

UNESCO/Jikji Memory of the World Prize

Nomination form

To be submitted by 31 December 2004

Please complete this form, print it out and send it together with the corresponding attachments to our postal address:

***UNESCO/Jikji Memory of the World Prize, Information Society Division, 1, rue Miollis,
75732 Paris Cedex 15, France***

1. Nomination presented by (if other than the candidate himself/herself):

Name of candidate:

Street address:

E-mail:

Website:

2. ***If the candidate is an individual***

Nationality:

Education:

Professional experience:

Publications and materials produced by the candidate relating to the accessibility and preservation of documentary heritage:

Please send a brief curriculum vitae (1 or 2 pages).

3. ***If the candidate is an organization***

Type of organization: National Library of the Czech Republic

Date of establishment: ca. 1360

Brief history and general information: The history of the library is connected with the foundation of the Charles University in 1348. The first written references concerning books are documented in relation to the oldest Charles College, having been given a royal gift of manuscripts in 1366. The main mission of the National Library is twofold: to be the archive library for documents issued on the territory of the Czech lands and to be a public research library especially in the domain of

humanities, pure natural sciences, culture, and arts. The library has more than 6 million vols. from which great parts are of irreplaceable cultural value not only for the territory of the Czech Republic, but also for many cultures of the world. The library is a leading institution in preservation and especially access to documentary heritage. It is a co-ordination centre for several national programmes in these areas incl. research and development.

Publications and materials (CD-ROMs, cassettes, videocassettes) produced by the candidate relating to the accessibility and preservation of documentary heritage:

The library produced several UNESCO pilot CD-ROMs in the Memory of the World programme, incl. the first CD of the programme in 1993; after that first entirely digitized manuscripts in 1995 (also MW UNESCO pilot projects), the CD-ROM Digitization of Rare Library Materials, recommended by UNESCO as a complex approach for the Memory of the World in 1999; CD-ROM catalogues of Arabic and Persian manuscripts of the National Library with MW logo in 1998 and 1999; in 2003 and 2004 the major publications are the digital libraries Manuscriptorium for access to rare manuscripts, old printed books and historical maps from various Czech and foreign institutions from the region (it works also as a shared catalogue of historical collections) and Kramerius for access to digitized old periodicals endangered by acid-paper deterioration.

4. Describe the way in which the work nominated has made a significant **contribution** to the preservation and accessibility of documentary heritage (use separate sheet if necessary):

The National Library is active both in preservation of and access to rare and endangered library materials. Access and preservation activities are mostly coordinated between themselves. The major achievements are as follows:

- a) Launch of the Kramerius national coordinated preservation and access programme (in 1999) for safeguarding the content of acid-paper library materials. Thanks to the National Library several preservation microfilming centres in Czech regions were built up. They co-ordinate their activities and produce ca. 1 million filmed pages yearly. An important part from this filming output is digitized centrally in the National Library; in order to provide easy access, communication with other systems, long-term storage of digital documents, and modern XML-based document formats were developed and applied nationally. At the moment the formats (Document Type Definitions – DTD) are publicly available for the following types of documents at the URL <http://digit.nkp.cz>: digitized periodicals, digitized monographs, digitized museum objects, and digitized audio documents (draft). They have been built in production tools (editors) as well as in the Kramerius Digital Library. The Kramerius application is based on open-source software and it is freely available for Czech institutions, which would like to run it locally (due to copyright issues it is necessary to have not only central but also local implementations).
- b) Launch of the Memoria national coordinated programme (in 1996) for access to rare manuscripts, old printed books, and historical maps. Dozens of Czech

institutions (libraries, museums, archives, monasteries, castle libraries, etc.) have been participating in the programme. Its goal is to develop an international research environment for work with these documents, otherwise scarcely available. The Memoria Manuscriptorium Digital Library acts as a shared catalogue of historical collections with international participation – catalogue data from Slovak, Polish, Hungarian, Croatian, Slovenian, Lithuanian, Austrian, and German projects or institutions are included or will be included in the near future. Manuscriptorium is also a rich resource of digitized content (ca. 700,000 pages, i.e. more than 1,500 fully digitized volumes). Manuscriptorium uses a modern XML-based document format for digitized documents and a TEI-based format for structured digitized texts (to be added) – for both see <http://digit.nkp.cz>.

