not the primary information point about the pandemic in their parent organizations (95 % of libraries).

Regarding the budget, 25% of librarians reported that the pandemic has affected their budget, more than 50 % of respondents do not know yet, while 25 % believe that the pandemic will not affect their library budget.

45 % of librarians answered that they have developed their own protocols for users and rules for handling material, almost a half received instructions from the parent organization, and about 60 % received instructions from the national institutions.



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As of 18 May, about half of children in Slovenia will return to schools and kindergartens and school libraries will follow special instructions of the National Institute of Public Health and the instructions issued by individual schools.

The Slovenian public libraries are opening their branches according to their possibilities and the Slovenian Public Libraries Association is providing support with all the necessary information.

SLA has already been informed that the funds for 2020 expected to be received from the Ministry of Culture will probably only cover the overheads. But we are still waiting to receive the final decision. All the events for 2020 have already been cancelled. We will still try to publish the professional journal Knjižnica (Library).

Kind regards,

Irena Sešek,

Vice-President