- c) Manuscriptorium and Kramerius Digital Libraries are also open for communication via standardized protocols, such as Z39.50 and OAI-PMH. Manuscriptorium co-operated as one of the three test libraries for CERL MSS portal development.
- d) The above mentioned activities and programmes are products of initiatives co-ordinated by the National Library and supported by the Ministry of Culture.
- e) The National Library was very active during floods in the Czech Republic in 2002 and especially in floods recovery works (together with the National Archives). Thanks to these activities, the flooded documents from all types of institutions were immediately frozen (several kilometres of shelves) and techniques and technologies developed and tested for drying them, while taking into account the specific properties of different materials. An international seminar with participation of IFLA-PAC and foreign experts incl. U.S.A. was organized in 2003 to assess all the technologies applied (mass and individual drying techniques, sometimes combined with preservation microfilming and/or digitization).
- f) The National Library has also launched a boxing service (boxes made in permanent acid-free paper) for improved storage of endangered originals. Advanced plotters are applied to measure and cut automatically the tailored-made boxes for concrete documents. The service is used by many Czech institutions.

5. Describe the **impact** of this contribution to the preservation and accessibility of documentary heritage, whether at the local, national, regional or international level (use separate sheet if necessary):

The impact of the above mentioned activities has in all cases the **national** dimension. The National Library has been able to run the supporting research and development projects and programmes (since 1997) and to persuade the Ministry of Culture to launch national programmes (in 2000) based on calls for proposals for Memoria and Kramerius activities. Thus the financial support of the state is combined with an on-going co-ordination and research activities of the National Library. All the output is used by all participants and the application of modern data standards widely ensured. Thanks to this, in the domain of preservation microfilming and digital access to endangered and rare documents, national, but also foreign (as many tools are downloadable free of charge) institutions may enjoy of unified approach in a high-technology area. National digitization training courses are taking place since 2003 both in Prague and regions.

The impact in flood recovery after 2002 on the national level is huge, because thanks to this and especially thanks to quickly launched measures, qualified advice, and co-ordination activities, hundreds of thousands of flooded documents (various libraries, archives, and museum documentation) have been rescued (large capacity freezing and mass and individual drying).

Internationally, the Memoria project experts provided a UNESCO digitization training in Prague in 1997, a regional Baltic training course in Latvia (for Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) in 1999, and on behalf of the OSI Budapest digitization training courses in Moldova, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine in 2003, while in 2004 in Serbia and Lithuania. Thanks to achieved results, the National Library is one of the first non-G7 members of Bibliotheca Universalis and it has been taking part in several access and preservation EU projects. Many institutions from the region and elsewhere took consultation in our library before starting their own digitization programmes of endangered documents. Good co-operation has been developed mainly in case of Baltic countries. The National Library is also a founding and supporting member (even if external to the group) of the SEEDI (South-East European Digitization Initiative) whose aim is to co-ordinate cultural heritage digitization activities in Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, and Turkey. It is worth to mention also participation of National Library experts in the work of the Memory of the World International Advisory Committee (until 2000) and its Sub-Committee on Technology (since 1996 until nowadays).

Especially in digital access to rare collections the impact of the National Library has a very strong international dimension incl. its own digitization activities through which it provides access also to unique items of Arabic, Persian, or Hebrew provenance and thus, it contributes to virtual reunification of dispersed collections. Western manuscripts from various countries are processed as well. The library has also ensured preservation microfilming incl. selective digitization of the large unique collection of Russian and Ukrainian émigré periodicals (published in 1920s – 1940s on Czech territory) preserved in the so-called Russian Historical Archives Abroad Library.

For all the above activities, the National Library has already received many foreign experts, researchers, and students who wished to complete their knowledge in the field. Some of them stayed with us for longer periods of time; they were from various countries incl. e.g. U.S.A., some Western European countries, but also Lithuania, Ukraine, Georgia, or Turkey.

Thanks to the richness of its unique Slavonic Library, The National Library assisted efficiently in completion of Bosnian collections in the destroyed National and University Library in Sarajevo (providing microfilm of destroyed items) and nowadays it is providing concrete help to the National Library in Baghdad in the field of restoration of rare documents damaged during the war.

6. Has the candidate received previously any award for the same contribution?
If yes, briefly indicate which prize: NO

7. Explain briefly how the prize money would be used: The money will be used for enhancement of international co-operation in further building and creation of a powerful research environment in Memoria Digital Library whose origin is in fact in first UNESCO Memory of the World activities. The money could help substantially to increase the proportion of foreign (mostly regional) data.

8. Please attach illustration material or indicate web site(s) where the nominated work could be consulted.
 - a) access to documentary heritage in manuscripts, old printed books, and historical maps at the URL <http://www.memoria.cz> or <http://www.manuscriptorium.com> (full access at request addressed to adolf.knoll@nkp.cz) – more than 1,500 vols. digitized on more than 700,000 pages.

 - b) access to documentary heritage in acid-paper materials, mostly old newspapers at the URL <http://kramerius.nkp.cz> (please, mind that due to copyright issues access to images of originals published after 1880 is possible only in the institutions possessing the original as well as its digital copy stored on site) – more than 1 million pages available

The availability of items in these digital libraries also means that they have been surveyed from the preservation point of view, got basic treatment if necessary, and in case of acid-paper materials they have been produced also the high-quality preservation microfilm copies.